

TRANSFORMATIONS IN SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN THE TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OF UKRAINE

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INTRODUCTION

The scientific study of transformational changes in the structure of social and religious identity under the temporary occupation of several Ukrainian territories by the Russian Federation is currently an extremely relevant area of research. The occupation is accompanied not only by military actions but also by significant cultural and value-based transformations in the consciousness of the population. Currently, the temporarily occupied territories are gradually turning into spaces of total social and symbolic control, within which the occupying authorities are shaping and imposing new narratives of national belonging, implementing processes of Russification at various levels, and utilizing propaganda mechanisms, under the influence of which social perceptions of “one’s own” and “the other” are significantly distorted. In this context, the study of structural changes in the social and religious identity of residents of the temporarily occupied territories (TOT) takes on particular significance for the conceptual understanding of social phenomena and processes occurring in the conflict zone.

The relevance of a sociological study of this topic stems, first, from the need to document external manifestations of loyalty or resistance to the occupying authorities, and secondly, by identifying the internal logic of identity choices, which are partly shaped at the intersection of conformism – driven by people’s general desire to survive in crisis conditions – and latent or open resistance, which manifests itself in various social practices. Changes and shifts in social identity under occupation may not be radical or instantaneous; rather, they occur predominantly gradually – through constant pressure in the social, political, religious, and informational spheres. This situation gives rise to a specific type of identity that can be tentatively classified as “hybrid identity,” which retains elements of pre-occupation social experience while incorporating adaptive responses and behavioral practices that emerge in response to new conditions.

In this context, it should be emphasized that contemporary Ukrainian sociological discourse reveals a certain lack of comprehensive empirical studies devoted to the interconnection between the phenomena of conformism and resistance within the framework of identity transformations during the occupation. For the most part, existing research focuses on the topic of collaborationism and the study of trust in occupation institutions; however, the complex, multi-level processes of transformation of social and religious self-identification under the influence of symbolic manipulation, propaganda, and forced adaptation are virtually unexplored. Thus, the proposed topic offers an opportunity both to empirically document identity changes during the occupation and to broaden our understanding of the multi-level transformational processes that arise under the influence of occupation.

1. Methodological and theoretical approaches to studying the transformation of social and religious identity under occupation

The aim of our study is to identify and analyze the mechanisms of transformation in the social and religious identities of residents in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, which arise under the propaganda influence of the occupying institutions. Particular research attention is focused on analyzing manifestations of conformity or resistance among local residents; these processes are examined separately within a temporal and regional retrospective of the occupation.

Before proceeding to the review of studies and publications that, in our opinion, are of paramount importance within the context of our chosen academic perspective, we note that the proposed subject matter is multi-paradigmatic in nature and will therefore be examined through the lens of a range of approaches and concepts. First, let us consider one of the key concepts for us – conformism. In general, the study of this phenomenon is quite well-established within sociological discourse. This phenomenon involves the partial adjustment of opinions, attitudes, values, and value orientations in accordance with dominant social norms and attitudes. Various sociological theories, particularly those of Émile Durkheim, Robert Merton, and Talcott Parsons, provided the theoretical basis and impetus for a fundamental understanding of conformism as a complex social problem. Its derivative manifestation – conformity – is largely shaped by various mechanisms of social control and different institutions, with the mass media currently playing a decisive role in its manifestation. It should be noted that the phenomenon of social conformity appears to be a certain universal across different cultures, although the degree of conformity may vary significantly and take different forms¹. Research conducted by a number of scholars indicates that conformist behavior can influence the fundamental characteristics of human adaptation to the external environment and may have partially negative consequences, particularly in crisis or wartime conditions. The scientific study of indicators of conformism is crucial for understanding various social phenomena and developing effective policies, particularly regarding the fight against unlawful behavior and manifestations of collaboration under occupation².

In this context, the opposite of conformism is social resistance. This phenomenon involves various social groups attempting to resist the dominant influence of, for the most part, institutions of power and various cultural norms, which, under certain circumstances, are not perceived as socially acceptable practices and tend to lead to a certain degree of social distancing or rejection³. Resistance itself can take various forms – ranging from the emergence of different subcultures that oppose capitalist or

¹ Xue, Yang. 2023. “Conformity and Collective Memory: The Influence of Group Identity.” *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 120 (12). <https://doi.org/10.61173/tpnq8k30>

² Patacchini, Eleonora, and Yves Zenou. 2010. “Social Networks and Parental Behavior in the Intergenerational Transmission of Religion.” *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.162214>

³ Sage, George H. 2007. “Resistance.” In *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, edited by George Ritzer. Blackwell Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405165518.wbeoss238>

totalitarian systems⁴, to more complex social phenomena that manifest themselves at the level of group consciousness⁵. Social resistance can also be viewed as a kind of social drama that may consist of four stages: disruption, crisis, recovery, and reintegration⁶. Although resistance itself has the potential, under certain circumstances, to transform dominant social relations, it often faces contradictions and compromises that may arise during the transformation of the socioeconomic and political landscape, particularly under conditions of prolonged occupation and targeted propaganda. Within this framework, the concept of affect is particularly interesting, as it expands our understanding of resistance beyond the boundaries of traditional macro- and microsociological analysis, suggesting that a significant portion of contemporary power and resistance is affective in nature⁷. However, monistic sociological theories view power and resistance as specific emotional and behavioral responses to social events⁸.

It should be noted that significant changes in the social identity of the population occur under the influence of both conformity and social resistance. Thus, social identity theory, which gained significant traction in the 1970s, seeks to explain the role of self-identification in group processes and intergroup relations. Subsequently, its scope was expanded to interpret various social phenomena, including organizational dynamics and language as symbols of identity⁹. The concept itself largely integrates individual consciousness with group structure and functions, encompassing individual, relational, group, and collective identities¹⁰. The social-identity approach, which incorporates self-categorization theory, has significantly influenced our understanding of identity formation across various social groups¹¹. There have also been attempts to categorize various types of social identity –

⁴ Beal, Becky. 1995. "Disqualifying the Official: An Exploration of Social Resistance through the Subculture of Skateboarding." *Sociology of Sport Journal* 12 (3): 252–267. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.12.3.252>

⁵ Hynes, Maria. 2013. "Reconceptualizing Resistance: Sociology and the Affective Dimension of Resistance." *The British Journal of Sociology* 64 (4): 559–577. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12038>

⁶ McFarland, Daniel A. 2004. "Resistance as a Social Drama: A Study of Change-Oriented Encounters." *American Journal of Sociology* 109 (6): 1249–1318. <https://doi.org/10.1086/381913>

⁷ Hynes, Maria. 2013. "Reconceptualizing Resistance: Sociology and the Affective Dimension of Resistance." *The British Journal of Sociology* 64 (4): 559–577. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12038>

⁸ Fox, Nick J., and Pam Alldred. 2017. "Social Structures, Power and Resistance in Monist Sociology: (New) Materialist Insights." *Journal of Sociology* 53 (4): 792–808. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783317730615>

⁹ Hogg, Michael A. 2016. "Social Identity Theory." In *Understanding Peace and Conflict Through Social Identity Theory*, edited by Shelley McKeown, Reeshma Haji, and Neil Ferguson, 3–17. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29869-6_1

¹⁰ Marilyn B. Brewer. 2001. "Identity Problems in Multinational Societies." *Political Psychology* 22 (2): 267–282. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0162-895X.00229>

¹¹ Hornsey, Matthew J. 2008. "Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory: A Historical Review." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 2 (1): 204–222. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2007.00066.x>

individual, interactional, and institutional¹². It should be emphasized that our study also focuses on one of the components of social identity, namely ethnic and national identity. In this regard, V. Yevtukh's works on the topic of multi-ethnicity deserve special attention¹³.

Within the religious sphere, specific expressions of identity also take shape. Thus, according to various scholars, religious identity is a complex social phenomenon that transcends the social boundaries of both religious and denominational affinities and differences¹⁴. This phenomenon plays a decisive role in shaping psychological and social processes, offering a unique "sacred" worldview and a sense of belonging to a particular religious community. Religious identity can contribute to social well-being, but it can also lead to negative consequences if religious conflicts arise¹⁵. In this context, the study of the transmission of religious identity across generations is a highly relevant field of research that encompasses various dimensions: group, emotional, ethical, and cultural¹⁶. Religious identity can influence a person's mental and physical health, social relationships, and political views. However, its conceptualization varies across interdisciplinary discourse: sociologists and political scientists focus on religious affiliation and religiosity, while psychologists seek to explore its role in a person's self-concept.

Although religious identity is generally a stable phenomenon, it can undergo significant changes under the influence of various factors. Indeed, a number of scholars examine the transformation of religious identity in the context of globalization and social change. For example, a change in religious affiliation, particularly from Islam to Christianity, can lead to an identity crisis, which partly points to the socially constructed nature of religious and ethnic identity. The interaction between religion, modernity, and social change – particularly regarding feminism, human rights, and environmental protection – is also reflected in academic research¹⁷. It should be noted that in today's society, world religions are confronted with the manifestations and challenges of the information age and the digitalization of various social processes, leading to a rethinking of identity formation in religious contexts¹⁸. The process of forming

¹² Jenkins, Richard. 2000. "Categorization: Identity, Social Process and Epistemology." *Current Sociology* 48 (3): 7–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392100048003003>

¹³ Євтух, Володимир. 2014. "Поліетнічність як конструкт *modus vivendi*." *Сучасні тенденції модернізації суспільства*. 4: 70–78. <https://stmm.in.ua/archive/ukr/2014-4/8.pdf>

¹⁴ Werbner, Pnina. 2010. "Religious Identity." In *The SAGE Handbook of Identities*, edited by Margaret Wetherell and Chandra T. Mohanty. *SAGE Publications*. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446200889.n14>

¹⁵ Ysseldyk, Renate, Kimberly Matheson, and Hymie Anisman. 2010. "Religiosity as Identity: Toward an Understanding of Religion from a Social Identity Perspective." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 14 (1): 60–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868309349693>

¹⁶ Hervieu-Léger, Danièle. 1998. "Religion as a Chain of Memory." *International Sociology* 13 (2): 213–229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026858098013002005>

¹⁷ Herbert, David. 2006. "Religion and Civil Society: Rethinking Public Religion in the Contemporary World." *Nova Religio* 10 (2): 137–142. <https://doi.org/10.1525/NR.2006.10.2.137>

¹⁸ Coleman, Simon, and Peter Collins, eds. 2006. *Religion, Identity and Change: Perspectives on Global Transformations*. *Routledge*. <https://www.routledge.com/Religion-Identity-and-Change-Perspectives-on-Global-Transformations/Coleman-Collins/p/book/9781138275874>

religious identity is becoming increasingly complex under the influence of factors such as religious fundamentalism, indifference, and non-church-based spiritual exploration. Traditional methods of forming religious identity are being replaced by more fluid, individualistic approaches, leading to a certain pluralization of the religious landscape¹⁹.

In our study, we combine all of the aforementioned sociological categories and examine their manifestations within the context of the temporary occupation of several Ukrainian territories by the Russian Federation – a situation in which both social resistance and conformism, as well as shifts in identity, are evident. Currently, there are a number of rather isolated studies aimed at examining this issue. Thus, according to researchers' findings, Ukrainians' attitudes toward residents of the occupied territories are generally neutral or rather negative, which potentially indicates manifestations of social tension and a desire to distance themselves from the problems of people who find themselves in such circumstances²⁰. One form of conformist response is collaboration with the occupying authorities, which can manifest itself among both privileged social groups and marginalized ones²¹. Young people, as a social group subject to significant propaganda influence, face both a range of socioeconomic challenges and the search for their own identity²². Indeed, in occupied cities (such as Berdyansk), residents perceive their surroundings as alien and hostile, while the occupiers are implementing a policy of "urbicide" to destroy social cohesion and impose their own vision of the past and the future²³. Studies on the evolution of the socio-political views of young people who have remained in the temporarily occupied territories are also of interest²⁴.

There is also research on resistance specifically to occupation. For example, political distancing and a lack of trust in the occupiers can intensify resistance²⁵. According to a number of scholars, indigenous national identities shaped

¹⁹ Титаренко, В. (2021). Трансформація релігійної ідентичності в контексті глобалізації: причини та наслідки. *Схід*, 1 (1), 43–47. [https://doi.org/10.21847/1728-9343.2021.1\(1\).225560](https://doi.org/10.21847/1728-9343.2021.1(1).225560)

²⁰ Осипчук, А., і Суслов, А. 2024. Виклики для соціальної згуртованості після деокупації: соціально-політична реінтеграція та ставлення до мешканців тимчасово окупованих територій *Наукові записки НаУКМА. Соціологія*. 7: 97–111. <https://doi.org/10.18523/2617-9067.2024.7.97-111>

²¹ Зубченко, Олександр. 2022. Колабораціонізм як проблема: фактори та особливості формування в умовах російської окупації. *Політичне життя*. 3 (55): 75–80. [https://doi.org/10.20535/2308-5053.2022.3\(55\).269530](https://doi.org/10.20535/2308-5053.2022.3(55).269530)

²² Никифорова Н., Чаплик М. та Сікорська І. (2022). Повсякденне життя абітурієнтів освітніх центрів «Донбас-Україна» (Соціологічне дослідження). *Міжнародний науковий журнал університетів та лідерства*, (14), 30–41. <https://doi.org/10.31874/2520-6702-2022-14-30-41>

²³ Зубченко, Олександр. 2022. Колабораціонізм як проблема: фактори та особливості формування в умовах російської окупації. *Політичне життя* 3 (55): 75–80. [https://doi.org/10.20535/2308-5053.2022.3\(55\).269530](https://doi.org/10.20535/2308-5053.2022.3(55).269530)

²⁴ Курило, Н. О. 2019. Погляд молоді з тимчасово окупованих територій на події в Україні 2014–2019 рр. *Вісник Луганського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка. Педагогічні науки* (6(329) Ч.1): 16–25. [https://doi.org/10.12958/2227-2844-2019-6\(329\)-1-16-25](https://doi.org/10.12958/2227-2844-2019-6(329)-1-16-25)

²⁵ Collard-Wexler, Adam. 2013. Rebel Alliances and Civilian Cooperation: The Logic of Collective Insurgency. Columbia University Academic Commons. <https://doi.org/10.7916/D8BZ6D8M>

by education, combined with a favorable traditional landscape, are key prerequisites for armed uprisings against occupiers. The occupier's behavior also influences the propensity for active or latent resistance²⁶. Understanding these factors is crucial to understanding the diverse responses to the occupation and the conditions of social instability.

Despite growing interest in the topic of identity under occupation, most existing studies focus on specific aspects – political orientations, manifestations of collaboration, attitudes toward state institutions, or issues of media influence. In contrast, comprehensive scholarly analyses and empirical studies specifically examining the transformations of social and religious identity under military occupation remain rather fragmentary within Ukrainian academic discourse. There are only a few studies that simultaneously account for the dynamics of conformity, resistance, and changes in religious behavior in the temporarily occupied territories. In this context, the proposed study fills an important research gap by focusing on identity strategies of survival, adaptation, and resistance that emerge under the influence of occupation.

To provide an empirical representation of the proposed issue, we will refer to the results of a unique sociological study, “Identity in the Temporarily Occupied Territories: Adaptation, Survival, Transformations,” conducted by the Active Group team with the participation of the authors²⁷. The collection of empirical data consisted of two comprehensive stages. The first stage of the study focused on obtaining qualitative explanatory data, which made it possible to reconstruct, to some extent, the subjective meanings people ascribe to the concepts of “us/them” and faith, as well as to identify practices of adaptation and resistance in everyday life and behavioral patterns. The theoretical foundation for this stage was the use of the interpretive sociological paradigm and the potential of symbolic interactionism, according to which identity is formed through social interactions and the interpretation of symbols circulating in the social environment. In this context, it is also appropriate to employ social action theory, which enables the interpretation of the significance of individual motivations in making both personal and group decisions and constructing models of adaptive behavior under conditions of occupation. By leveraging the explanatory potential of these paradigms, we can emphasize that residents of the TOC emerge not only as objects of external influence (from the occupying authorities, religious institutions, and propaganda mechanisms) but also as actors who consciously or intuitively construct their own scenarios/practices of action – ranging from silent loyalty or collaboration to covert or overt resistance. Conceptually important for our study is also the use of a narrative approach to interpreting social information, within which the personal histories of informants are examined through the lens of explanatory cases. This allows us to provide a scientific illustration of the multiplicity of certain identities, as described

²⁶ Darden, Keith. 2009. Resisting Occupation: Mass Schooling and the Creation of Durable National Loyalties. Manuscript, Georgetown University. <https://keithdarden.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/book-overview.pdf>

²⁷ Active Group. 2025. Звіт за результатами глибинних інтерв'ю з респондентами з тимчасово окупованих територій (ТОТ) за темою «Ідентичність». <https://activegroup.com.ua/2025/03/26/identichnist-na-okupovanix-teritoriyax/>

by I. Hofmann, which manifest themselves in various contexts – civic, religious, local, and national – and may exist in a state of opposition and contradiction.

To obtain empirical explanatory data, we chose to utilize the research potential of in-depth semi-structured interviews using a questionnaire (interview guide). To ensure the safety of informants (who, especially in the newly occupied territories, expressed concerns about participating in interviews, as they could face physical reprisals from the occupying authorities), all interviews were conducted via messaging apps (WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal). A total of 26 respondents residing in the temporarily occupied territories were interviewed. Respondents were selected using the “snowball” method, drawing on the interviewers’ remaining personal contacts in the region. Data collection took place between December 2024 and January 2025. Particular attention was paid to the ethical aspects of the study: anonymity, voluntary participation, and the protection of personal data were identified by us as the primary research priority at every stage of the survey. The sociodemographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Socio-demographic profile of respondents					
Gender		Respondent's age		Region of residence	
Men	12	18-35	4	Donetsk Oblast	10
Women	14	36-55	16	Luhansk Oblast	3
		>55	6	Kherson Oblast	3
				Zaporizhzhia Oblast	5
				Autonomous Republic of Crimea	5

2. Transformations in the social identity of the population in Ukraine’s temporarily occupied territories

The temporary occupation of parts of Ukraine’s territory by the Russian Federation can be broadly divided into two waves: Wave 1 began in 2014. During this period, the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions were occupied both through military means and, ostensibly, by peaceful means using the mechanism of pseudo-referendums. For more than ten years, residents of these territories were subjected to the propaganda and manipulative influence of the occupying authorities, who actively sought to reshape public consciousness and identity, particularly under the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church. Since 2022, with the start of a full-scale Russian invasion, the territories of the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions have been occupied. Residents found themselves under both a military and an information blockade. The occupiers deployed the same propaganda mechanisms that had already been tested during the first wave of occupation – promoting narratives of Russian greatness, the return of “historically Russian” lands, and so on. Since these territories have been under occupation for a much shorter period of time, changes in social and religious identity are likely to be less significant. To empirically document identity transformations, the main thematic narratives and frames provided by respondents from the temporarily occupied territories will be divided into two types:

Wave 1 (long-occupied territories); Wave 2 (newly occupied territories). The summary research tables will present respondents' quotes in the language in which they were provided, without correction, to preserve the uniqueness of the expressed opinions. To specify changes in the public consciousness of Ukrainians regarding residents of the TOT, the results of the quantitative component of the study will be used. So, let us proceed to the presentation of the main material

One of the key indicators for determining identity-related metrics is precisely how residents of the temporarily occupied territories identify themselves (Table 2).

Table 2

Respondents' answers to the question "How do people see themselves?"

Quotes from respondents living in the long-occupied territories	Quotes from respondents living in the newly occupied territories
– "In our region. Or rather, probably the people living here. It's still a long way from Russia. It's also hard to associate them with Ukrainians"; – "Most consider themselves Russian. In Donbas, it's always been that way, one way or another. Although Donbas is multinational"; – "Nowadays, many associate themselves with Russia"; – "Given that the majority of the population was Russian. We are, after all, close to Russia"; – "They gave me a Russian passport, so now I'm Russian"; – "Even though I'm Russian-speaking, I'm Ukrainian at heart. I don't know how to explain it – it's just something inside me"; – "We grew up on a firmly established Soviet ideology, and everything else was shaped by it"; – "I'm having very complicated issues with my national self-identity. I have a passport; I was born in Ukraine. But since I've been living for 10 years in a territory that doesn't belong to Ukraine – and now it belongs to Russia – I received a Russian passport"; – "In any case, no matter where you live, you're still from Donetsk"; – "Well, we're Russian. Although, actually, she might be Greek"; – "How do people identify themselves? Those who were for Russia, who vote for it, consider themselves Russian. Those who, so to speak, are for Ukraine, who are waiting for Ukraine, consider themselves Ukrainian, or say that we are Russian Ukrainians"; "We're Donetsk residents, that's all. It's not that we're saying we're not Russian, but we're not Ukrainian either. I think, yes, Russians, because somehow that feels closer."	– "A Russian-speaking Ukrainian." – "We're probably residents of the area." – "It's fifty-fifty. There are plenty of people who are already with Russia, and plenty who still want to remain part of Ukraine." – "Well, if we take the Skadovsk district, there are a lot of Ukrainian-speaking people there, because everyone in the villages mostly speaks Ukrainian." – "I can only speak for the people around me, the ones I interact with. Those who are Tatar consider themselves Tatar; those who are Ukrainian consider themselves Ukrainian." – "Ukrainian, I suppose." – "The problem here is that of the people who stayed here and didn't leave, they lean more toward Russia, provided that this is 20–30 percent of the city's population." "Well, the narrative being pushed here is that, yes, 'Russians' is sort of a general term."

The narratives obtained allow us to conclude that the issue of social self-identification is complex and multifaceted for informants who are forced to remain in the temporarily occupied territories. A slight majority of informants clearly distinguish between their ethnic identity and the Russian citizenship formally granted to them. At the same time, the nature of self-identification depends significantly on the region and the duration of the occupation. We can identify the following trends regarding the specifics of national self-identification. For the long-occupied territories, there are two dominant narratives: a demonstrative identification specifically with the residents of a particular region or city – such as “Donetsk residents,” “Luhansk residents,” and so on. Respondents who express such views generally distinguish themselves from both Ukrainians and Russians – emphasizing, rather, their territorial uniqueness. At the same time, it should be noted that for Ukrainians who have been under the propaganda influence of the occupying authorities for over a decade, self-identification as Russians is quite common. Some informants explain this by the historical ties of these territories to Russia, a shared Soviet past, or more pragmatic considerations – such as obtaining Russian citizenship or a passport, which allows for certain socio-economic benefits. In this context, we can observe generally negative manifestations of conformity – that is, people do not pay much attention to their own national identity and are willing to adapt to the surrounding socio-political changes in order to receive conditional “bonuses.”

In the newly occupied territories (Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions), the vast majority of informants still consider themselves Ukrainian, but try not to declare this publicly out of fear of persecution and physical violence. Respondents view openly identifying as Ukrainian as extremely dangerous. The overwhelming majority highlights the mass exodus of people loyal to Ukraine (mostly in the early years of the war). Among those who remained, the majority consists of those who, due to personal circumstances, cannot take such a step, as well as neutral residents (those without a clear political stance or opportunists) or pro-Russian residents. An interesting trend is that respondents repeatedly identify themselves as Russian-speaking Ukrainians, which generally corresponds to the linguistic characteristics of these regions. Although many residents of the newly occupied regions still identify as Ukrainians, in practice, the strategy of concealing this identity for security reasons prevails.

The transformation of social identity, particularly national identity, can be observed based on informants' estimates regarding the approximate number of people who consider themselves Ukrainians or identify as Russians (Table 3).

Thus, we see that the longer the occupation lasts, the more Ukrainians who have remained in the temporarily occupied territories tend to identify themselves as Russian citizens. For the most part, this is not driven by ideological considerations, but rather by a desire to ensure their own safety and adapt to crisis conditions. Respondents who consider themselves Ukrainians try not to make this known, especially in the long-occupied territories, where a public pro-Ukrainian stance is perceived as socially unacceptable. In the newly occupied territories, there remains a significant number of residents who identify as Ukrainians. However, even there, there is a noticeable trend toward a decrease in this proportion – under pressure from propaganda, as well as potential or overt repression. As noted previously, a significant number of residents in the long-occupied territories publicly declare

Table 3

Respondents' answers to the question "Are there many people who consider themselves Russians or Ukrainians?"

Quotes from respondents living in the long-occupied territories	Quotes from respondents living in the newly occupied territories
They consider themselves Russian	
<i>"Some people consider themselves part of Russia, others consider themselves part of Ukraine, but the majority probably still identify with the DPR."</i> <i>"We don't think about it now: it's a Russian region, a constituent entity of the Russian Federation."</i> <i>"Most consider themselves Russian, as indicated on their passports."</i> <i>"I guess this integration didn't happen anyway. We were supposed to become Russians. We're Donetsk residents, and that's it."</i> <i>"Naturally, there's a large segment of people who already consider themselves Russian."</i> <i>"I think so, yes, Russians, because somehow it feels closer. No one would want to associate themselves with the other side."</i> <i>"Well, for the most part here, of course, people feel Russian; yes, you can't take that away."</i>	<i>"More than half are already Russian. A lot of people have left, I want to tell you. Many of those who stayed have fallen under Russian influence."</i> <i>"Mostly elderly people who lived, perhaps, in the USSR, and some of whom are originally from Russia."</i> <i>"If we're talking about locals, it might be a small number, or maybe half, because so many have left."</i> <i>"There are some, of course, there are."</i> <i>"There are plenty of newcomers here, too. That's why there are more pro-Russian people right now."</i> <i>"There are some like that, too, but I think there are fewer of them."</i> <i>"Of the people who stayed here and didn't leave, they lean more toward Russia, provided that this is 20–30 per-cent of the city's population."</i> <i>"Probably, right now, 40–50 percent still consider themselves Russian, and on top of that, given the rise in wages, people have shifted slightly toward choosing Russia."</i> <i>"Many have sided with Russia. Russia came in very well and won them over right away."</i>
They consider themselves Ukrainians	
<i>"I think it's not just that they don't speak Ukrainian – there are very few such people left."</i> <i>"A minority."</i> <i>"There aren't many Ukrainians left, and everyone keeps their opinions to themselves. So it's not really visible."</i> <i>"There aren't any anymore. Except maybe those who've just arrived. They still have Ukrainian documents."</i> <i>"Of course, there are people who consider themselves Ukrainian, who have been on Ukraine's side all these years, who have supported Ukraine – there are people like that too."</i> <i>"Of course. There are people like that. It's just that nobody talks about it; it's all quiet, but we know."</i> <i>"There aren't many of them."</i> <i>"Actually, there are some, but yes, they're a minority, of course. Well, I think maybe 20 percent, perhaps. Again, it depends on the generation."</i>	<i>"In the Skadovsk district, if you speak Ukrainian, you most likely consider yourself Ukrainian. And the majority of us consider ourselves Ukrainian."</i> <i>"That's enough, too. Of course, people can't always talk about it. Or, even less so, show it."</i> <i>"Most people still consider themselves Ukrainian, generally speaking."</i> <i>"Everyone else has either left, or those who have stayed are the ones who have nowhere else to go, who are still tied here by something. But the majority, of course, were closer to Ukraine."</i>

themselves to be Russian or “citizens of the DNR/LNR.” Spatial and informational isolation are driving the gradual displacement of Ukrainian identity. The artificially created living conditions in the TOTs provide a space for forced Russification in private, educational, and public spheres. Obtaining a Russian passport is largely perceived as a necessary and imposed condition for survival, though in some cases also as a marker of identity.

As noted in the theoretical framework of our study, language is one of the factors that shapes the identity of various social groups. In this context, respondents were asked a projective question (Table 4).

Table 4

**Respondents’ answers to the question
“Does the language a person speaks influence how they identify themselves
(are there Russian-speaking Ukrainians or Ukrainian-speaking Russians)?”**

Quotes from respondents living in the long-occupied territories	Quotes from respondents living in the newly occupied territories
– “Back in the day, half of Ukraine spoke Russian and considered themselves Ukrainian.” – “I don’t think it’s necessary; a person has the right to consider themselves Armenian while speaking Russian, or Ukrainian while speaking Russian.” – “I think it does have an influence. I mean, it’s not exactly a decisive factor, but I think it has a significant impact. After all, it’s very important for one’s sense of identity.” – “If I was born into a Russian family, have a Russian last name, and we spoke Russian, then of course I’ll always consider myself Russian. Language has nothing to do with it.” – “It doesn’t matter what language a person speaks.” – “In my family, and everywhere with friends, we spoke Russian, but we considered ourselves Ukrainian.” – “Here, they actually forbid us from speaking Ukrainian; God forbid someone sings a song somewhere. Yes, language is the main thing. I’m saying, every country should have its own language.” – “I think so.” – “We speak Russian, and when someone starts switching to Ukrainian, we automatically switch to Ukrainian right away. Of course, you know it, so there’s no problem for you.” “There’s nothing particularly special about it, in principle. Well, at least that’s how I see it – it’s not tied to identity. A person can speak any language and, in principle, still feel like a citizen of their country.”	– “I don’t think language affects one’s sense of national identity, but given the circumstances, I would really like to communicate in our language – Ukrainian, our national language.” – “Most likely, yes.” – “It doesn’t affect it. I’m Ukrainian, and I speak Russian.” – “I speak Russian, but I consider myself Ukrainian. Some people speak only Ukrainian and also consider themselves Ukrainian.” – “You see, we’re in a region where there’s a large Russian-speaking population, so we speak Russian all the time.” – “In my opinion, it has absolutely no effect. It’s a forced narrative.” – “I don’t think so.” – “We lived in Ukraine for over 30 years and spoke Russian, but that’s just how things historically turned out in this region.” – “No, no. Language doesn’t matter. Why? Because it was already the dominant language in our region before.” “Well, speaking for myself – no.”

The topic of the connection between the language of communication and national identity is quite emotionally sensitive and is often exploited for propaganda purposes to justify various political and manipulative actions or to delegitimize certain identities. However, most respondents demonstrate a fairly clear distinction between these concepts. Thus, according to the respondents, regardless of the region where they live, the language of communication is not a defining factor or manifestation of identity. Attention is repeatedly drawn to the fact that a person can speak Russian and still consider themselves Ukrainian, or vice versa. Pro-Ukrainian respondents associate language with multifaceted processes of self-awareness. According to their statements, language shapes worldviews in a certain way and does indeed influence the sense of belonging to a nation. A number of respondents directly point out that the opposition between language and nationality is rather an artificially created and imposed discourse that practically does not correspond to the actual worldview of residents of the temporarily occupied territories. It is noteworthy that these connotations do not depend significantly on where the informants currently reside (in the long-occupied or newly occupied territories).

Continuing our examination of markers of identity, we note that cultural traditions, which manifest themselves in various festive practices (both secular and religious holidays), play a significant role in people's lives and worldview. One of the mechanisms of propaganda influence by the occupying authorities is the forced imposition of holidays associated with traditional Russian narratives and the active, aggressive displacement of Ukrainian holidays. The informants' responses made it possible to determine what this aspect of life looks like for the population in the temporarily occupied territories (Table 5).

As we can see, under the occupation, the celebration of Ukrainian national and local holidays takes on new, covert forms or disappears from the public sphere altogether. Informants, regardless of their location, indicate that, in accordance with the established Russian narrative, celebrating Ukrainian holidays in public is completely impossible. Pro-Ukrainian residents are forced to limit themselves to private, small-scale family celebrations, mostly at home. Some respondents, especially young people, view holiday symbols purely utilitarianly – as an opportunity for leisure (New Year's, birthdays). They do not attach significance to the political or identity-related context of the holiday. A number of pro-Russian respondents express significant outrage regarding changes to the church calendar in Ukraine. They interpret such changes as a manifestation of government interference in the religious sphere and view them extremely negatively. This trend is particularly evident in the long-occupied territories. There are signs of a loss of memory regarding the significance of Ukrainian national holidays, which is the result of prolonged exposure to information isolation and propaganda. In all temporarily occupied territories, Russian state and Soviet holidays continue to be officially celebrated and have taken on the form of mandatory "cult" practices. Thus, in addition to the conventional set of Soviet and Russian holidays – May 9 (Victory Day) and February 23 (Soviet Army Day) – dates such as "Russia Day" and "National Unity Day" have been added, as well as new types of regional holidays, such as the "Day of the DNR's Reunification with the Russian Federation." This indicates the gradual implementation of a strategy of cultural integration and the symbolic consolidation of Russia's control over the temporarily occupied territories.

Table 5

**Respondents' answers to the question
“Do people celebrate Ukrainian/Russian holidays?”**

Quotes from respondents living in the long-occupied territories	Quotes from respondents living in the newly occupied territories
<i>“We actually celebrate more holidays from the Russian Federation here than Ukrainian ones.”</i> <i>“We don’t celebrate Ukrainian Army Day or Cossack Day here. As for Christmas – the Ukrainian one on December 25, which I think is Catholic – we don’t celebrate that here either.”</i> <i>“I’ve seen the list of holidays Ukraine proposes. I’m sorry, but we definitely don’t celebrate those here.”</i> <i>“Well, how should I put it – it’s telling – no, they’re afraid.”</i> <i>“We used to have Defender of the Fatherland Day on February 23; they were so shameless – they moved it to October 14. That date coincides with the UPA defenders – that’s bad, because they supported the Nazis; that’s bad, that’s seditious.”</i> <i>“There are no Russian/Ukrainian holidays. We have our own holidays – New Year’s, birthdays. As for the rest – the ones they’ve imposed – I don’t really care.”</i> <i>“Right now we’re celebrating Russian holidays.”</i> <i>“People celebrate Russian holidays because, for them, a holiday means a day off.”</i> <i>“Well, let’s say the next one is coming up – the Day of Unity of the Peoples on the 4th. We have a holiday specific to the Donetsk People’s Republic – September 30, the Day of Reunification with the Russian Federation; it’s an official holiday for us.”</i> <i>“The main public holidays are Flag Day, Constitution Day, and that same Day of National Unity – in other words, basically, people do celebrate those holidays.”</i> <i>“We still celebrate the Soviet holidays. You know, like May 9 and February 23 – thank God, they haven’t banned them for us.”</i> <i>“For example, I don’t celebrate the Russian ones either. I’m generally against anyone telling you that a particular day is a holiday.”</i> <i>“In my opinion, we basically only have New Year’s left. We simply don’t have any other shared holidays anymore. Not March 8, not February 23, not May 9.”</i>	<i>“We only celebrate Ukrainian holidays at home.”</i> <i>“They’re being completely eradicated.”</i> <i>“No, not right now.”</i> <i>“Quietly, yes, we do celebrate. Independence Day, Flag Day.”</i> <i>“Well, just with close family. Very close family – on Independence Day, on Constitution Day.”</i> <i>“Russia Day is a city-wide celebration. To be honest, I don’t really get involved in their holidays; I’m not interested.”</i> <i>“Quite a lot of people come to the parades on May 9 and May 1. I was totally shocked. I thought no one would go there, but people did, and I don’t know what drives them.”</i> <i>“None of mine do.”</i> <i>“We have to celebrate the new ones.”</i> <i>“They celebrate. I don’t celebrate, but they try to create some kind of atmosphere.”</i>

It should be noted that despite the complete ban on celebrating Ukrainian holidays in the temporarily occupied territories, a significant number of informants – mostly from the newly occupied territories – celebrate them in an effort to preserve their national identity and resist the influence of Russian propaganda, which attempts to shape public consciousness through various mechanisms. They also declare their refusal to participate in Russian celebrations. At the same time, informants acknowledge that, at the level of urban infrastructure and the existing media landscape, a corresponding “atmosphere” is being created that encourages compulsory participation or, at the very least, passive attendance at festive events.

3. Religious Identity and Propaganda Mechanisms for Shaping Public Perception in Ukraine’s Temporarily Occupied Territories

The topic of religion in the interviews proved to be quite complex to analyze. Most respondents do not identify as religious, and for the most part attend church only occasionally. According to their observations, churchgoers are predominantly elderly people. At the same time, in the context of the war, for some residents, faith – rather than church institutions – becomes a source of moral support and is seen as a way to cope with the fear of uncertainty and the constant threat to life – both from the occupiers and from shelling (Table 6).

Table 6

Respondents’ answers to the question “Do many people go to church?”	
Quotes from respondents living in the long-occupied territories	Quotes from respondents living in the newly occupied territories
– “A lot of people go. Quite a few.” – “Quite a few people go to church, and people do celebrate church holidays.” – “Well, there are a lot of believers. Especially with recent events, there are even more now.” – “A lot; religion is important to people here. The church is really important to people.” – “I think it all depends on your financial situation. Why should I go to church on Easter if I can spread red caviar on my bread and stay home?”	– “It seems like not many people go anymore; ours in the village is closed.” – “Yes, churches are very well-attended, and I see that even in ruined cities, the first things to be rebuilt are the churches.” – “Young people don’t go; sometimes the elderly do.” – “There’s a new Russian church here, but people aren’t very keen on going there.”

Informants generally do not notice the presence of overt political propaganda in churches, but they note that they are aware that prayers mention Russian soldiers and wish for the victory of the Russian Federation’s army. According to the observations of those surveyed, even in destroyed cities, churches are the first to be rebuilt, and Russian clergy are sent there. This indicates that the occupying authorities understand the importance of the church as a tool for fostering loyalty to Russia. Informants from the newly occupied territories express some resistance to attending churches under the patronage of the Russian Orthodox Church and note that people refuse to attend them even on major church holidays.

Respondents' answers also made it possible to identify certain propaganda mechanisms used by the occupying authorities in the religious sphere, as they attempt to reshape residents' consciousness by combining sacred practices with manipulative influence (Table 7).

Table 7

Political Propaganda in Religious Circles

Quotes from respondents living in the long-occupied territories	Quotes from respondents living in the newly occupied territories
– “Those prayers were about power. That’s how I interpreted them, at least. He was saying something about the Russian army, about a protector. But it was really a militaristic prayer.” – “On national television, the church has always called for – and continues to call for – this is what I’ve heard – first, it condemns the schism and calls on all of us, Orthodox Christians, to reconciliation and unity. This applies to us, the Ukrainian people, the Russian people, and so on.” – “I haven’t heard that.” – “Prayers for the tsar.” – “There’s propaganda in the sermons.” – “They’re promoting the war.” – “I personally haven’t heard that, but it’s in the news.” “Actually, yes, of course, all of that is there. Just look at the media space – there are well-known figures there, and they are mentioned. It’s understandable, and in politics and in churches, it’s clear that they’re trying to sway people in some way.”	– “I read in the news yesterday that Patriarch Kirill says it’s okay to kill people.” – “I didn’t hear it; I read about it in the news. They mention it and bless people to go into battle.” – “I don’t know, I won’t say. I won’t tell you anything about that.” “They’re feeding us political propaganda in their sermons.”

Informants' responses indicate that Russia is increasingly using the religious sphere in the temporarily occupied territories as a channel for disseminating political propaganda, particularly through sermons, church rituals, and the Russian Orthodox Church's media presence (there are reports of sermons being broadcast via various media channels – television, social media, radio, etc.). It should be noted that there are documented instances of prayers aimed at supporting the Russian army, which include references to “defenders,” calls for the “unity of Orthodox peoples,” and even references to monarchical imagery, such as “prayers for the tsar.” Sometimes this image is projected onto the figure of the President of the Russian Federation. These practices indicate an attempt to sacralize and, in a certain way, legitimize military aggression, to provide it with religious justification, using the language of reconciliation as a cover for the spread of occupation pressure.

In this context, it is worth noting the varying degrees of influence. Thus, we can observe a trend where respondents from the newly occupied territories more often learn about certain politicized messages from the church through the news or public

statements (as they try to distance themselves from physical attendance at these events), whereas in the long-occupied territories, this influence has taken on a more widespread and everyday character. A number of informants clearly point to the presence of propaganda within religious rituals, while others tend to deny its existence, though they acknowledge its presence in the media sphere. This institutional ambivalence within the religious sphere creates a situation in which the church maintains the outward image of a spiritual pillar but in fact functions as an extremely powerful transmitter of the occupying ideology.

In general, one can observe a specific form of social mutation – namely, the intertwining of the sacred and the political – which is characteristic of authoritarian regimes and takes on particular manifestations in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, as the population views the church as a moral authority. This significantly contributes to the transformation of the religious identity of local residents, replacing spiritual meanings and aspects with constructed tools designed to foster loyalty to the occupying authorities.

Based on the literature we have analyzed, we can emphasize that the formation of a “Russian/Rus” identity emerges as one of the key vectors of occupation policy in the temporarily occupied territories (Table 8). Our study also confirms this.

Thus, we see that residents of the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, who had already identified themselves as “Russians” even before 2014, did not require any additional political or propaganda persuasion. Their pro-Russian stance was perceived by the occupying authorities as a necessary basis for their own legitimacy. A number of informants point to the forced issuance of Russian passports and interpret this as yet another element of forced Russification. Even those who do not identify as Russian were forced to accept the imposed legal identity, as this allows them to at least continue to exist and work under occupation and provide for their families. We emphasize that the potential opportunity to pay for or purchase housing, secure certain financial prospects, or obtain a position serves as yet another tool for drawing the local population into cooperation with the occupiers. This phenomenon can be defined as forced conformity or imposed collaboration. One of the main tools for influencing identity is the use of material incentives (pension increases, one-time payments, humanitarian aid), which people are forced to accept under conditions of total impoverishment. Such mechanisms are primarily aimed at pensioners and members of vulnerable population groups. Furthermore, by employing propaganda tropes such as “Russian greatness,” “historical belonging,” “defense,” and “return to the motherland,” the occupying authorities are attempting to create a positive and socially desirable image of Russian significance and to justify any, mostly unlawful, actions. This is reinforced by the mandatory presence of visual symbols (flags, portraits of “leaders”), holidays, and “revived” traditions. At the same time, informants emphasize that the Russian authorities are more concerned with banning Ukrainian culture than with building a Russian cultural identity.

Table 8

Respondents' answers to the question "What are the Russian authorities doing to make people consider themselves Russian?"

Quotes from respondents living in the long-occupied territories	Quotes from respondents living in the newly occupied territories
– "A lot has already been done, because the local population was considered Russian. Plus, there's some propaganda – yes, there is – that we are part of a united Russia. That Russia will protect us." – "Russia provides rights and opportunities." – "The formation of a Russian, pan-Russian identity." – "Nothing. We don't feel like Russians, just second-class citizens." – "They forbid us from displaying anything Ukrainian, saying anything good about Ukraine, or showing any of that." – "Russia gives money, throws it around, to keep people quiet." – "They tell us a story that Donetsk, Donbas – was Russian territory, there were Russian entrepreneurs, Ukraine was never here." – "Cultural events, Russian dictations, activities – do you know Russian laws, do you know the 12 facts about the Russian flag, and so on." – "First, you see how they bribed the pensioners... Then they provided humanitarian aid. It turns out they somehow bought people off that way." – "They're starting to play some pseudo-Russian folk music on the radio a lot." – "Everything connected to Ukraine is simply being eradicated." "Education starting in school – yeah, some kind of, I don't know, patriotic education."	– "Passports, culture. Ukrainian culture is simply being completely eradicated. My mom used to work in the cultural sector – now everything is being wiped out." – "At first they gave this aid – 100,000 – but now they've taken it back, and there's hardly anything left. Well, at first the utility bills were much lower." – "They forced us to get Russian passports." – "No passport, no medical care – it's out of the question. People just have to do it." – "They're hanging their flags everywhere." – "Propaganda in schools, Russian ideology." – "They're running a very serious propaganda campaign: Russia Day, Culture Day, whatever Day – it's constantly being highlighted. Then there are these flags stuck up everywhere you look, portraits of Putin and political figures everywhere. And it's constantly being talked about everywhere." – "There's a very clear sense of Russian superiority. You know, that kind of grandeur." "They're doing well financially; they've raised people's salaries."

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, we highlight the most significant findings of this study. Thus, the identity of Ukrainians who have remained in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine is undergoing a process of deep hybridization, social mutation, and a certain degree of adaptive balancing between outward conformity and largely latent resistance. Social and religious identities, under conditions of both long-term (over 10 years) and relatively shorter-term (3 years) occupation, do not appear as fixed and stable structures. For the most part, they can be characterized as fluid configurations that are constantly changing under the influence of political and propaganda pressure, significant informational isolation, and interference even in the religious sphere.

A distinctive feature of the contemporary field of identity in the temporarily occupied territories (to use Pierre Bourdieu's terminology) is a complex functional split between the public and the private: demonstrated/public loyalty to the occupying authorities increasingly takes the form of coercive, forced, or rational adaptation, whereas private, internal identity – particularly national and religious identity – is preserved in the form of memory, linguistic (hidden) practices, family ties, or customary traditional practices. This mechanism is a manifestation of forced conformity, which is not an ideological acceptance of the new order, but rather a model/strategy for survival under conditions of territorial, religious, and cultural occupation.

Based on the empirical data collected, we can emphasize that the duration of people's exposure to occupation plays a dominant role in the transformation of social identity. Residents of the so-called long-occupied territories typically exhibit a more pronounced identification with belonging to Russia or with a local/territorial identity, which is partly accompanied by the normalization of conformity as an everyday behavioral norm. At the same time, residents of newly occupied regions mostly try to maintain their Ukrainian self-identification but are forced to conceal it or refrain from public expressions of it due to the risks of persecution, repression, or physical violence.

A distinct vector of transformation in the social sphere of the temporarily occupied territories is the religious sphere, where the institutional presence of the Russian Orthodox Church is accompanied by the sacralization of military aggression and the imposition of militarized religious rhetoric, which manifests itself in prayer and worship practices. Despite this, the religious identity of respondents appears to be more stable than their national identity. However, even in these forms, the church is being used as a channel for soft propaganda and symbolic control. It was interesting to note that the language issue, despite its highly contentious nature in public discourse, is not a marker of national identity for most informants. Informants emphasize that it is possible to speak Russian while remaining Ukrainian, which confirms the strong symbolic resilience of Ukrainian cultural heritage, even in a Russian-speaking environment.

The quantitative data obtained revealed a trend indicating that the motives for returning to the temporarily occupied territories are primarily linked to everyday, economic, and family-related factors, while moral or ideological factors have a negligible influence. This underscores once again that identity transformation is not a consequence of conscious support for the occupation regime, but rather is shaped by an unstable socio-economic environment and difficulties in adaptation.

Thus, an empirically documented feature of the Russian Federation's occupation policy is the implementation of systematic socio-ideological control, manifested in changes to the holiday calendar and the dominance of propaganda in educational, cultural, and religious spheres. In response, the local population exhibits ambivalent behavioral patterns, where support for or participation in artificially constructed rituals/events is often not the result of a shift in identity, but rather an outward adaptation while maintaining internal loyalty to Ukraine.

Thus, the study's findings indicate that Ukrainian identity in the temporarily occupied territories has not disappeared but has been transformed, concealed, and fragmented, yet remains capable of revival under conditions of de-occupation and a balanced social policy. This constitutes not only the analytical value of the proposed

work but also its scientific potential for initiating processes of future reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction of the social identity of Ukrainians in the temporarily occupied territories.

SUMMARY

The article examines the transformation of social and religious identity among residents of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine under conditions of prolonged military, informational, and symbolic pressure. The study focuses on the interplay between conformism and resistance as key mechanisms shaping identity changes in the context of occupation. It addresses a gap in Ukrainian sociological research concerning the complex, multi-level transformation of identity beyond the frameworks of collaborationism and institutional trust.

The empirical basis of the study consists of qualitative data obtained through in-depth semi-structured interviews with residents of both long-occupied and newly occupied territories. The findings demonstrate that identity transformation occurs gradually and leads to the emergence of a hybrid identity combining elements of pre-occupation experience with adaptive behavioral strategies. The duration of occupation is identified as a key factor influencing the depth of identity change.

Residents of long-occupied territories tend to display higher levels of adaptive conformity and identification with Russia or local territorial identities. In contrast, residents of newly occupied territories largely preserve Ukrainian identity but conceal it due to security risks. The study reveals a distinction between public conformity and private identity preservation, where conformity functions primarily as a survival strategy.

Special attention is paid to propaganda mechanisms in educational, cultural, and religious spheres, which contribute to identity transformation. Despite these pressures, Ukrainian identity persists in latent forms, maintaining the potential for post-occupation reintegration.

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