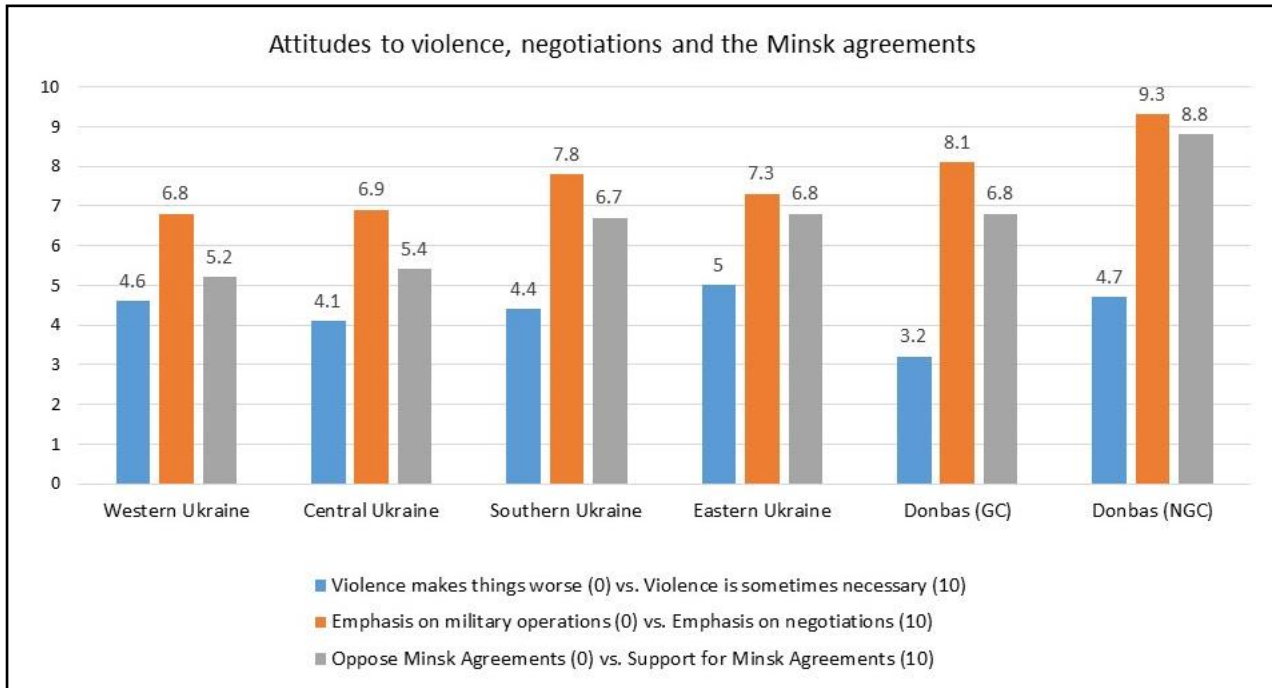


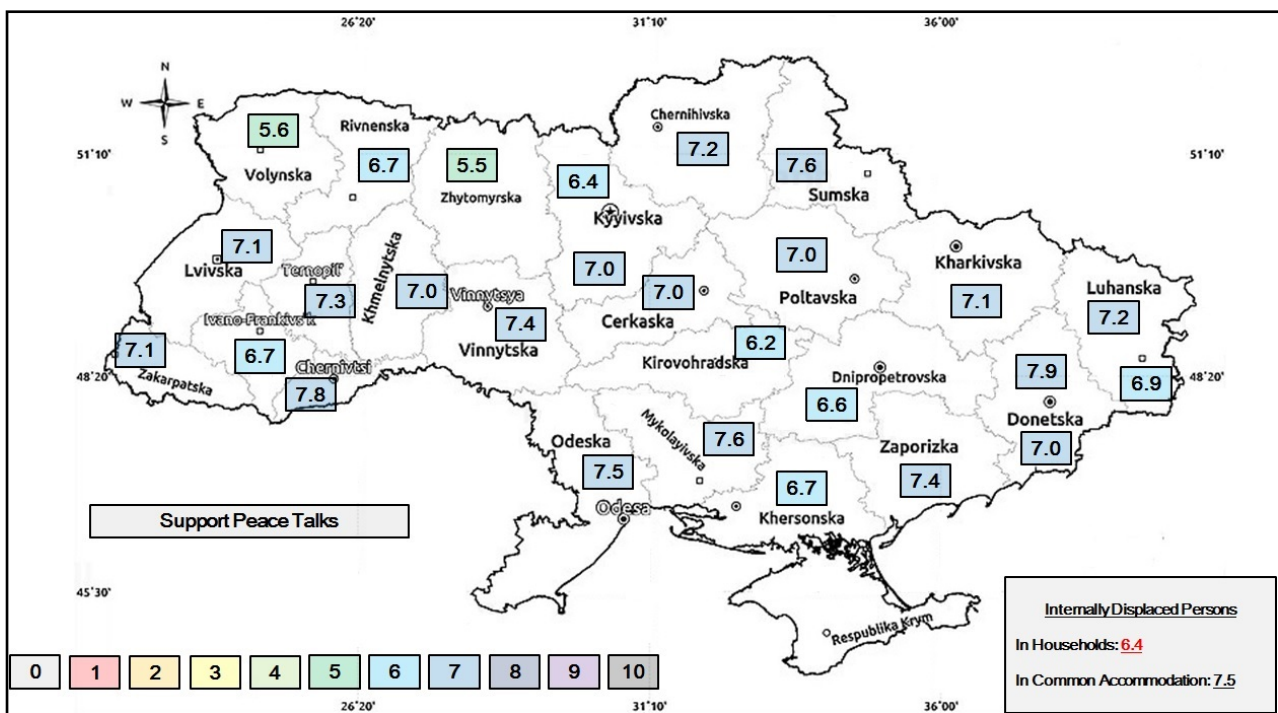
Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) Index

Executive Brief on Peace Process: How to move forward regarding the negotiations and Minsk Agreements?

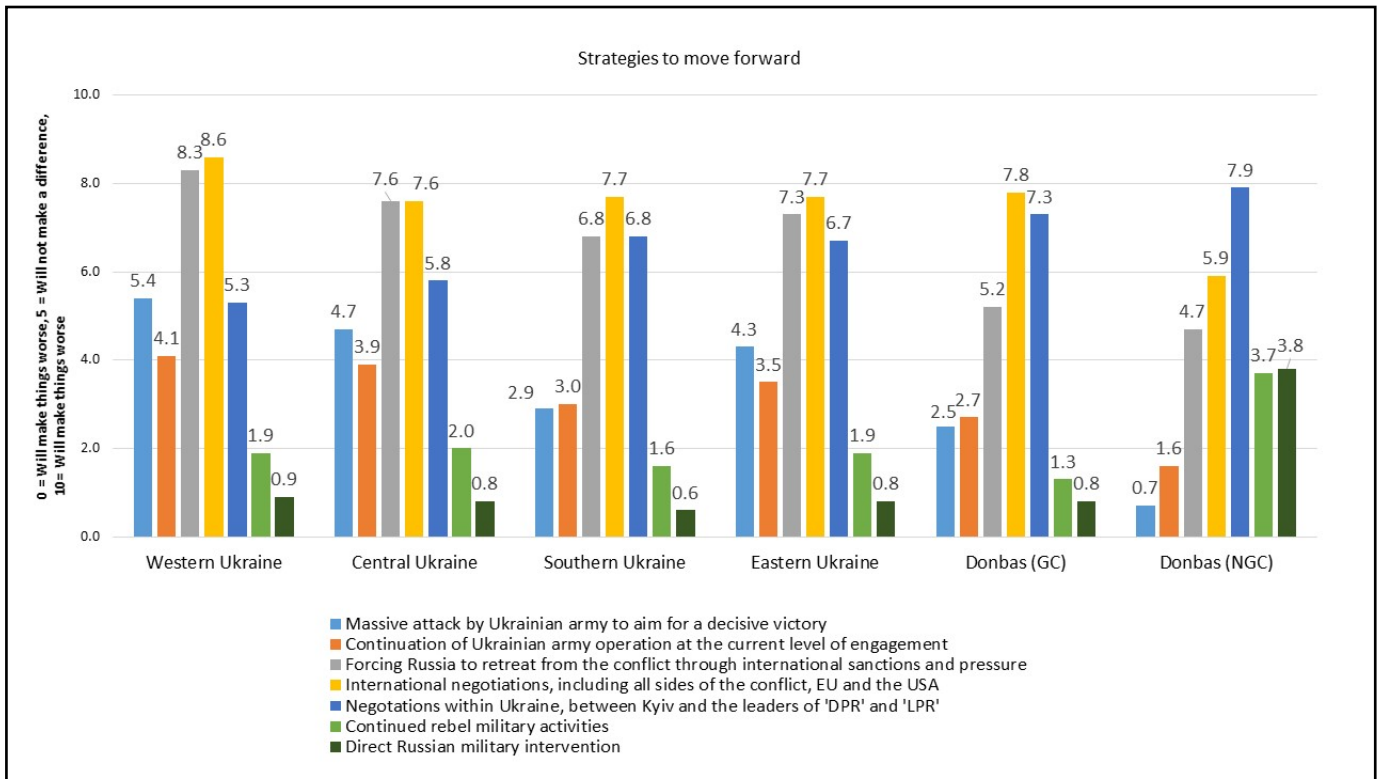
SCORE Index findings reveal that Ukrainians are currently not as supportive of continued army operations, perhaps acknowledging that this is not a war that can be won in the battlefield (see scores of 3.2 and 4.7 on a scale of 0 -10; “support for use of violence”).



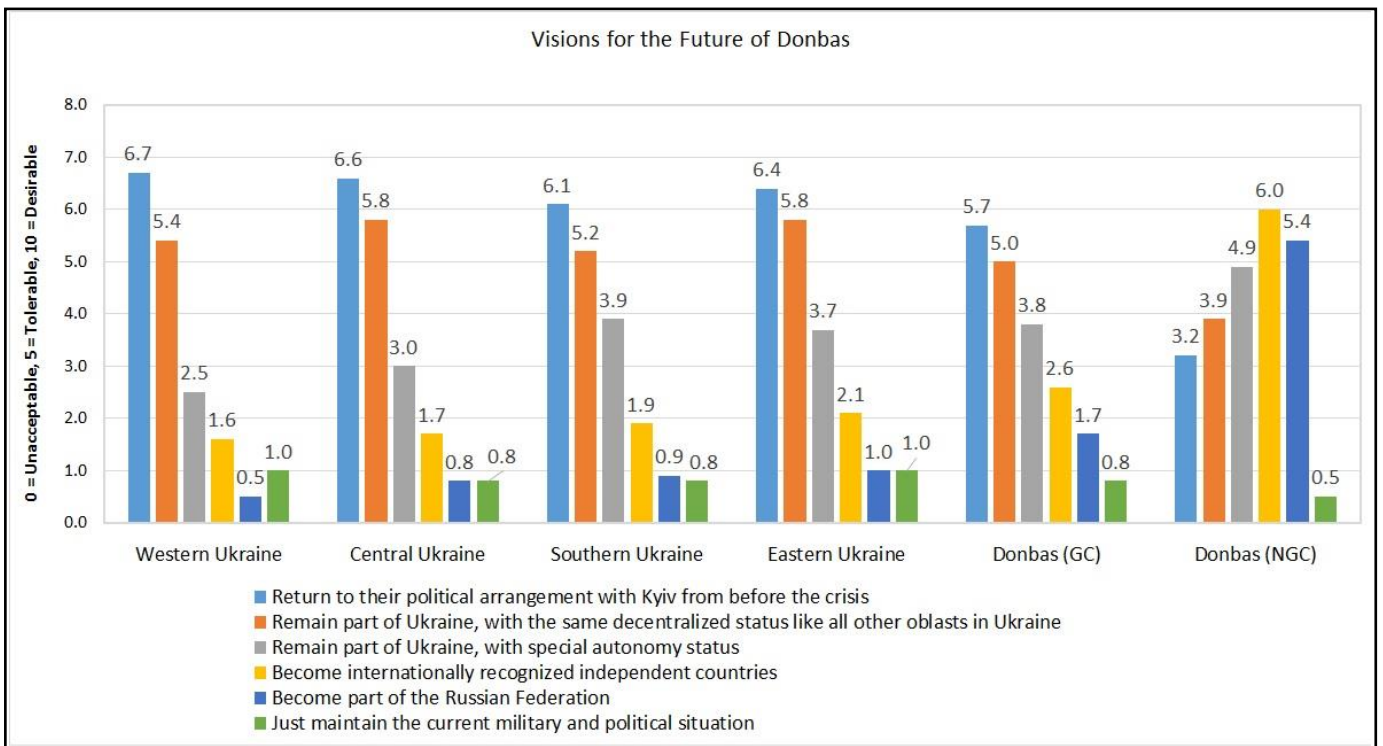
In contrast, there is high support for peace talks as opposed to continuation of war throughout the country, including the non-government controlled (NGC) areas of Donbas.



Among various alternative strategies, ‘negotiations within Ukraine, between Kyiv and the leaders of the so-called DNR/ LNR’ are supported by the population, even by those living in the non-government controlled areas. Having said that, international negotiations tend to be viewed more favourably than negotiations within Ukraine, in government-controlled areas. Continued military engagement, by either side, is viewed as significantly less desirable than peace talks in all regions of the country. Notably, in the non-Government controlled areas, military intervention by Russia or continued rebel military activities are actually not considered as desirable options.



In order to understand Ukrainians' perceptions on ways of achieving 'peace', the SCORE Index has measured the level of support towards the Minsk Agreements as a basis for peace. The research findings show that there is a lot of support for Minsk Agreements in both South and East, especially in the non-government controlled areas. However, there is ambivalence towards the Minsk Agreements in the West and Central parts of Ukraine. To capture the underlying causes of opposition towards the Minsk, the SCORE Index has further tested different options regarding the future of Donbas:

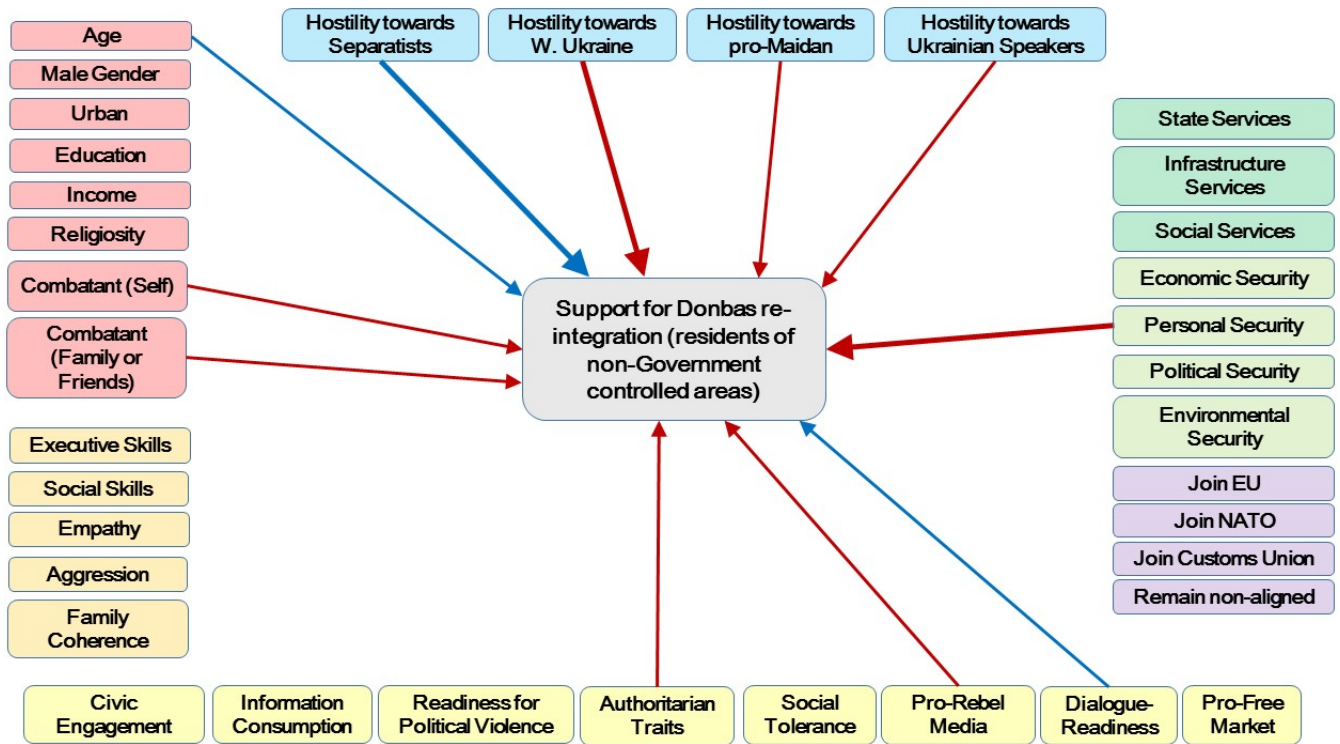


As shown by the chart above, 'remaining part of Ukraine with special autonomy status' is an acceptable solution for the people living in the non-government controlled areas of Donbas, which is a main driver of their support for the Minsk agreements. However, there is very low support for 'special autonomy of Donbas' in the West; hence there is lower support for Minsk Agreements.

The SCORE has identified a similar pattern regarding support for Amnesty. There is relatively high support for Amnesty especially in the non-government controlled areas, but very low support in the West (especially in the oblasts which send people to fight in the conflict).

Furthermore, in case of a peace deal, there is a nation-wide consensus that amnesty should be only provided for those who have not committed war crimes (i.e. summary executions, killing of civilians, kidnappings, rape).

Regarding the future of Donbas, the SCORE has identified factors that influence people living in the non-government controlled areas to support the re-integration of Donbas into Ukraine:



A positive relationship (blue lines) suggests that higher scores on the predictor lead to greater readiness for political violence. A negative relationship (red lines) suggests that higher scores on the predictor lead to less readiness for political violence.

As shown above, residents of NGCAs who are reluctant to support integration of Donbas are mainly people who are hostile towards Ukrainian speakers, Western Ukraine and Pro-Maidan narratives; while people who follow Pro-Rebel / Pro-Russian media are also reluctant to support reintegration. Furthermore, support for reintegration appears to be lower in people who experience high personal security under the current status-quo and among Combatants (people who are either combatants themselves; or have family members or friends who are combatants). Finally, younger people (18 – 35 age group) and People with authoritarian traits appear to be reluctant over Donbas reintegration.

A related analysis that was also conducted was to try and identify which factors predict hostility towards separatists, among NGCA residents. This analysis revealed elevated hostility towards separatists among people who believe Ukraine should join the EU, more educated people, and among people whose families have been divided through the conflict.

Policy Recommendations:

The SCORE Index has shown that peace talks are currently preferred over military engagement in all regions of the country, including in the non-government controlled areas. A national consensus is emerging that more military engagement would not contribute to the re-integration of Ukraine or the successful resolution of the Donbas issue. This preference for peace talks over military engagement is an important take-away message from this study, which should be disseminated and discussed.

However, when it comes to defining which peace is to be sought through talks, important disagreements emerge. While the Minsk agreements are widely supported in the non—Government controlled areas and elsewhere in the East and South of Ukraine, support for them is mixed at best and hostile at worst in the West and Centre of the country. This scepticism of the Minsk agreements appears to be related to their content – and specifically, concerns over ‘special autonomy status’ as well as over the desirability of amnesty. However, personal, intergroup and demographic characteristics are also contributing to attitudes towards Minsk. Citizens in the West and Centre of the country with higher levels of empathy, higher capacity for rational analysis, and lower hostility towards people from Eastern Ukraine are more likely to support the Minsk agreements, and probably any other peace deal that might be brokered.

With these in mind, paving the way for an eventual peace agreement will require: Extensive national dialogue regarding the scope and rationale of any 'autonomy status' that might be granted to specific regions of the country, with special emphasis on how such autonomy is compatible with Ukraine's political cohesion and with its path towards economic and administrative reform; engagement of victim and fallen combatant families in any discussion related to the scope of amnesty; and cultivation of a nation-wide culture of empathy, intergroup tolerance, and rational debate.

As for the non-Government Controlled Areas, the SCORE Index findings provide some initial insights as to what is driving attitudes in favour of re-integration or separation. More specifically, youth currently in the NGCAs, former combatants, people who experience security under the current status quo, and people who are hostile towards Western Ukraine are more likely to favour separation. In contrast, people in the NGCAs that believe in Ukraine's European aspirations, more educated persons, and families that have been divided by the conflict, all tend to be hostile towards the separatist agenda.

In sum, a strategy to prepare people in the NGCAs for eventual re-integration of the Donbas might include: Reaching out to understand the concerns of youth in the NGCAs; fostering support for Ukraine EU membership in the NGCAs; working with IDPs and other citizens of government-controlled Donbas to engage NGCA residents in dialogue with a view to reducing identity polarization; and making sure that the peace agreement provides adequate provisions for the security of current NGCA residents. A helpful practical measure might be to create spaces for civic dialogue and co-operation in the vicinity of the crossing points, both in Donetsk and Luhansk, where NGCA residents, IDPs and GCA residents can meet to address issues such as those mentioned above.

About SCORE Index in Ukraine: Recently emerged and long standing political and cultural divisions have been exploited and in part have contributed to Ukraine's current conflict and history of regional divisions. To address the issues underpinning community tensions and cohesion, USAID/OTI supported programme "Ukraine Confidence Building Initiative (UCBI)" implemented the Social cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) Index in partnership with the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD) and local survey/polling partner GfK. The UCBI programme is complementing ongoing USAID efforts to create a prosperous and stable Ukraine by responding to the crisis in the East, helping the Government of Ukraine engage citizens in the reform process, and promoting national unity. Within this context, the SCORE Index in Ukraine has focused on 5 key areas: identity and emerging trends, governance and public policy reforms, civic engagement, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the peace process. In terms of sample structure, more than 7,700 interviews were conducted throughout Ukraine, (over 300 per oblast in 24 oblasts and in Kyiv city) as well as 640 interviews in non-controlled areas of Donbas; 300 interviews in Crimea and 1600 interviews with IDPs. All interviews were conducted face-to-face, except non-government controlled areas of Donbas in which interviews were conducted via telephone.

About SCORE Index: The SCORE Index was originally developed by SeeD in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with USAID funding. The tool supports policy decisions for national and international stakeholders and is particularly suited for post-conflict multi-ethnic societies that now face peace-building and state-building challenges. By examining social cohesion and reconciliation, the SCORE Index aims to identify and analyse the factors that underpin peace in a society - as needed in order to evaluate intervention programs as well as to better inform them. So far, the SCORE has been implemented three times in Cyprus (2013, 2014 and 2015), once in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2013), once in Nepal (2014) and currently in Ukraine, Liberia and Moldova.

About SeeD: SeeD is a peace-building think tank, with regional scope, that uses participatory research to support international organizations, local policy makers, stakeholders and peace-practitioners to develop, implement and monitor targeted efforts towards social cohesion and reconciliation. SeeD specializes in the development of innovative quantitative methodologies for use in peace-building contexts such as Participatory Polling and the SCORE Index, which seeks to understand the underlying social dynamics of conflict and its transformation.

About UCBI: In July 2014, USAID began implementation of a program in Ukraine to support the country's historic political transition and mitigate the effects of this crisis. The Confidence Building Initiative (UCBI) complements ongoing USAID efforts to create a prosperous and stable Ukraine. UCBI provides fast, flexible, short-term assistance to Ukrainian partners in support of a peaceful democratic transition and community cohesion in the East. The program's current objectives are (1) to mitigate social tensions caused by the conflict, which threaten Ukraine's political transition and (2) to increase availability of information and inform public debate on issues related to the conflict and its impact.



More information can be found at SCORE Online Platform: www.scoreforpeace.org

The SCORE Index in Ukraine has been implemented in partnership between by the USAID/OTI supported programme “Ukraine Confidence Building Initiative” (UCBI) and SeeD.

