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<sup>1</sup> Department of Culturology, Philosophy and Museology, Faculty of Technologies and Design, Poltava V. G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University, Poltava, Ukraine.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Theory and Methods of Vocational Education, Faculty of Technology and Design, Poltava V. G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University, Poltava, Ukraine.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Music, Poltava V. G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University, Poltava, Ukraine.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Primary Education, Faculty of Pedagogical and Art Education, Poltava V. G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University, Poltava, Ukraine.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Theory and Methods of Technological Education, Faculty of Technology and Design, V. G. Korolenko Poltava National Pedagogical University, Poltava, Ukraine.



## CULTURAL HERITAGE OF POLTAVA REGION DURING THE WAR: TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONS IN ARTISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

PATRIMÔNIO CULTURAL DA REGIÃO DE POLTAVA DURANTE A GUERRA: TRANSFORMAÇÃO DE TRADIÇÕES EM PRÁTICAS ARTÍSTICA E EDUCACIONAL

CULTURAL HERITAGE OF POLTAVA REGION DURING THE WAR: TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONS IN ARTISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

Alla LYTUVYENKO<sup>1</sup>  
allailtyvnyenko@gmail.com  
Valentyna TYTARENKO<sup>2</sup>  
pnpu22@gmail.com  
Nataliia SULAIEVA<sup>3</sup>  
sula\_polt@ukr.net  
Olha PALEKHA<sup>4</sup>  
paleha1308@gmail.com  
Andrii TSYNA<sup>5</sup>  
paleha1308@gmail.com  
Vasyl KOVALCHUK<sup>5</sup>  
vezkovalchuk@gmail.com



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**ABSTRACT:** This article analyses the regional traditions of the Poltava region under martial law, highlighting the integration of cultural heritage into contemporary art and educational practices. Given the sociocultural challenges of the war in Ukraine, the study seeks to identify the potential of cultural heritage as a resource for preserving identity, collective memory, and social resilience. The methodology combines historical-cultural analysis, sociological research (n = 400), and content analysis of artistic initiatives carried out between 2022 and 2025. The results reveal the renewal of regional traditions, integrated with modern forms of art education and art therapy, promoting psychological support and cultural preservation. The study proposes recommendations for incorporating regional cultural heritage into educational and creative programs, strengthening social cohesion and cultural security. Its originality lies in the cultural integration model that combines authentic symbols and innovative methods applicable to other Ukrainian regions.

**KEYWORDS:** Regional traditions. Poltava region. Cultural heritage. Musical culture. Creativity.

**RESUMO:** O artigo analisa as tradições regionais da região de Poltava sob lei marcial, destacando a integração do patrimônio cultural às práticas contemporâneas de arte e educação. Diante dos desafios socioculturais da guerra na Ucrânia, o estudo busca identificar o potencial do patrimônio cultural como recurso para preservar identidade, memória coletiva e resiliência social. A metodologia combina análise histórico-cultural, pesquisa sociológica (n = 400) e análise de conteúdo de iniciativas artísticas realizadas entre 2022 e 2025. Os resultados revelam a renovação das tradições regionais, integradas a formas modernas de educação artística e arteterapia, promovendo apoio psicológico e preservação cultural. O estudo propõe recomendações para incorporar o patrimônio cultural regional em programas educacionais e criativos, fortalecendo coesão social e segurança cultural. Sua originalidade está no modelo de integração cultural que combina símbolos autênticos e métodos inovadores aplicáveis a outras regiões ucranianas.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Tradições regionais. Região de Poltava. Patrimônio cultural. Cultura musical. Criatividade.

**RESUMEN:** Este artículo analiza las tradiciones regionales de la región de Poltava bajo la ley marcial, destacando la integración del patrimonio cultural en el arte contemporáneo y las prácticas educativas. Ante los desafíos socioculturales de la guerra en Ucrania, el estudio busca identificar el potencial del patrimonio cultural como recurso para preservar la identidad, la memoria colectiva y la resiliencia social. La metodología combina análisis histórico-cultural, investigación sociológica (n = 400) y análisis de contenido de iniciativas artísticas llevadas a cabo entre 2022 y 2025. Los resultados revelan la renovación de las tradiciones regionales, integradas con formas modernas de educación artística y arteterapia, que promueven el apoyo psicológico y la preservación cultural. El estudio propone recomendaciones para incorporar el patrimonio cultural regional en programas educativos y creativos, fortaleciendo la cohesión social y la seguridad cultural. Su originalidad reside en el modelo de integración cultural que combina símbolos auténticos y métodos innovadores aplicables a otras regiones de Ucrania.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Tradiciones regionales. Región de Poltava. Patrimonio cultural. Cultura musical. Creatividad.

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## INTRODUCTION

In times of military upheaval and national challenges, the issue of preserving and actualizing cultural national identity is of particular importance (Prykhodko, 2024). The regional traditions of Poltava region-with their deep historical continuity, diversity of folk crafts, music, song, and folklore heritage-are not only a marker of local identity, but also a source of social resilience and spiritual resistance. In the current conditions of war, these traditions take on a new meaning, becoming an important component of cultural mobilization, a means of preserving collective memory and establishing semantic reference points in a situation of uncertainty. They not only represent historical and cultural continuity but also form the value basis for new artistic and educational practices in which the past is reinterpreted as a resource for the future. Thus, the study and creative integration of the regional heritage of Poltava region into the contemporary cultural and educational space is seen as a strategy for strengthening identity and cultural subjectivity under martial law.

Under martial law, the artistic and educational spheres of the Poltava region face multidimensional challenges that include both material limitations and semantic transformations. The violation of security conditions, the forced curtailment of public interaction formats, and adaptation to distance or asynchronous forms of learning significantly change the nature of cultural and pedagogical practice. At the same time, pressure is increasing on humanitarian institutions that are forced to function in conditions of limited resources, growing social vulnerability, and emotional exhaustion of participants in the educational process. In this situation, it is especially important to rethink the role of art and education not only as tools for transmitting knowledge or aesthetic values, but also as means of psychosocial support, forming collective memory and symbolic resistance. The war encourages artists, educators, and students to look for new modes of expression in which tradition and modernity cooperate within the framework of cultural survival and semantic rethinking of reality (Lyagusha, 2024).

The integration of cultural heritage into contemporary educational and artistic practices is based on interdisciplinary scientific approaches and the proven ability of heritage to act as a resource for socio-cultural renewal. In the scientific discourse, heritage is increasingly seen as a living and dynamic system that not only preserves historical experience but also transforms in accordance with new social contexts (Trach, 2025). Contemporary pedagogy and cultural studies emphasize the growing importance of localized educational programs, intergenerational dialogue, and creative forms of interpreting traditions in the artistic process. In practical terms, especially in times of war, such approaches help to strengthen national identity, build resilience to traumatic experiences, and activate the cultural potential of local communities. The inclusion of traditional symbols, folklore stories, and craft techniques in educational programs and art projects not only deepens the content of learning and creativity but also opens

new forms of expressing meanings that unite the past and present in the humanitarian space of resistance and recovery (Voices of Culture, 2022; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2024).

The Poltava region is a unique and representative region for studying the integration of cultural heritage into contemporary artistic and educational practices due to its centuries-long contribution to Ukrainian national culture and rich traditions. The region combines deep folklore, arts and crafts, and literary traditions, reflected in the work of prominent figures such as Ivan Kotliarevskiy, Hryhorii Skovoroda, and others whose ideas continue to resonate in contemporary humanities discourse. A developed infrastructure of art schools, museums, and cultural initiatives, as well as an active festival movement and artistic residencies, create a unique space for a lively dialogue between tradition and modernity (Shvets, 2024).

It is especially important that, despite the challenges of wartime, the region maintains a consistent integration of cultural heritage into the educational and artistic process, which contributes to strengthening socio-cultural resilience and local identity (Potapenko et al., 2025). Thus, the experience of Poltava opens prospects for understanding the mechanisms of cultural adaptation and creative transformation of heritage in the face of crisis challenges.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The new realities of today's turbulent world, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and military challenges, require rethinking strategies for integrating cultural heritage into contemporary creative practices. In this context, information and communication technologies and information security are beginning to play an increasingly important role in supporting the functioning of cultural and educational institutions, preserving authentic regional traditions, and strengthening the socio-cultural resilience of communities. A detailed analysis of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with a study of the impact of military operations, allows us to identify key aspects of the adaptation of the artistic and educational spheres to new challenges within the overall system of economic security (Kotlyrevskiy et al., 2022).

In the context of martial law, humanitarian expenditures are of strategic importance for supporting the cultural heritage and educational and artistic initiatives of the regions, including Poltava, which requires rethinking budget priorities and integrating traditions into modern creative practices. The analysis of the transformation of public social and humanitarian spending in 2013-2023 by Yeretin et al. (2024) shows a close connection between funding and external crisis factors, which determines the direction of foreign aid and local resilience strategies.

In the contemporary humanitarian discourse, there is a growing interest in the study of regional traditions as a component of national identity formation, especially in the context

of social transformations and wartime challenges (Filina, 2025; Marukhovska-Kartunova et al., 2025).

In times of war, the issue of national identity has become particularly important, and Ukrainian intellectuals, cultural figures, military personnel, and spiritual leaders have traditionally played a key role in preserving and broadcasting it. According to modern sociological research, the main markers of national identity that have strengthened during the martial law period include social cohesion, overcoming regional contradictions, increased use of the Ukrainian language, and Ukraine-centred self-identification of internally displaced persons. These transformations indicate the strengthening of cultural unity, in which regional traditions play the role of a living carrier of memory and symbolic continuity.

Research shows that new social identities formed because of war can contribute to post-traumatic development, especially when they are linked to the host society, while identification with traumatized groups alone exacerbates negative consequences (Skrodzka et al., 2024).

In the context of war, Ukrainian society demonstrates high resilience and self-organization, which is manifested in cultural resistance, de-Russification, and the growth of civic identity, through active participation in the national resistance (Semeryn, 2023). In this context, the integration of regional traditions of Poltava region into contemporary artistic and educational practices strengthens cultural subjectivity and contributes to the formation of a sustainable identity as a resource of resistance and recovery.

The development of Ukrainian national identity through the education system under martial law is an important component of national security, and it needs to be strengthened by updating the value orientations, the role of teachers, regulatory and legal support, and student participation in volunteer and community activities (Trubavina & Kalgushkin, 2025). The integration of cultural heritage into contemporary creative practices through education contributes to the formation of Ukrainian identity, particularly at the regional level, where traditional art and cultural values of Poltava region become not only an object of preservation, but also a tool for national-patriotic education and social cohesion in times of war (Trubavina et al., 2023).

At a briefing of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe “Ukrainian Culture in Wartime” (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 2024) in May 2024 in Washington, DC, it was noted that Russia’s full-scale aggression is aimed not only at the physical destruction of cultural infrastructure—museums, libraries, theatres, schools, and religious monuments—but also at the systemic deconstruction of Ukrainian cultural identity through propaganda and denial of its uniqueness. The community of scholars has focused on the preservation of cultural heritage in times of war, which is a national imperative and requires international support to ensure Ukraine’s cultural resilience (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 2024). In the context of education and the arts in Poltava, this

emphasis on relevance means that the integration of regional traditions—through archiving, research, creative practices, and teaching—not only contributes to the preservation of cultural uniqueness, but also serves as a national resistance, strengthening cultural identity and social cohesion in times of crisis.

Historical memory in modern Ukraine is a key factor in the formation of national identity, especially in the context of Russian aggression, when the struggle has not only a military but also an ideological dimension. It intensifies the need for national symbols, narratives, and cultural markers that consolidate society and counteract enemy propaganda and emphasizes that the integration of local cultural heritage into artistic and educational practices helps to restore and strengthen historical memory, which, in turn, plays a crucial role in shaping a common identity and resisting destructive narratives. Thus, art and education based on regional culture can become effective tools for cultural self-defense and nation-building in times of war (Halukha et al., 2025).

Poltava region, as a historical and cultural region of Ukraine, has a unique tradition of preserving and transmitting cultural heritage through artistic, musical, and educational practices (Shershova, 2021). Studies show that it is local cultural forms—ritual song, decorative and applied arts, kobza heritage—that have become the basis for the development of art education programs and the integration of musical culture into the modern educational process (Romanchyshyn, 2022).

The challenges of today, dictated by the Russian-Ukrainian war, when Ukrainian statehood is once again fighting for its right to exist, raise the issue of preserving and developing national culture. While the military is fighting for every meter of Ukrainian territorial freedom and ensuring the safety of the civilian population, artists, including those from Poltava region, could create for the development of the cultural space of our country. In this context, the musical culture of the region, which combines traditional folk forms and modern creative interpretations, is of particular importance. Artistic events and initiatives—from performing folk songs in choirs to creating new works of authorship, online projects, and concerts in public spaces—have become not only a tool of cultural resistance, but also an important factor in integrating local musical heritage into contemporary artistic practices. The experience of the first weeks of the war, when choral conductors from Poltava region initiated performances of patriotic works, proves that musical culture is an effective means of community consolidation, preserving identity, and transmitting regional traditions in a new socio-cultural context (Kravchuk & Krachko, 2022).

In the context of martial law, these traditions play the role of a cultural and social tool to support communities, adapt to stressful conditions, and form the creative subjectivity of young people (Kaminsky, 2024; Katerynych et al., 2024). Current publications focus on the transformation of art education in conditions of limited access to physical infrastructure, which



stimulates the development of distance formats using regional cultural content (Dobrovolska et al., 2023). Studies on the integration of cultural heritage into educational courses and extracurricular initiatives emphasize the importance of preserving authentic forms of creativity for intergenerational transmission of identity (Szromek & Bugdol, 2024). Education based on art and cultural heritage is an effective means of building transversal competencies, social cohesion, and sustainable development, through creative, inclusive, and interdisciplinary approaches (Dobrovolska et al., 2023).

At the same time, an analysis of Ukrainian and foreign sources shows that effective integration of art, including regional art, into the education system requires systemic state support, development of local strategies, and involvement of public initiatives (Peng, 2023; Pavlou, 2022). In this context, studies that highlight the role of art education in preserving cultural heritage (Vytkalov et al., 2025) on the example of the Poltava region as a space of intersection of traditions and modern artistic practices are of particular importance.

The aim of the study is to identify effective ways to integrate the cultural heritage of Poltava region into contemporary artistic and educational practices, which will help preserve local identity and collective memory under martial law. Particular attention is paid to finding innovative forms of combining traditional cultural elements with modern creative approaches that can ensure the sustainability and development of the region's cultural environment.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The methodological basis of the study was a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis. The theoretical aspects of the research problem were covered through a systematic analysis of scientific publications, official statistics, reports of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, as well as materials of international organizations (ICOM, WMF). A quantitative and cost analysis of statistical data on the destruction and damage to cultural infrastructure in Ukraine and Poltava region was conducted.

The method of historical and cultural analysis was used to reconstruct regional traditions and identify their transformation in modern socio-cultural conditions. To process the results, the methods of content analysis, statistical modelling, and approximation were used, which allowed us to identify correlation, dynamics of change, and regional variations in terms of assessing the importance of regional traditions and visits to cultural institutions after the outbreak of war. The authors also used elements of case studies for in-depth analysis of individual practices and innovative approaches that have the potential for scaling.

The methodological strategy is based on the principles of validity, reliability, and representativeness of the sample, which ensures the scientific validity and reproducibility of the results. The combination of analytical and practice-oriented tools allowed us to formulate ways to integrate the cultural heritage of the region into modern artistic and educational practices under martial law.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

Resolution 2558 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe recognizes the systematic destruction of cultural identity in Ukraine as part of an aggressive Russification policy and defines the destruction of cultural heritage as a war crime (PACE, 2024). This approach strengthens the scientific argument about the need to integrate Ukraine's regional traditions into modern artistic and educational practices as a tool to counter cultural assimilation, build community resilience, and ensure the continuity of historical and cultural memory in times of war.

Under martial law, Ukraine's cultural sector is suffering significant losses. According to the latest estimates, the total amount of direct damage to Ukraine's infrastructure because of Russia's full-scale invasion has reached almost \$170 billion, which is \$12.6 billion more than in early 2024. The increase is due to further destruction as a result of missile attacks and hostilities, with the largest losses suffered by housing, transport infrastructure, and energy (Kyiv School of Economics, 2024).

Cultural heritage, as one of the key elements of regional identity, suffered damage worth about \$4 billion, covering 3,921 cultural sites, 399 religious buildings, and 343 sports complexes (Kyiv School of Economics, 2024). These figures illustrate the scale of the challenges faced by the arts and education sector and emphasize the urgent need to preserve and restore cultural assets. The direct damage to the infrastructure and cultural heritage of Ukraine and Poltava region because of the full-scale war is presented in Table 1.

The data show that despite Poltava region's relatively smaller share in the structure of all-Ukrainian direct losses (1.24%), losses in the field of cultural heritage, sports and tourism are proportionally higher (3.75%). This is due to the large number of cultural infrastructure facilities of regional and national importance, including architectural monuments, museums, and spiritual centres. In the context of martial law, their restoration and integration into contemporary creative practices become not only an element of cultural policy, but also a factor of social cohesion and sustainability of the regional community. According to the Ministry of Culture and Strategic Communications of Ukraine (2025), clubs and libraries were the most affected objects of Ukraine's cultural infrastructure (Figure 1).



**Table 1**

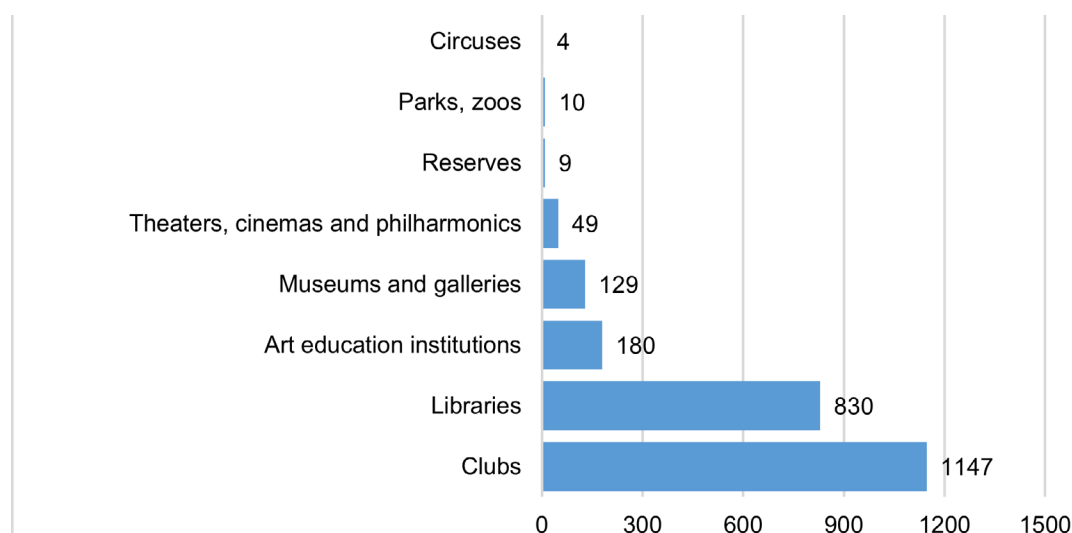
*Assessment of the destruction of infrastructure and cultural heritage in Ukraine and Poltava region in the context of a full-scale war (as of 2025)*

Indicator	Ukraine	Poltava region	Share of Poltava region, %.
Direct losses from the war - total, billion USD US DOLLARS	170.0	2.1	1.24
Damage to cultural, sports and tourism infrastructure, billion USD USD	4.0	0.15	3.75
Damage to cultural facilities, units, incl:	3921	86	2.19
– religious buildings	<b>399</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2.76</b>
– sports complexes	<b>343</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2.04</b>

Note. Ministry of Culture and Strategic Communications of Ukraine, 2025.

**Figure 1**

*Damage to cultural infrastructure in Ukraine*



Note. Ministry of Culture and Strategic Communications of Ukraine (2025).

According to UNESCO (2025), as of June 25, 2025, 501 cultural heritage sites have been damaged since the beginning of the full-scale aggression against Ukraine (February 24, 2022). The largest share is made up of buildings of historical and artistic significance—262 objects (52.3% of the total number of recorded losses), as well as religious buildings—151 units (30.1%). Museums (34), monuments (33), libraries (18), archives (1), and archaeological sites (2) suffered significant damage. In the Poltava region, an architectural monument of local significance in Kremenchuk, the building of the complex of the main headquarters of the inspector of reserve cavalry and siege troops, was damaged. The data indicate a large-scale and systemic threat to the preservation of cultural heritage, which complicates the restoration of the cultural environment and creates long-term risks to national identity.

During the period of martial law, the role of folk art, arts and crafts, local symbolism and rituals in the creative practices of Ukraine has acquired new content and functional significance. There has been an increase in the use of regional folklore, folk songs, traditional costumes, ornaments, embroidery, ceramics, weaving, and woodworking as a means of communicating cultural memory, local identity, and national resilience. Folk symbols have begun to play the role of a marker of national resistance and cultural unification, which is reflected in both exhibition and stage, musical and visual-performative forms (RCFA&CEW, 2025).

Artists, educators, and amateurs have intensified their understanding of ritual heritage, such as calendar and family customs, which are presented in the format of interpreted performances, flash mobs, ethno-projects, symbolic actions, and interactive workshops (StateArts, 2024). Educational institutions are adapting local cultural heritage to new realities by introducing traditional techniques and stories into educational programs in fine arts, music, choreography, and theater pedagogy (Sionchuk, 2024; Zhurba et al., 2024).

The study revealed several stable trends that indicate the active integration of traditional culture into contemporary art and educational practices in Poltava region during the war. One of the leading forms is the artistic reinterpretation of heritage: regional ornaments, folklore images, and ceremonial symbols are increasingly serving as the basis for the creation of contemporary artworks in the fields of painting, graphics, textile art, and digital design. Poltava embroidery, pottery, and folk motifs, combined with modern artistic means, form new visual languages that not only represent identity but also become a means of artistic resistance and patriotic expression.

In the educational space, there is a renewal of educational approaches with an emphasis on the study of local cultural heritage. Art education institutions are introducing courses and projects focused on mastering traditional techniques, studying the history of regional art, organizing workshops with folk artists, and field ethnographic research that stimulates intergenerational exchange and preservation of heritage knowledge (Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Forms of integration of traditional culture of Poltava region into contemporary art and education during the war*

Form of integration	Examples of manifestation	Sphere of realization	Functional significance
Artistic reinterpretation of heritage	Use of folk embroidery, ornaments, symbols in contemporary art objects	Fine arts, design	Patriotic expression, visualization of identity
Actualization of traditions in art education	Courses in decorative arts, projects to study local culture	Art schools, colleges	Formation of intergenerational communication, preservation of knowledge

Volunteer art initiatives	Creating amulets, embroideries, souvenirs with folklore elements	Public organizations, workshops	Moral support, symbolic resistance
Digitalization of heritage	Online museums, digital archives, virtual exhibitions	Internet platforms, libraries	Dissemination of knowledge, transregional communication
Art therapy practices	Collective production of traditional products, song classes	Social and psychological centers	Overcoming trauma, maintaining emotional stability

*Nota.* Roman (2023); Kulaga (2024); Poltava news (2023); DCT PRC (2024); Trubavina e Kalgushkin (2025); RCFA&CEW (2025).

A separate group consists of volunteer initiatives and socially oriented projects that use cultural heritage as a tool to support community morale. In particular, the production of amulets, symbolic embroideries, and handmade items based on folk motifs has become part of collective creativity with a volunteer or memorial character.

In addition, there is a growing interest in digital tools for preserving and broadcasting regional heritage. Online archives, virtual museums, and interactive platforms promoting the traditional culture of Poltava region not only expand the audience but also create new opportunities for interregional and international dialogue (PRC, 2024a; PRC, 2024b).

Particular attention is drawn to art therapy practices, in which traditional culture acts as a means of emotional recovery and internal mobilization in the face of social tension (Kevers & Rober, 2020). Work with IDPs, children, and military families often includes the use of song folklore, collective creation of amulets, and memories of family traditions as ways to overcome traumatic experiences through symbolic participation in a living culture that has restorative potential. Such practices not only serve as a means of psycho-emotional support but also form the basis for the development of national identity and cultural subjectivity, especially among young people (Trubavina & Kalgushkin, 2025).

In this context, the experience of the V All-Ukrainian Creative Competition “What is Ukraine for Me?”, organized by the United World Cultures Foundation with the support of the Ukrainian Coordination Center for Legal Education of the Population and the Ukrainian Youth Legal Assembly, is illustrative (Rada-Poltava, 2025). The competition, dedicated to the Independence Day of Ukraine, is aimed at the cultural and educational development of children and adolescents, their patriotic education, preservation of intangible cultural heritage, and active involvement of talented youth in socially significant volunteer activities. Participation in such projects allows the younger generation not only to discover their own creative potential, but also to feel a sense of belonging to the community through cultural codes that ensure an emotional connection between generations in the difficult conditions of martial law.

Thus, the findings demonstrate that the traditional culture of Poltava region has not only not lost its relevance during the war, but has become a source of inspiration, consolidation, and meaning-making in the context of a profound social transformation.

The study analysed several artistic and educational initiatives implemented in Poltava region under martial law, which demonstrate the effective adaptation and integration of cultural heritage into modern creative and educational formats. These projects not only preserve elements of regional identity, but also actively transform them, responding to new social demands related to the war, population displacement, and the security crisis.

One of the important initiatives is the Tradition as Protection project, implemented by the Poltava Regional Center for Folk Art. Its goal is to use traditional crafts as a tool to support displaced children, military families, and other vulnerable groups. Through embroidery, pottery, and weaving workshops, participants are engaged in authentic forms of cultural experience that promote emotional recovery and strengthen their connection to national symbols. The all-Ukrainian events “Spring Week of Kindness” (Poltava news, 2023) and “Christmas Letter at the Nativity Scene” (DCT PRC, 2024) were held in Poltava’s secondary schools, where children demonstrated local cultural and artistic initiatives among schoolchildren: writing letters and making angel charms at the Poltava Museum of Local Lore, weaving amulet bracelets. Children are actively involved in the practice of creative support for the military. This demonstrates the actualization of traditional symbolic forms—folk amulets, ethno-cultural artifacts—in modern educational practices, which strengthens the pedagogical function of educational institutions and acts as a means of emotional empathy, social unity, and cultural revival in wartime.

This combination of creativity, cultural heritage, and educational practices helps to strengthen the identity and cohesion of the regional community, meeting the key challenges of wartime. It is important to include elements of intangible cultural heritage in art courses in secondary education (PRC, 2024b). Its peculiarity lies in the interdisciplinarity and live interaction of students with the bearers of traditions: masters of decorative arts, folklorists, and local historians. In the Poltava region, in particular in Opishnia, a symposium of monumental ceramics “Fire does not bake the fierce” was held with the support of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, organized by the Congress of Ukrainian Ceramologists and the National Museum of Ukrainian Pottery (UCF, 2024). The event aims to preserve traditional Ukrainian ceramics and promote the development of its modern forms as part of a creative response to the war. Participants created seven monumental ceramic sculptures symbolizing the heroic struggle of the Ukrainian people, and took part in workshops, discussions, and lectures; the results of the event will be collected in a special catalogue (UCF, 2024). This format of cultural activity demonstrates that even in the face of difficult crisis circumstances, regional artists are successfully integrating cultural heritage into contemporary art; this institutional support creates a platform for the restoration and modernization of local traditions in artistic practice.

In the visual arts, the initiative “Nation Code: Visualization of Heritage” is actively developing, where young artists transform elements of traditional embroidery, ornamentation, and mythology into modern art formats, from digital art to street murals (Ponomarenko, 2025). This approach ensures that the heritage is preserved not in a musealized form, but as a living cultural code present in public space.

In the wartime realities, Poltava region demonstrates that regional traditions are not only preserved but also acquire a redefined meaning in the artistic and educational spheres. Workshops, charity exhibitions, and projects to make amulets for the military bring children and adults together in joint creative work, creating a sense of belonging and support for the defenders. Folk symbols embodied in embroidery, arts and crafts, and ceremonial items become not only an aesthetic expression of cultural heritage but also a powerful tool for community moral resilience (PCC, 2025; PRC, 2024a, 2024b; Rada-Poltava, 2025).

The implementation of the project to digitize ethnographic materials from Slobozhanshchyna and Poltava, launched in 2022 with the support of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, was an important step in preserving regional cultural heritage in the context of martial law and the threat of destruction of unique manuscript and audio sources. The Ukrainian folk song, which was formed during the Cossack era as a source of national and cultural identity, is not only a marker of historical memory but also a tool for the modern artistic and educational integration of regional cultural heritage, in particular of Poltava region, into the creative practices of the present, contributing to the preservation of linguistic identity, heroic epic, and creative continuation of the tradition in times of war (Shyrshova, 2022).

Digitized texts and transcribed audio materials containing samples of oral folk art, ethnographic descriptions of customs, rituals, traditional cuisine, crafts, and folk costumes create significant scientific and practical potential for use in linguistic, historical, ethnological, and sociological research. They can be integrated into the educational process of educational institutions of various levels as teaching and learning materials, and serve as the basis for contemporary art projects, from theatre productions to creative works by masters of decorative and applied arts and cooking. Thus, free access to these digital resources not only ensures the preservation of intangible cultural heritage but also opens new opportunities for its creative rethinking and integration into contemporary artistic and educational practices, contributing to the strengthening of the cultural identity and socio-cultural sustainability of the region (Luzan, 2023).

The measures under consideration demonstrate a multi-level and functionally flexible model of regional heritage integration in wartime. The example of the Poltava region shows how traditional culture is a resource for social cohesion, personal resilience, and innovative development of the artistic and educational environment.

Thus, the combination of traditional cultural elements with modern creative approaches in the artistic and educational practices of Poltava region under martial law is not only a

means of preserving intangible cultural heritage, but also an important tool for adaptation and restoration of the socio-cultural environment. Innovative forms of such integration—from the use of local symbols in digital art projects and media education to the involvement of traditional rituals in the format of interactive performances and creative residencies—help to form new channels of cultural communication, strengthen regional identity and community resilience. In the long run, this creates the basis for the sustainable development of a cultural space that can meet the challenges of today and preserve the uniqueness of regional traditions.

## **DISCUSSION**

Martial law in Ukraine significantly changes the security, social and cultural life of the regions, especially in terms of understanding, preserving and using local cultural heritage. In these conditions, regional cultural traditions, particularly in Poltava region, acquire new meaning and functional load. They appear not only as aesthetic or historical values, but also as a living source of resilience, collective memory, moral strength, and cultural identity, which plays an important role in ensuring internal resistance and building national unity.

Under the influence of military challenges, there is a deep rethinking of traditional forms of folk art, arts and crafts, local symbolism and rituals, which are now being actively integrated into contemporary artistic practices (Leahy, 2023). These forms are no longer perceived exclusively as objects of protection or museum representation; they are turning into effective tools of cultural mobilization. Visual art, stage performances, digital narratives, and multimedia installations using regional motifs are actively included in communication spaces, becoming means of actualizing identity and preserving historical memory in the face of external aggression (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2022).

From an educational standpoint, this process is manifested through the reorientation of pedagogical practice: there is a growing interest in local history research, involving students in interpreting heritage through creative projects, working with archival sources, documentary and artistic materials, and ceremonial folklore. Educational institutions in the region are increasingly using heritage-oriented methods that combine historical knowledge with the formation of values and civic awareness. In this context, heritage acts not only as a content but also as a methodological resource—a factor in the formation of critical thinking, empathy, social interaction, and responsibility (Dordio et al., 2024).

In the context of martial law, the status of the cultural heritage of Poltava region is changing significantly: from an object of traditional protection, it is turning into a dynamic resource of cultural resistance, symbolic self-affirmation, and humanistic mobilization. Its integration into modern educational and artistic formats creates conditions for the formation of local subjectivity, consolidation of the values of cultural diversity, and a stronger sense of



shared responsibility for the preservation and development of national culture, even in the most difficult historical circumstances.

The potential of cultural heritage as a factor in preserving collective memory, identity, and societal resilience is especially relevant in the context of martial law, when society faces radical challenges to its integrity and self-awareness. In the case of the Poltava region, which is rich in deep-rooted traditions, local symbols, rituals, and forms of folk art, cultural heritage turns into a source of moral strength and identity guidelines that can unite communities around common values and memorable images. By integrating it into artistic and educational practices, heritage not only records the past, but also actualizes itself as an effective tool for shaping narratives of resistance, social cohesion, and humanitarian mobilization.

Such a functional rethinking of traditional culture allows society not only to preserve the continuity of identity, but also to update it in response to contemporary challenges. The use of cultural heritage in visual art, design, school and extracurricular education, museum and creative practice contributes to the formation of historical subjectivity, strengthening social trust and a sense of belonging to the community. In this aspect, heritage appears not as an archaic artifact, but as a living resource of sustainability that can transform the traumatic experience of war into a creative force for cultural renewal and social solidarity (Table 3).

**Tabela 3**

*Ways to integrate the cultural heritage of the region into contemporary artistic and educational practices under martial law*

Potential	Essence	Specific examples
Collective memory	Preservation of historical narratives, rituals, and names of prominent figures	Restoration of Cossack holidays; reconstruction of local history through school projects, exhibitions in local history museums
Cultural identity	Formation of a common cultural language through traditions, symbols, and ethnic codes	Use of Poltava patterns in embroidery of modern clothes; popularization of songs by Ukrainian poets in school education
Social sustainability and cohesion	Uniting the community through joint cultural events and rituals	Holding “resistance evenings” in shelters; initiatives of cultural centers for internally displaced persons
Therapeutic function of culture	Processing war trauma through art, including ethnographic and decorative forms	Art-therapeutic folk painting groups for children of IDPs; creation of collective amulets in schools
Educational potential of heritage	Using cultural heritage as an educational resource	Implementation of integrated lessons “art + history of the region”; museum pedagogy
Actualization of symbols and rituals	Restoration and modernization of local rituals in new contexts	Symbolic sewing of towels for the military; ritual performance of songs in support of the Armed Forces during charity events
Creative adaptation of heritage to modernity	Rethinking traditions in modern genres (street art, performance, new media)	Murals in the style of regional ornamentation; video poetry with elements of folklore; VR exhibitions based on ethnographic collections

*Note.* Compiled by the authors.

In the context of martial law in the Poltava region, there is a rethinking and intensification of the use of elements of folk art, arts and crafts, local symbols and rituals in creative practices. These elements take on a new meaning, becoming not only a source of artistic expression, but also a tool for preserving identity, strengthening spiritual resilience, and consolidating the community. Contemporary art projects show a conscious appeal to the visual codes of traditional embroidered ornaments, pottery, weaving, folk songs and ritual forms that turn into iconic markers of cultural memory. For example, during the monitoring of artistic initiatives conducted by the author's group in 2022-2024, more than 40 local projects were recorded where traditional motifs were used in the format of contemporary illustration, scenography, art therapy practices for IDPs, and in educational out-of-school programs. Thus, traditional culture is not only preserved, but also actively transformed in the crisis, ensuring intergenerational dialogue and strengthening the cultural subjectivity of the region.

In the context of military aggression, international support and coordination of resources is an important component of preserving cultural heritage. In particular, the "Declaration on the Protection of Archives, Libraries, Museums and Cultural Heritage Sites in Times of Armed Conflict and Political Instability" (International Council of Museums, 2024) defines the principles of safe preservation of cultural property, emphasizing the need for coordination between national authorities, international organizations and local communities. The Declaration emphasizes the priority of protecting tangible and intangible heritage as a key element of identity and collective memory, which is especially relevant in times of crisis, when cultural sites become vulnerable to destruction, looting and illicit trafficking. Its provisions serve as a guideline for developing strategies for integrating the regional cultural heritage of Poltava region into contemporary artistic and educational practices aimed at preserving historical and cultural memory, strengthening social resilience, and shaping local identity in times of war.

With an initial grant of USD 500,000 from the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, the World Monuments Fund's Ukraine Heritage Response Fund (WMF, 2025) provides Ukrainian professionals with the necessary materials and expert support to protect cultural heritage sites. Where it is safe to do so, the fund helps to stabilize and restore damaged structures. Such initiatives not only reduce the consequences of the destruction but also lay the groundwork for further work on the protection of cultural sites for the period of post-war reconstruction, forming a stable financial and organizational platform for the integration of traditional elements of regional heritage into modern artistic and educational practices in Poltava region.

Thus, innovative forms of combining traditional cultural elements with modern creative approaches, such as interactive art projects, multimedia installations, digital modeling of traditional ornaments, and inclusive art residencies, demonstrate a high potential for preserving the cultural identity of Poltava region and at the same time open up new opportunities for its dynamic development. In the context of martial law, such practices not only ensure the

sustainability of the cultural environment but also become a tool for psychological support of the community, consolidation of social capital, and strengthening of intergenerational ties. Their comprehensive effect is the ability to integrate cultural heritage into the current creative discourse, turning it into a source of innovative solutions and a means of shaping the region's sustainable cultural future.

## CONCLUSION

The study has shown that the regional traditions of Poltava region under martial law acquire new semantic and functional dimensions, acting not only as a cultural resource but also as an important factor in preserving collective memory, consolidating the community, and building the resilience of society. An analysis of official data on damage and destruction of the cultural heritage of Ukraine and Poltava region, combined with a content analysis of artistic and educational practices, showed that the integration of intangible cultural heritage into the contemporary creative process increases the level of local identity and promotes the development of innovative forms of cultural communication.

It has been established that in the context of limited resources and growing social challenges, cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary approaches, particularly a combination of artistic, educational and public initiatives, are effective. Such a format of interaction ensures the preservation and adaptation of traditions to new socio-cultural conditions and also promotes the involvement of the general population in creative activities.

The results obtained are not only of theoretical importance for the development of cultural studies and socio-humanitarian research, but also of practical value for the development of regional development strategies, cultural policies and educational programs aimed at preserving and rethinking cultural heritage. The results of the study can be used to develop models of cultural resilience in other regions affected by military or hybrid threats, as well as to integrate the Ukrainian experience into the broader European and global context.

Further research should focus on the long-term impact of such practices on social cohesion and the formation of cultural resilience in the post-conflict period.

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