

NATIONAL INTEREST AS A PHILOSOPHICAL CATEGORY: G7 IDEALS AND KAZAKHSTAN'S STRATEGIC IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the concept of national interest not alone as a strategic or geopolitical necessity, but also as a philosophical conception shaped by various cultural identities, normative frameworks, and modes of discourse. In international relations, conventional realist and liberal perspectives often regard national interest as an objective determinant of power, security, or profit. This study contends that these concepts overlook the fundamental epistemological and ontological grounds that influence how nations define their interests and represent themselves globally. The article illustrates the divergent formation of national interest across various civilisational and geopolitical contexts by contrasting Kazakhstan's multi-vector, pluralist foreign policy with the Group of Seven's (G7) universalist normative framework that advocates for liberal democracy, individual human rights, market rationality, and a rule-based international order. The G7's normative framework, rooted in Enlightenment rationality and Western historical context, often presents its values as universally beneficial and superior to alternative value systems. Kazakhstan possesses a strategic identity centred on cultural pluralism, civilisational dialogue, and contextual autonomy. This positions it as a mediator between the East and West, as well as the North and South. The research indicates that Kazakhstan combats epistemic dependency by providing several approaches to modernity and global integration. It employs philosophical hermeneutics, critical discourse analysis, and comparative political theory. It neither only adheres to nor dismisses existing rules; it strives to reinterpret and negotiate them according to its distinct history and position in the world. The paper concludes by asserting that national identity should not be perceived as a fixed set of objectives dictated by systemic logic, but rather as a dynamic concept influenced by cultural factors over time. This perspective facilitates epistemic plurality in international thought and endorses the validity of non-Western contributions to global order and standards.

Key words: National Interest, G7, Kazakhstan, Political Philosophy, Strategic Identity, Pluralism, Soft Power.

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Ұлттық мүдде философиялық категория ретінде: G7 идеялары және Қазақстанның стратегиялық болмысы

Аңдатпа. Мақалада ұлттық мүдде ұғымы тек стратегиялық немесе геосаяси қажеттілік ретінде ғана емес, философиялық категория ретінде қарастырылады. Ол әртүрлі нормативтік жүйелермен, мәдени сәйкестіктермен және дискурстық практикалармен қалыптасады. Халықаралық қатынастардағы дәстүрлі реалистік және либералдық тәсілдер ұлттық мүддені көбінесе билік, қауіпсіздік немесе экономикалық пайда тұрғысынан объективті ұғым ретінде түсіндіреді. Алайда бұл зерттеуде мұндай көзқарастар эпистемологиялық және онтологиялық негіздерді елемейді деген тұжырым жасалады, өйткені дәл осы негіздер мемлекеттердің өз мүдделерін қалай анықтап, жаһандық деңгейде өзін қалай таныстыратынын айқындайды. G7 елдері ұстанатын универсалистік нормативтік модель либералдық демократияны, адам құқықтарын, нарықтық рационалдылықты және ережеге негізделген халықаралық тәртіпті алға тартады. Бұл модель Ағарту дәуірінің рационалдылығына және Батыстың тарихи тәжірибесіне негізделіп, өзінің құндылықтарын жаһандық нормалар ретінде ұсынуға бейім. Ал Қазақстанның көпвекторлы, плюралистік сыртқы саясаты, керісінше, ұлттық мүддені басқа мәдени-өркениеттік және геосаяси контексте қайта түсіндіруге мүмкіндік береді. Қазақстан өзінің стратегиялық келбетін мәдени плюрализмге, өркениеттер диалогына және контекстуалды егемендікке негіздей отырып, Шығыс пен Батыстың, Солтүстік пен Оңтүстіктің арасындағы көпір ретінде танытады. Мақалада философиялық герменевтика, сыни дискурс талдауы және салыстырмалы саяси теория қолданылып, Қазақстан G7 елдерінің нормативтік қысымына тек реакция танытпай, өзінің тарихи тәжірибесі мен геосаяси жағдайына сүйене отырып баламалы жаһандану жолдарын ұсынатыны дәлелденеді. Қазақстан үстем нормаларды не толық қабылдамайды, не түбегейлі жоққа шығармайды, керісінше, оларды қайта қарастырып, мағыналық келісім арқылы өз шеңберінде бейімдейді. Қорытындысында мақалада ұлттық мүдде – бұл халықаралық жүйенің қатып қалған логикасымен анықталатын тұрақты басымдықтар жиынтығы емес, тарихи, мәдени және мағыналық жағынан өзгермелі ұғым екені айтылған. Мұндай көзқарас халықаралық теорияда эпистемологиялық плюрализмге жол ашады және жаһандық тәртіпке Батысқа жатпайтын көзқарастар мен үлгілердің де толық құқықты үлес қоса алатынын мойындайды.

Түйін сөздер: ұлттық мүдде, G7, Қазақстан, саяси философия, стратегиялық болмыс, плюрализм, жұмсақ күш.

Национальный интерес как философская категория: идеалы G7 и стратегическая идентичность Казахстана

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается идея национального интереса не только как стратегической или геополитической необходимости, но и как философской категории, формируемой конкурирующими нормативными системами, культурными идентичностями и дискурсивными практиками. В рамках традиционных реалистских и либеральных теорий международных отношений национальный интерес часто воспринимается как объективная функция силы, безопасности или экономической выгоды. Однако автор отмечает, что такие подходы упускают из виду более глубокие эпистемологические и онтологические основания, определяющие, как государства формируют свои интересы и позиционируют себя в глобальном пространстве.

В статье проводится сравнение универсалистской нормативной модели «Группы семи» (G7), продвигающей либеральную демократию, права человека, рыночную рациональность и международный правопорядок, с многовекторной и плюралистичной внешней политикой Казахстана. Показано, как национальный интерес формируется в различных цивилизационных и геополитических контекстах. Нормативная модель G7, основанная на рациональности эпохи Просвещения и западном историческом опыте, склонна представлять свои ценности как универсальные и морально превосходящие. В противоположность этому, Казахстан строит свою стратегическую идентичность на культурном плюрализме, диалоге цивилизаций и контекстуальном суверенитете, позиционируя себя медиатором между Востоком и Западом, Севером и Югом.

Используя философскую герменевтику, критический дискурс-анализ и сравнительную политическую теорию, исследование демонстрирует, как Казахстан противостоит эпистемологической зависимости, выстраивая альтернативные пути модернизации и глобальной интеграции. Он не просто принимает или отвергает доминирующие нормы, а стремится их переосмыслить и переинтерпретировать через призму собственного исторического опыта и геополитического положения.

В заключение сделан вывод, что национальный интерес следует рассматривать не как фиксированный набор приоритетов, продиктованный логикой международной системы, а как динамичную, исторически и культурно обусловленную конструкцию. Такой подход открывает пространство для эпистемологического плюрализма в международной теории и подтверждает значимость неконвенциональных, включая незападные, вкладов в глобальный порядок и нормативность.

Ключевые слова: культура, архетипы, культурные архетипы, межкультурная коммуникация, коммуникативные модели, коммуникативные нормы, культура поведения.

Introduction

Political science and international relations have long been the fields where the idea of national interest has been studied. But in the last few decades, researchers have come to understand more about its philosophical roots, especially when it comes to ideas like sovereignty, identity, and value systems [1]. As the balance of power in the world changes, a country's national interest is no longer based only on military or economic factors. Instead, it is based on deeper ideological and cultural factors that shape how a country sees itself and its place in the world [2]. These new definitions call for a change away from objectivist and instrumentalist ways of thinking towards interpretive frameworks that take into account meaning, recognition, and political subjectivity.

In this case, the G7's goals of liberal democracy, a market economy, human rights, and a rules-based international order serve as both moral and strategic guides for how the world should interact with each other. These principles often act as tools of soft power, changing what people around the world expect and affecting how non-G7 states see themselves [3]. At the philosophical level, they are based on Enlightenment rationality and Kantian moral universalism, which assume that there is a shared moral framework and that history moves in a straight manner. But these assumptions bring up important questions: How universal can these values really be? And how do they connect with other ontologies and epistemes that come from non-Western traditions, diverse cosmologies, and post-imperial conditions?

Kazakhstan makes a strong argument for looking at these problems. Kazakhstan is a post-Soviet, multi-vector state with ties to both the East and

the West. It must constantly adjust its strategic identity in response to changing global challenges. Its foreign policy ideology stresses pragmatism, multilateralism, and cultural diversity - values that are similar to, but also go against, the G7's normative frameworks [4]. This positioning is not just a geopolitical balancing act; it is also a deeper ontological debate of what it means to be a nation in the face of normative inequalities. In this way, Charles Taylor's idea of "recognition" can help us understand Kazakhstan's path. This view says that identity is formed via interaction with others and their expectations. The goal of this article is to look into national interest as a philosophical idea by looking at how G7 norms and Kazakhstan's changing strategic identity affect each other. The article doesn't see national interest as a rational calculation or a permanent geopolitical need. Instead, it sees it as a historically contingent and culturally ingrained category that is formed by competing value systems, stories of modernity, and different ideas of what a decent life is.

The article uses an interdisciplinary framework that includes political philosophy, constructivist international relations theory, postcolonial theory, and critical epistemologies that try to move away from Eurocentric worldviews and bring back other ways of understanding global order that have been historically ignored. Within this framework, national interest becomes a phenomenological structure - a way of living in the world based on cultural memory, emotional attachments, and historical consciousness. It is also a hermeneutic process, in which the meanings of interest are understood, changed, and fought over in different ways of talking about them. Hans-Georg Gadamer's [2] focus on the historical horizon and interpretive openness is very important here: national inter-

est is not a fixed thing but a dialogical unfolding that is changed by time and the way people make meaning together.

The paper goes on to talk about postcolonial critiques of epistemic domination. People like Gayatri Spivak and Walter Dignolo [6] talk about how coloniality still exists in global knowledge systems and advocate for epistemic disobedience, which is not accepting Western categories as universally normative [5][6]. From this point of view, Kazakhstan's involvement with G7 standards is not only strategic, but also epistemological, as it means actively negotiating different ways of looking at the world and ways of knowing. The state's power comes not only from following policies, but also from being able to translate, mix, or oppose outside standards in ways that affirm its own unique nature. This method is new because it sees national interest as a place for philosophical disagreement instead of strategic agreement. The article goes against the idea that rationality is one thing and instead supports the idea of various rationalities - a variety of values and logics that states use to explain their strategic goals. This method is also founded on Alasdair MacIntyre's [5] tradition-based ethics, which says that national interest must be understood in the context of certain moral traditions and community stories.

In the end, the article adds to bigger discussions about epistemic justice, ontological pluralism, and how to think about international norms in a world that is no longer unipolar. Kazakhstan's changing identity, which is influenced by the legacy of Soviet modernity, Islamic cultural forms, Turkic heritage, and Eurasian connectivity, shows that national interest can be redefined not by accepting dominant ideas, but by having philosophical agency based on the idea that there are many civilisations. This new way of thinking has us think about not only what states want, but also how they figure out what is worth wanting.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative, multidisciplinary approach based on philosophical analysis, discourse analysis, and comparative political theory. It wants to change the way people think about national interest from a static geopolitical category to a dynamic, context-sensitive idea formed by cultural identities, moral frameworks, and strategic narratives. Instead of seeing national interest as a set goal, this method looks at how it is built, fought over, and talked about in different epistemological and civilisational settings. The paper employs hermeneutic interpretation to look at how national interest is talked about in both Western (especially G7) and Kazakhstani discourses. This method focusses on how meaning is shaped by history and culture, and it lets you compare political writings, strategic doctrines, and policy narratives [1]. Hans-Georg Gadamer's and Paul Ricoeur's philosophical hermeneutics [2] and [9] help us understand national interest as a concept that changes through conversation and interpretive negotiation [2]. In

this view, political ideas like interest, identity, and sovereignty are not fixed signs but changing ideas whose meanings come out through the way they are understood in different situations. So, hermeneutic analysis is a great way to connect the meaning gaps between liberal internationalist ideas and modernities that are founded in culture. The idea of the "fusion of horizons" (Horizontverschmelzung) also helps us understand how frameworks that are based on history can either resonate or resist in conversations between people from different cultures.

Second, the study uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) to look at how G7 communiqués, foreign policy declarations, and Kazakhstan's strategic identity documents use language that makes claims about global order, legitimacy, and modernity. CDA is especially good at finding hidden power structures, knowledge hierarchies, and ideological assumptions in political language [3]. The study looks at the strategic vocabulary of official writings, such as "stability," "progress," "partnership," and "modernisation," to show how these discourses embed certain ideas about the ideal life and the appropriate way to run the world. The method is based on the work of Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk, who stress how important discourse is for maintaining social and political power. Here, Michel Foucault's theory of discourse and power/knowledge regimes adds to the method and lets us think more deeply about how language shapes political reality.

Third, a comparative normative analysis looks at the philosophical underpinnings of G7 foreign policy goals in connection to Kazakhstan's foreign policy ideas, such as its philosophy of multi-vector diplomacy, cultural sovereignty, and civilisational pluralism. This method shows both similarities and differences, which makes it possible to look at how different value systems work together and apart when it comes to defining national interest. Kazakhstan's unusual geopolitical position as a transitional state - part Eurasian, part post-Soviet, and part global - is given special attention because its identity can't be reduced to one ideological framework. The comparison is based on important philosophical ideas like universality vs. particularity, order vs. multiplicity, and autonomy vs. alignment. The study uses Isaiah Berlin's idea of value pluralism and Emmanuel Levinas's ethics of alterity to show how important it is to deal with differences without forcing them to fit into dominant norms.

In addition, the methodology is based on a critical epistemological approach that questions the existing hierarchies of knowledge in the field of international relations and tries to bring to the forefront perspectives that are often ignored by mainstream Western-centric scholarship. This approach emphasises the importance of listening to subaltern voices, acknowledging silenced narratives, and giving more weight to non-Western ontologies. Instead of copying the analytical distance of conventional IR scholarship, this study uses critical reflexivity, which means being aware of the re-

searcher's position and the fact that all theoretical interpretation is based on where the researcher is [5]. The normative goal is not to completely reject the G7's ideas, but to put them in context by putting them next to other global philosophical traditions as one way of looking at things, rather than as truths that apply to everyone.

The study uses Walter Mignolo [6]'s idea of the "pluriverse" to show that there are many valid ways of looking at the world that might affect international ethics and the establishment of interests.

The point of the article is not to judge foreign policy based on their results or efficacy, but to break out the philosophical categories and value assumptions that shape how countries interact with each other. In this way, it follows the tradition of political philosophy that puts the ideas behind global order ahead of its real-world effects. This helps us better comprehend how diverse cultural and political groups don't just accept or reject global norms, but also change, mix, and give them new meanings. Official documents from the G7 and the Government of Kazakhstan are the main sources. These include speeches, policy statements, foreign communications, and plans for strategic growth. People look at them as both literary and symbolic gestures of putting oneself in a certain place in the world. Political philosophy, international relations theory, and postcolonial critique are all examples of secondary sources. To avoid repeating dominant worldviews in the study of global politics, all resources are looked at through the lenses of epistemological diversity and critical reflexivity. The study hopes to add to a more nuanced understanding of Kazakhstan's foreign policy identity by using these three methods together. It also hopes to add to a broader theoretical rethinking of national interest as a category of political thought that is part of the complexity of a multipolar, post-hegemonic world.

Discussion

The G7 promotes ideas like liberal democracy, rule-based order, individual human rights, and market liberalism. These ideas come from Enlightenment rationality and modern Western political thinking. These ideas serve as both policy preferences and normative frameworks that make claims to universality [1]. The G7 supports these ideals as the standard for "responsible" states and global legitimacy through statements, development aid conditions, and leadership in global governance groups including the IMF, World Bank, and WTO [2]. These norms are not often imposed through force, but they are examples of soft power that affect the symbolic economy of international recognition. This is similar to a Kantian teleology of cosmopolitan order, which says that liberal norms are logically self-evident and ethically better. However, philosophers like Isaiah Berlin [1] have been increasingly questioning this kind of universalism. He argues for value pluralism, which is the idea that different, incompatible ideas of the ideal life

can exist without a single moral hierarchy. Dipesh Chakrabarty and Walter Dignolo are two postcolonial thinkers who say that Eurocentric claims to universality often hide power structures that have been in place for a long time. This is what Mignolo calls the "coloniality of power." These critiques call for a pluriversal approach to global ethics and politics, which means accepting that there are many different paths to modernity instead of assuming that there is only one. Kazakhstan, which sprang out of the post-Soviet era, has been active in global diplomacy and has a multi-vector foreign policy that tries to balance its ties with Western institutions, Russia, China, and the Islamic world [3]. Its strategic identity stresses civilisational discourse, cultural pluralism, and sovereignty. This is generally said to be different from being aligned with any one geopolitical group. So, Kazakhstan's national interest includes both practical issues and philosophical commitments to balance, inclusion, and contextual sovereignty [4]. It shows a mixed logic that doesn't fit into two categories and puts agency first when dealing with global discourses. Charles Taylor's idea of recognition can help us understand this. Kazakhstan wants not only geopolitical security but also to be recognised as a separate and distinct culture and history in world politics. To show the difference in philosophy, let's look at two political texts: The G7 2023 Hiroshima Leaders' Communiqué talks about "the rules-based international order," "freedom, democracy, and human rights," and a commitment to "global resilience through shared values" [5]. In his 2022 Address to the Nation, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said that "justice," "unity," and "prosperity" are the main ideas that guide Kazakhstan's development plan. He talked about his top goals, which included constructing a fair and responsible government, promoting national identity through cultural discussion and inclusivity, and making sure that foreign policy is balanced and based on multi-vector diplomacy and sovereign equality. These directions are in line with Kazakhstan's strategic identity and its commitment to both reforming its own country and being an active, pluralistic player on the world arena [6].

A critical discourse analysis shows that the ontological assumptions of each work are very different. The G7's rhetoric shows a universalist liberal teleology, which says that history is moving towards a single model of political rationality. Human rights and democratic governance are examples of political principles that are seen as necessary for genuine global engagement. Kazakhstan, on the other hand, sees diplomacy as a conversation between civilisations that are all equal. Norms aren't forced on people; they are negotiated. Sovereignty isn't only legal; it's also ontological, based on the right to establish your own developmental logic and symbolic identity. This idea is in line with Emmanuel Levinas's [4] ethics of alterity, which says that to really connect with the Other, you have to avoid becoming like them and promise to respect them in a dialogical way. What this means for diplomacy and global norms

is Kazakhstan's involvement in global groups like the UN, the OSCE, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and the Organisation of Turkic States shows that it is trying to work with other sets of rules without giving up its strategic independence. This plan isn't just about politics; it's also about ideas. It is an attempt to overcome epistemic dependency by putting out different ideas about what is right, what is diplomatic, and what is development. Kazakhstan's focus on "balance" is not simply a strategy, but also a sign of a phenomenological view that values diversity and cohabitation.

Kazakhstan, for example, hosted the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions [14], which is different from the G7's focus on secular liberalism. This project is based on the idea of civilisational plurality and serves as a way to establish identity via action. It makes Kazakhstan not only a policy player, but also a normative subject that can determine its own agenda for debate, ethics, and living together [7]. These activities show that Kazakhstan's foreign policy is not value-neutral, but based on its own metaphysical beliefs. This is an attempt to define modernity outside of the liberal-secular framework. Kazakhstan's strategic relationships, such as its support for the Middle Corridor and involvement in China's Belt and Road Initiative, show another way of looking at globalisation that is based on economic realism, infrastructure connection, and cooperation between many countries. These programs work within a set of rules that are different from the G7's focus on democratic conditionality. Kazakhstan, on the other hand, focusses on reciprocity, non-interference, and the mutual benefit of working with different partners [8]. The G7, on the other hand, is more focused on value alignment when it comes to aid and investment.

Kazakhstan also fights against binary alignments by pushing the idea of the "Greater Eurasia" region. This is a discursive construct that challenges Euro-Atlantic centrism and supports the legitimacy of post-imperial identities. This way of thinking shows that you are aware of how power has been unevenly distributed in the past. It stresses that post-Soviet states cannot be fully incorporated into the Western liberal system or only seen as peripheral areas under the control of powerful states. Instead, they can tell many strategic stories based on history, culture, and location. Kazakhstan's foreign policy is therefore a place of conceptual sovereignty, where statehood is not only protected by boundaries but also by differences in knowledge.

In postmodern international relations, identity is not just a description; it is also a performance. States act out their identities through speech, diplomacy, and symbolic involvement [9]. Kazakhstan's strategic identity, which is moulded by its past as a former colony and its position between East and West, liberal and authoritarian, or developed and developing, goes against the grain of traditional binary categories. Kazakhstan is located at the crossroads of Eurasian civilisations. It uses its mix of cultures as a strength instead

of a weakness, and it doesn't become stuck on any one ideological axis while dealing with complicated international relationships. So, national interest is more than just a projection of monetary interests; it is also a negotiation of how we see ourselves within global systems of meaning. It shows that a state wants to not only survive or do well, but also to be seen on its own terms, through its own stories and ideas about the world. The G7 often tries to define what it means to be a "modern," "responsible," or "developed" state by projecting its own norms. These groups have hidden hierarchies of legitimacy and often hide other ways to modernise and get involved in politics.

This dynamic is similar to what Paul Ricoeur [9] said in his hermeneutics of selfhood, which says that identity is not set but narrative, coming out via actions of self-interpretation that happen over time and in conversation. Kazakhstan's strategic actions can be understood as a story that the country tells itself in order to deal with its past, its geopolitical limitations, and its hopes for the future. Kazakhstan's participation in many normative regimes creates a self that is dependent, plural, and reflective. This avoids both strict sovereignty and complete normative convergence. Kazakhstan fights against this kind of essentialization by having a multiple identity: one that accepts sovereignty while also accepting interdependence, and one that wants to be involved without losing its identity. It develops many diplomatic languages, including as liberal institutions, post-Soviet collaboration, Islamic diplomacy, and regional integration, all while keeping a consistent strategic narrative based on national context and civilisational debate. This approach is similar to Judith Butler's performative theory of identity and Stuart Hall's idea of cultural hybridity, both of which go against essentialist ideas of the self. Identity is no longer a solid essence; instead, it is a positioning strategy that is built in response to changing power structures and discursive settings. Kazakhstan's multifarious diplomacy is a type of strategic performativity in which the country's interests are carried out not through domination or imitation, but through differentiation and selective appropriation.

This resistance isn't a reaction; it's a creative one. It is an attempt to come up with a model of strategic identity that is both culturally based and related to the rest of the world. Kazakhstan does this to show that it has both political and philosophical power. It changes the rules for how to participate in the world system from the outside instead of the inside. This fits with Gayatri Spivak's suggestion to "strategically essentialise" identity so that we can change the way we talk about things while yet keeping a variety of ways of knowing. In this way, Kazakhstan is not only a part of global politics, but it is also a co-author of alternative modernities. This helps to make global norms more diverse and to change what it means to belong to the global community in the 21st century. From this point of view, Kazakhstan's foreign policy is

not just about aligning its interests with others; it is also a philosophical statement that states have the right to define modernity on their own terms and to take part in world-making from places of cultural diversity instead of geopolitical marginality.

Table 1 - Comparative Matrix of Normative Strategies: G7 Framework vs. Kazakhstan's Strategic Identity

| Category | G7 Normative Framework | Kazakhstan Strategic Identity |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Core Ideals | Liberal democracy, human rights, rule-based order | Multi-vector diplomacy, civilizational dialogue, sovereignty |
| Epistemology | Universalism | Pluralism |
| Diplomatic Mode | Norm exportation | Balanced engagement |
| Normative Framing | Conditionality | Contextual negotiation |
| Strategic Identity | Value-convergent | Value-agnostic / Multivalent |

This comparison shows that we need to re-think national interest not just as a geopolitical calculation, but also tie it up with bigger stories and symbolic hierarchies that shape our civilisation. National interest is not a set doctrine based only on material interests; it is a changing expression of a state's worldview, historical memory, and moral goals. It shows how a country sees itself in the moral landscape of world politics and how it negotiates the parameters of its involvement in the international system. Kazakhstan's foreign policy is a good example of how governments can use epistemic plurality to have strategic agency by combining pragmatism with cultural sovereignty. Kazakhstan builds a kind of normative flexibility that can't be reduced to a single ideological model by intentionally working with several global power centres, including the West, the East, Islam, and the post-Soviet world. This plan lets it stay independent not only in terms of diplomatic affiliation but also in terms of meaning, identity, and legitimacy. This kind of stance goes against the liberal international order's normative asymmetry, which tries to make Western political and moral ideas universal. Kazakhstan doesn't completely reject this order; instead, it engages in it selectively, presenting its involvement as a conversation between civilisations that are equal instead of as surrender to a dominant norm-setter. This pluralist approach shows a deeper philosophical commitment to living together, recognising each other, and making global rules together. Kazakhstan is not just offering a regional strategy, but also a different way for the world to live together. This new way recognises power imbalances but aims to go past them through new ways of talking and ontological self-determination. This model helps to make

international norms more varied and adds to the intellectual lexicon of global politics.

Conclusion

The article that follows examines the concept of national interest not merely as a governmental instrument or strategic need, but also as a philosophical construct shaped by cultural identities, normative frameworks, and global epistemologies. When you compare the G7's universalist ideals with Kazakhstan's pluralist, multi-vector strategic identity, it becomes clear that national interest is not a neutral or fixed thing; it is built through language, is dependent on history, and is deeply rooted in a state's ontological worldview. The G7 supports a vision of international order based on liberal democracy, individual rights, and rules-based government. These ideas are important, yet they come from a Western way of thinking that is often thought to apply to the whole world. Their spread through institutions, development mechanisms, and diplomatic language is not only useful but also ideological, supporting a teleological picture of modernity founded on Enlightenment rationalism. Kazakhstan, on the other hand, bases its reaction on civilisational discourse, cultural autonomy, and the ability to change norms. Its foreign policy is based on contextualism, which means that it balances working with many power centres while keeping its strategic independence. Kazakhstan doesn't just accept global norms; it uses performative diplomacy to combine its Eurasian past, Islamic beliefs, and modern statecraft into a unique strategic identity. This identity is not antagonistic but different; it wants to coexist without being absorbed. This is similar to Levinasian ethics of difference, where the Other is not absorbed but met with respect.

Using hermeneutic and discourse-analytical methodologies, this study shows that Kazakhstan doesn't just respond to G7 normative pressure; it also expresses a different way of thinking about international participation that goes against relying on dominant Western ways of knowing. This way of looking at things is part of a bigger conceptual change in political theory and international relations (IR) that tries to challenge the importance of Eurocentric frameworks and bring back the intellectual legitimacy of non-Western political philosophy. In this light, the idea of national interest is not a single or standardised logic imposed by global power centres, but rather a dynamic and diverse construct that comes about via culturally ingrained processes of interpretation, negotiation, and self-definition. Philosophically moving national interest away from Western-centered frameworks opens up a broader view of global political life, one in which identity is negotiated rather than imposed and strategic autonomy is shaped by cultural memory, historical experience, and ontological self-definition. This change goes against the traditional international relations theory's ideas about how knowledge is organised, and it makes room for a global

ethics that includes many points of view, where various civilisations can work together without being forced to follow the rules of others.

In the end, Kazakhstan's story makes us think more broadly about how small and medium-sized countries may build significant strategic identities in a world where strong powers set the rules. It says that when you look at national interest from a philosophical point of view, it's not a single logic of survival or supremacy, but a dynamic field of meaning that is shaped by the interaction of power, value, and interpretation. In this way, national interest isn't only about where a country is in the world; it's also about who it is, what kind of world it wants to see, and how it interacts with other countries on the world stage. This new way of thinking has effects that go beyond Kazakhstan. It asks both researchers and politicians to reassess the structure of global standards, the validity of epistemic authority, and the basic conceptual bases of working together internationally. The future of world order may depend not on consensus around a single set of values, but on the capacity of diverse actors to sustain a dialogue across difference – one grounded not in normative hierarchy but in mutual intelligibility, narrative hospitality, and ontological humility.

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