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The Politics of Cancel Culture: Origins, Identity, and Prognostications of Cancel Culture in South Africa

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2023-03

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Dunlop, John Anthony Blackadder. (2023). The Politics of Cancel Culture: Origins, Identity, and Prognostications of Cancel Culture in South Africa. [Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg]. WIReDSpace. https://hdl.handle.net/10539/39944

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Masters of Arts: Political Studies

Masters Research Report

John Dunlop

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The Politics of Cancel Culture: Origins, Identity, and Prognostications of Cancel Culture in South Africa.

A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Political Studies in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand. Johannesburg.

Supervisor: Dr. Ayesha Omar

Declaration:

I John Dunlop declare that this Masters Essay/ Research Report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Political Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University. Where the efforts of others and the sources have been used or quoted, they all have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

John Anthony Blackadder Dunlop Date: 15/03/2023

Dedication:

I would like to dedicate this research report and all the efforts put into it to my dearest Mother, Father, and Sister, for all their unconditional and unwavering encouragement and support for all my studies, research, and the obtainment of this degree. I would also like to dedicate this research report to my closest friends for their continuous mental and emotional support throughout this endeavour.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincerest gratitude to Dr. Ayesha Omar for all her time, assistance, and guidance as my supervisor for this research report. Dr. Omar, I greatly appreciate all your input and advice, as well as your patience and understanding during these trying times.

I would also like to thank the entire Political Studies Department at Wits University, especially all the professors who lectured on the courses I took throughout my undergraduate and postgraduate studies, as well as my fellow students, tutors, and admin staff. Without all of your hard work, teaching, guidance, assistance, support, and fellowship, I truly do not believe I would have made it to this point.

I would also like to thank The University of the Witwatersrand as well as the Faculty of Humanities for allowing me the opportunity to study at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and for all the assistance which allowed for the expansion of my education and knowledge.

Abstract:

In this Research essay, I identify five socio-political developments, trends, and or features which characterize the relationship between Cancel Culture and South Africa. Firstly, because of Cancel Culture's origins and notoriety, the concept was moulded in the United States and, therefore, a modern liberal device. Secondly, because of its roots Cancel Culture is also founded upon ideas around identity and woke politics. Thirdly, South Africa's employment of Cancel Culture is justified within the country's common and most troublesome socio-political struggles, which include issues with racism, decolonization, sexual assault, and gender-based violence. Fourthly, South African Cancel Culture, is ideologically and politically non-partisan, as there doesn't seem to be an overload of opposition, claim and dismissal for the concept. Lastly, South Africa's right-wing conservatives and far-right factions are not as hyper-critical of Cancel Culture, and their discontent and critiques of the socio-political phenomenon are not well published when compared to the Western World. This essay argues and predicts that: firstly, Cancel Culture will not take an extensive period before it becomes a household name, and more cases or examples will follow. Secondly, Cancel Culture's social media presence will escalate, which will allow for further development and evolution of the concept. Thirdly, Cancel Culture will become a prominent fixture and component among South Africa's various Universities. There will be an upsurge in self-censorship and political correctness amongst South African citizens to prevent attempted cancellations. South African liberals and far-left advocates will continue to be Cancel Culture's principal protagonists and perpetuators. Following that, right-wing, conservative, and far-right South Africans will aim to retort and resist the rise of Cancel Culture. I contend that parallel to the United States, Cancel Culture will continue to be an ineffective feature of South Africa's contemporary socio-political environment. Lastly, because of Cancel Culture's online presence and notoriety, the concept will have a dramatic increase in academic enquiry, research, and literature.

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Introduction:

The term Cancel Culture, although not particularly easy to define because of the multifaceted nature of the concept, has become one of the most widely cited and analyzed socio-political concepts in recent times. While the origins of the concept are still being contested, the idea of Cancel Culture is well established within various social movements and political ideologies such as Liberalism and identity politics. The term has been utilized as a descriptive symbol for a pronounced sense of protest against the actions or deeds of specific individuals, usually influential or famous. Cancel Culture also seems to be the heir apparent to previous forms of mass, socially orientated and normative disciplinary terms, or mechanisms; known as 'callout culture' and 'political correctness'. Aja Romano, in his article on Vox, argues that to be cancelled refers to the idea of being "culturally blocked from having a prominent public platform or career" (Romano. 2020). Daniela Garcia provides an alternative description for Cancel Culture stating that:

> "Clearly Cancel Culture evolves around the idea of bringing justice for an offensive word, or action taken by any public figure. And, in a major part of the cases, it is displayed on the familiar pattern: A celebrity or other public figures does or says something offensive. Therefore, a public backlash, often fueled by politically progressive social media, ensues. Then come the calls to cancel the person — that is, to effectively end their career or revoke their cultural cachet, whether through boycotts of their work or disciplinary action from an employer. In other words, the person or group who is calling to cancel someone else is acting in the place of the jury with the motivation of the due responsibility of respect and honor that each person ought one another" (Garcia. 2021: pg. 3.).

Younger generations, including those described as millennials (those born between 1980 and 1995) and generation Z (those born between 1996 and 2010) the so-called "woke generation", are mostly utilizing social media and other platforms, to cancel individuals for behaviour deemed as inappropriate, unacceptable, and offensive (Dershowitz, A. M. 2020, Zille, H. 2021). As mentioned, social media platforms have been a central base in which complaints, condemnation, and pleas for numerous individuals, some well-known and some who aren't, are fired, de-platformed, and effectively cancelled (Clark. 2020: pg. 88-90). Prime examples include the cancelling of R-Kelly, Harvey Weinstein, and J. K. Rowling. These particular individuals were lambasted online for their actions which were deemed socially unacceptable and were then

cancelled. The social proliferation of the idea of Cancel Culture is evident in the global setting, South Africa has for example, seen its own forms of social uproar which have been described as incidents of Cancel Culture. Some examples of social and professional exclusion and ostracism, whom South African people deemed as cancelled, including performing artists such as Jub Jub and Okmalumkookat, as well as prominent South African academics, political commentators and politicians like Adam Habib and Hellen Zille. It is unsurprising, considering South Africa's historical and contemporary legacies and, socio-political fractures, that Cancel Culture has also become a prominent trend throughout South African society as well as in social media (Mdluli. 2019.)

This research paper aims to understand and elucidate the politics of Cancel Culture. To achieve this, my essay will consist of three core chapters. The first chapter is tasked with tracing and understanding the movement and concept of Cancel Culture as well as its origins around the world and especially in South Africa. This chapter will explore the genealogy, development, and methodology, as well as the various effects and marks Cancel Culture has left on the world and South Africa so far. Chapter two will aim to understand and explicate the world's socio-political relationship with Cancel Culture as well as the World's utilization of Cancel Culture through various ideologies and political theories such as Liberalism, Conservatism, Capitalism, right and left-wing politics, identity politics and more. This part of the essay will attempt to understand and adequately elucidate all the politics in and around Cancel Culture not only as a concept but as a socially orientated and normative disciplinary phenomenon. This will be accomplished by examining and dissecting, through a politically ideological lens, several Cancel Culture case studies from America and Great Britain, two nations which have the greatest number of concrete examples.

The final chapter or section will aim to somewhat identify and understand the politics of Cancel Culture in South Africa as a whole. Through left and right political ideology, as well as identity politics this chapter will aim to elucidate Cancel Culture politics in general and at the various levels and societal areas in which South Africans seem to be applying the concept and perpetuating the movement. I aim to specifically highlight how the idea of Cancel Culture has taken root in South Africa, how Cancel Culture has taken shape and influenced South Africa's socio-political landscape as well as how South Africans interacted with the phenomenon. This will be

accomplished by analyzing and comparing three South African Cancel Culture case studies, that of the cancellations of Adam Habib, Helen Zilla, and Okmalumkookat. Then in light of all the research and evidence gathered, as well as the previous two chapters, I will propose and predict what the near future holds for South Africa and Cancel Culture as a political concept, phenomenon and social justice movement. This will include how and whether or not the concept will evolve and become normalized as a socio-political phenomenon, what it means for all South African citizens and the social policing of their behaviour, how South Africans will continue to react, respond, and utilize the concept and movement, and whether or not the concept or movement has a long-term future in South Africa.

Literature Review:

The term or phrase 'Cancel Culture' became popularized and widespread throughout the world, not only in the Western world, between 2015 and 2018 where there were several high-profile and well-broadcasted 'cancellations' (Romano. 2020. Accessed 10 May 2021). What could be described as a social, political, economic, and cultural boycott of an individual, a celebrity, a group, or an organization and more, Cancel Culture has become a prominent, prevalent, and protuberant socio-political fixture, concept, and phenomenon. Although Cancel Culture has been utilized in and amongst other platforms and contexts, however, Cancel Culture owes most of its reputation, and popularity because of the internet and social media platforms. "This power is magnified by the pervasiveness and speed of the internet and social media, which are the weapons of choice deployed by Cancel Culture" (Dershowitz, 2020: pg. 14.). Cancel Culture has been a prominent fixture and instrument for various marginalized people or minority groups and especially for social justice movements and organizations around the world specifically in the United States of America. Cancel Culture's proliferation amongst prominent social media platforms, mainly Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, has resulted in real-world consequences for many cancel targets. As certain actions and behaviour undertaken by individuals or groups are then, by the public at large, considered or viewed as offensive and problematic or are equated to serious social issues around identity such as racism, homophobia, sexism, and criminal or illicit activities and more (Garcia, D. A. 2021: pg. 6-8.). These prominent examples which are generally well published or spread publicly, when confronted by pleas for cancellation, the real-life consequences even if the alleged conduct is generally severe (Dershowitz, 2020: pg. 33.).

Due to the lack of or the small quantity of peer-reviewed academic literature on the subject of Cancel Culture. I decided to undertake, this research report, to fill the gap within the literature which refers to a comprehensive identification and analysis of the origins of Cancel Culture, the politics of Cancel Culture, as well as its effect on and utilization in South Africa and the analysis and contextualization thereof. South Africa has a few useful examples and case studies where South Africans took to social media and used other means to attempt to cancel certain individuals as a form of justice for their precarious actions or behaviour. I will be utilizing three of these examples as case studies in alignment with the aims and objectives of my research essay/ thesis;

detailed in the sections to come, these examples will be that of the cancellations of Adam Habib, Hellen Zille, and Okmalumkoolkat. Cancel Culture and all aspects which coincide with the concept and movement, as the literature suggests, originated within liberal political spaces, and were initially utilized by left-wing, liberal progressives. Cancel Culture appears to be engrained within and is continuously operated and evolved by contemporary left-wing liberal political traditions. Although the majority of those who observe and follow right-wing political traditions are anti-Cancel Culture, there are some examples of right-wing conservatives also utilizing the concept to amass political gains (Cook, C. L. Patel, A. 2021). However, there just is not enough evidence to suggest that there is a mutual and beneficial relationship for both sides of the spectrum, as Cancel Culture has most certainly benefitted the left on a larger scale and owes its notoriety and origins to liberal politics.

Amongst the modest amount of literature that does exist, similar to most renowned socio-political concepts, there are various definitions of Cancel Culture and there doesn't seem to be one accepted and concrete definition for the term. Eve Ng describes Cancel Culture as a "withdrawal of any kind of support for those who are assessed to have said or done something unacceptable or highly problematic, generally from a social justice perspective especially alert to sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, racism, bullying and related issues" (Ng. 2020: pg. 623). Some authors like Clark believe that canceling someone is an act and "expression of agency" because those who are doing the canceling are choosing to withdraw their support, time, and money from those individuals and organizations whose actions do not fall in line with their own values (Clark. 2020: pg. 88). Pippa Norris deemed Cancel Culture "as attempts to ostracize someone for violating social norms" (Norris. 2020: pg. 2). Whilst Joseph Velasco believes that "Cancel Culture is a form of public shaming initiated on social media to deprive someone of their usual clout or attention with the aim of making public discourse more diffused and less monopolized by those in positions of privilege" (Velasco. 2020: pg. 1). The one principle all the published and common definitions tend to share is that the intended or required result of a cancellation is that as a consequence for their behavior or actions there needs to be some sort of de-platforming or loss of support or patronage.

The original premise of Cancel Culture began as a phenomenon and method for achieving social justice by individuals and groups who were seeking some sort of redress for being marginalized in various ways, a great example being the #MeToo Movement. Essentially, Cancel Culture became

a tool for ordinary citizens and social justice movements to be able to hold those in positions of power accountable not only over social media but within the tangible world as well (Clark. 2020: pg.91). Many academics and authors like Rocco Chiou, Gilles Favarel-Garrigues, Samuel Tanner, and Daniel Trottier also describe it as a form of digital or online vigilantism (Chiou. 2020. Favarel-Garrigues. Tanner. Trottier. 2020). Cancel Culture has proven to be a controversial yet potent tool in addressing issues around racism, sexism, oppression and most if not all forms of discrimination or hate, especially for those who suffer from such experiences yet never really had some sort of countermeasure, platform, and mechanism, until recently with social media and Cancel Culture (Chiou, 2020). However, the majority of critics, as we will see further on in this literature review, have and continue to argue that Cancel Culture also infringes on the freedom of others, mainly the freedoms of expression and speech.

Cancel Culture appears to be an evolved and more potent version of other similar and notorious concepts such as political correctness and call-out culture, as these were utilized for similar purposes, with the differences lying in methodology and consequences. Political correctness, a term and concept which has been traced back to the 1970s, refers to the avoidance of language, behaviour and actions which would be deemed insulting, harmful, or offensive by those individuals and groups who face extensive issues around discrimination (Hillman. 1998. Butterbaugh. Jackson. & Branner. 1994). Call-out culture on the other hand is a more contemporary model for the protection and maintenance of accepted, modern-day social norms, which may also be seen as one of Cancel Cultures' predecessors. Asam Ahmad states:

> "Call-out culture refers to the tendency among progressives, radicals, activists, and community organizers to publicly name instances or patterns of oppressive behaviour and language used by others. People can be called out for statements and actions that are sexist, racist, ableist, and the list goes on. Because call-outs tend to be public, they can enable a particularly armchair and academic brand of activism: one in which the act of calling out is seen as an end in itself. (Ahmad. 2015).

The literature suggests that Cancel Culture evolved from call-out culture, as the latter's goal was to educate and prevent such ill-conceived actions, whilst the former aims to generate real and serious consequences for such actions (Rom. and Mitchell. 2021).

Being politically correct can be traced back to as early as the 1970s amongst liberal and feminist political traditions (Fairclough, N. 2003: pg. 18-23). Whilst Call-out culture seems to have its roots within more contemporary, online liberal, or leftist socio-political spaces, especially on social media platforms. Cancel Culture on the other hand, although considered call-out culture's successor, was coined, and founded within contemporary African American culture, social justice movements and within what has come to be known as 'Black Twitter'. This is an extremely popular and famed section or segment on the social media platform Twitter, Romano reports that the phrase Cancel Culture was coined by black Twitter and has since been perpetuated and utilized by individuals but especially social justice movements such as the 'Black Lives Matter' and '#Metoo' movements (Romano. 2020 and 2021). It is thanks to social media trends and patterns which have allowed most if not all other marginalized communities to utilize and embrace Cancel Culture around the world. It is this shift in power dynamics which Cancel Culture transfers between those who normally control so much of it, such as celebrities, politicians, and organizations, and those who are ordinarily powerless against such individuals and groups. It is for this reason that Cancel Culture as spread to most parts of the world and is not merely being perpetuated in the United States of America and it's thanks to social media and the internet as Gwen Bouvier and David Machin state: "Individuals and groups, formerly lacking a platform to speak, are now able to be heard, share their ideas and mobilize themselves and others" (Bouvier. Machin. 2021: pg. 309).

It is clear from the literature that Cancel Culture has been conceptualized and utilized as an instrument for socio-political gains by liberal, leftist progressives. As Daniella Garcia states: "Cancel Culture is being privileged with the power and responsibility to become judge for every decision that public figures make but especially whatever or whoever goes against what the left progressivist believe" (Garcia. 2021: pg. 6). Cancel Culture has also been described as and attributed to an aspect of 'wokeness' or part of woke politics. "Cancel Culture is a manifestation of "wokeism" which is "an ideology that views reality as socially constructed and defined by power, oppression, and group identity" (Velasco. 2020: pg. 2. & Beiner. 2020). In simple terms, to be woke in contemporary society means to be consciously aware of and knowledgeable about social issues around discrimination and injustice, hence the linkages between Cancel Culture and wokeism (Kanai, A. and Gill, R. 2020: pg. 10-16). Proponents of Cancel Culture highlight and boaster a defence for their concept in the works of Herbert Marcuse, especially in his essay "repressive Tolerance" he argues that "When tolerance mainly serves the protection and

preservation of a repressive society, when it serves to neutralize opposition and to render men immune against other and better forms of life, then tolerance has been perverted" (Marcuse. 1865: pg. 10). There have been examples of the conservative right also utilizing Cancel Culture, albeit on their terms and without using the actual term. However, Cancel Culture's most fierce opponents tend to associate themselves with right-wing politics. Pippa Norris delineates that.

> "Conservatives argue that recent years have seen growing silencing of contrarian voices challenging the liberal hegemony in many cultural spaces, but especially in the academy, thereby limiting freedom of speech, increasing social pressures for ideological conformity, reinforcing intellectual exclusion, group-think bubbles, 'Us-Them' segregation, academic intolerance, and self-censorship. The net result, critics claim, is a rush to collective judgment and a new climate of censorship by the 'mob', magnifying even minor errors of judgment" (Norris. 2020: pg. 3).

The principal argument that stems from right-wing political traditions and what the majority of conservatives contest Cancel Culture with is how Cancel Culture infringes on their right to freedom of speech or expression. Conservative rightists maintain that the tactics of the left when attempting to or successfully canceling someone is illiberal because it stifles one's ability to express themselves in the way they choose (Rom, and Mitchel. 2021). Their most persuasive rationalization of this argument against Cancel Culture, however ironic it may seem, comes from the classic liberal work of John Stuart Mill and his essay "On Liberty" (1859). In his essay Mill argues in favour of and profoundly defends free speech and because of this, conservatives argue that he would condemn Cancel Culture and would seriously oppose the tendency that Cancel Culture forces individuals into a state of self-censorship (Strossen. 2020: pg. 2). Throughout his essay, Mill argues in favour of free speech, the articulation of ideas whether right or wrong, and education thereafter. He argues that "If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person was of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind," (Mill. 1869: Ch. 2.). Mill believed that freedom of speech leads to debate and the exchange of ideas and viewpoints, which then leads to the development and advancement of human intellect and progress.

The literature also suggests that Cancel Culture and identity politics are inextricably linked because "the cultural climate has been saturated with identity politics and the incessant clamour for

recognition and respect for people of various identities – sexual, racial and gender" (Ejiofor, P. F. 2020.). Although two to three decades prior, similar to Cancel Culture, identity politics theory and ideology spread around the world through various platforms because of its appeal to marginalized groups. This link is also heavily criticized by the political right as they describe it as "a kind of political correctness, or identity politics gone mad, carrying undertones of that they see as dangerous 'Cultural Marxism' intent on bringing down Western civilization" (Bouvier. Machin. 2021: pg. 308.). Cancel Culture also maintains some links to intersectionality as the group nature and mob mentality of Cancel Culture often involves a multitude of grievances and participants. As Tynes et al. confirm: "Countering dominant discourses on social media as the conversation is intersectional, multidimensional and less restricted. This enables users to effectively 'talk back' and mobilize around topics outside the view of the mainstream until they go viral at which point, they gain the desired attention of the mainstream media" (Tynes et al. 2016: pg. 33). Helen Lewis also suggests that capitalism perpetuates Cancel Culture because "private companies—institutions built on maximizing shareholder value, or other capitalist principles—struggle to acclimatize to life in a world where many consumers vocally support social-justice causes. Progressive values are now a powerful branding tool." (Lewis. 2020.)

Lastly, the three case studies of South African Cancel Culture to be analyzed and compared in this research report are as follows. Firstly, the cancelling of Adam Habib former vice chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand and the current director of the School of Oriental and African Studies, at the University of London. In March 2021, Habib in his role at SOAS was suspended after using the n-word whilst conducting a meeting with students. He was suspended and 'canceled' after a petition was created and he was heavily criticized and condemned over social media, as his actions were deemed racist by students, societies, some staff members, and many South African social media users (Ngqakamba. & Nkanjeni. 2021). The second example is that of the attempted cancellations of the former Premier of Cape Town and current chairperson of the Federal Council of the Democratic Alliance Hellen Zille, who has on multiple occasions been at the forefront of controversy with regard to her opinions and subsequent tweets on Colonialism, Apartheid, racism, and other contemporary socio-political matters. South Africans have continuously attempted to 'cancel' her for her problematic and controversial views (McCain. 2021, Campbell. 2017 & Nkanjeni. 2019 & Feliz. 2020). Lastly, the cancellation of Smiso Zwane, the South African Rap artist known as 'OkMalumKoolat' was cancelled after being convicted for

sexual assault whilst visiting Australia in 2016. Zwane was lambasted over social media and struggled to maintain bookings. However, he is still very influential within South Africa's local music industry (Marshall. 2019. Grootboom. 2018 & Mdluli. 2019).

Research Question:

The Politics of Cancel Culture: Origins, Identity, and Prognostications of Cancel Culture in South Africa.

1. Key Questions:

    - What are the politics of Cancel Culture, not only as a global socio-political concept and phenomenon but more specifically in South Africa?
    - What are the origins and genealogy of Cancel Culture around the world, in countries where it has been most prevalent, as well as in South Africa?
    - How has the concept of Cancel Culture impacted South African society? What kind of connections does South Africa have with Cancel Culture?
    - How has left and right-wing, as well as identity politics ideology and theory affected South Africa's relationship with and utilization of the concept of Cancel Culture?
    - What will be the ripple effects of South Africa's connections with Cancel Culture in the near and far future?
    - Will Cancel Culture be a long-lasting and successful socio-political concept and social justice phenomenon in South Africa?
    - What levels of support and opposition will the utilization and promotion of Cancel Culture garner?
    - Will South Africans continue to evolve or regress the concept, or even ironically cancel the concept itself?

2. Aims and Objectives:

- My research essay, in its entirety, aims to understand, elucidate, and envisage the politics of Cancel Culture.
- To trace and understand the movement and concept of Cancel Culture as well as its origins around the world and especially in South Africa.

- To research, investigate and clarify the origins, genealogy, development, utilization, methodology as well as the numerous effects and marks Cancel Culture has left on the world and South Africa so far.

- To comprehend and explicate South Africa's relationship with Cancel Culture as well as South Africa's utilization of Cancel Culture.

- To understand and clarify how South Africa's connections with, and utilization of Cancel Culture have been affected by and through the ideology and political theory of Liberalism, Conservatism, and Identity Politics.

- To accomplish the above two aims/ objectives, this research essay will aim to examine, dissect, and explicate, through a political ideological lens, several South African case studies, where individuals were cancelled by South African citizens using various means in order for sed individuals to be punished or scrutinized for their ill-conceived and precarious actions.

- To make relative and comparative findings and conclusions how, considering South Africa's notorious historical and contemporary relationships and links to issues with identity at their core such as racism, homophobia, misogyny, xenophobia, classism, religion, political affiliations and more, left, and right-wing political ideology, and identity politics has played its part in these case studies.

- To identify and understand the various levels, and societal areas in which South African citizens seem to be applying the concept and perpetuating this form of social justice movement.

- In light of all the research and evidence gathered, this research essay will aim to propose and predict what the future holds for South Africa and Cancel Culture as a political concept and as a social justice movement/ phenomenon.

- To understand and predict what kind of repercussions the proliferation of Cancel Culture could result in for South African citizens.

- To also understand, clarify and predict how: South Africans currently and in the future will respond to the continued social policing of their behaviour,

- To make sense of how South Africans will continue to react, respond, and utilize the concept and movement, and whether or not the concept or movement has a long-term future in South Africa.

Methodology:

Desk/ Secondary Research Study:

1. Study/ Research setting:

The majority of my primary research will and has been collected through secondary research, also known as desk research. The only research and data I have collected have originated from existing resources and literature. My study does not permit, require, or contain any field research or fieldwork. The various sources from which the majority of my research and data has been collected include published books, academic books, academic journals, academic articles, academic essays, online and offline news articles, as well as relative, accurate and reliable socio-politically orientated internet sources and articles,

2. Study/ Research design:

- Descriptive, Exploratory, Explanatory, and predictive/ prognosticative study:

This research essay, because of its specificity, will essentially be a case study, using already existing research, data, and information, of the relationship between politics, Cancel Culture and South Africa. Therefore, my essay/ thesis will be descriptive, exploratory, explanatory, and predictive or prognosticative in nature because the core questions and objectives I wish to address and achieve require it. This research essay will explore, describe, and attempt to explain how and why, through data and information gathered, Cancel Culture has found its way into South Africa's socio-political landscape. It will also explore, describe, and explain the connections between South Africa and Cancel Culture, as well as how and why political ideology has and will continue to play a large part in sed relationship. Lastly, this research essay will be predictive or prognosticative because the final chapter, and possibly one of the most important components of my essay, will be predicting how South Africa's connections with Cancel Culture will develop or change in the near and far future. Using all the research and sources that I have and will gather, as well as the rest of my essay itself, I will attempt to ascertain or determine and clarify certain prognostications as to how the connections between South Africans and Cancel Culture will develop or evolve.

- Theory testing and theory building research – Political Theory and Ideology.

Purely because there is a gap in the literature, with regard to the concise, expansive, and complex connections between left and right-wing political traditions, identity politics and Cancel Culture throughout the Western world and in South Africa, I will be testing and building upon political theory and ideology within the scope of my research essay.

3. Target and study population:

Purely because all my primary research and data I have collected originate from desk research/ secondary sources. My research or study will not involve or require any field research, so I will not require any research participants. However, as a whole, this essay will aim to target the interest of any South Africans and global citizens as my topic revolves around an extremely pertinent, contentious, and contemporary socio-political subject matter that could possibly affect any people at any time as evidence suggest anyone can be cancelled.

4. Variables:

Simply because I will not be undertaking any field work or research and all my research consists of desk research, there are no variables.

5. Data collection: (Mixed Methods)

- Non-Empirical research.

As my research, sources and data collection has been collected through desk/ secondary research and because my research utilized political theory and ideology within left and right-wing political traditions, as well as identity politics this essay is non-empirical in nature. The research I have collected has been for contextual purposes, as the first few sections of this research essay will provide necessary historical, conceptual, and theoretical context about Cancel Culture and its political considerations.

Ethical Considerations:

This research essay is not likely to infringe on too many if not any common ethical dilemmas. Considering the fact that I won't be undertaking any field research, won't be utilizing any human participants and all my research that has been done will only be secondary or desk research. Whilst writing and compiling this essay, I considered ethical issues about discrimination because I explored and clarified issues around identity such as race, class, religion, gender, sexuality and more whilst building upon and adding to identity politics literature. I also considered ethical issues around the possible deformation of character whilst reviewing, analyzing, explicating, comparing, and contrasting different South African examples and case studies where South African citizens were 'cancelled.' In order to avoid these possible ethical issues, I ensured that this essay contained no biases and attempted to remain completely objective whilst approaching issues around identity and when analyzing the above-mentioned case studies. There is a low chance, because of the nature of my topic, as well as the aims and objectives of this research essay, that individual South Africans or a specific group or demographic of South Africans will be harmed by this essay. Especially because my research is contextual, theory-based and reliant upon already existing literature, sources, and information.

Proposed Essay Chapter Outline:

- **Introduction:**

Introduction to the topic, the main questions, aims and objectives of the research, chapter outline and possible conclusions.

- **Chapter 1: The Origins, Conceptualization, and Genealogy of Cancel Culture.**

The first chapter is tasked with tracing and understanding the movement and concept of Cancel Culture as well as its origins and genealogy from the United States to all over the world and how it arrived in South Africa.

- **Chapter 2: The Politics of Cancel Culture**

Chapter two will aim to comprehend and explicate the world's socio-political relationship with Cancel Culture as well as the World's utilization of Cancel Culture through various ideologies and political theories such as Liberalism, Conservatism, Right and Left-wing politics, Capitalism identity politics and more. This will be accomplished by examining and dissecting, through a politically ideological lens, several Cancel Culture case studies from America and Great Britain, two nations which have the greatest number of concrete examples.

- **Chapter 3: The Politics of South African Cancel Culture: Predictions and Prognostications of Cancel Culture in South African Society.**

In this final chapter, I will aim to, with the utilization of and reference to the first two chapters, somewhat identify and understand the politics of Cancel Culture in South Africa as a whole. Through the political ideology, this chapter will aim to elucidate and divulge Cancel Culture politics in general and at the various levels and societal areas in which South Africans seem to be applying the concept and perpetuating the movement. Following that I will, in light of all the research and evidence gathered, as well as the previous two chapters, propose and predict what the near future holds for Cancel Culture in South Africa and Cancel Culture as a political concept and as a social justice phenomenon.

- **Conclusion:**

A summation of the materials and findings provided within the four core chapters of this research essay/ thesis, as well as concluding remarks.

Chapter 1: The Origins, Conceptualization, and Genealogy of Cancel Culture.

In this opening chapter, I aim to trace and understand the Socio-political phenomenon, and concept that is Cancel Culture, as well as its origins and genealogy around the world and how it came to be prevalent within South African citizen's minds and social media accounts. Over the last few years, what I believe to be, a socialized form of non-state, publicly orientated, disciplinary phenomenon and socio-political concept known as Cancel Culture, has gained tremendous amounts of traction. What can be described as, in simple terms, the various actions and practices taken up by individuals in order to withdraw various if not all forms of support from other individuals and organizations. The most notable individuals and organizations who are adversely or justly affected by Cancel Culture mainly include celebrities, sports personalities, social influencers, wealthy individuals, political figures, political parties, as well as institutions, organizations, universities, and large corporations (Norris, 2021: pg. 2-4.). Mass calls for an individual or organization to be cancelled normally originate from various social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and more and are typically a response to any form of conduct which is deemed either offensive or immoral (Chiou, R. 2020: pg. 297-298.).

Cancel Culture has quickly become a prominent social fixture and instrument for justice and reparations, which is often utilized by marginalized people, minority groups and social justice movements, especially in the United States of America. The predominant forms of conduct, which instigate the attempted cancelling, are usually deemed as offensive or problematic because they are deemed to be provocative towards serious socio-political and socio-economic issues. Social issues centered around identity are at the helm of the cancel movement, especially issues such as racism, homophobia, sexism, any form of discrimination, oppression as well as criminal or other illicit activities (Kovalik, D. 2021: pg. 139-149.). The consequences of Cancel Culture range in severity and are typically dependent on the circumstances of the case; the most common outcome of a successful cancellation is some form of modern-day social and cultural ostracism (Norris, 2021: pg. 4 and 27.).

Many people, groups and organizations believe Cancel Culture to be beneficial to society, mostly those who lean towards the political left. However, many also believe Cancel Culture to be a detriment to society, mainly those who affiliate themselves with the political right. (Dershowitz 2020: pg. 53-54.). Those who are in favour of Cancel Culture understand it to be able to place

power back into the hands of the general public in order to hold influential figures accountable for their misconduct and behaviour which they consider to be unacceptable. It provides for an intangible device which can be utilized by ordinary citizens who own a phone and maintain a reasonable social media presence, in order to punish and ostracize individuals who have acted against social norms. Many social justice movements and organizations have utilized Cancel Culture to achieve justice for those who have been marginalized in various ways, simply because they struggle to hold powerful figures and organizations accountable by utilizing ordinary means (Cook, C. L. Patel, A. Guisihan, M. Wohn, D. Y. 2021: pg. 2-9.). However, on the opposite spectrum, critics believe that Cancel Culture leads to unnecessary reputational damage and destruction to the lives of those who get cancelled. Cancel Culture has also fashioned opposing perspectives which claim that the phenomenon has and will continue to stifle necessary rights and principles such as freedom of speech and expression as well as concepts like academic freedom and more. (Dershowitz. 2020: pg. 20-23.) If the pleas for an individual to become cancelled are successful, possible repercussions of the social ostracization which follows usually include the cancelled individual or organization being boycotted on numerous professional, financial, and personal levels. (Norris. 2020: pg. 2) In these cases it is simple for one to observe that when the cancellations are warranted, and justifiable Cancel Culture may be advantageous for those seeking justice and redress. Whilst simultaneously, cancellations which are unwarranted and unjustifiable can be particularly damaging to an individual's life; be it their social status and reputation, or their career and livelihood.

High-profile cases of Cancel Culture are typically triggered by influential individuals or organizations doing or stating something which causes some form of harm, violation and offence to certain persons, groups, communities, and social justice movements. Many cancelled celebrities, which I will go into further detail later on in this chapter, are boycotted and ostracized because of accusations and proof of sexist, homophobic, racist, transphobic, or violent conduct and statements. Cancel Culture is slowly becoming considered an effective way of holding famous, wealthy, and powerful individuals and organizations to account for actions which may have no other legal recourse (Thiele, M. 2021: pg. 51-54). By publicly shaming and alerting the public to the grievances levelled against the accused. Cancel Culture seems to force supporters, employers, sponsors, and other stakeholders into either boycotting, distancing or in extreme cases completely terminating their relationships with the accused. It is therefore not naïve to deduce that Cancel

Culture has become a balancing instrument between those individuals and companies who ordinarily seem socially, politically, and economically untouchable and those ordinary citizens, communities and organizations who are not as formidable.

However, is Cancel Culture truly a 'social movement'? A social movement can be defined as Anthony Giddens puts it a "collective effort to realize a common interest or common goal through collective action outside the scope of established institutions (Waani, M. S. Wempi, J. A. 2021: pg. 267). According to Greg Martin new social movements, similar to Cancel Culture, are "relevant because it focusses on changing the culture of society and solving problems", whilst Macionis in 'Sociology' defines social movements as "organized activities that encourage or prevent social change" (Martin, G. 2001, Macionis, J. J. 2017: pg. 631). According to these definitions and interpretations Cancel Culture most definitely qualifies. Considering that the majority of attempts to cancel are conducted on a large scale by numerous social media users, who don't utilize traditional established devices, who generally aim to solve a problem or prevent conduct which may contribute to serious social issues. Who also, ultimately through cancelling, want to prevent further harm and implement positive changes for such conduct and issues to be reduced.

The complicated genealogy of Cancel Culture.

Although the actual term 'Cancel Culture' has only fairly recently risen to global prominence and become widely utilized and referenced amongst this contemporary social media era. The act of public shaming has been around for centuries, public displays of punishment and condemnation have been used, throughout history, in order to hold individuals accountable for their actions. Public shaming such as stockades, public trials, and hangings, were used on criminals and individuals who did not abide by the societal norms of those periods (Mishan, L. 2020). A near-perfect example is the public dismissal, shaming, and eventual conviction of Galileo Galilei, one of Science's pioneering contributors and astronomers. Galileo believed and was steadfast in their defence, that his theories proved both the bible and the Roman Catholic Church incorrect. It is because of these controversial, at the time, convictions, that he and his body of scientific work were condemned as heresy by the church and the general public, and he was then shunned and eventually convicted. (Lindberg, D. C. 2003.) Many examples like that of Galileo are evident throughout history, especially when it relates to marginalized groups and individuals who were

groundbreakingly different, unconventional, and dissimilar in appearance and beliefs. Women have been persecuted ostracized, rebuked, and unrecognized throughout history as witches and as important role players in many industries, and especially in the field of science (Green, K., & Bigelow, J. 1998: pg. 199-205). Many individuals, cultures and communities throughout the world have had much if not all their contributions to the world, be it through math, science, engineering, agriculture, communication, and their general way of living, destroyed, hidden, or blackballed by the methods and actions of colonial and Western powers through cultural Imperialism (Misra, A. 2021).

Many countries and cultures around the world were also extremely creative in publicly shaming traitors, cowards, and abstainers during periods of war. Simply because they turned their backs on what was viewed as socially acceptable at the time, which was a sense of patriotism and an expected duty to defend one's own country. (Dudenhoefer, N. 2020, Accessed 10 May 2021) On the other hand, public shaming has simultaneously been upheld and perpetuated as a form of social practice which is understood to wield positive and communally uplifting results. In the article referenced above, Amanda Koontz, an associate professor of sociology at the University of California, states that "public shaming is a long-standing public ritual that helped to uphold social bonds and make sure people within communities were equal and understood the norms, and to ensure no one got too high and mighty," (Koontz, A in Dudenhoefer. 2020). Although Cancel Culture is a far more modern adaptation of public shaming, the commonalities are exceedingly apparent, except for the modus operandi-like physical nature of other historical forms of public shaming such as stockades and public executions.

To avoid varying levels of social exclusion and social disjunction, especially prior to the dawn of the 21st century, individuals and communities tried their utmost to not deviate from the social norms and standards that were acceptable at the time. As Ali and Miller confirm: "Ostracism is a form of community enforcement in which a guilty player is punished by all her partners, while innocent players continue to cooperate with each other." (Ali, S. N. and Miller, D. A. 2016: pg. 2329) In the past institutionalized religion, racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of regulated oppression created and perpetuated social norms which allowed for the social ostracism of men, women, people of different races, religions, and even social classes. All across the world being a homosexual, an atheist, a Muslim, or a man or woman of different race or ethnicity, meant

that you would be ostracized from the social world around you. Ostracized not only by oppressive laws but by the community standards and principles instilled by these very laws and the norms they created (Ali. & Miller. 2016: pg. 2330-238.). Although the contemporary world does still struggle with these social and political difficulties, which are a major causation for the proliferation of Cancel Culture. In the past, it was far easier to be publicly shamed and ostracized for these oppressive reasons because they operated according to law, politics, religious doctrine, and historical heritage and were perpetuated by ordinary citizens.

However, public shaming as well as various forms of social, political, and economic ostracism, prior to the onset of the 21st century, had also been an effective instrument for both the powerful and those marginalized groups and individuals who choose to not accept and dispute the status quo. There are many examples of celebrities and prominent figures being publicly and even economically alienated, blackballed, and essentially 'cancelled' without even realizing it. As Tessa Schlesinger so bluntly and correctly states "Cancel Culture is not a new phenomenon. It has always been used by the powerful to isolate those of whom they disapproved. Cancel Culture is merely a retaliation of the many against the few" (Schlesinger, T. 2020). Yes, this quote mostly represents the plight of those who have utilized and continue to perpetuate Cancel Culture within contemporary times. However, it also has standing for those who stood up to those powerful and infamous figures and organizations who acted in, what they deemed to be, a morally objectionable and unacceptable manner. Although discernibly, these kinds of events occurred well before the modern day, socially and morally orientated resistance phenomenon known as Cancel Culture. These actions, one can argue, if given the opportunity and the correct amount of analysis and attention, could be labelled as features of, or part of the original foundations of the contemporary, social media-based phenomenon.

Many examples of non-characterized Cancel Culture, public shaming and social ostracism occurred long before Cancel Culture itself came to be a popular socio-political term and social phenomenon. These examples also occurred even before one of Cancel Culture's chief contextual ancestors became a prominent socio-political term and fixture in the 1990s, referring to what is known as 'Political Correctness'. During the late 1940s, as well as throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, a psychologist by the name of Dr. Frederic Wertham openly and publicly criticized comic books and even authored a book in 1954 titled 'Seduction of the Innocent'. His book served "as

historical and cultural touchstones of the anti-comics movement in the United States during the 1940s and 1950s" (Tilley, C. L. 2012: pg. 383.). His criticism of comic books was that they were leading to increased child delinquency and a drop in general child welfare, leading to a massive decrease in comic book sales and even the public burning of comics (Tilley, C. L. 2012: pg. 383-384.). Even one of the most historically renowned rock and roll music bands 'The Beatles', faced boycotts and the burning or destruction of their record albums. In 1966 after John Lennon, one of the bands leading members, made a statement in an interview which angered certain factions of American society. In an interview with the 'Evening standard' a prominent newspaper and magazine at the time, Lennon was quoted as saying "Christianity will go, it will vanish and shrink. We're more popular than Jesus now" (Williamson, C. 2016: pg. 55-56). Soon after arriving back in the United States, after the interview had been made public and widely published "Starting in Mississippi, then across the American South, opportunistic DJs, clergy and others began organizing boycotts of Beatles music and of events for locals to burn "Beatle trash" (Williamson, C. 2016: pg. 56.). 1966 proved to be a prominent year for the de-platforming and exclusion of prominent celebrities of the time. That very same year, former professional boxer, and Heavyweight Champion of the World Muhammad Ali, who many believe and contend to be the greatest boxer of all time, was banned from participating in professional boxing and was stripped of all his titles and privileges. This occurred because he refused to participate in and be drafted into the military to fight in the Vietnam War. His famous words, "I ain't got no quarrel with no Viet Cong," have resonated within political and war discourse since the day he uttered the potent statement (M. Ali with R. Durham, 1975: pg. 148-149.). The professional and institutional exclusion he faced from boxing authorities and the United States government at the time, lead to mass public discontent which led to further sanctions against Ali. Another example is "At the conclusion of 1966 The Ring magazine refused to select its usual "fighter of the year" because it did not want Ali "held up as an example to the youngsters of America" (Harrison, B. T. 2001: pg. 77.).

Fast forward to the 1990s, when a new term and fixture amongst the growing discourse around tolerance and progressiveness came to be utilized by citizens, communities, other groups, and varying organizations. Once Political Correctness became a prominent socio-political concept, it quickly became a kind of moral, and social normative enforcement tool and phenomenon. "Political correctness (PC) is a term used to refer to language that seems intended to give the least

amount of offence, especially when describing groups identified by external markers such as race, gender, culture, or sexual orientation. The concept has been discussed, disputed, criticized, and satirized by commentators from across the political spectrum" (Roper, C. 2020). The term originally became popular throughout the 1970s and 1980s amongst liberal and progressive politicians and politically left-leaning citizens:

> "Political correctness resulted from a confluence of other streams of liberation, including those of the other peoples of colour, flowing into the post-civil rights movement of Black Power, and subsequently the development of "African Americanism," i.e., the identity of African American, and the cultural movement of Afrocentrism. These other movements included feminism, gay liberation, and the movement for the interests of the handicapped. These movements joined, in an informal way, to generate a common political mood of victimization, moral indignation, and a self-righteous hostility against the common enemy--the White male. All of these groups felt oppressed by the ruling White male elite of American society or, in some cases, by Western civilization in general" (Spencer, M. E. 1994: pg. 559.).

Political correctness, aside from being a result of the struggles and plight of various liberation and progressive movements, became a prominent socio-political fixture, because to practice being politically correct one would need to avoid any behaviour and abusive language which would offend marginalized individuals and groups. A near-perfect case of political correctness in action was when the British Broadcasting Company, or the BBC, "dropped the use of the terms Before Christ (BC) and Anno Domini (AD) on one of their programmes and decided that the terms 'Before Common Era' / 'Common Era' are more appropriate" (Hughes, R. 2011.). However, in a similar fashion to Cancel Culture, political correctness received heavy criticism from right-leaning conservatives. All over the world, not only in the United States, public spaces like universities, certain industries, and major corporations embraced the concept within their teaching and marketing. The right claimed that the culture being created by the perpetuation of political correctness had led to the, and will lead to further, stifling of expression, thought, academic freedom and speech (Fairclough, N. 2003). Laura Butterbaugh, April Jackson and Amy Branner believe "The attack on political correctness is nothing more than a rejection of community

standards of behaviour. The concept behind the rejection of politically correct is simply, "I can do anything I want and not feel guilty" (Butterbaugh, L. Jackson, A. and Branner, A. 1994: pg. 20). Although the substantial amount of criticism led to a downfall in the terms use and effectiveness, the term is still used within liberal and progressive spaces and is still critiqued by right-wing opponents, especially within the discourse of identity politics. I therefore understand political correctness to be linked and should be considered a not so distant relative to Cancel Culture, because of the way the term polices thought and expression, and has also led to consequences like social ostracism and a withdrawal of support in the past. Especially for those individuals and organizations who decided not to refrain from acting in a way which is and could be deemed politically offensive.

With the birth and rise of social media within the first two decades of the 21st century, came a new form of online activism known as Call-Out culture. Cancel Culture and call-out culture are often utilized interchangeably because of their similarities, and it is difficult to uncover which of the two was formed or initiated first. However, when compared directly, based on the amount of literature on the topic and their respective levels of discourse recency, the former is more favourable to call-out culture and the latter favouring Cancel Culture. I have deduced that call-out culture was formed first, especially because Cancel Culture evidently extends a step further by attempting to ensure some kind of penalty for unfavourable actions and behaviour follows. The entire aim of Call-out culture is to, mostly through social media and through a sort of mob mentality methodology, alert the general public to offensive and socially rejectable acts and behaviour. This is done to publicly shame influential and powerful individuals and organizations, so that they may begin to feel guilty or remorseful, so that kind of behaviour might change, in the hopes of it never happening again (Ahmad, A. 2015.). The behaviour which usually incites this kind of response from the public is commonly deemed or identified as some kind of sexist, racist, homophobic, or transphobic remark, or conduct. Call-out culture, as Beth Tucker puts it, is formed and moulded because:

> Social Media allows for Synoptic values to be laid out in an entirely transparent manner; celebrities literally have millions of 'followers', who actively choose to watch them as closely as possible (Friend or Follow, 2017). This freedom of speech of celebrities on social medias created room for the 'followers', the many, to begin to actively police the celebrities, the few, bringing in Panoptic values into a Synoptic situation. When a celebrity

> says something that does not align with the image created, or with popular societal values, they are ‘dragged’ or ‘called-out’ on what they have said, usually by a great volume of people and very quickly (Tucker, B. 2018: pg. 3.).

A prime example of call-out culture is that of Jimmy Fallon in 2020, the popular American television talk show host was called out on social media, and he subsequently apologized, for performing a comedic sketch in 2000 that was deemed racist when the video resurfaced (Yang, R. 2020, Accessed 1 April 2021). However, dissimilar to Cancel Culture, call-out culture’s chief aim is to merely expose and raise awareness for the misguided and socially immoral acts and behaviour of powerful and wealthy individuals, brand names, and organizations. Whereas that is only an initial and minor part of Cancel Cultures’ entire process whilst seeking some kind of penance. (Placio, E. D. C., Vargas, D. S., & Estigoy, M. A. S. 2021pg. 538-540.)

In an article published online by the New York Post, a professor of Sociology and criminology at Villanova University, Dr. Jill McCorkel confirms the notion that Cancel Culture finds its roots throughout history. Simply because human beings have continually found ways to punish individuals for not conforming to apparent social norms. She stated that “Cancel Culture is an extension of or a contemporary evolution of a much bolder set of social processes that we can see in the form of banishment. “They are designed to reinforce the set of norms.” (Kato, B. 2021) As per Vox and Aja Romano, a well-established American news website which primarily publishes explanatory journalistic articles, ‘cancelling’ an individual was first referenced in popular culture during the Wesley Snipes Movie ‘New Jack City’, where the actor’s character states “Cancel that [woman]. I’ll buy another one,” (Romano, 2019.). Romano also uncovered that the term only started gaining traction in 2014 when in an episode of a reality television show called “Love & Hip-Hop: New York”, one of the members of the cast said “You’re canceled” to one of his potential love interests (Romano, 2019). The Insider reports that the actual term ‘Cancel Culture’ had only one of its first uses online through the social media site Twitter, “from Myles McNutt, a TV critic and assistant professor at Old Dominion University, who used it in a tweet in February 2014 to refer to the cancellations of TV series. "It's unfortunate how to renew/Cancel Culture has made 'not renewed early' read as canceled — 'wait and see until pilots come in' is normal," McNutt tweeted” (Greenspan, R. E. 2020). “McNutt was commenting specifically on TV network

decisions to cancel certain programs based on ratings at the time, but his choice of words may have indirectly planted the seed of today's "Cancel Culture" phenomena" (Bolding, G. 2021).

The act of cancelling and Cancel Culture itself rose to prominence throughout the Western world, as well as the rest of the world, with the growth and rise of both the '#BlackLivesMatter' movement and the '#MeToo' movement (Placio, E. D. C., Vargas, D. S., & Estigoy, M. A. S. 2021: pg. 537-545.). The social activism movement came about as a response to incidents of unwarranted violence and killings, violent racism, and racism in general, conducted by American police officials. The movement then exploded in the last few years as a complete fight against racism as a whole all over the world ((Ng, E. 2020: pg. 623). The Mee Too movement came about as a result of the mass exposure of "the scope of sexual harassment and assault" occurring within the film industry in Hollywood (Ng, E. 2020: pg. 623). Soon after its rise in the United States, blew up into a global socio-collective movement dedicated to the fight against sexism, sexual harassment and sexual assault (Ng, E. 2020: pg. 623-624). Social media has, throughout the rise of the cancel movement, been a potent tool in order to hold individuals and organizations accountable for their misguided actions and wrongdoings. Meredith Clark appropriately amounts Cancel Culture as a "socially mediated phenomena," with social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram being the most popular and effective; Twitter being the most used and highly effective platform (Clark, M. D. 2020: pg. 89). Through platforms like Twitter "Individuals and groups, formerly lacking a platform to speak, are now able to be heard, share their ideas and mobilise themselves and others" (Bouvier, G. and Machin, D. 2021: pg. 309). What has come to be known as 'Black Twitter' is an excellent case example of the power of Twitter and social media activism. Black Twitter is a section, space and or type of subculture created through hashtags, which has become infamous for joke making, employing Cancel Culture tactics when warranted and as a space where people can express their anger and resentment towards social issues, especially racism. These hashtags ordinarily reflect, resemble and "tend to comment on black culture and society-at-large" (Lee, L. A. 2017: Pg. 2). Aja Romano confirms the importance of black culture and social activism to the establishment and effectiveness of Cancel Culture:

> "Thanks to social media, Black culture in particular has become more widely recognized as the dominant driving force behind much of pop culture. Platforms like Twitter give a

> louder collective voice to Black citizens and other marginalized groups who have traditionally been shunted to the edges of public conversations." (Romano, 2019.)

It is without any doubt that Cancel Culture originated during contemporary American times, but it also owes its roots to American history. The civil rights boycotts of the 1950s and 1960s also have similar links to modern-day Cancel Culture. As "canceling someone is akin to a boycott, but of a person rather than a business." (Romano, 2019) Although the majority of high-profile cases of cancelling have been celebrities, politicians and businesses or organizations. The concept and utilization of Cancel Culture has also spread rapidly to college and higher education campuses in the United States. Where students, their various representative bodies and other kinds of student organizations turned to Cancel Culture, social media, and their institutional disciplinary mechanisms in order to Call-out and cancel members of staff for objectionable and or offensive behaviour. Cancel cases on college campuses in America, similarly to most conventional cancel cases, were "surrounding issues of racism and ethnicity, sexual harassment and misogyny, non-binary gender identities and transphobia." (Norris, 2020: pg. 2) Cancel Culture in and amongst American colleges also employ "harsh measures, including even outright exile from the university community via expulsion (of students) or firing (of faculty or staff members)." (Strossen, N. 2020: pg. 1) In Mark Rom and Kristina Mitchell's journal article "Teaching Politics in a Call-Out and Cancel Culture," they discuss a "Professor Watchlist" which contains the names of over three hundred college professors who have discriminated against conservative students to expose and document these incidents. (Rom, M. C. and Mitchell, K. 2021: pg. 610) The fact that in this case, right-wing conservatives were attempting to expose and punish progressive and liberal professors, proves that Cancel Culture is also a socio-political ideological battlefield.

<u>From America to the world</u>

The United States of America has been a catalyst for the proliferation of popular culture all over the world. Just like American-produced movies and music genres such as Rap and R&B, Cancel Culture has become the United States' latest cultural export to the world. With the popularity of social media and American pop culture, "Datareportal's" 'Digital 2022: Global Overview Report' reveals some interesting insights into how social media has impacted the world. The report utilizes 8 different data partners to collect and decipher the data necessary for the report. Using this report, it is simple to understand how and why Cancel Culture has spread so rapidly around the world,

including South Africa. According to the report, 4.62 billion people are active social media users, which equates to 58.4% of the entire world's population. Narrowing it down to the far corners of the world, to get an idea of the expansive hold social media has over the entire globe, 79% of South Americans, 69% of East Asians, 85% of Northern Europeans, 70% of Eastern Europeans, 66% of people living in the Oceanic region, and finally 45% of Southern Africans are active social media users. Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are three of the most recognized and popular social media platforms, all three of which are active news shearers. Whom all maintain an interactive interface between users, hence their propensity for Cancel Culture, and have a user base of 2.91 billion, 1.478 billion and 436 million, respectively (Kemp, S. 2021).

Considering Cancel Culture's proficiency in the utilization of social media in order to expose and hold individuals and organizations accountable for immoral and dubious conduct, as well as the statistics mentioned above, one can understand how Cancel Culture and all that goes with it has reached the shores of other continents around the world. Great Britain, especially the liberal and progressive left, has embraced Cancel Culture and has also become a cancelling hub. British journalist and infamous broadcaster Piers Morgan was cancelled in 2021 after he made ill-received comments on the television show "Good Morning Britain" about Megan Markle's suicidal feelings. He resigned from the show after being lambasted on social media by mental health advocates and many celebrities (Walsh, G. 2022). Famed Harry Potter Series Author J.K Rowling has supposedly been cancelled a few times after alleged insensitive comments made in public or on social media. She was more notably cancelled or more recently labelled as cancelled after a series of tweets that she published on Twitter were labelled as transphobic by LGBTQ+ advocacy groups (Walsh, G. 2022). Another fairly recent example is the attempted cancellation of English comedian Jimmy Carr, who during a television comedy special, made a joke about the holocaust which was received as insensitive, antisemitic and pro-genocide. Carr has been slammed on social media and other platforms by charities, celebrities and politicians, a petition was also released for signatures to have the special removed from major streaming platform Netflix (Walsh, G. 2022).

The allure of Cancel Culture and its uncanny ability to give a voice to those who feel unheard and marginalized by powerful individuals, institutions and organizations. This is one of the chief reasons why Cancel Culture has been able to proliferate to all corners of the world, not only in the West. In South America, more specifically Columbia, the legacy of Christopher Columbus is under

siege by Indigenous activists and organizations. Activists consider him to be a representation and constant reminder of imperialism, oppression, and colonialism, rather than the conventional label of Columbus as a pioneer of exploration. Activists continue to shun and boycott his legacy and in 2021, in a well-documented event, protestors vandalized and toppled a statue of Columbus in the city of Barranquilla, whilst similar events have occurred in both Chile and Mexico (Misra, A. 2021). In Asia, Chinese consumers in 2019 boycotted Dolce & Gabbana foods because their advertising was interpreted by the public as a mockery of the pronunciation of Chinese speech. Dolce & Gabbana were forced to give out refunds and were forced to remove their products from two of China's largest e-commerce sites (Goh, Z. J. D. 2020). In Singapore, a high-profile social media influencer and blogger, who goes by the name Xiaxue, was cancelled for the comments she had made over time regarding foreign workers and people living with obesity. The cancel campaign against her has led to the loss of income as she had numerous endorsements and partnerships cancelled (Yadav, S. A. 2020).

Cancel Culture has also found its way to the Oceania region, in 2019 Australian right-wing politician Fraser Anning was voted into censorship within the Australian senate by both left and right-wing politicians. This occurred dramatically after the public outcry he received for his comments on the Christchurch Mosque shootings in New Zealand, blaming the incident on immigration policies (Kelly, C. 2019). In Germany, the pop star and singer of "99 red balloons" had two of her concerts/ performances in 2021 cancelled after she made negative comments during her performances about the German government's Covid-19 restriction regulations, where she encouraged fans to ignore hygiene and social distancing, whilst simultaneously maintaining affiliations with known conspiracy theorists and anti-vaccine advocates (Kirschbaum, E. 2021). Just like the rest of the world, Cancel Culture has also been embraced and has flourished in Africa, more particularly in South Africa, with a multitude of celebrities being cancelled for immoral, questionable and illicit behaviour. Some South African celebrities have had their careers effectively put to an end or practically irreparably damaged after allegations of rape or sexual assault. Some of which include rapper and recording artist Simiso Zwane better known as Okmalumkoolkat, recording artist Jabulani Hadebe better known as 'Sjava', Disk Jockey Themba Nkosi better known as Euphonik and another well-known South African DJ and radio host Thato Sikwane better known as DJ Fresh. Although the latter three cases have had their cases thrown out by the National Prosecuting Authority (Junior, L. 2021). Other prominent social and political

figures have also in a way been cancelled, de-platformed, or ostracized. Former vice-chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand and current director of the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London Adam Habib. Landed himself in hot water after he received a hefty amount of backlash and was suspended from his position at SOAS after using the N-word during a virtual meeting with students and other staff members (Mlambo, S. 2021). Hellen Zille, a prominent and controversial South African political figure and former Premier of the Western Cape and Federal Leader of the Democratic Alliance. Has on multiple occasions been effectively cancelled or at least labelled as cancelled for her divisive opinions, statements, and comments on social media, which are commonly labelled as racist and politically incorrect (Nkanjeni, U. 2019). Three of the above examples of Cancel Culture in South Africa will be utilized as case studies in the chapters to come and more factors and details will be revealed, those are the cancellations of Adam Habib, Hellen Zille and Simiso Zwane or Okmalumkoolkat.

Chapter 2: The Politics of Cancel Culture:

"Cancel Culture's labelling can be seen as symptomatic of an era where people present themselves using a few carefully chosen words, and choose their allies and enemies based on the same" (Janner-Klausner, R. L., & Deller, A. 2021: pg. 32). It is for this core reason why, to truly understand, analyze and decipher the nature and origins of Cancel Culture, we need to breakdown and understand the politics and political nature of Cancel Culture. This Chapter is dedicated to comprehending and explicating the world's socio-political relationship with Cancel Culture. It also aims to understand and rationalize the World's utilization of Cancel Culture through various ideologies and political theories such as Liberalism, Conservatism, Capitalism, right and left-wing politics, Identity Politics and more. This will be accomplished through the examination and the dissection of, observing through a political ideological lens, several Cancel Culture case studies from America and Great Britain. Two leading and powerful nations which have the greatest number of concrete and well-published examples.

Cancel Culture and Left-Wing, Progressive Liberalism

First off let us break down these three political ideological terms which play such a significant role in this section of chapter two. All three of these socio-political concepts, Liberalism, Progressive, and Left-Wing, are interconnected and can even be said to maintain a kind of codependency. Certainly, in Western nations where if you have pronounced yourself as a liberal you would automatically be assumed to be both progressive and left-wing, and vice versa for the other two concepts. Modern-day Liberalism represents a desire for a society which is free from totalitarianism, oppression and inequality, contemporary liberals desire to live in a society based on the principles of justice, welfare, fairness, and equality. Slightly different from conventional Liberalism, like the theories of John Locke, John Stuart Mill, and John Rawls, which advocate for individualism, the right to life through freedom, liberty, the ownership of property and minimal state interference (Courtland, S. D., Gaus, G. and Schmidtz, D. 2022.). "For me, the central use of the term "progressive" lies in describing public policies aimed at improving the material conditions of those existing under material conditions of existence that place them in positions of reasonably severe deprivation" (Tushnet, M. 2011: pg. 1073.). Being progressive in the 21st century means that advocating for liberalism is not enough, progressives are relentless in their pursuit of equality of rights and opportunity, in particular racial and gender equality. They are both pro-poor and pro-

welfare states, via their advocacy for increased tax levels for the wealthy and powerful corporations, as well as increased wages and increased state welfare support (Pew Research Center, 2021.).

> "It is important to clarify that Cancel Culture not only focuses on the mode of justice against racial discrimination but any type of taboo against minorities. Throughout the years, American society has emphasized the so-called social justice, and most of the definition and representatives for this cause come from the left-wing and progressist on the government. They would define social justice as a fight against systemic oppression by the dominant over the oppressed, which employs coalition-building and seeks changes in basic societal structures" (Garcia, D. 2021: pg. 4).

Lastly, in this context as well as the circumstances of contemporary Western political landscapes, those individuals who lean to the left of the political spectrum usually conform to and advocate for both liberal and progressive politics. Whether you are in the United States or Great Britain, two countries that use this label on a grand scale, you will be labelled a leftist if you are well-versed and a strong advocate for liberal rhetoric and application. There is another noticeable and provocative political branding that has been widely used that place all of the above under one scope and that is 'woke politics' or 'wokeism'. Wokeism is "an ideology that views reality as socially constructed and defined by power, oppression and group identity" (Beiner, A. 2020).

"The idea of Cancel Culture hides behind its duty and desire to fight inequality and injustice" (Garcia, D. 2021: pg. 3). One can easily assume that Cancel Culture is a potent instrument for the left because it notably targets issues of racism, sexism, homophobia, sexual assault, transphobia, and other socio-political issues. Taking into consideration that these groups are customarily and frequently seeking various modes of justice and equality because of existing and historical prejudice, discrimination, and injustice. Unsurprisingly, the individuals who form these groups and participate in cancellations are generally progressive liberals. Suntosh Pillay explains how some Twitter hashtag movements which have all utilized Cancel Culture strategies and campaigns, have been effective against various forms of oppression. "#BlackLivesMatter challenges White supremacy, #MeToo challenges toxic patriarchy, #FeesMustFall challenges educational commodification, #TakeAKnee challenges police brutality, #SayHerName challenges police

brutality specifically against Black women in the United States, and #RhodesMustFall challenges coloniality" (Pillay, S. R. 2020: pg. 309.).

Joseph Velasco, utilizing the theories of Neil Alperstein, writes on how when the thoughts, arguments and, ideas of various individuals on social media are aligned or coincide with one another, a "virtual collective consciousness" is formed between those individuals (Velasco, J. C. 2020: pg. 2). This infers that "it bears a similarity to an echo chamber, where similarly minded individuals only hear what they wish to hear. Anything that might be contrary to their line of thinking and preferences is deemed undesirable" (Velasco, 2020: pg. 2). The Cancel Culture of the 'woke' or progressive left is no different to this, Black Twitter, the #BlackLivesMatter movement and the #MeToo movement are three perfect examples. Firstly, Black Twitter, as discussed in Chapter 1, could be credited with being the founders of Cancel Culture. Secondly, both Black Twitter and #BlackLivesMatter have accounted for multiple celebrity and political callouts which then proceeded into attempted cancelling. American Rap artist Kanye West was cancelled in 2019 after he was caught stating that "slavery was a choice" and that Bill Cosby was apparently innocent of all the sexual misconduct, sexual assault allegations and legal charges laid against him (Grootboom, J 2018.) (Kelly, 2019.). After years and years of sexual assault and sexual immorality allegations, in 2017 R&B recording artist R-Kelly was cancelled after the cancel campaigns on social media had the singer banned from performing and collaborating with other artists (Grootboom, J 2018.) (Kelly, 2019.). Although the #BlackLivesMatter movement began in 2013 as a reaction to police brutality and unwarranted killings of African American citizens. The movement intensified on an almost unprecedented scale after the police killing of George Floyd, an African American citizen who died whilst being detained by United States police officers. In the wake of George Floyd's death, the #BlackLivesMatter movement and its supporters took to social media. Using several platforms, primarily Twitter, to hold those individuals and organizations accountable for either racist or insensitive and immoral conduct directed towards the movement (Hain, P. and Odendaal, A. 2020). During the height of the protests in 2020, a video surfaced where Doja Cat, a hip-hop recording star, was seen in an online chatroom with white men who were using all kinds of racial slurs including the 'n-word', she was subsequently cancelled on Twitter by many of her fans and #BlackLivesMatter supporters (Arroyo, K. 2020). Another two noticeable examples were when after continuous pleas, petitions and threats of boycotts. The company behind the two food products named "Aunt Jemima" and "Uncle Ben" were near forced

into changing the names of the two products in 2020 because of the racist undertones of the original names (Los Angeles Magazine, 2020).

Following an expose by several actresses who exposed one of Hollywood's principals and most powerful producers, Harvey Weinstein, as a prolific and sordid sexual offender. A social media campaign targeted at powerful and wealthy sexual predators exploded on social media, especially on Twitter and Instagram. The hashtag #Metoo allowed all kinds of victims, from various backgrounds not only actresses, of sexual abuse suffered at the hands of individuals normally perceived as legally untouchable, to be able to come forward and expose those individuals and have them held accountable (Murphy, M. 2019.). The #MeToo movement helped expose and cancel the likes of Actor Bill Cosby, comedian Louis CK and R. Kelly for their sexual abuse and misconduct against women in their industries. Although the Me-Too movement is fundamentally a women's movement and essentially a feminist cause, the movement still maintains modern liberal and left-wing principles; of seeking out justice and equality. As the movement's "strategy can be justified as an effective tool for achieving social justice by victims unable to obtain legal redress or public apology" or accountability (Norris, 2020: pg.2).

Another ideological level which must be examined, an area of great concern for right-leaning conservatives, especially in the United States and Britain, is the Cancel Culture which seems to be intensifying at a constant rate on College and University campuses. Academics like Pippa Norris believe there is a "liberal hegemony" at all levels on college campuses across the United States (Norris, 2020: pg. 4). Which refers to the fact that the majority of students, staff, professors, academics, upper management, board members and investors, albeit not a vast majority, generally classify themselves as liberals and progressives. In his book titled "Cancel Culture: The Latest Attack on Free Speech and Due Process" Alan Dershowitz also confirms this academic liberal hegemony:

> "Many of the current zealots are young students and faculty—men and women alike—who may well become our future leaders. For the first time in my lifetime, academic "justifications" have been offered by hard-left American professors for restrictions on free speech and due process, labelling these fundamental rights as weapons of "privilege," deployed against the unprivileged" (Dershowitz, A. M. 2020: pg. 23).

The prevailing belief is that the balance of opinions on college and university campuses has become increasingly liberal. Especially towards issues like racial equality and inclusion, LGBTQ+ rights and equality, gender equity, religious tolerance, ethnic diversity, modernization as well as secularization. According to David Acevedo as well as The National Association of Scholars based in the United States, who have tracked the cancellations of over 210 academics and professors in both the United States and Canada, all of which resembled the typical Cancel Culture modus operandi (Acevedo, D. 2022). The majority of these cancellations came about after a student or members of staff said or wrote something controversial. Which was then regarded as offensive or immoral, after which faculty, students and student representative organizations demand various forms of institutional discipline. Lastly, university and college management or administrators punish the accused in various ways, sometimes causing reputational damage and even terminating their employment (Kaufman, E. 2020).

Moving on to how the socio-political landscape has impacted how and by whom Cancel Culture has been received and utilized in England and Great Britain as a whole. Cancel Culture landed in America's former colonial authority not long after it took off on home soil. Similar to all of America's cultural exports, British people swiftly took to the concept and progressive liberals began to employ the concept and all its methods. As discussed earlier, three excellent examples of British Cancel Culture are those of J. K. Rowling, for the transphobic comments she made. Piers Morgan, for his routinely controversial views and the comments he made on the mental health of Megan Markle. Lastly Jimmy Carr, for his controversial and antisemitic jokes in his latest television comedy special. All three of these cases of Cancel Culture were all labelled as left-wing attacks on free speech, as the majority of individuals and groups who protested the boycotting of these controversial figures were aligned with modern liberal and progressive ideals (Walsh, 2022).

Britain in a similar mould to that in the United States, is also experiencing issues at universities with Cancel Culture as one of the main conceptual obstacles in the way of balancing the ideological and political scales at tertiary institutions. "UK universities face growing threats to academic freedom. This called attention to 'structural discrimination', with progressive social norms arising from the predominance of left-wing scholars, generating a chilly of intolerance for the small minority challenging these views" (Norris, 2020: pg. 5). Similarly, to college campuses in America, this liberal hegemony within British Universities has led to examples of intellectual

repression, ideological uniformity, the de-platforming of intellectuals, irreparable reputational damage as well as termination of employment (Kaufmann, 2020). Cancel Culture in the United Kingdom can be said to have been the catalyst and the final instrument required, which ignited the campaigns against the legacies and memorialization of British historical figures. Who in recent times have been commonly found and discovered to be racist and immense contributors to the enslavement, oppression, subjugation, colonization, and murder of others. Cecil Rhodes, Edward Colston and Winston Churchill are all three historically and traditionally revered for their socio-political and socio-economic exploits done in the name of the British Empire. Have had their memorial statues vandalized and even torn down by protestors for their contributions to slavery, colonialism, and imperialism (Colomer, L. 2020.). Since the onset of Cancel Culture in Britain all three of these legacies and their respective commemorative statues or landmarks, although have been under fire for quite some time. Have recently faced increased pressure for social and public tarnishing, the exposure of their immoral deeds and exploits and for public removal. Especially because of the Black Lives Matter movement, as all three figures, their statues and legacies were vandalized during the protests in the UK. Edward Colston's statue in Bristol was even pulled down and pushed into the ocean by protestors because he was a 17th-century slave trader (Colomer, 2020: pg. 1). It seems as though liberal and progressive activists from both Britain and America are seeking to erase systemic racism and white supremacy through the cancelling and erasure of infamous Western history, especially within tertiary institutions and college campuses.

Right-Wing, Conservative Politics and a Somewhat Hypocritical Critique of Cancel Culture

Similar to the section above, this subsection will begin with a definition of the socio-political terms above. This is necessary to be able to begin to comprehend how right-wing conservative politics has impacted Cancel Culture and how conservatives have either utilized or critiqued the concept and its impact on the world. In a similar codependent relationship between that of liberalism, progressivism and left-wing politics. In today's modern world, it would be unsurprising that if someone considers themselves to be conservative, they would automatically be assumed to be right-wing leaning, and vice versa. Modern-day right-wingers and conservatives typically defend forms of traditionalism, which in lemans terms refers to the advocacy for past or current modes of governance and living. Modes that these individuals believe to be the only effective forms of government; and they also especially oppose liberal democracy (Hamilton, Andy. 2019).

Individuals and groups which align themselves with the right side of the political spectrum, especially in the United States and Britain as conservatives. Strongly believe that limited government, a laissez-faire economic system, and lower tax rates especially for the rich and businesses will lead to economic prosperity. However, they also seem to believe that inequality is perpetually inevitable and will always be a societal reality. According to the 'Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy', Conservatism is "a response to the challenges of modernity" (Hamilton, 2019). Conservatives, similar to liberals, adore and defend the principle of liberty, however, their version of liberty is not based on rights and equality but on civil liberties allowed by lesser government interference (Hamilton, 2019.).

Cancel Culture's greatest ideological and theoretical opposition appears to be originating from the right-leaning conservatives in the Western world, but especially in the United States. As Gwen Bouvier and David Machin point out, "many critics of Cancel Culture sit to the political right, describing it as a kind of political correctness, or identity politics gone made, carrying undertones of what they see as a dangerous cultural Marxism intent on bringing down Western Civilization" Bouvier and Machin, 2021: pg. 308.). What at first glance seems like a form of hyper-criticism, once we narrow down the central points of their extensive and ever-expanding arguments against Cancel Culture, there may be some merit to their protests. Many conservatives strongly maintain that political correctness, call-out culture and especially Cancel Culture itself have caused growing levels of ideological conformity, academic exclusion, ideological segregation, self-censorship as well as stifling freedom of speech and expression (Norris, 2020: pg. 3.). Alan Dershowitz, a prominent legal scholar in the United States believes that when the left justifies this form of censorship "It argues for cancellation and censorship only of right-wing, conservative, anti-left speech, while demanding total freedom of speech for comparable advocacy, even if hateful, directed against conservatives, right-wingers, and people of privilege. The identity of the speaker is as important as the content of the speech, though both are related" (Dershowitz, 2020: pg. 53.).

One of the right's chief concerns regarding Cancel Culture is the effect it has had on America's college campuses. Cancel Culture has proven to be a prominent fixture amongst America's predominantly liberal tertiary institutions. Not only are the rights to freedom of speech and expression at risk but from the hegemonic liberal positioning that Cancel Culture holds over

scholars, admin and students. The concept and restriction of academic or intellectual freedom is another grave concern for the conservative right. Academic freedom refers to the non-constitutional/ legal right to "seek the truth, wherever the investigation may lead," essentially "an eternal spiritual search for the truth" (Schalin, J. 2016: pg. pg. 5, 9.). As we have seen by the number of academics and professors who have been cancelled and punished in various ways for words said and written on campus. The conservative fear that Cancel Culture is causing censorship on college campuses is not mere speculation. "Conservative scholars, anticipating discrimination, self-restrict their academic freedom, focusing on technical subjects rather than pursuing controversial topics or dissenting viewpoints" (Kaufmann, 2020). Pippa Norris also identifies a similar trend within universities in the United Kingdom, with liberal biases causing a reluctance within conservative students out of fear for the repercussions which might follow whilst disagreeing with their peers (Norris, 2021.).

One of the most potent and convincing political works and justifications utilized by the right in defence of free speech and their critique of Cancel Culture lies in the works of John Stuart Mill. Who is ironically considered one of the most influential liberal philosophers of all time. In his 19th-century work "On Liberty", Mill defends mankind's inalienable individual freedoms, most importantly protection from the tyranny of the majority, as well as the government and freedom of speech and expression. Freedom to Mill was vital to human improvement and societal development. Mill believed that by censoring opinions, we would miss out on both opinions which on the one hand would hold truth, and those on the other hand which would prove to be wrong for us to understand why (Courtland, S. D., Gaus, G. and Schmidtz, D. 2022). "If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error" (Mill, J. S. 1998: pg. 25.). He believed by suppressing opinions which would prove to be partly true we miss out on the opportunity to obtain the whole truth. He also argued that by denying challenge or free debate in this case, arguments and claims which have been made, tend to exhaust their legitimacy. Lastly, by denying people the chance to follow and express their ideas, thoughts and intellect to make their own informed conclusions, people miss out on the opportunity to change and develop both their own intellect and their ideas and thoughts (Courtland, S. D., Gaus, G. and Schmidtz, D. 2022). This one passage in "On Liberty" confirms the last few observations made above:

> "He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side; if he does not so much as know what they are, he has not ground for preferring either opinion. The rational position for him would be suspension of judgment, and un- less he contents himself with that, he is either led by authority, or adopts, like the generality of the world, the side to which he feels most inclination. Nor is it enough that he should hear the arguments of adversaries from his own teachers, presented as they state them, and accompanied by what they offer as refutations. This is not the way to do justice to the arguments or bring them into real contact with his own mind. He must be able to hear them from people who actually believe them, who defend them in earnest, and do their very utmost for them. He must know them in their most plausible and persuasive form; he must feel the whole force of the difficulty which the true view of the subject has to encounter and dispose of, else he will never really possess himself of the portion of truth which meets and removes that difficulty" (Mill, 1998: pg. 52.).

In essence, conservatives, especially conservative politicians and commentators, the core argument against Cancel Culture is that it has and will continue to lead to reduced levels of freedom of speech, open debate and exchange of ideas and increased levels of censorship and ideological purging. They contend that Cancel Culture is a form of illegitimate online mob justice, attempting to silence those who don't abide by contemporary liberal methodology, and trying to erode history. As Otto von Feigenblatt so fervently states: "The destruction, removal, or defacing of historical heritage is an attack on all of humanity. Censoring the past is the worst act of censorship possible and it is a sign of overblown pride and arrogance. Evaluating the past from the perspective of the present is methodologically invalid" (von Feigenblatt, O. F. 2020: pg. 489.). The impact of Cancel Culture even led to over 150 academics, scholars and writers penning an open letter to Harper's magazine expressing their grief and concerns over Cancel Culture and rising levels of intolerance from the left. Notable signatories included J. K. Rowling, Noam Chomsky, and political scientist Francis Fukuyama (Velasco, 2020: pg.4.).

However, according to historical and present-day evidence and examples, is the conservative criticism of Cancel Culture an example of hypocrisy? Conservatives, especially Republican

Conservatives have been cancelling, without using cancel terminology or labelling, individuals and organizations within the United States for decades now. As Steve Israel points out "I don't minimize bans from the left. But the notion that Cancel Culture is the sole province of the so-called "woke left" is flat out, undeniably, irrefutably wrong" (Israel, S. 2022). Some historical examples of conservative or right-wing Cancel Culture include the Salem Witch Trials, the Jim Crow laws, and historical discrimination against LGBTQ+ community members (Laconte, S. 2021.). All of the above-mentioned examples caused socio-economic and socio-political ostracism and exclusion, as well as extreme levels of violence, oppression and discrimination and were all directed from conservative Republicans onto marginalized individuals and groups. Some modern-day examples include the non-labelled cancelling of Colin Kaepernick, the former American Football star who protested against police brutality and racism in America. After taking a knee during the American national anthem at professional Football matches, after serious backlash from the right, as well as former president Trump, and wealthy team owners and executives, he was kicked out of his team and the National Football League (Laconte, S. 2021.). The enormous sports apparel and equipment brand Nike also faced boycotts from the right and even had its products publicly burnt and recorded on social media after they released a video in 2018 in support of Kaepernick. Lastly, famed Hollywood director James Gunn was temporarily dismissed from his position as director of a high-budget movie franchise after tweets surfaced that right-wing conservative deemed to be offensive. These right-wingers, including infamous Republican and right-wing politician Ted Cruz, openly campaigned against the director on social media. (Laconte, 2021)

The hypocritical nature of the right's criticism and disdain for Cancel Culture is evidently apparent, especially because their tactics when cancelling someone are not so dissimilar to those of the left. The only apparent differences are that the right does not label their boycotts, and attempted de-platforming as Cancel Culture. They don't garner as much media attention or as much backlash and the left is not as hyper-critical of and opposed to right-wing Cancel Culture as the right is when the roles are reversed. In Christine Cook, Aashka Patel, Meciel Guisihan, and Donghee Wohn's study, their results surprisingly revealed that and back this argument: "Our results indicate that someone who identifies as liberal is less likely to engage in Cancel Culture online in comparison to those who identify as conservative or politically neutral" (Cook, Patel, Guishan, and Wohn 2021: pg. 237.).

Cancel Culture Capitalism and Identity Politics

How much do economic factors play a part in how and why Cancel Culture has become such a prominent socio-political fixture in contemporary times? It is easy to underestimate the part finances played in the numerous cancellations which have taken place all over the world. To either evade cancel campaigns or reduce the impact of a case of Cancel Culture, companies, organizations, and wealthy individuals in the name of economic self-preservation adopt progressive values as a sort of branding tool (Tine, S. V. 2021). What Helen Lewis calls the "iron law of woke capitalism", is "Brands will gravitate toward low-cost high-noise signals as a substitute for genuine reform, to ensure their survival" (Lewis, H. 2020). Woke capitalism seems to have come into existence as a result of the boycotts, ostracism and financial losses which regularly occur because of political correctness, call-out culture and Cancel Culture. Diversity and implicit bias training, a billion-dollar industry, came as a result of left-wing political activism and economic pressure. Lewis believes that woke capitalism hasn't been a result of the voiceless and marginalized resisting the affluent and powerful but a "reflexive jerk of the knee by the powerful, a demonstration of institutions' unwillingness to tolerate any controversy, whether those complaining are liberal or conservative" (Lewis H. 2020).

Since the dawn of Cancel Culture and Donald Trump's reign as president of the United States, in order to maintain good relations and economic ties with government and political parties. Large corporations usually hand out donations to, companies in the United States have had to tread carefully when getting involved in political and social matters like Cancel Culture, black lives matter and the Me-too movement. Populist politics, Cancel Culture, and woke capitalism have led both sides of the political spectrum into becoming campaigners against large and wealthy corporations, organizations, businesses, and entrepreneurs (Lerer, L. 2021). As an example, from the right, as already identified above, we observed how Nike was boycotted and publicly shamed as well as protested against for their pro-liberal support of Colin Kaepernick. From the left, we bring our attention back to the branding of 'Aunt Jemima' and 'Uncle Ben', a near-perfect example of woke capitalism. As the parent companies of both brands changed the names of the respective products out of fear of boycotts and further protests, and to become realigned with their customer base. In essence, as Akane Kanai and Rosalind Gill point out, "woke capitalism exploits the historical politicization of identity, reaffirming the centrality of capital and re-incorporating

movements of resistance, without dismantling the hierarchies to which they refer. It mobilizes identity politics for the generation of profit" (Kanai, A. and Gill, R. 2020: pg. 25.).

This brings us to another significant socio-political subject matter, identity politics, which many believe Cancel Culture to be an embodiment of. Identity groups are a vital component of what has become to be known and studied as identity politics. Amy Guttman expands on the importance of the relationship between identity and political organization.

> "People identify with others by ethnicity, race, nationality, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, age, ideology, and other social markers. No single group identity or even all group identities taken together comprehends the whole of a person, yet a commonly shared identification around any of the above characteristics of a person often leads to a group identity. Group identities are as abundant in democracies as they are controversial. Politically significant associations that attract people because of their mutual identification are aptly called identity groups" (Guttman, A. 2003: pg. 2.).

These politically significant associations which form identity groups, are the foundations and parameters of identity politics and what allows us to define and specify how identity groups organize and align themselves politically. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines identity politics as a signification of

> "a wide range of political activity and theorizing founded in the shared experiences of injustice of members of certain social groups. Rather than organizing solely around belief systems, programmatic manifestos, or party affiliation, identity political formations typically aim to secure the political freedom of a specific constituency marginalized within its larger context. Members of that constituency assert or reclaim ways of understanding their distinctiveness that challenge dominant characterizations, with the goal of greater self-determination" (Heyes, C. 2020.).

Considering the definition and various contexts of identity politics, it is unsurprising that, in a similar situation to Cancel Culture, identity politics also maintains a noteworthy ideological divide and rivalry over its application and merits. In the United States and the United Kingdom, identity politics is a popular and controversial topic on both sides of the political spectrum, once again both sides seem to be divided over the concept and theory. The left has fully embraced and employed

identity politics rhetoric and standpoints, with critics from the right going so far as to claim that Identity politics is an inherent product or project of the liberal left (Cressida, H. 2002). This is because of the various foundations and principles that liberals and progressives uphold, such as the desire to live in a society based on the principles of justice, welfare, fairness, equality, and freedom from oppression. Modern-day liberalism embraces difference and identity and preaches tolerance and understanding, to achieve peace, happiness and prosperity and an equal society based on restorative justice, recognition and fairness (Cressida, H. 2020.). Identity politics highlights and publicizes the historical and contemporary struggles of racial and ethnic minorities. As well as those individuals who are of different nationalities, cultures, religions, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, ages, ideology, as well as the discrimination women have faced and still face.

Much of the world's contemporary social landscape and how it has evolved can be attributed to how much value every nation or society places on identity because social norms and values stem from identity groups (Nishiyama, T. 2022: pg. 101-103.). This is why it is understandable and plausible to argue that Cancel Culture is a product of identity politics. If we look to the Black Lives Matter movement, a social activist movement based solely on achieving justice and equality for African Americans and Black people all over the world. As a movement based on identity politics, all those cases of Cancel Culture that the movement endorsed, such as Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben, became a reality because norms around non-racism were not followed (Nishiyama, T. 2022: pg. 101-103.). If we look at the cancel cases of R. Kelly and J. K. Rowling, Kelly's boycotts and social ostracism were lobbied by women and feminist organizations with support from others as well. Rowling's criticism and cancelling stemmed from members and organizations of the LGBTQ+ community with hefty support from the left.

Right-wing conservatives have been fierce critics of identity politics since the concept's inception. "The problem with today's embracers of shallow identity politics who care little to nothing about history, and who care more about the colour of one's skin than the content of their character" (Kovalik, D. 2021: pg. 188.). Aligned with a similar trend within this entire chapter, the right has begun to endorse their version of Cancel Culture, Takayuki Nishiyama identifies how thanks to the politics and populist rhetoric of Donald Trump and his administration, the "white working class" have increasingly become politically and socially organized because they "believe that their voices are not being heard by political officials. Their demands are not only economic but also

relate to identity and dignity. Liberals who value identity have not amplified those voices; it has been Trump who has amplified them" (Nishiyama, 2022: pg. 105.). Whether they are willing to accept or admit it, conservatives are also pushing an identity politics agenda by promoting and spreading nationalist rhetoric. As Francis Fukuyama points out, the left is focused "less on creating broad economic equality and more on promoting the interests of a wide variety of marginalized groups, such as ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees, women, and LGBT people. The right, meanwhile, has redefined its core mission as the patriotic protection of traditional national identity, which is often explicitly connected to race, ethnicity, or religion" (Fukuyama, F. 2018: pg. 91). The Right's cancelling of former American Footballer Colin Kaepernick is a perfect example of the right utilizing Cancel Culture to push forward their very own identity politics. He had his entire career practically put to an end after right-wing conservatives felt he was disrespecting the nation, the United States armed forces as well as all the principles which America was founded upon. Merely kneeling multiple times during the national anthem was being played before professional American Football matches.

Chapter 3: The Politics of South African Cancel Culture: Predictions and Prognostications of Cancel Culture in South African Society.

Based on what Cancel Culture is premised upon, historically South Africa, similar to the United States and the rest of the world, has been involved in some kind of social ostracism and forced social boycotts for centuries now. Especially if we look back to the socio-economic and socio-political ostracism experienced through the segregation and oppression that black, coloured and Indian South Africans faced during South Africa's colonial period and then during Apartheid. However, contemporary, and conventional Cancel Culture arrived in South Africa via similar means to the rest of the world who have either experienced cases of Cancel Culture, had their citizens embrace the concept and its devices or have felt the effects of the concept one way or another. South Africa and its citizens did not take long to accept, normalize, and then subsequently employ the concept soon after. South Africa has a vast and vigorous social media user base, with Twitter, Facebook and Instagram being three of the largest platforms. Cancel Culture reached South Africa through social media and pop culture and hasn't slowed down since, with multiple celebrities, companies and prominent individuals being either threatened by boycotts and protests or have been cancelled and have faced various consequences. By utilizing the first two chapters and all research gathered for this essay, this chapter will aim to identify and understand the politics of Cancel Culture in South Africa. Through the West's left and right-wing political ideology as well as identity politics, this chapter will aim to elucidate and divulge Cancel Culture politics in South Africa. Both on a general basis and at the various levels and societal areas in which South Africans seem to be applying the concept and perpetuating the movement. Following that, in light of all the research and evidence gathered, as well as the previous two chapters, and the first section of this chapter. This chapter will propose and predict what the near future holds for the relationship between South Africa and Cancel Culture as a political concept and as a social justice movement.

The Politics of South African Cancel Culture

How similar or dissimilar is South Africa's utilization, defence, and opposition of Cancel Culture, when compared to that of the United States and Great Britain? In trying to define, understand and explicate the politics of South Africa's Cancel Culture, this section will examine, specify and cross-reference three examples of South African figures being cancelled. Firstly, Adam Habib, former vice-chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand and the current director of the

School of Oriental and African Studies, at the University of London. In March 2021, Habib, in his role at SOAS, was suspended after using the, typically viewed as racist, n-word whilst conducting an online meeting with students. He was suspended and subsequently 'canceled' after a petition was created by students of SOAS and after being heavily criticized and condemned over social media. His use of the derogatory word was deemed racist and offensive by students, student organizations, some staff members, and especially South African social media users, political parties, politicians, and students (Ngqakamba. & Nkanjeni. 2021). Although Habib did apologize in the online meeting, in a Twitter thread he explained that "Do I think I did something wrong? No, for reasons I explained above, However, I did apologize because some individuals felt offended, and it was the right thing to do. Did it make a difference? No, because some focus on the politics of spectacle. These are my final words on the issue" (Nkanjeni, 2021).

The next case is the cancellation of numerous attempted cancellations of the former Premier of the Western Cape and Federal Leader of South Africa's official opposition Party the Democratic Alliance, and current Chairperson of the Federal Council of the DA, Helen Zille. In early March of 2017, Zille released a thread of tweets regarding her official trip to Singapore. The last tweet in the thread, where she was replying to comments, read "For those claiming legacy of colonialism was ONLY negative, think of our independent judiciary, transport infrastructure, piped water etc. Would we have had a transition into specialized health care and medication without colonial influence? Just be honest" (Zille, H. 2021: pg. 100.). After a hefty amount of backlash, outcry and pressure from social media users, political commentators, other political parties and within the DA itself, she was suspended from the party. Although Zille did initially apologize for her tweets by stating "I apologize unreservedly for a tweet that may have come across as a defence of colonialism. It was not," her words were labelled insensitive, unjustifiable, and racist (Zille. 2021: pg. 100-101). Even after this incident, as her current title suggests, Zille was reinstated, and continues to serve within the party, yet she has had numerous clashes with Cancel Culture after further tweeting and talking herself into controversy.

The last case is the cancellation of South African recording star and rapper Simiso Zwane, more commonly known as Okmalumkoolkat. In 2016 Zwane spent a month in an Australian prison after he was arrested and convicted allegedly for sexual assault whilst in the country after performing at a music festival. After the news broke there was a huge outcry by fans and South African social

media users calling on fans alike and others to boycott his shows, music, and performances (Zeeman, K. 2016.). The initial aftermath and outcry by fans and gender-based violence advocacy groups led to Zwane being removed from event line-ups and a number of his shows cancelled. Even after apologizing and making it clear that he was actually convicted of indecent assault and assault with indecent intent, as opposed to sexual assault, some promoters and music labels refuse to book him (Marshall, 2019.).

These cases reveal five core political characteristics and principles which South Africa's Cancel Culture and its operators tend to amplify and perpetuate. The first two common reoccurring features are that South Africa's conceptualization of Cancel Culture is understandably, because of its origins and notoriety, moulded from the United States. Therefore, South African Cancel Culture is typically a modern liberal device and secondly, is also based on identity and woke politics. Considering South Africa's infamous past, the prolonged oppression of the Black majority through colonial rule and then after the system of Apartheid. This history has led the country to a point where the majority of South African citizens maintain a robust association and alignment with Liberalism and modern Left-Wing politics. "Post-apartheid, liberalism and liberal values continued to be highly contested and racialized. This is unsurprising, given the class and race tensions the ideology carries in postcolonial times" (Distiller, N. 2022: pg. 47.). This signifies how South Africans are socio-politically and socio-economically fixated on erasing and rectifying past injustices and inequality. Especially by holding individuals, companies and other organizations accountable for conduct which breaches contemporary post-Apartheid anti-racist, anti-discrimination, and anti-oppression social norms and rhetoric. By analyzing the cases of Habib, Zille, and Zwane we can deduce that the majority of those rallying for them to be held accountable because the cases perpetuated the problems of racism and violence against women, were liberal South Africans seeking justice. South African liberals and far-left advocates will, as these issues perpetuate forms of oppression and violence, continue to utilize, and advance Cancel Culture through social media and other forms of protest.

In tune with the first feature, due to the nature of South Africa's notorious historical injustices, which were based on identifying factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and culture etc. Both identity and woke politics occupy a persuasive and central position and function within the political and ideological justifications for Cancel Culture in South Africa. Helen Zille herself

confirms this in her latest book "#StayWoke: Go Broke – Why South Africa Won't Survive America's Culture Wars and What You Can Do About It". She states that "This tendency was significantly intensified because it coincided with the dramatic rise of identity politics (otherwise known as Wokeness), which as a quasi-religious ideology, requires unwavering faith in, and adherence to, its doctrines. To challenge and question them is heresy, deserving of the strongest censure — being cast out of society through an online *fatwa*, or digital witch-burning" (Zille, H. 2021: pg. 157.). When observing the three cases we can isolate how factors around identity and woke politics were at play, the first two cases were principally initiated by non-white, and particularly Black South Africans as a way to combat what they viewed as racist and offensive remarks by Habib and Zille. The last case was primarily initiated by South African women, as another struggle against sexism, and gender-based violence in the name of feminism, so that Zwane would be adequately punished or shunned for his assault conviction.

The third political feature suggests that South Africa's employment of Cancel Culture is grounded and justified in the country's common and most troublesome socio-political struggles. These include instances like in the cases above, struggles like racism, decolonization, sexual assault, and gender-based violence. Although the country has been living under majority rule for almost thirty years, now, there are still prevailing issues around racism and the nation's colonial and Apartheid legacy and heritage which seem to persist. As we can see in the first two cases, that of Habib and Zille, racism remains a constant socio-political battle for non-white South Africans and evidence suggests it will not change soon. For example, this is not the only time where Zille received hefty backlash and a threat of political ostracism, even though the case above was the only time real consequences occurred. In 2019 she defended her tweets on colonialism once again, and in 2021 she made distasteful, insensitive and offensive statements on Facebook about the #BlackLivesMatter movement (Nkanjeni, 2019) (Daniels, N. 2021). Violence of all kinds, especially sexually related violence, perpetrated against women has become a horrifying scourge in South African society. When considering Zwane's case, as a public figure it is near perfectly justifiable that women, feminist groups and groups against gender-based violence called for his cancellation (Akoonyatse, B. 2017.). The #RhodesMustFall movement is another example of South Africans trying to erase or cancel the country's legacy of colonialism and put a halt to institutional racism. When students at the University of Cape Town protested to have a statue of Cecil Rhodes on campus removed, because although he was a colonial hero to the British,

according to evidence he was a staunch imperialist, racist and white supremacist (Dominy, G. 2017: pg. 28-29.).

Utilizing the cases above and cross-referencing them with all the research collected for this dissertation. The final two political features of South African Cancel Culture have everything to do with, unlike in the United States and Britain, the lack of partisan politics and right-wing critique and discontent. South African Cancel Culture, at first glance, seems to be ideologically and politically non-partisan, by this I mean that there doesn't seem to be an overload of opposition, claim and dismissal for the concept and all its features. Yes, there have been levels of discontent and critique from both sides of the political spectrum, mainly from the right as will be discussed below. However, Cancel Culture only seems to be a favourable tool and point of dialogue amongst South Africa's progressive left wing. The vast majority of examples of South African Cancel Culture have been driven by liberals and the far left. Such as when the Economic Freedom Fighters and their followers as well as other social media users went on a Cancel Culture campaign. A campaign which included physical protests on location, after major South African retailer Clicks showed a hair product advertisement which depicted White women's hair as superior to Black women and was subsequently deemed as racist and offensive (Payne, S. and Shoba, S. 2020.). The only attempt at cancellation that I could find which stemmed from right-wing conservatives is when former white South African cricket players took to social media in criticism of current Black South African cricket player Lungisani Ngidi. Who openly supported Black Lives Matter and wished for the national cricket team to get behind the movement. The former players denounced Ngidi's support for the movement and replied with typical "alt-right perspectives in the US and South Africa" (Hain, P. and Odendaal, A. 2020).

Lastly, although not as outspoken and notorious as their counterparts in the West. South Africa's right-wing conservatives and far-right factions are either not as hyper-critical of Cancel Culture or their discontent and critiques of the socio-political phenomenon are not exceedingly, favourably, or commonly published and circulated. Yes, it would be remiss to assume that right-wing conservative critique of any left-wing, liberal ideological device and concept is either absent or unobtrusive. As Helen Zille herself, who is generally viewed as a right-wing conservative, is a fierce critic of Cancel Culture and its foundations found in woke and identity politics. (Du Plessis, C. 2021.)

> "Apart from misreading Africa's past, Wokeness misinterprets the present and sows the seeds of future failure, especially in South Africa. Unlike the United States, South Africa does not have deep-rooted institutions, built over centuries, that protect individual rights, and a culture of democratic accountability. The central thesis of this book is that the fragility of South Africa's emerging democratic institutions may be unable to survive the impact of the Woke Tsunami" (Zille, 2021: pg. 33.).

However, there is almost no peer-reviewed academic material or research originating from the South African right which focuses on Cancel Culture as well as critiques it. I have only been able to acquire and read opinion pieces which well-nigh mostly read the same as the next quote "conservative people are beginning to equate decency and politeness with a desire to be inoffensive to others and are thus acquiescing to having their viewpoints silenced" (Ellerbeck, 2020.). Otherwise, most of the right-wing condemnation stems from a few prominent figures like Zille and AfriForum, a right-wing non-governmental organization focused mainly on the interests of South African Afrikaans citizens.

South Africa and Cancel Culture: Predictions and Prognostications

Based on all the research and materials I have gathered, the previous two chapters as well as the five features of South Africa's Cancel Culture identified in the previous subsection. This closing section of this research essay will classify and elucidate my predictions and prognostications for the relationship between Cancel Culture and South Africa in the not-so-distant future. I maintain eight different prognostications grounded on how Cancel Culture evolved and developed in the United States, its chief designer and perpetuator, and how it has been received, utilized, and developed within South Africa.

Firstly, this is merely the beginning for Cancel Culture in South Africa, the concept will not take an extensive period before it becomes a household name and more similar and diverse cases will follow like the ones already mentioned. South Africa's complicated and deeply divided society can be compared to an open wound. This a wound that any bigoted or foolish individual and organization can feast upon by acting in a certain way or saying something which could easily trigger liberal South Africans into creating a cancel campaign. South Africans have never been shy to voice their concerns or appeal for accountability when there has been a serious grievance or wrongdoing, and with Cancel Culture we will see a continuance of this resilience. "The internet –

particularly social media – has changed how, when and where these kinds of interactions occur. The number of people who can go online and Call-out others for their behaviour or words is immense, and it's never been easier to summon groups to join the public fray" (Vogels, A. E. Anderson, M. Poerteus, M. et al. 2021.). Based on the ease upon which Cancel Culture can spread, it will most likely begin to affect many areas of South African society, if not the majority in only a few years.

Secondly, Cancel Culture's social media presence will escalate and become progressively more apparent, along with further development and evolution of the concept the more it is consumed and applied. Although many critics claim that there are "limitations of twitter, as well as other social media platforms, to allow more nuanced and complex discussion of issues, rather than simplifications, extreme points of view and moral rages" (Bouvier, and Machin, 2021: pg. 309.). Social media's power and scope have a near-unbelievable ability to generate, define, shape and develop discourse and perceptions. "This power is magnified by the pervasiveness and speed of the internet and social media, which are the weapons of choice deployed by Cancel Culture" (Dershowitz, 2020: pg. 14.). South Africa also maintains a well-established division of 'Black Twitter' which will most certainly continue to utilize, evolve and perpetuate the phenomenon of Cancel Culture. "Black Twitter has often been criticized for its unashamed bashing of those who are perceived as displaying inauthenticity in their performance of identity and their positions on the critical issues debated on Twitter." (Molefe, M, Ngcongo, M. 2021: pg. 26.).

Thirdly, similar to cases and the state of affairs in the United States and Great Britain, Cancel Culture will become a prominent fixture and component among South Africa's various Universities. It will become essential for Students, professors, administrative staff and executives or directors to become accustomed to the concept as well as the effects it might have on their institutions. Similar to the cases of Adam Habib and #RhodesMustFall, Cancel Culture will, considering the liberal and progressive affiliation with South African universities, become a major topic of discourse, as well as a potent tool to be used by students, student organizations and staff. A sort of valuable device to hold their universities and other individuals involved, as we have seen in the United States and Britain accountable for abusive, oppressive, offensive, and politically incorrect behaviour (Strossen, 2020: pg. 1-4.). Students are also avid social media users and understand the sway and capacity of social media to have their grievances heard. "Activists know

that bombarding a university Twitter feed will result in a chilling email landing in an errant professor's inbox. They are adept at making formal complaints via university forms, alerting department heads, contacting ethics committees, and organizing harassment campaigns with the help of student radicals" (Kaufmann, 2020).

Fourthly, if my first three predictions come to fruition, there will be an upsurge in self-censorship and political correctness amongst South African citizens to prevent attempted cancellations and the typical consequences which follow. It is fair to say that as things stand, South Africans already tread a thin line when it comes to remaining politically correct, especially because of our infamous past and contemporary socio-political and socio-economic climate. However, Cancel Culture, I believe will continue to foster and worsen these levels of self-censorship, similar to the United States and Great Britain. Simply because "conservatives argue that recent years have seen the growing silencing of contrarian voices challenging the liberal hegemony in many cultural spaces… The net result, critics claim, is a rush to collective judgement and a new climate of censorship" (Norris, P. 2020: pg. 3). I also predict, due to the creative and diverse nature of South Africa and its social climate, that new and unique consequences will arise the more the country and its citizens employ and develop the concept.

Fifthly, considering the left's proficiency and attachment to the socio-political phenomenon in both the Western world, as well as in South Africa. I predict that South African liberal and far-left advocates will continue to be Cancel Culture's principal protagonists and perpetuators. Considering South Africa's aptitude for both identity and woke politics, if they are not the same as the right suggests, as well as Cancel Culture as a leftist construction and device. Liberals will continue to be the key torchbearers for justice, accountability and equality in South Africa. As we can understand considering the effectiveness of social media as well as the various liberal student protests such as #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall. Cancel Culture will prove to be a continual deterrent and metaphorical firearm to be used against the politically incorrect, bigoted individuals and belligerent institutions in South Africa. "The balance of public opinion in society has been transformed in a more liberal direction towards issues such as LGBTQ rights, secularization, gender equality, ethnic diversity, and racial inclusion. This shift is gone furthest among the groups who have been at the vanguard of these changes, namely the younger generation (hence students) and college educated populations" (Norris, 2020: pg. 16-17.).

In response to the previous two predictions, I contend that right-wing, conservative, and far-right South Africans will aim to retort and resist the rise of Cancel Culture in the country. This will be accomplished through increased critical and contrasting rhetoric and a rise in anti-Cancel Culture scholarship and academic literature. This will be considered absolutely necessary by conservative academics and think tanks, "Others claim that liberal universities no longer foster the open mindedness required for true scholarship, and that they are becoming increasingly partisan to left-wing views rather than remaining neutral" (Benatar, S. R. 2016: pg. 386). I also predict that similar to the paradigm in the United States, South African right-wingers will begin to adopt and establish their very own form of Cancel Culture and begin to utilize it. Whereafter, as seen in the West, we will see a rise in the attempts to cancel liberal figures and left-wing-leaning institutions and organizations.

My penultimate prognostication revolves around the long-term ineffective nature of Cancel Culture and attempted cancellations. I argue that Cancel Culture has been ineffective in all its settings, not only in South Africa but in the United States as well, and it will continue to be an ineffective feature of South Africa's contemporary socio-political environment. By ineffective I mean that although many prominent celebrities and organizations have been 'cancelled', not many have experienced any long-term repercussions for their actions. It's instructive that, for all the fear that Cancel Culture elicits, it hasn't succeeded in "toppling any major figures — high-level politicians, corporate titans — let alone institutions" (Mishan, L. 2020.). It seems as if the more established and powerful you are the less likely you are to be on the receiving end of long-term consequences from being canceled. J.K. Rowling, who was cancelled after her controversial remarks on gender and transgender issues, still has her books on shelves being sold around the world. Rowling and other writers and academics even penned an open letter, titled "A Letter on Justice and Open Debate," which was published by Harper's magazine, where they called "for a defense of free speech and an end to the "censoriousness" permeating our society" (Kovalik, 2021: pg. 219.). The three South African cases of Habib, Zille and Zwane are another three perfect examples, Habib was reinstated as director of the School of Oriental and African Studies. Zille still serves within the Democratic Alliance as the Chairperson of the Federal Council, and although Zwane still finds difficulty in being booked for performances in the city of Johannesburg, he still takes the stage in many other parts of the country, and he still produces music (Marshall, 2019.). I predict that this trend will continue, especially with wealthy, powerful and connected individuals,

as well as politicians, celebrities, groups and organizations, unless they have conducted themselves in an absolutely unforgivable, illegal and irredeemable manner.

Finally, Cancel Culture will be on the receiving end of an immense increase in academic enquiry. Due to Cancel Culture's steady increase in global presence and notoriety, South African and international academics will construct the concept into a core point of analysis. Therefore, we will observe a steady increase in peer-reviewed and published research materials. As already stated in the literature review, one of the core reasons for undertaking this research and subsequently writing this report. This was due to the lack of peer-reviewed academic works and literature on the topic of Cancel Culture, hence the number of internet sources utilized. The aim was to contribute to a gap in the literature, especially when it comes to the overall history and political nature of Cancel Culture and the relationship between South Africa and Cancel Culture. Although since I began the research and the construction of this report, there has been a steady incline in peer-reviewed journal entries and authored books, most of which I utilized in this report. I still maintain that there will be a rapid increase in academic enquiry and research into Cancel Culture considering the rate at which it is growing and developing in the United States, Great Britain, South Africa, and all around the world. Which in turn will equate to an upsurge in the amount of published, peer-reviewed materials, journal entries, books and academic sources.

Conclusion:

The controversial socio-political phenomenon and social norm policing construct known as Cancel Culture has been a blockbuster talking point and unit of analysis throughout the modern world. Especially when considering how it rose to fame in 2017 with the rise of the #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo movements. The left would describe Cancel Culture as "attempts to ostracize someone for violating social norms…The cancelling strategy typically uses social media to shame individuals with the intention of exerting penalties with different degrees of severity, ranging from limiting access to public platforms, damaging reputations, and ending careers to instigating legal prosecutions" (Norris, 2020: pg. 2.). Based on obtaining various forms of accountability for conduct and behavior characterized by "inequality, and injustice," as well as "sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, racism, bullying," and other forms of discrimination and oppression. (Garcia, 2021: pg. 7-8.) (Ng, 2020: pg. 623.). The Right would define Cancel Culture as "denying someone a platform upon which to express his or her opinion, usually accompanied by boycotts and opprobrium against the shunned dissenter" (Pilon, G. J.2020: pg. 190.). Or a sort of liberal mob justice based on "a modern form of the medieval witch-hunt, known as "Cancel Culture", using social media to manufacture outrage against "offending" individuals and taking social ostracisation to pre-Enlightenment extreme" (Zille, 2021: pg. 29.).

Although the actual term 'Cancel Culture' has only recently risen to global prominence and become widely referenced amongst this contemporary social media era. The act of public shaming has been around for centuries, where public displays of punishment and condemnation were not so unusual or controversial. Public shaming as well as various forms of socio-economic and socio-political ostracism during the 20th century had been an effective instrument for both the powerful and those who accept and perpetuate the status quo. As well as marginalized groups and individuals who choose to not accept and dispute the status quo. Then came the age of Political correctness, which began in the 1990s. To practice being politically correct, in order to refrain from being abusive or offensive, one would need to avoid any behaviour and abusive language which would offend marginalized individuals and groups. Then came call-out culture, Cancel Culture's nearest ancestor. Call-out culture's whole purpose was to, through social media, alert the general public to offensive behaviour in order to shame prominent and powerful individuals and organizations so that they may feel remorseful so their behaviour might change. Then after Cancel Culture became

an infamous social movement. A sort of advanced form of call-out culture and digital activism, because of its establishment amongst Black Twitter and then various social justice movements and high-profile cancellations like that of Harvey Weinstein, R. Kelly, J. K. Rowling and Kanye West and more. (Cook, Patel, Guisihan, et al. 2021: pg. 4.)

After researching the establishment and development of Cancel Culture in mainly the United States, as its chief instigator, as well as Great Britain, to understand the politics of Cancel Culture. We can understand the concept on a socio-political basis, firstly, Cancel Culture is a modern liberal and progressive concept and device because the majority of its users are progressive liberals who customarily and frequently seek out justice and equality because of existing and historical prejudice, discrimination, and injustice. This premise may also be justified through Cancel Culture's roots in both identity and woke politics, both of which are common and popular ideological instruments of the left. Secondly, Cancel Culture's greatest ideological and theoretical opposition appears to be originating from the right-leaning conservatives. Their chief argument against Cancel Culture is that it has and will continue to lead to reduced levels of freedom of speech, open debate and exchange of ideas and increased levels of censorship and ideological purging. Which I have discovered to be rather hypocritical, considering they themselves have embraced the concept both historically and presently without ever characterizing it as Cancel Culture. Lastly, Cancel Culture was one of the chief reasons why the socio-political and economic concept of 'woke capitalism' came into existence as a result of the boycotts, ostracism and financial losses which regularly occur because of political correctness, call-out culture and Cancel Culture. This has caused companies to actively try and evade cancel campaigns in the name of economic self-preservation, which forced them to adopt progressive values as a sort of branding tool (Tine, S. V. 2021: pg. 225-232).

Following the breakdown, contextualization, and subsequent analysis of the South African Cancel Culture cases of Adam Habib, Helen Zille, and Simiso Zwane. Came the identification of five socio-political developments, trends, and or features which characterizes the relationship between Cancel Culture and South Africa. The first two features, because of Cancel Culture's origins and notoriety, moulded from the United States. Cancel Culture in South Africa is also a modern liberal device and secondly, is also based on identity and woke politics. The next feature regards South Africa's employment of Cancel Culture as grounded and justified in the country's common and

most troublesome socio-political struggles, which include issues with racism, decolonization, sexual assault, and gender-based violence. Fourthly, South African Cancel Culture, is ideologically and politically non-partisan, as there doesn't seem to be an overload of opposition, claim and dismissal for the concept and all its features. Lastly, South Africa's right-wing conservatives and far-right factions are not as hyper-critical of Cancel Culture, or their discontent and critiques of the socio-political phenomenon are not well revealed or published.

Grounded on all the research materials I gathered for this research essay, as well as all the chapters and subsections. I conclude with 8 different predictions and prognostications for what the near future may hold for the relationship between Cancel Culture and South Africa. Firstly, Cancel Culture will not take an extensive period before it becomes a household name and more similar and diverse cases will follow. Secondly, Cancel Culture's social media presence will escalate, which will allow for further development and evolution of the concept the more it is consumed and applied. Thirdly, Cancel Culture will become a prominent fixture and component among South Africa's various Universities. If all three initial predictions are accurate, there will be an upsurge in self-censorship and political correctness amongst South African citizens in order to prevent attempted cancellations and the typical consequences which follow. The next predicts that South African liberals and far-left advocates will continue to be Cancel Culture's principal protagonists and perpetuators. My sixth prediction responds to the last that right-wing, conservative, and far-right South Africans will aim to retort and resist the rise of Cancel Culture in the country. Not only through critical and contrasting rhetoric, as well as anti-Cancel Culture scholarship and academic research. The penultimate prognostication contends that parallel to the United States, Cancel Culture will continue to be an ineffective feature of South Africa's contemporary socio-political environment. Lastly, because of Cancel Culture's online presence and notoriety, the concept will have a dramatic increase in academic enquiry, research, and literature.

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