



**Analytical report on the survey results “Specific features of the mindset and identity of the residents of controlled and uncontrolled territories of the Donetsk region”: conclusions and recommendations**

**Kyiv  
2016**

*The survey was conducted for Donbas Think Tank by the Ukrainian office of the international research agency IFAK Institut from May 30 to June 13 2016 by using the method of face-to-face interview. The sample of respondents on the uncontrolled territory of the Donetsk region was 605 and 805 respondents on the controlled territory. The sampling error on the uncontrolled territory was 3, 98% and 3, 45% on the controlled territory.*

*The survey was conducted with the support of National Endowment for Democracy and the International Renaissance Foundation.*

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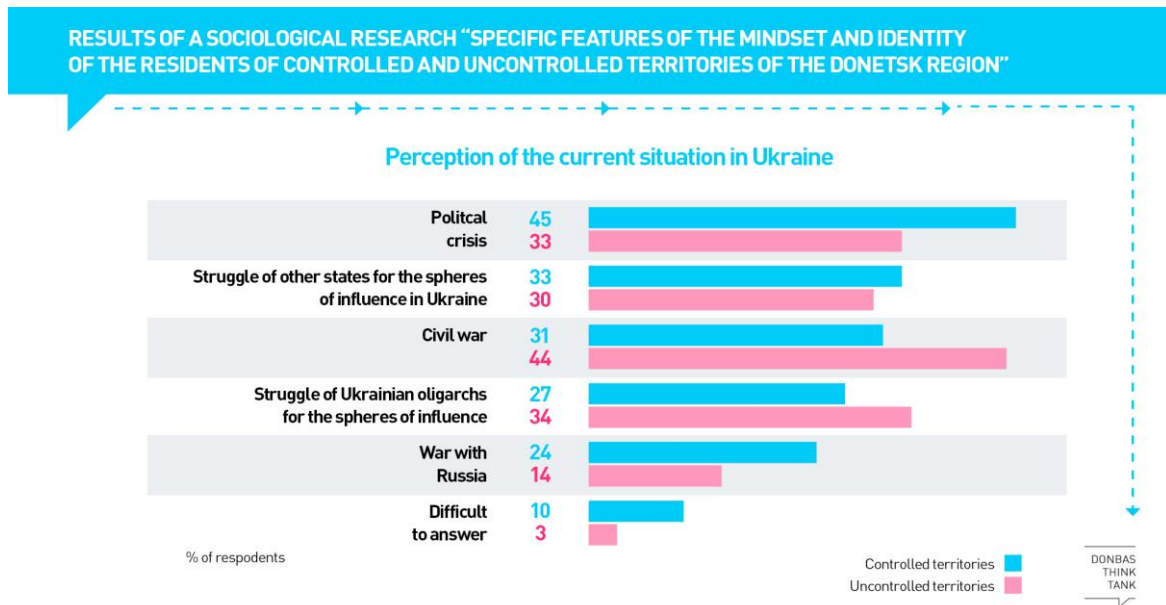
 **Відродження**  
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## Assessment of the current situation in Ukraine

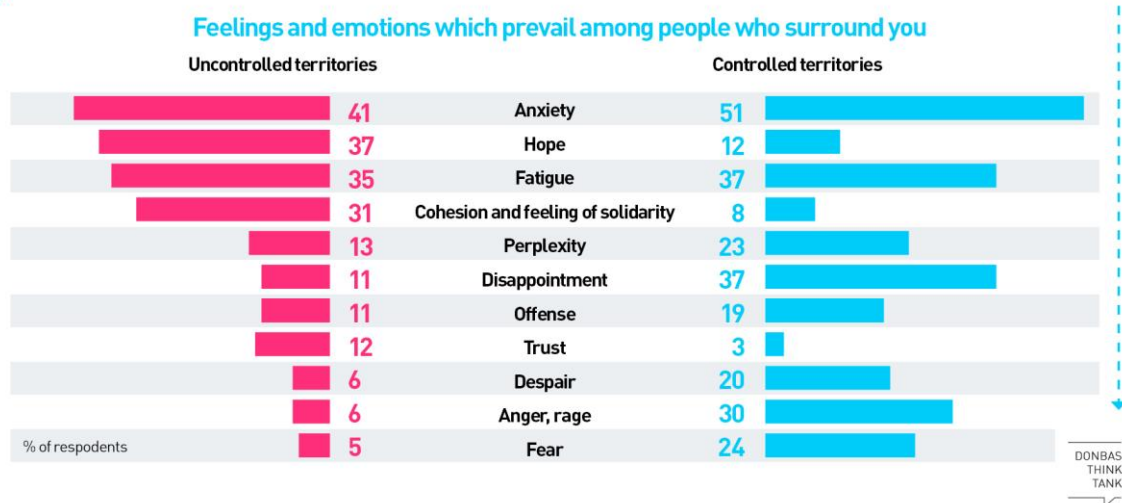
### *Civil war or war against Russia: the perception of current situation in Ukraine*



- While 45% of respondents on the controlled territory of the Donetsk region assess the current situation in Ukraine as a political crisis, 44% of residents on the uncontrolled territory perceive the current situation as a civil war.
- However, almost a third of respondents in both areas (33% on the controlled and 30% on the uncontrolled territory) define the current situation in Ukraine as a struggle of other states for the spheres of influence in Ukraine.
- It should be noted that residents of both parts of the Donetsk region share the perception that the current situation in Ukraine is a struggle for influence between Ukrainian oligarchs. However, this perception is more common among the residents of the uncontrolled territories (34%), while among the residents of controlled territories this number is 27%.
- There is a part of respondents on both territories who assess the current situation as a war against Russia. While on the controlled territory of the Donetsk region such respondents comprise almost a quarter (24%), on the uncontrolled territory the number of such respondents is 14%.

## What are they feeling: their emotional state

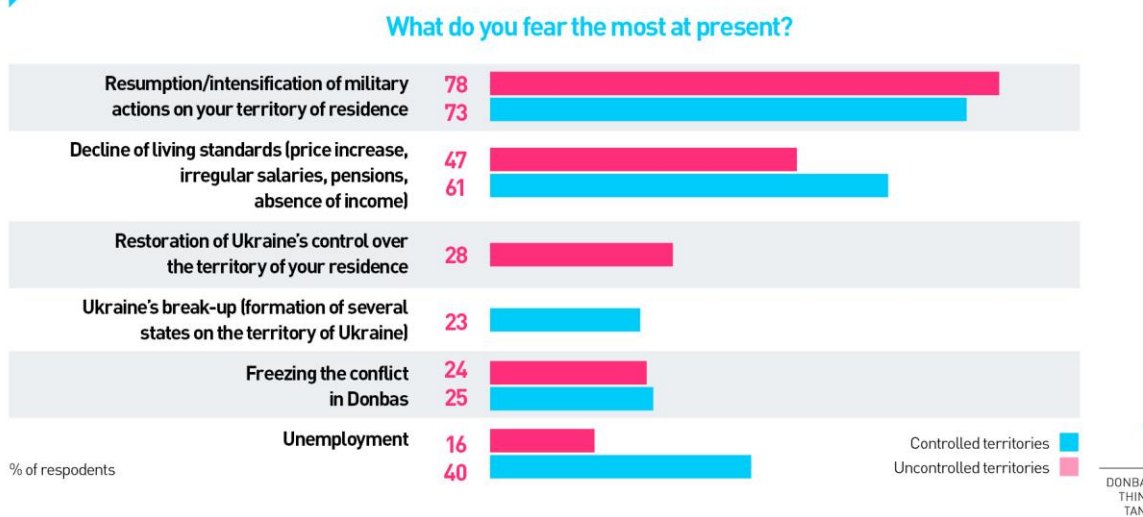
RESULTS OF A SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH "SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE MINDSET AND IDENTITY OF THE RESIDENTS OF CONTROLLED AND UNCONTROLLED TERRITORIES OF THE DONETSK REGION"



- The most pronounced emotion among residents of both areas is anxiety (51% on the controlled and 41% on the uncontrolled territory) and fatigue (37% on the controlled and 35% on the uncontrolled territory).
- Other dominant emotions among the residents of the controlled territory is disappointment (37%) and anger (30%).
- While negative emotions prevail among the residents of the controlled area of the Donetsk region, a large part of the inhabitants of the uncontrolled territory have such positive emotions as hope (37%) and cohesion and solidarity (31%).

## What are they afraid of: social fears

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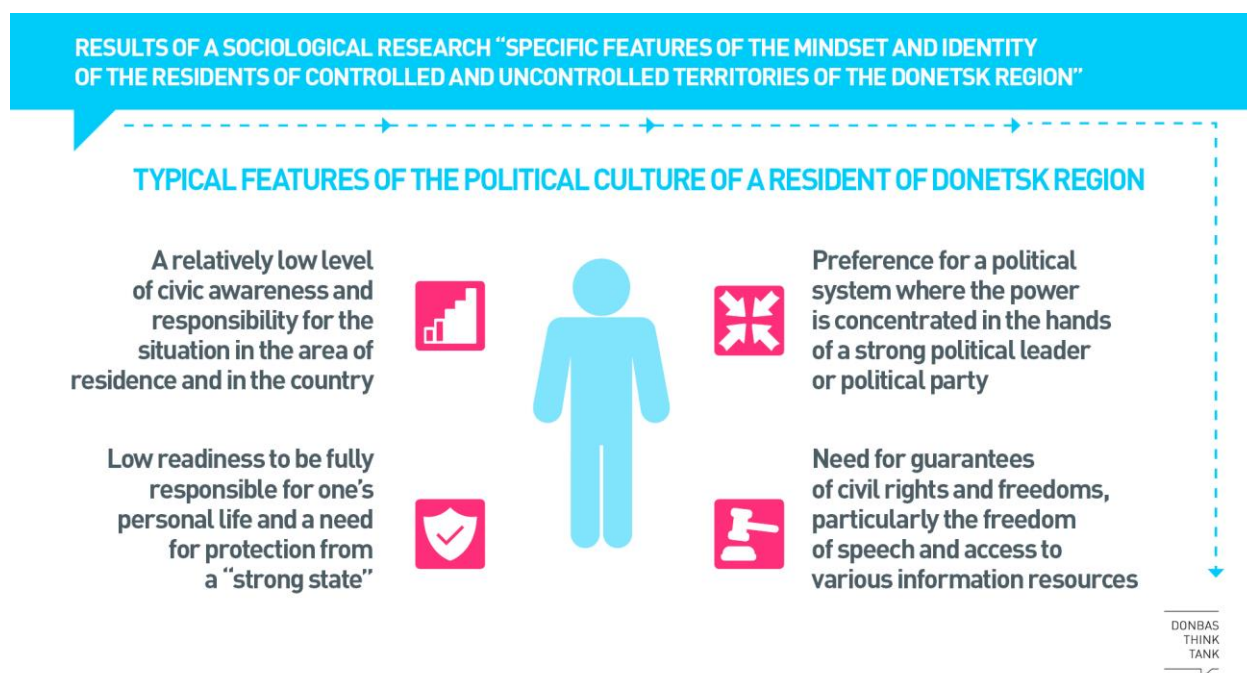


- The most pronounced fear among the residents of both parts of the region is related to **personal security**, particularly to the restoration or increase of hostilities on the territory of their residence (78% on uncontrolled and 73% on controlled territory).
- Almost a quarter of respondents on both territories fear the freezing of the conflict in Donbas (25% on controlled and 24% on uncontrolled territory).
- It is worthy of note that the inhabitants of the uncontrolled area fear the restoration of Ukraine’s control over their territory of residence (28%).
- Attention should be paid to the fact that 23% of respondents on the controlled area of the region fear the collapse of Ukraine as a state and the formation of several states on its territory.
- Economic fears are more expressed among the inhabitants of the controlled territory. 61% of respondents on the controlled territory and 47% on the uncontrolled area fear the decline of living standards. While 40% of respondents on the controlled territory are afraid of unemployment, the number of residents on the uncontrolled territory with the same fear is 16%.

## Specific identity features of the residents of the Donetsk region

### *Common features of political culture*

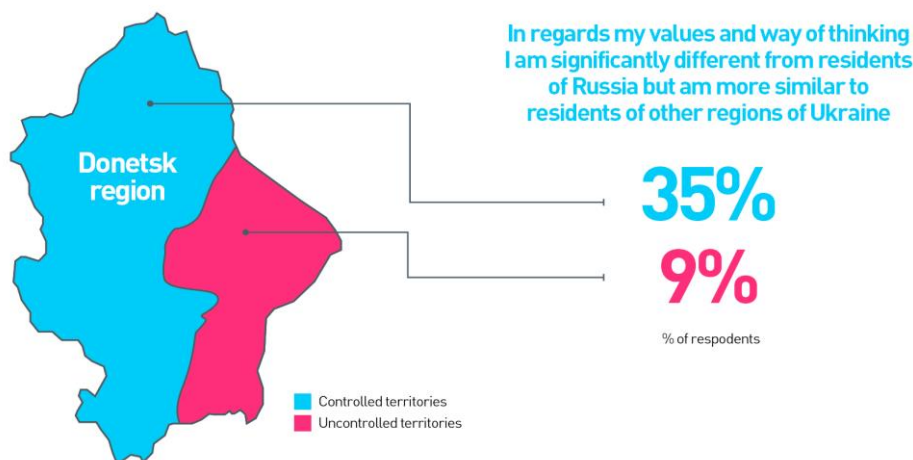
The political culture of the Donetsk region residents has certain paternalistic features which are described in the table below.



- In the hierarchy of identities the prevailing identity among the residents of both parts of the Donetsk region is territorial (61% on the controlled and 60% on the uncontrolled territory). Territorial identity consists of the regional (belonging to Donbas or the Donetsk region) and local (belonging to the place or area of residence) identities.
- The “citizen of DPR” (“Donetsk People’s Republic”) identity is shared by 18% of the residents of the uncontrolled territory of the Donetsk region.

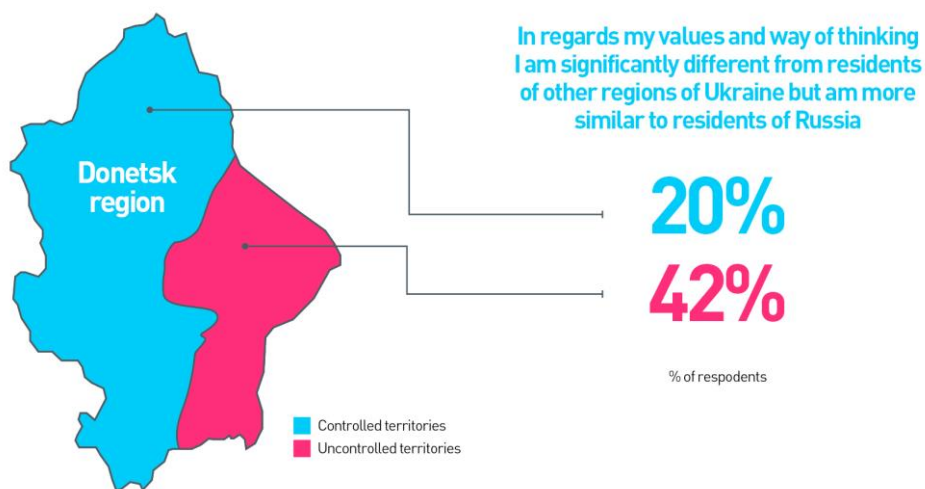
## With whom do they have more in common: with residents of Ukraine or Russia?

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- 35% of respondents on the controlled territory believe that their values and way of thinking are significantly different from Russia's residents and are similar to the residents of other regions of Ukraine; only 9% of respondents on the uncontrolled area agreed with this statement.

RESULTS OF A SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH "SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE MINDSET AND IDENTITY OF THE RESIDENTS OF CONTROLLED AND UNCONTROLLED TERRITORIES OF THE DONETSK REGION"



- At the same time, 42% of the residents of the uncontrolled territory stated the similarity of their values and way of thinking to the people living in Russia and their difference in regards the inhabitants of other regions of Ukraine; the number of respondents on the controlled area who share this point of view is 20%.

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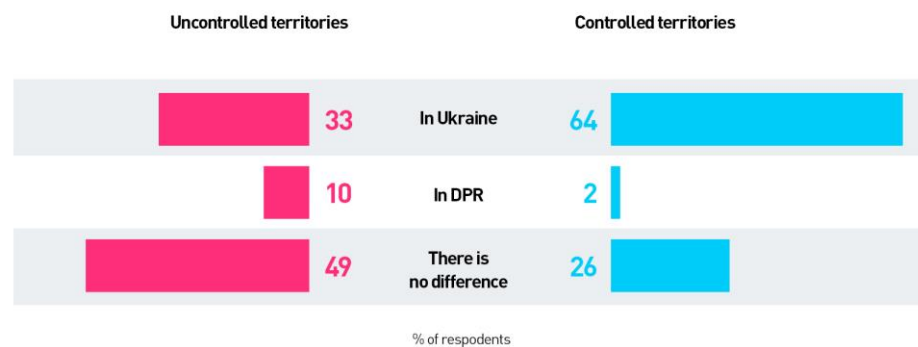
- It is necessary to point out that one third of respondents (31%) on the uncontrolled area consider themselves different both from the residents of other regions of Ukraine and Russia. The number of respondents on the controlled territory who share this point of view is twice smaller (16%).

### Assessing the quality of life

#### Where is the life better: in Ukraine or "DPR"

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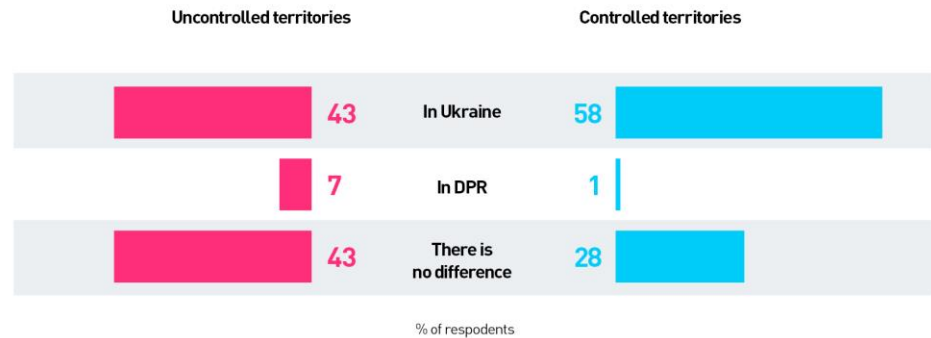
If you compare life conditions, where are they generally better?



- When comparing the life conditions in Ukraine and "DPR", 64% of the residents on the controlled territory said that they were better in Ukraine. One third of respondents on the uncontrolled area (33%) agreed with this statement.
- Almost a half of the respondents on the uncontrolled area (49%) and a quarter of the residents of the controlled area (26%) do not see any difference in the living conditions in Ukraine and "DPR".

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If you compare the level of people's welfare, where is it higher?

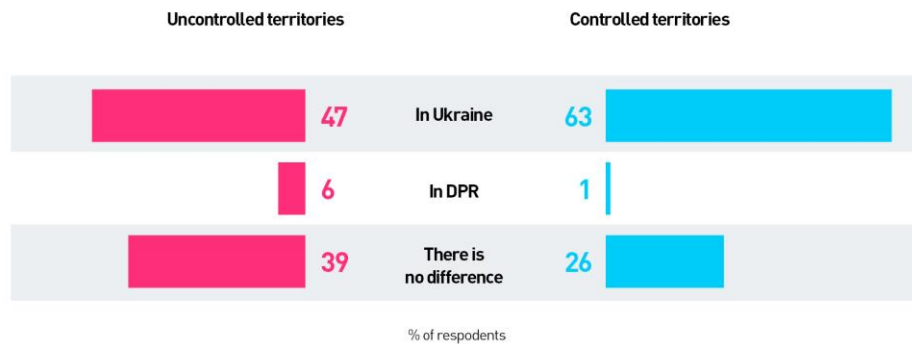


DONBAS  
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- When assessing people's welfare, 58% of respondents on the controlled territory and 43% on uncontrolled area believe that it is better in Ukraine than in "DPR".
- 43% of residents on the uncontrolled and 28% on the controlled area do not see any difference in people's welfare in Ukraine and "DPR".

RESULTS OF A SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH "SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE MINDSET AND IDENTITY OF THE RESIDENTS OF CONTROLLED AND UNCONTROLLED TERRITORIES OF THE DONETSK REGION"

If you compare employment opportunities, where are they better?



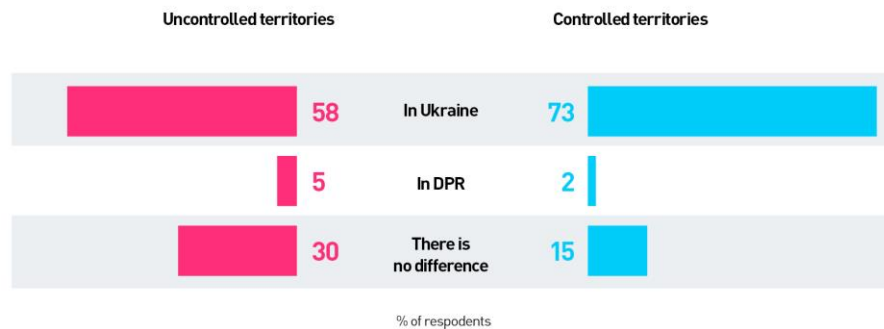
DONBAS  
THINK  
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- Comparing employment opportunities, 47% of residents on the uncontrolled territory and 63% on the controlled area agreed that they were better in Ukraine than in "DPR".
- 39% of respondents on the uncontrolled territory and 26% on the controlled area consider employment opportunities in Ukraine and "DPR" the same.



RESULTS OF A SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH "SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE MINDSET AND IDENTITY OF THE RESIDENTS OF CONTROLLED AND UNCONTROLLED TERRITORIES OF THE DONETSK REGION"

If you compare food prices, where are they better?

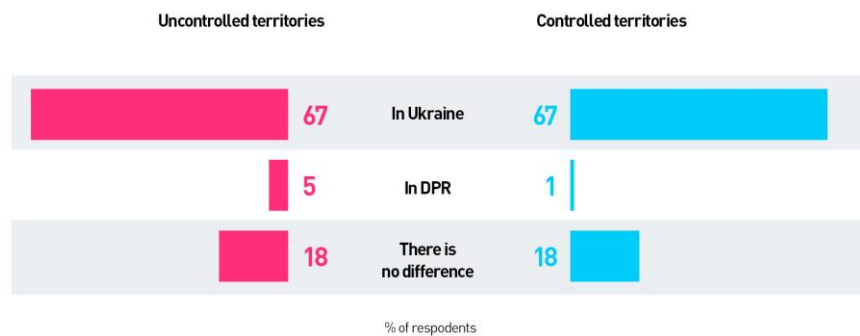


DONBAS  
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- Comparing food prices, 73% of residents on the controlled and 58% on the uncontrolled area believe they are better in Ukraine than in the “DPR”.
- One third of respondents on the uncontrolled (30%) and 15% on the controlled territory evaluate food prices in Ukraine and “DPR” as the same.

RESULTS OF A SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH "SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE MINDSET AND IDENTITY OF THE RESIDENTS OF CONTROLLED AND UNCONTROLLED TERRITORIES OF THE DONETSK REGION"

If you compare the quality of the banking system, where is it higher?

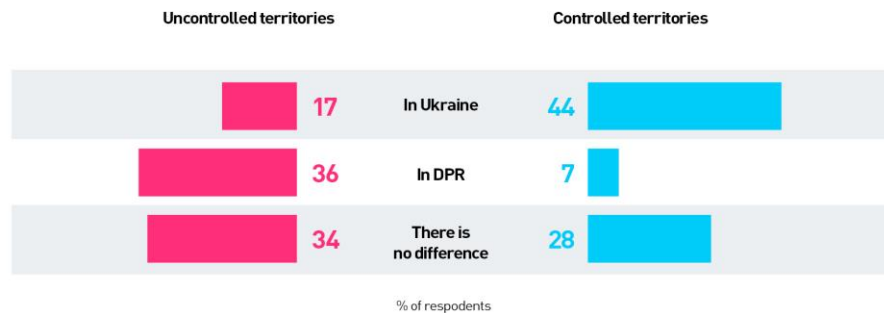


DONBAS  
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- Comparing the quality of the banking system, 67% of respondents on both territories agreed to the fact that it is better in Ukraine.
- 18% of respondents on both areas think that there is no difference between the banking systems in Ukraine and “DPR”.

RESULTS OF A SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH "SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE MINDSET AND IDENTITY OF THE RESIDENTS OF CONTROLLED AND UNCONTROLLED TERRITORIES OF THE DONETSK REGION"

If you compare the observance of human rights and freedoms, where is it better?

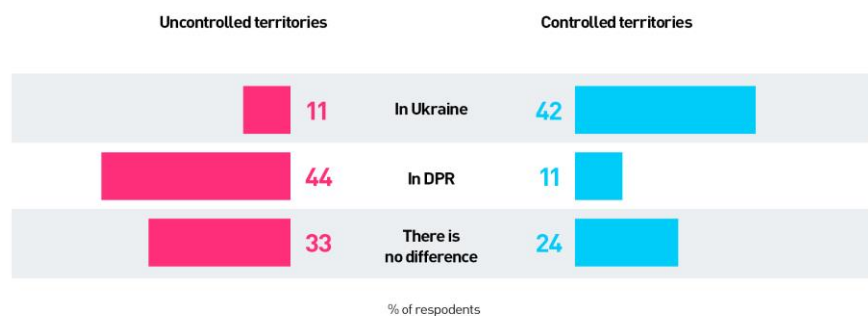


DONBAS  
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- Comparing the observance of human rights and freedoms, 36% of residents of the uncontrolled territory believe that it is better in “DPR” than in Ukraine; the number of respondents who think that human rights observance is better in Ukraine is twice smaller (17%).
- 44% of respondents on the controlled area of the Donetsk region believe that human rights and freedoms are better observed in Ukraine than in “DPR”.
- At the same time, 34% of respondents on the uncontrolled and 28% on the controlled area think that human rights observance in Ukraine and “DPR” is at the same level.

RESULTS OF A SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH "SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE MINDSET AND IDENTITY OF THE RESIDENTS OF CONTROLLED AND UNCONTROLLED TERRITORIES OF THE DONETSK REGION"

If you compare the observance of the freedom of speech, where is it better?

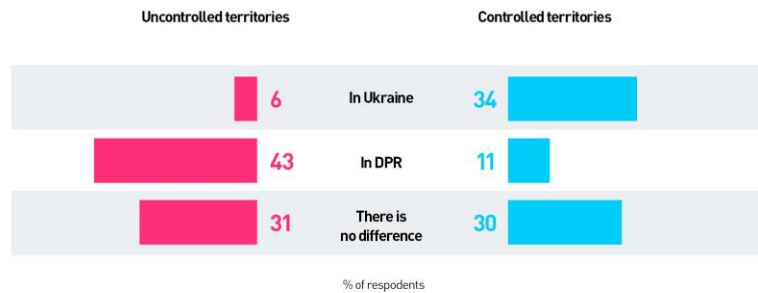


DONBAS  
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- Assessing the observance of the freedom of speech, 44% of the inhabitants of the uncontrolled territory consider that it is better in “DPR” than in Ukraine; the number of respondents who think that the freedom of speech is better observed in Ukraine is four times smaller (11%).
- In contrast, 42% of the inhabitants of the controlled area believe that the freedom of speech is better observed in Ukraine rather than in “DPR”.
- One third of respondents on the uncontrolled area (33%) and one fourth on the controlled area (24%) think that the observance of the freedom of speech is the same in Ukraine and “DPR”.

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If you compare the government's readiness to listen to people on your territory of residence, where is it higher?



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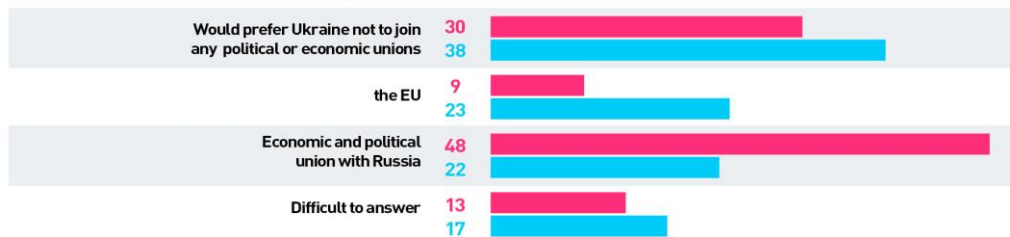
- Comparing the government’s readiness to listen to people, 43% of residents of the uncontrolled area believe that it is better in “DPR” than in Ukraine.
- At the same time, 34% of respondents on the controlled territory believe that the Ukrainian authorities are more ready to listen to people than in “DPR”.
- Almost a third of respondents on both areas (31% on the uncontrolled and 30% on the controlled area) assess the government’s readiness to listen to people in Ukraine and “DPR” at the same level.

The vision of Ukraine’s future

The EU, Russia or non-aligned status: foreign policy orientations

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If in the nearest future Ukraine has to join one of the economic or political unions, which will you choose?



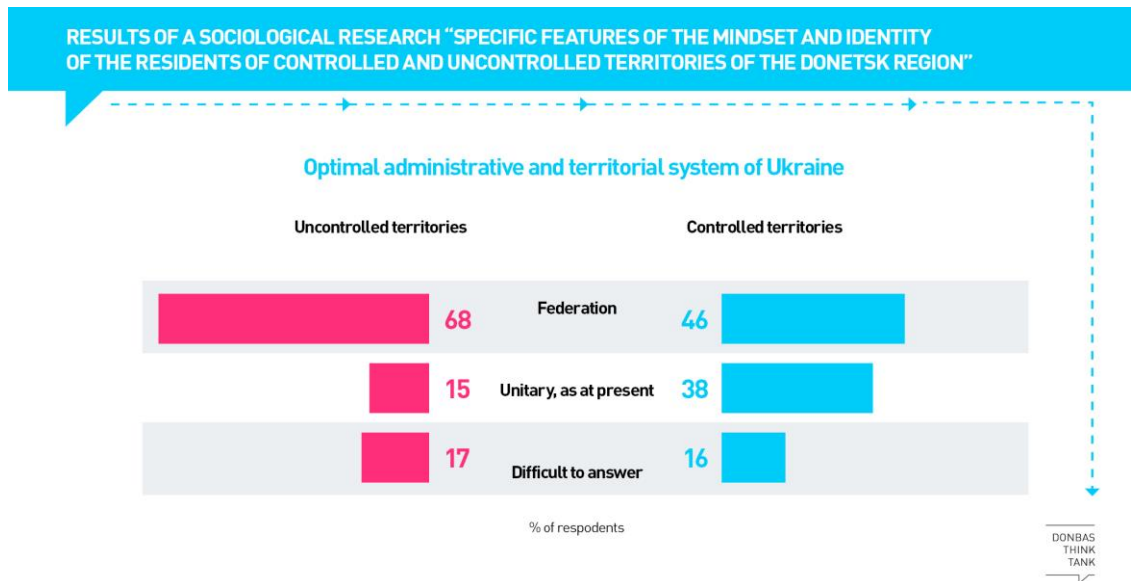
% of respondents

Controlled territories  
Uncontrolled territories

DONBAS THINK TANK

- Almost one third of respondents on both territories (30% on the uncontrolled and 38% on the uncontrolled area) would prefer if Ukraine did not join any economic or political unions.
- Almost a quarter of respondents on the controlled area (23%) would choose the EU, while on the uncontrolled territory the number of EU supporters is 9%.
- At the same time, almost a half of the inhabitants of the uncontrolled territory (48%) and 22% on the controlled territory would prefer the economic and political alliance with Russia.

## *Federation or a unitary system?*



- 68% of respondents on the uncontrolled area and 46% on the controlled area consider a federation the best administrative and territorial system for Ukraine.
- 38% of residents of the controlled area believe that the existing unitary structure is optimal for Ukraine, whereas on the uncontrolled territory this point of view is supported by 15% of respondents.

### *Conclusions*

1. Residents of the controlled and uncontrolled territories of the Donetsk region share the following socio-cultural features:
  - A rather ***strong territorial identity***, which is characterised by a feeling of belonging to the place, area or region of residence (Donbas or Donetsk region);
  - ***Paternalistic orientations***, particularly the need of protection from a “strong state”, adherence to a political system in which the power is concentrated in the hands of a “strong leader” or few political parties;
  - The ***importance of economic and cultural ties with Russia***.
2. However, throughout two years of the conflict in the East of Ukraine, certain differences appeared between the residents of controlled and uncontrolled territories as a result of the following objective factors: living across the front line, a conventional border and checkpoints between the two territories of the region, weakening institutional ties between the residents of the uncontrolled territory and the Ukrainian state, opposite informational influence targeting the residents of both areas of the Donetsk region. In addition, the residents of the uncontrolled area live in the isolated information environment with limited access to Ukrainian media and predominantly use Russian and so-called “republican” media.
3. The differences between the residents of both areas of the Donetsk region, which result from the conflict, include the following:
  - The ongoing formation of the ***new identity “a DPR citizen”*** among the residents of the uncontrolled territory;

- A tendency of *increasing distance between the residents of the uncontrolled territory and Ukrainian state*;
  - A rather expressed *feeling of distance among the residents of the uncontrolled area* (compared with the residents of the controlled territory) *towards the residents of other regions of Ukraine*;
  - A relatively strong *feeling of socio-cultural otherness among the residents of the uncontrolled area* (compared with the residents of the controlled area) which implies the feeling of their dissimilarity with the residents of Ukraine and Russia.
4. The indicator of distance between the inhabitants of the uncontrolled area of the Donetsk region and the Ukrainian state is their *fear of return under Ukraine's control* (28% of respondents).
5. The lack of confidence in Ukraine's integrity and strength among the residents of controlled area is reflected in the indicator of *fear of Ukraine's demise and the formation of several states on its territory* (23%).
6. The residents of the controlled area are aware that in regards economic (welfare, employment opportunities and price rates) and political parameters (observance of human rights and freedoms, government's readiness to listen to the people) *living conditions in Ukraine are better than "DPR"*.
7. While a significant part of the inhabitants of the uncontrolled area understand that *in regards economic parameters living conditions are better in Ukraine than in "DPR", political parameters are more likely to be estimated in favor of "DPR"*.

**The Donbas Think Tank team suggests that delaying the conflict for 3-5 years has a risk of deepening differences between the inhabitants of the uncontrolled area from one side and inhabitants of the controlled area of the Donetsk region and residents of other regions of Ukraine on the other side. There is a particular risk that the "citizen of DPR" identity might expand and the Ukrainian civic identity might be weakened among the residents of the uncontrolled territory.**

***In order to prevent a further disintegration of the residents of the uncontrolled area of the Donetsk region, we suggest taking the following steps in public policy:***

### **Part 1. Information policy**

1. Neutralisation of digital and analogue broadcasting of the so-called "republican" and Russian TV channels from the uncontrolled areas of the Donetsk region.
2. Neutralisation of the Donetsk television tower (located on Pikhotnaya street in Donetsk).
3. Expanding the broadcast of Ukrainian television on the uncontrolled area of the Donetsk region by:
  - Improving the quality of broadcasting from the television towers and transmitters on the controlled area (taking into account the terrain of the area before constructing the tower and estimating the necessary tower height, so that it would cover the uncontrolled territory);

- Constructing a high-powered television tower on the controlled territory which would be technically compatible or exceeding the power of the Donetsk TV tower (height - 360 meters, power of the digital transmitter - 2 kW and power of the analogue transmitter - 25 kW).

## **Part 2. Public policy on the residents of the uncontrolled territories of the Donetsk region**

1. To ensure the implementation of the procedures guaranteeing social and economic rights of those Ukrainian citizens who live on the uncontrolled territory of the Donetsk region by taking the following measures:

- Simplifying the rules of checkpoint crossing and improving their transparency by optimising the infrastructure of checkpoints (increasing the number of “windows” for passage control, increasing the number of staff responsible for passage control);
- Improving passenger transport connection between the controlled and uncontrolled territories of the Donetsk region by launching rail traffic between the two territories;
- Providing clear and transparent procedures of receiving welfare payments on the controlled Ukraine’s territory by the residents of the uncontrolled territory.

2. To elaborate and adopt legal regulations which establish the guarantees of the rights and freedoms of the residents of the uncontrolled territory as Ukrainian citizens after the restoration of Ukraine’s control over the uncontrolled area. (Such guarantees might include non-persecution guarantee, retention of employment record for the conflict period for certain categories of employees who work for public utilities, education and medical service)

## **Part 3. Strategic communication**

1. To develop a system of communication between state authorities and the residents of the uncontrolled territory of the Donetsk region which comprises the principles and mechanisms of the information exchange between the parties.

2. To systematically inform the residents of the uncontrolled area about the process of their reintegration into Ukraine and the state policy in regards reintegrated citizens.

## **Part 4. Tactical communication**

1. To elaborate and implement communication strategy for the reintegration of Donbas – a policy paper describing target groups of the Donetsk region residents, a system of narratives and messages, channels and tools of communication with the target audience.

2. To elaborate and implement a comprehensive information campaign for the residents of the controlled and uncontrolled territories of the Donetsk region aiming at strengthening their Ukrainian civic identity.