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Four Types of Diaspora Entrepreneurs and How They Could Impact Ukraine's Recovery

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Key Points

This policy memo encourages Ukrainian policy-makers to consider formulating policies that could engage the millions of currently displaced Ukrainians by tapping into the potential of **four types of diaspora entrepreneurs—Broker, Local, Home-bound** and **Communal**[1]—operating in the economic, political and social fields. The rationale for thinking about these diaspora entrepreneurs differently is because they can capitalize on their own unique connections to people and institutions in home-land and host-land, and use the powers amassed from such connections in ways beneficial to policy-makers in Ukraine. ***Brokers*** are very visible, international bridge-builders and mediators who are multivocal in different contexts and capable of reaching out to international organizations. The quieter ***Locals*** have accumulated useful expertise in business, medical, twinning-cities and other fields in their host-lands. The ***Home-bound*** are more involved with the country of origin, and more likely to return and mobilize others for return. The ***Communal*** can engage in projects of community-relevance, humanitarianism, education, and beyond high politics. Such diversity in engagement can ***open the space for a freedom of choice*** to be exercised among the Ukrainian global community to return, stay in their host-countries and participate in Ukraine's recovery transnationally, beyond dichotomous thinking about host-state "integration" and "return."

Background

We usually think of migrant communities and diasporas as **groups**, **not as individuals**.

Statistical outputs of surveys make conclusions about groups, even if they poll individuals. For example, an OECD/EUAA 2024 study argues that 53% of polled Ukrainians in Europe want to return to Ukraine, 30% are not sure and 17% do not want to return.[2] In such statements Ukrainians in Europe are seen as a summative category, aggregated from the experiences of many.

Governments think of diasporas as groups as well. When formulating policies for these groups, host-country governments (for example, the UK, Germany, Poland) focus on how to deal with the immediate needs of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, how to integrate them in their host-societies and how to consider their potential return. Home-country governments can have different priorities, caring more about how to preserve diaspora identity in distant locations and how to harness diaspora remittances and economic potential for the home-country's benefit.[3]

Academics have also thought of diasporas as "groups", although they have been more attuned to acknowledge in-group differences. These could stem from (a) *different waves of emigration*, such as the

[1] The original categories in Koinova's *Diaspora Entrepreneurs and Contested States* (OUP 2021) are Broker, Local, Distant and Reserved. The last two categories have been relabelled to better fit the political and social realities in the Ukrainian diaspora and global community, while retaining the core idea that diaspora entrepreneurs have differently strong connections to people and institutions in the countries of origin and settlement, and other global contexts.
[2] OECD/EUAA, 2024 //tinyurl.com/4ffr57e4.
[3] ODIHR Report, 2024. https://tinyurl.com/4kcr3y8z

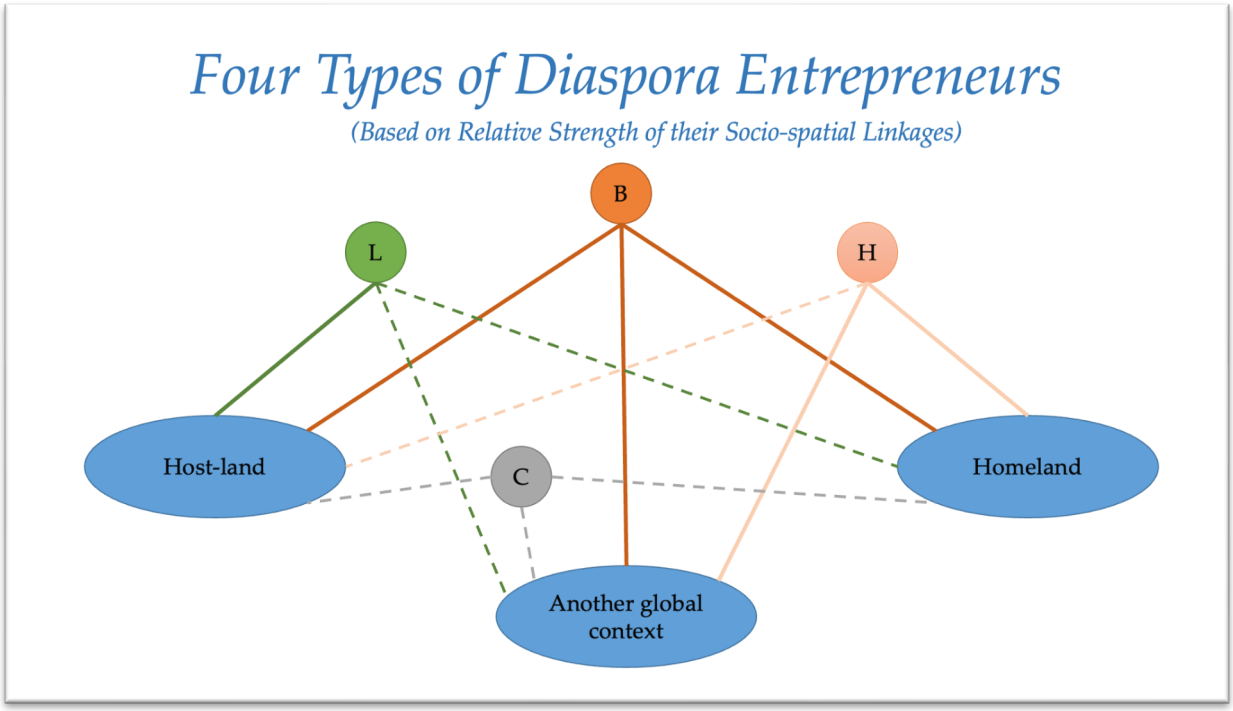
old-generation Ukrainians in Canada who emerged from post-WWII emigration, or those associated with recent forced displacement after Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion; (b) *generational differences*, as youths can think differently about countries of origin and settlement than their parents do; (c) *political differences*, as groups may contain competing political parties from the original homeland, mobilizing during homeland elections and even challenging incumbent leaders;[4] and (d) *membership differences* such as a diaspora that has core, active or passive members,[5] and migrants more broadly considered as "high skilled" or "low skilled", "regular" or "irregular", "short-term" or "long-term".

Very little has been done to understand who diaspora entrepreneurs are. Such an omission could be an impediment to meaningful policy formulation. Diaspora entrepreneurs are usually seen as economic or social investors in their countries of origin,[6] less so than political entrepreneurs, interested in institutional reforms. Diaspora members have different capacities as some are *born* leaders, while others are *made* by overcoming challenges during the migration experience; they can take on the role of an idea champion, team facilitator, funder, political buffer, connector, or implementor, among others.[7]

Four Types of Diaspora Entrepreneurs

I have looked at diaspora entrepreneurs not simply as leaders or as taking on different roles, but as how strongly they are connected to host-land, homeland and other global contexts. Such a difference can carry policy implications. Based on the analysis of over 300 interviews for my book *Diaspora Entrepreneurs and Contested States* (Oxford UP 2021), I found that there are **four types** of diaspora entrepreneurs connected differently to people and institutions across global locations.

Figure 1 presents these categories schematically.



[4] Koinova 2018, https://tinyurl.com/45bhe2sh
[5] Shain and Barth 2003. https://tinyurl.com/bdhj4wcx
[6] African Diaspora Policy Centre 2014. https://tinyurl.com/r2z4dxp8
[7] Brinkerhoff 2016, https://tinyurl.com/w8945zyu

Policy-makers will find it useful to consider such differences among diaspora entrepreneurs if they want to harness the potential of the Ukrainian global community in different ways: for return, transnational and communal engagement. I will elaborate on each type of diaspora entrepreneur first, and then explain how each is specifically useful for Ukraine's recovery.

You would quickly recognize the ***Broker,*** with their strong connections to politicians, civil society and businesses in both the host-land and homeland. They are often visible in the media, travel a lot internationally and are the go-to-persons when diaspora-related matters are at stake. They have strong access to both institutions and people in the country of origin and settlement, as well as to international organizations. They understand well the different contexts in which they are "multivocal". Their power lies in connecting individuals and networks, building bridges and mediating between host-land, homeland and diaspora in different locations. Because of their visibility, Brokers are usually invited to forums by and involved in communications with governments, civil society, and international organizations.

Brokers are not many in number, while other, quieter types have further potential for collaboration. The ***Local*** is the proverbial well-integrated migrant in a host-state who has shed most of their institutional connections to the country of origin, remains connected to family there but has developed thicker connections to social, economic and political actors in their country of settlement. Their power lies in knowing deeply the host-land context and in connections with the host-country's local government, business and civil society. The ***Home-bound***, on the other hand, lives in a host-land but is not deeply connected to its institutions and processes. They are more deeply connected to political, social and economic actors in their country of origin, and remain in heart and mind back "home". The Home-bound is also the most likely to return or to mobilize returnees. Finally, the ***Communal*** is an activist who does not have strong connections to institutions and people in both countries of origin or settlement but has strong preferences for communal and humanitarian activism.[8]

The Four Types and Their Potential for Ukraine's Recovery

The profile of Ukraine's global community is on the rise at home. In a landmark statement of 22 January 2024 President Volodymyr Zelensky addressed the nation's global community with long-awaited and bold gratitude for all of its efforts in supporting Ukraine since Russia's 2022 invasion. Zelensky is now taking steps to change the constitution to introduce dual citizenship, much awaited in diaspora circles. The pre-Ukrainian Recovery Conference (pre-URC) and the actual URC in Berlin in June 2024 have further emphasized the role of the Ukrainian global community and its global civil society.[9]

Ukraine's government and institutions want their displaced citizens to return. Currently around 4.2 million Ukrainians have a temporary protection status in the EU.[10] European governments are interested in issues of return, although they may have their own differences. It could be anticipated that some countries will be more inclined to think of Ukrainians as temporarily residing in their territories than others. Germany has been relatively advanced in developing programmes for labour market integration, opening prospects for obtaining German citizenship through a simplified procedure, if one has resided in Germany for more than three years, is proficient in the language and is employed.[11] For individual Ukrainians in Europe, the longer the war goes on, the more they and their children become accustomed to their host-societies.

Hence, policy formulation needs to consider different options for the Ukrainian diaspora and global community, i.e. ***their freedom of choice to return, stay in host-countries or participate transnationally in Ukraine's recovery***. In this context, the idea of the ***four types of diaspora entrepreneur*** is useful. It provides options for differential engagement of people beyond "group" thinking, while the Ukrainian government and institutions can retain their primary power to design the actual programmes of such differential engagement. Thereby they can inspire, encourage and incorporate all in the Ukrainian global community who want to contribute to Ukraine.

Brokers can be an asset because of their capacities for bridge-building, connecting effectively host-states with institutions in Ukraine, identifying new opportunities and potential collaborations across borders, international visibility, multi-vocality in different contexts, fundraising, lobbying and advocacy among key stakeholders, including international organizations. Brokers are easily identifiable and are a great

[8] Koinova, 2021. https://tinyurl.com/ythdmjkr
[9] Keudel, Koinova, Pavlova and Pryhornytska 2024. https://tinyurl.com/yc3x85jf
[10] Eurostat 2024. https://tinyurl.com/56fcw5ds
[11] ICMPD 2024. https://tinyurl.com/2uzkh9k8

asset for engaging ***transnationally*** with Ukraine. They usually travel to Ukraine, even during war times, and identify new opportunities despite the war. For example, Brokers could identify stakeholders and connect them to governments, to establish new collaborations and find people in niche subjects, such as those who could help write complicated funding applications, such as for the EU-funded INTERREG programme (of interest to local and regional government) or Horizon Europe (of interest to academics), which could include members from the Ukrainian scientific diaspora.

Locals are numerous in host-societies, but not as visible to Ukrainian authorities. Because they have been lsettled in host-societies, their connections and capacities can prove very useful. For example, they can drive the twinning of projects and cities across borders; become associated with big or small businesses that can fundraise and generate donations; be supportive on medical projects from the hospitals in which they work; campaign to lobby host-state politicians, parliaments and institutions; and, like the Brokers, become Ukraine's cultural ambassadors through film, dance and the arts.

The Home-bound could become active on matters of ***return***. Expecting a Local or Broker to advocate for return when they are well embedded in a host-country may trigger integrity dilemmas and can prove very challenging, as opposed to reaching out to the ***Home-bound*** who are already and more naturally connected exclusively to Ukraine. Identifying groups of people who want to return and approaching the diaspora entrepreneurs among them can smoothen the process of future return and increase chances that it would be done voluntarily.

The ***Communal*** can be found around local civil society helping other Ukrainians during the humanitarian crisis, whether inside host-states or for humanitarianism in Ukraine. There are plenty of these organizations and networks currently among the Ukrainian diaspora, helping to expand activities from humanitarianism to broader service to the community in support of education, rehabilitation, language acquisition, culture and other projects that are of a clear ***community-related interest*** and do not involve lobbying or high politics. [12]

In sum, considering the four types of diaspora entrepreneurs and their different linkages to people and institutions in host-lands and Ukraine can facilitate: 1) thinking beyond diasporas as "groups," 2) freedom of choice to be exercised by protection seekers to return and/or participate in Ukraine's recovery transnationally, and 3) efficiency in the ways the Ukrainian government and institutions can target differentially the diaspora and its resources.

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1. ***Quoting/referencing:*** Koinova, Maria. 2024. "Four Types of Diaspora Entrepreneurs and How They Could Impact Ukraine's Recovery," Research England Policy Support Fund Grant "Engaging the Ukrainian Diaspora in Reconstruction and Development: Democracy and Human Rights Dimensions," University of Warwick, policy memo.

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2. If you intend to use the memo in policy development or it informs your thinking or practice please ***contact the PI of the project,*** Prof. M. Koinova at m.koinova@warwick.ac.uk.

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[12] I would like to express my gratitude to Alice Szczepanikova for her useful feedback on an earlier draft of this text.