

# Do Diasporas Matter? The Growing Role of the Ukrainian Diaspora in the UK and Poland in the Development of the Homeland in Times of War

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*Ukraine has been going through a series of political and economic crises, notably the Euromaidan revolution and the Russian aggression and subsequent economic downturn. These events triggered fresh transnational diaspora-led activities such as the ‘London Euromaidan’ and the ‘Warsaw Euromaidan’. This paper analyses Ukrainian diaspora volunteerism in the UK and Poland and explores how the Ukrainian diaspora engages and contributes economically, socially, politically and culturally to the development of Ukraine. Drawing on fieldwork in both countries, three main findings were identified. First, due to the events in Ukraine, the Ukrainian diaspora has mobilised, grown stronger and became more united, whilst transforming from a more inward-looking to a more outward-looking community which, as a result, is now more and critically engaging with Ukrainian affairs. Second, the Ukrainian diaspora has the willingness, power and resources to contribute to the development of the home country, claiming to be recognised as an important stakeholder in the development of Ukraine. Thirdly, the Ukrainian government’s lack of recognition of the contribution of the Ukrainian diaspora is one of the most significant barriers to more comprehensive diaspora involvement in development.*

*Keywords: Ukrainian diaspora; Euromaidan; the UK; Poland; development*

## Introduction

Two events have dominated recent developments in Ukraine – the Euromaidan of 2013 and the subsequent and ongoing war in the east of the country. These, however, are only the culmination of years of poor governance, economic crises and endemic corruption.

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Ukraine has suffered from a prolonged period of poor governance, beginning with the Kuchma administration (1994–2005), through the failure of the so-called Orange Revolution (2004) – notably the subsequent stalemate between the two main camps led by Yushchenko and Timoshenko and the coming to power of the Party of Regions. Under the then-new president Yanukovich, a new kleptocracy took shape (Bobinski 2014) that gave rise to a system of nepotism which specifically benefitted the Eastern oligarchs and the out-dated heavy industries in the east. This almost ruined the country (Leshchenko 2013). In addition, corruption in all sectors of society reached new highs and severely undermined the rule of law (Lapshyna 2014).

The massive protests in Ukraine in 2013 – known as ‘Euromaidan’ – led to the fall of Yanukovich’s kleptocratic regime. However, this did not signify the end of the Revolution of Dignity but, rather, its beginning, as Ukraine required a complete overhaul in its political system and not just a simple change of regime. The Revolution of Dignity prevented the country from ‘slipping’ into open state authoritarianism. However, its main task was to lay the foundation for a liberal and stable democracy (Shveda and Park 2016). Thus, it can be argued that the Euromaidan and the subsequent crisis are part of a wider transition process and socio-economic transformation of Ukraine. Recovering after a protracted socioeconomic and political crisis will require not only time but also improved governance, updated institutions and a revitalised investment climate. Taken together, this can be called the second start of Ukraine’s transition (Grigoriev, Buryak and Golyashev 2016).

Over the last 15 years, Ukraine has lost a significant amount of its already meagre human capital, largely by way of international migration. This, however, resulted in the formation of significant diasporas in many countries, whose role and potential for development, reform and post-war reconstruction are the focus of this article. Based on the project *Do Diasporas Matter? Exploring the Potential Role of Diaspora in the UK and Poland in the Reform and Post-War Reconstruction of Ukraine*, funded by British Academy, the aim was to explore whether and how the Ukrainian diaspora and the communities of Ukrainian migrants in the UK and Poland could contribute economically, socially, politically and culturally to the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine.

My research question is whether the Ukrainian diaspora and communities of Ukrainian migrants in the UK and Poland are willing and have the power and resources to contribute to the development of the home country. Ames (2014) suggests that diasporas are ‘key to recovery’. This might be exaggerated as the key probably lies, instead, with the people in Ukraine; however, in a pointed manner it raises attention for the potential role of the Ukrainian diaspora with regards to matters in the home country.

This article, based on a qualitative study conducted from 2015 to 2016 in the UK and Poland, examines Ukrainian diaspora mobilisation and explores how the Ukrainian diaspora engages and contributes to the development of Ukraine. It thereby enables the exploration of the dynamic interaction and synergy effects of the different segments of diaspora and immigrant communities with respect to their activities towards Ukraine. The two cases, Poland and the UK, were selected because they were distinctly different in some important aspects. Poland has a long-established historical Ukrainian diaspora and has recently received very large numbers of immigrants. The diaspora in the UK is comparably new and also much smaller. This provides for an interesting comparison.

## **Theoretical background**

### *Notions of diaspora*

Before commencing with an examination of the role of diaspora in development, a discussion of the definition and conceptualisation of diaspora is needed. The definition of ‘diaspora’ is not a straightforward task as there is no widely accepted definition; instead, there are diverse and partly conflicting definitions and the term is

used to describe many different phenomena. The term ‘diaspora’ is derived from the Greek, meaning the ‘dispersal or scattering of seeds’. Diaspora is an old concept, the uses and meanings of which have recently undergone dramatic change (Bauböck and Faist 2010). Originally, the concept referred only to the historic experience of particular groups – specifically Jews and Armenians. Later, it was extended to religious minorities in Europe. Since the late 1970s, ‘diaspora’ has experienced a veritable inflation of applications and interpretations. ‘Diaspora’ and ‘diasporic communities’ are increasingly being used as a synonym for expatriates, expellees, refugees, immigrants, displaced communities and ethnic minorities. The scholars examining diasporas have therefore largely agreed that the term ‘diaspora’ has often been overused; subsequently, there has been much debate over what it actually means (Cohen 1997; Gamlen 2011; Safran 1991; Tölölyan 1996). Akenson (1995: 382) even complained that ‘diaspora’ has become a ‘massive linguistic weed’. Sökefeld (2006) emphasised that the formation of diaspora is not a ‘natural’ consequence of migration but that particular processes of mobilisation in response to specific critical events have to take place for a diaspora to emerge. Marienstrass (1989: 125) added that ‘time has to pass’ before we can know that any community that has migrated ‘is really diaspora’ and strongly emphasised this temporal dimension of diaspora formation. In other words, one does not immediately know and thus does not announce the formation of a diaspora from the moment of arrival. A strong attachment to the past or a block to assimilation in the present and future must exist to permit a diasporic consciousness to be mobilised or retained. Thus, it is important to stress that not all migrants will cohere into communities, not all migrant communities will imagine themselves as transnational and not all transnational communities are simultaneously diasporic communities. The key marker would be diasporic identities and practices.

I endorse a broad definition of diaspora communities offered by Agunias and Newland (2012: 15) as ‘emigrants and their descendants who live outside of the country of their birth or ancestry on temporary or permanent basis, yet still maintain affective and material ties to their countries of origin’. At the same time, I support Cohen’s (2008) argument that not all groups who migrate internationally in search of work evolve into a diaspora. For instance, there are, of course, individual, family or small group who migrate for the purpose of settlement and who do not develop diasporic consciousness, particularly if they intend to assimilate and are readily accepted. I argue that, to qualify as a member of a diaspora, it is crucial to display ‘diasporic consciousness’. According to Duarte’s (2005) study, such interrelated patterns can be seen as indicative of diaspora consciousness, as (1) the co-presence of ‘here’ and ‘there’; (2) the re-creation of ‘own spaces’ in the host country; (3) ‘othering’; and (4) a reflexive appraisal of the homeland and its cultural values and norms. Some scholars suggest that an essential part of diasporic consciousness is the desire to return to the homeland. I believe that it is not the physical return to the homeland that is essential to the diasporic experience but, rather, the related sense of connection or disconnection.

I aim to study the issue of diaspora by taking a critical approach. This implies thinking beyond the box and studying diaspora more broadly but without over-stretching the concept. In order to not miss potentially relevant findings but to discover all diasporic or similar transnational activities, I include not only established ‘old’ diaspora but also ‘new’ diaspora groups. These latter still maintain ties to their homeland and, as I will show, also develop a diasporic consciousness and display diasporic practices and identities. For this purpose, definitions will be applied and a distinction made between ‘old’ and conventional and ‘new’ diasporas. When I use the words ‘old diaspora’ I mean specifically the community of post-World War Two immigrants and their descendants – in case of the UK – and a Ukrainian minority, formed prior to independence in 1991, for Poland. Under ‘new diaspora’ I understand migrants from independent Ukraine, who left there in large numbers from 1991 onwards. Including the new diaspora groups enables me to explore the dynamic interaction and synergy effects of the different social groups with respect to their activities towards Ukraine, as well as the adaptation

of classical diasporas to some new realities – notably the fresh influx of contemporary immigrants. Furthermore, thinking of diaspora broadly, following Van Hear (1998) and paraphrasing Sartre (1957), I suggest that we distinguish between diaspora ‘in itself’, hence all Ukrainians who live abroad – as, in our case, in the UK and Poland – and diaspora ‘for itself’, hence those Ukrainians living abroad, actively engaging with Ukrainian matters and displaying diasporic practices and identities. Important characteristics of the diaspora ‘for itself’ are that its members have developed diasporic consciousness and maintain ties to their homeland.

### *The diaspora–development nexus*

Over the past few years, the contributions of migrants and diaspora to sustainable development in their countries of origin and destination have been acknowledged by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the Summits of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (for a definition of development, see IOM 2005). In many EU policy documents, diasporas and migrant communities are discussed as emerging agents of development in their own right – pointing to the increased significance of migrant categories and collectives for cross-border policymaking (Weinar 2017). The engagement of diasporas in issues conventionally seen as relating to development, poverty reduction, economic growth, trade, post-crisis recovery or post-war reconstruction has generated an increasing interest among academics (e.g. Cohen 1997; Van Hear and Liberatore 2015) and stakeholders (the UNDP, CoE, IOM etc.). However, for over 80 years, migration studies have looked mainly at immigration from the point of view of immigrant-receiving countries, whilst paying little attention to the large body of mostly non-Anglophone literature produced in the emigration countries (Okólski 2009). The re-introduction of the country-of-origin perspective in the 2000s was an important step in migration studies (Weinar 2017). Desiderio (2014) argues that, in the past two decades, origin countries began to better understand diaspora contributions to development in the homeland. These countries have increasingly acknowledged that the development effects of migration stem not only from returns and remittances but, more broadly, also from knowledge transfers and direct investments. They also recognise the capacity of emigrants and their descendants to ‘market’ their homeland abroad – thus contributing to the country’s attractiveness for tourists and foreign investors, stimulating trade and even channelling broader geopolitical benefits. Levitt (1996) suggests that members of the diaspora also contribute social remittances – the ideas, behaviours, identities, new values, expectations, ideas and social capital that flow from receiving- to sending-country communities – which can impact on conflict resolution or post-conflict reconstruction. Bercovitch (2007) points to socio-cultural influences that can be beneficial in a post-conflict environment; he suggests that, with regards to reconciliation, people in the homeland are preferring to accept advice from members of the diaspora rather than from other foreigners. He envisions this in terms of the diaspora’s ability to provide culturally appropriate facilitation to reconciliation processes and socio-psychological healing. Van Hear and Cohen (2017) distinguished three spheres of diaspora engagement: the largely private and personal sphere of the household and the extended family; the more public sphere of the ‘known community’, by which is meant collectivities of people who know, or know of, each other; and the largely public sphere of the ‘imagined community’, which includes the transnational political field, among other arenas. Sinatti and Horst (2015) argue for a reconceptualisation of development as a process of social change that is linked to human mobility across a range of socio-spatial levels and of diaspora as a mobilising tool and an imagined, as opposed to an actual, community. They suggest that many programmes and policies have taken a too-restrictive understanding of development as a distinct area of professional practice and have thus attempted to channel migrants’ transfers of financial, social and human capital towards this planned development. A reconceptualisation beyond the narrow understanding of

development as a Western intervention would allow for the exploration of new aspects of migrant contributions to societal transformations in countries of origin and residence.

There is a variety of positive contributions that diaspora populations can and do make; community-based NGOs, professional networks and political entrepreneurs all have the potential to bring about positive change. European research shows that migrant organisations, too, make important contributions to the development of their countries of origin (see, for example, Sezgin 2010). Gallina (2008), for instance, analyses the organisations of Malians in France and argues that they not only provided aid to Mali after the drought of 1973–1974, but were also responsible for 60 per cent of the infrastructure projects in certain regions. Similarly, Lampert (2014) argues that London-based Nigerian organisations transcend the ethicised boundaries of belonging to articulate and pursue visions of Nigeria's national development and that their potential for contributing to a unified and prosperous Nigeria should not be dismissed. Furthermore, InWent (2008) shows that cooperation with migrant organisations not only improves development work but also deepens the understanding of the lives of migrants in Germany. Schmelz (2007), for example, illustrated that there are diverse types of Cameroonian migrant organisations in Germany, including those with a primary focus on development policy. He argued that Cameroonian migrant organisations are engaged in a range of activities which, as a whole, serve for a better education and the empowerment of young people, especially in rural areas. In Ukraine, the Chernobyl catastrophe provided one of the first opportunities for the diaspora to play an officially sanctioned role in Ukrainian society. Humanitarian aid worth US \$40 million was provided to the victims of the disaster by members of the Ukrainian diaspora (Satzewich 2002).

#### *The Ukrainian diaspora and the diaspora–development nexus*

While much literature exists about the historical formation of the Ukrainian diaspora, few scholars focus on its role in the development of the homeland. Satzewich (2002) studied the North American Ukrainian diaspora and its response to the post-war suppression of the Ukrainian language, culture and religion in the home country. He explored how the diaspora's relationships with Ukraine have changed since the fall of the Iron Curtain. Comparing the Ukrainian diaspora with the other East-Central European groups, he pointed out that fewer diaspora Ukrainians seem willing to 'return' or move to their ancestral homeland than the members of other East-Central European diasporas. Another important finding of Satzewich is that diasporas, like communities, often contain social divisions, conflicts and differences. This reservation is also relevant for the Ukrainian diaspora. He argued that Ukrainians in the diaspora have emphasised their within-group differences as much as their similarities within a larger imagined community. In his book, Satzewich (2002: 17) said:

*In many ways, the story of Ukrainian diaspora community life in the west is one of conflict, struggle and hostility between Ukrainians of different political persuasions, religious affiliations, classes and wave of immigration. Divisions between socialists and nationalists, Catholic and Orthodox churches, eastern and western Ukrainians, 'new-wave immigrants' and longer-settled members of the community, and between followers of different nationalist leaders have all at some point fractured the Ukrainian diaspora.*

Previous research on the Ukrainian diaspora acknowledged its important role in the development of Ukraine, especially since independence in 1991. The Ukrainian diaspora enhanced the process of democratisation and lobbied foreign governments to adopt pro-Ukrainian policies. It contributed financially to political parties' advocating state independence (Satzewich 2002). A growing body of literature has begun to highlight the response of the Ukrainian diaspora to the Euromaidan movement. Malyutina (2014) focused her research on the transnational activism of the 'London Euromaidan' in 2013–2014. She pointed out that, despite the fact

that the Ukrainian community in London is smaller than that in Canada or USA, the ‘London Euromaidan’ was one of the most active and mobilised Ukrainian communities abroad supporting protests and actively engaging in political events in Ukraine. She suggested that one of the main characteristics of London’s Euromaidan was its dynamism and perseverance and the regularity of protests, the variety of targets of protests and the social diversity of the protesters. However, she only studied the beginning of the protest over a quite short period of time (November 2013 to spring 2014), which does not really allow examination of the changing dynamics. My research was conducted at the later stage of the protest cycle, which allowed me to also observe any up- and down-swings. The role of Ukrainian diasporas in (post)revolutionary processes has also been studied by Melnyk, Patalong, Plottka and Steinberg (2016) who, in their research, discussed the formation of a new Ukrainian ‘diasporic community’ in Germany and Poland. As in my findings, they argued that the civic engagement of Ukrainians in Germany with their home country has dramatically increased since the Maidan protests.

Kolyada and Raicheva (2018) studied the Ukrainian diasporas in the context of the latter using their social and economic potential to improve the competitiveness of Ukraine’s economy. The authors argued that collaboration with the Ukrainian diaspora is not efficient because too few leading foreign managers of Ukrainian origin are involved in the Ukrainian economy. They concluded that any potential economic benefits of the Ukrainian diaspora are not used enough for the Ukraine’s economic development. CEDOS (2017) added to this by stating that Ukrainians abroad are an underestimated capital of Ukraine, as the diaspora and migrants not only financially support their relatives but are also interested in Ukraine’s development. They support Ukrainian soldiers, offer expertise for reforms and good governance, cooperate with Ukrainian scientists in joint projects and serve as cultural diplomats.

Despite this evidence, however, there has been a lack of theorising about the role of the Ukrainian diaspora in the development of its country of origin. This article aims to address some of the research gaps.

## **Methodology**

This study is based on research which took place in 2015 and 2016 and 43 in-depth semi-structured interviews, field observations and a literature survey. I have chosen Poland and the UK as two different cases. Poland is a country with a large number of Ukrainians (estimates vary between 500 000 to 1 million); while, the UK has a relatively small number of Ukrainians (estimates vary between 30 000 to 100 000).

The interviews were conducted mostly in London and Warsaw. This is because, firstly, in the UK, Ukrainians are mostly concentrated in the capital, London. For comparative reasons, I have chosen the Polish capital, Warsaw, where Ukrainians are also found in significant numbers. Secondly, and more importantly, however, is that diaspora organisations are typically concentrated in the capital of the country because of their interest in communicating with the power structures. Therefore, the main diasporic and Euromaidan activities – which are the focus of this study – were mostly held in the capitals. Nevertheless, some interviews were also conducted in other cities of the UK and Poland. The sample consisted of 20 interviewees in the UK and 20 in Poland. Amongst these were 20 representatives of diverse Ukrainian diaspora organisations: 3 community leaders, 9 professionals/activists/volunteers, three business people, 3 embassy representatives; and 2 Church representatives. I also conducted three expert interviews in Ukraine. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. The material was anonymised, coded and analysed using NVivo software.

## The Ukrainian diaspora – diversity and segmentation

In both countries, the Ukrainian diaspora turned out to be diverse and segmented, depending on the members' skills, religion, class, age, initial migration motives, migration status and duration of stay in the host country. However, in one sense, the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland is distinctly different from that in the UK because, in Poland, there is a historic Ukrainian minority, a feature that does not exist in the UK.

### *The diaspora population in the UK*

The Ukrainian community in the UK has a long history and its own institutions – associations, a newspaper, archives, a community Saturday school, etc. (Kubal, Bakewell and de Haas 2011). However, no definite figures exist for the size or social composition of the Ukrainian community there today. According to the 2018 Annual Population Survey, 36 000 persons born in Ukraine were residing in the UK in 2017 (Office for National Statistics 2018). However, this figure excludes second-generation Ukrainians. Leaders of Ukrainian community organisations believe that the Ukrainian community currently numbers some 30 000 persons (Embassy of Ukraine to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, n.d.). These are mainly first- and second-generation Ukrainians from post-World War Two immigration flows. However, over the past few years, the Ukrainian community of Great Britain has increased due to – partly irregular – migrant workers. Any analysis of the Ukrainian diaspora in the UK cannot ignore the distinction between the different segments. Ukrainians in the UK can be divided in three main groups, between which there are significant differences with respect to their socio-economic and demographic characteristics and their involvement in organised Ukrainian community life. These three groups are a) post-World War Two immigrants, b) their descendants and c) migrants from independent Ukraine. Most of the Ukrainians who have come to the UK since Ukraine's declaration of independence in 1991 have been relatively young people of working age, with roughly equal numbers of men and women. They fall into several categories, depending on the circumstances of their arrival in the country and their status. Broadly speaking, two main subgroups can be distinguished within this category: those with a regular immigration and employment status and those with an irregular status. Those in the first group are employed in a wide range of occupations, from academic or highly skilled posts to unskilled jobs. Most of the undocumented immigrants work in un- or semi-skilled jobs in sectors such as agriculture, food processing, construction, catering and domestic work, even if they have higher educational qualifications and previously worked in higher-level jobs in Ukraine (Krawec 2017).

Recent migrants from independent Ukraine differ significantly from the post-war immigrants and their British-born descendants in terms of life experience and world outlook. As a consequence of this, they have generally not become involved in the life of the established Ukrainian community, albeit with some notable exceptions. The dramatic events of recent years in Ukraine – the Euromaidan, the annexation of Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine – have inspired newcomers in the UK to get involved and to make powerful contributions to their home country. Some have become members or supporters of both well-established and new diaspora organisations.

The 'old diaspora' refers mostly to the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain (AUGB), which was founded in 1946 by Ukrainians who went there at the end of World War Two. The association is the largest representative body for Ukrainians and those of Ukrainian descent, with branches in many UK cities. It exists to develop, promote and support the interests of the Ukrainian community and the AUGB community in London and the UK have been actively engaged in protests and providing aid to the home country. Members of the 'new diaspora' have different characteristics to those who have lived in the UK for a longer period of time. For example, more-settled immigrants are more likely to speak better English, to have become English citizens,

to have higher incomes and to have become homeowners – thus, a highly diverse diaspora. This was also confirmed by my interviewees. A senior representative of old diaspora organisation explained:

*There is no ‘one size fits all’, so every segment has to be approached in a very different manner. It is very important to understand, whenever doing anything with the diaspora, how diverse it is. There are Ukrainian oligarchs and their families, they are present in the UK and own hundreds of millions of pounds-worth of properties. Then there are Ukrainian big businessmen. The next segment is the Ukrainian professionals like the bankers, the lawyers, who are very well-paid individuals. Another group is academic – students and people who are working in academia. Then there is the old diaspora, which itself has different segments in it. Those who were born outside of Ukraine or in other countries, whose children have been born in the UK, this is a sort of diaspora. Then we have the migrants: legal and irregular migrants. We have this full eclectic mix, very diverse mix [UK14].<sup>1</sup>*

Crucially, all these segments complement one another, as the representative of the Embassy of Ukraine in London pointed out: ‘It [the Ukrainian diaspora] has different target groups and spheres of influence’ [UK19].

My research findings showed that, in some cases, there was a clear overlap between the different groups when, for instance, a newly arrived highly skilled labour migrant nevertheless became, first, a member of an old diaspora organisation – the AUGB – and then one of the leaders of the newly founded ‘London Euro-maidan’. Therefore, my findings challenge the neat distinction between immigrant communities and diasporas and the narrow conceptualisation of diaspora based on their historic roots. This approach implies that the idea of diaspora ‘in itself’ is derived from members’ historic roots only. Instead, I suggest considering diaspora ‘for itself’, instead taking peoples’ concrete engagement in diasporic activities and identities as the defining moment, no matter whether their ancestors had migrated or whether they themselves have migrated only recently. For these reasons, I distinguish between old and new diasporas.

### *The diaspora population in Poland*

As in the UK, the majority of my interviews in Poland reveal that the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland is quite diverse and segmented. First of all, there is a Ukrainian minority – the ‘conventional’ or ‘old’ Ukrainian diaspora in Poland – formed prior to independence in 1991 and represented by the Ukrainians’ Union in Poland (*Związek Ukraińców w Polsce*). The Association of Ukrainians in Poland was founded in 1990 as a descendant of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society (USKT), established in 1956. It was the only community institution in post-war Poland which was allowed to engage in Ukrainian cultural and educational activities until the 1980s.

Notably, Ukrainians are the fourth-largest minority in Poland – a distinctive feature of the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland. According to a 2011 survey, this diaspora consists of 51 000 people (Central Statistical Office in Poland 2011). Again as in the UK, there is a new post-independence Ukrainian diaspora in Poland, made up of a combination of people who emigrated after 1991. The number of Ukrainian nationals (including ethnic Ukrainians) who work in Poland either permanently or temporarily has been significantly increasing since the 1990s (Tyma 2018). This flow consists mainly of labour migrants, students, professionals and undocumented migrants. There are different estimates of the number of Ukrainians in Poland – according to the *Ukraiński Świat* Society in 2015, there were 400 000 (Kunicka 2015). Deshchytsia, the Ukrainian ambassador in Poland, argued that, in 2018, the number of Ukrainians living and working in Poland was over million (quoted in Radio Svoboda 2018). The ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine has contributed to an increase in a new category in Poland – applications for refugee status submitted by Ukrainian citizens.



It is important to stress that, despite segmentation, there is a dialogue and collaboration between the ‘conventional’ old diaspora and the new diaspora, as stated by the representative of a new diaspora organisation in Warsaw:

*They [old diaspora] collaborate with us, they see potential in us – Ukrainians from Ukraine, because one of the challenges for them is assimilation. Their children speak Polish at school, and only at home speak Ukrainian. We are native speakers and by communicating with us in Ukrainian they improve their Ukrainian language proficiency. On two occasions we organised major events together with the Association of Ukrainians in Poland – Ukraine’s Independence Day, this year and last year [P5].*

At the same time, a representative of the old diaspora organisation in Warsaw confirmed that:

*We collaborate with the organisation ‘Nash Vybir’ [‘Our Choice’], which was founded by new-comers, highly educated Ukrainian migrants. They are people who work at universities, graduated from universities or have some scholarships in Poland. They differ considerably from the previous migration wave in 1990 [P7].*

Another representative of the new diaspora in Warsaw was very positive about the old diaspora and pointed out that there was a lot to learn from it:

*When they came here first, it was not easy, they had to be very patient. Newcomers must learn from the old diaspora. Because we are [newcomers] ‘hot’ people, we want everything at once and immediately. And if there is no result we are quickly disappointed, whereas the old diaspora were more patient. We have to learn it from them. We do not appreciate that, in the past, everything was different [P20].*

Generally, all groups or segments in both countries engage in a variety of activities, have different target groups and spheres of influence and partly compete with, but also complement, one another. However, what they have in common is concern about the affairs of the country of origin, Ukraine. From my interviews with different representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora, it became clear that, in both cases and to a greater or lesser extent, the Ukrainian diaspora displays some divisions, conflicts and differences, thus echoing Satzewich’s (2002) description. For instance, a representative of the new diaspora in Warsaw revealed that:

*Young people here are very creative, whereas the old diaspora do not create new innovative things. They do not organise activities for the newcomers because they do not understand them. Therefore, we are very divided in Warsaw [P3].*

Differences between newcomers and more-settled immigrants were reflected in the comments of another representative of the new diaspora in Warsaw:

*Within the last 10 years there have been lots of changes here. Those Ukrainians who were born here [in Poland] lived a very quiet life, made some money but now feel uncomfortable. Their importance is decreasing. They have their own problems which are more related to history. Labour migrants, students or newcomers have different kinds of problem [P14].*

Several interviewees mentioned the division and conflict between migrant organisations in Warsaw:

*The division has also deepened due to the Euromaidan. In the beginning, the Euromaidan united all of us but, later, there was a division and many misunderstandings appeared. Everyone started discussing who has done more. One organisation accused another of being ‘Kremlin agents’.*

*On the one hand, there are organisations ‘X’ and ‘Y’ and, on the other, there is the organisation ‘Z’. When there was a celebration of Ukraine’s Independence Day, a picnic was organised by X, while Z organised the Vyshyvanka March. They deliberately organised these events on the same day and at the same time [P3].*

The representative of the new diaspora in Warsaw was also critical of the conflict and made it clear that ‘this problem hinders the development of the Ukrainian community in Poland. It would be better to act together’ [P3].

#### *The Euromaidan: the emergence of a diasporic civil society in the UK and Poland*

The Euromaidan, the subsequent occupation of Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine have all mobilised activists, volunteers, associations and various NGOs and foundations but have also inspired previously non-active Ukrainians abroad and triggered a unique response and powerful wave of diasporic activities in the UK and Poland. All actors quickly responded to the events in Ukraine – almost every Ukrainian NGO in London and Warsaw and many active citizens in the two countries were pulling together to help and support Ukraine. The great majority of my interviewees agreed that the Ukrainian community has united and grown stronger due to events in Ukraine. A representative of the new diaspora in London revealed:

*What we have seen is this joint effort of all the migrants – those who came long ago, more recently and even more recently – to join forces and support the Revolution of Dignity and unite as a front to oppose the Russian annexation of Crimea. So, if there is anything positive to come out of the tragic and horrendous events in Ukraine then it is that our community has grown stronger [UK3].*

The mobilisation of civil society has been remarkable in terms of the levels of engagement and participation across all segments of the Ukrainian diaspora. A number of my interviewees agreed that, due to Euromaidan and the war in Eastern Ukraine, diaspora members united their efforts and activities. A representative of the new diaspora in Warsaw observed:

*When the Euromaidan started, many people who were friends and trusted one another assembled in the square. This encouraged and drove other people to join in. A common enemy united different groups in Poland – the older diaspora, young people and newcomers. When the situation in Ukraine deteriorated, all were united [P18].*

On the one hand, traditional diaspora groups reported a surge in members, participants and activities. On the other, almost every Ukrainian NGO and many active citizens in the UK and Poland pulled together to help and support individual victims, civil society, the army and Ukraine in general. A representative of the new diaspora in London explains:

*When the Euromaidan started, the old diaspora became very active and they mobilised. There were more joint efforts, I remember petitions we signed together – we collected signatures. I remember the ‘March for*

*Peace’ – up to 10 000 people turned up and it was organised with the help of the old diaspora. The Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain and the Association of Ukrainian Women in Great Britain were very proactive. They were sending parcels to the front line, to kids, to families [UK9].*

Finally, ‘The Revolution of Dignity’ brought together different and often scattered diaspora and civil-society groups who had not previously collaborated.

*I think that the Maidan and the war in Eastern Ukraine mobilised people here. I could say about myself that, before all this happened, I did not do much. There were people who organised meetings, Ukrainian evenings etc. Now there are many people who come and are ready to help. I am sure that the war has changed us and Ukrainians have realised that they have to do something [P13].*

Thus, due to the events in Ukraine, the country’s diaspora has mobilised, grown stronger and became more united, whilst transforming from more inward-looking to more outward-looking communities which, as a result, are now engaging more and more critically with Ukrainian affairs. These activities can thus be conceptualised as a diasporic civil society.

### **The diaspora contribution to Ukraine’s development**

Most of the diaspora members retain strong emotional, financial and familial connections with their homeland. They are also well integrated in their host countries, with the potential and willingness to contribute to its development, poverty reduction and economic growth. A well-engaged diaspora may help governments and communities to resolve a crisis, deal with its humanitarian consequences and contribute to post-crisis recovery and rehabilitation. The transfer of diaspora skills can strengthen and build health, education, justice and other institutions in a crisis-affected country; diaspora members can, in turn, mobilise other support for the rehabilitation of the country of origin.

My research findings showed that the Ukrainian diaspora in the UK and Poland has the ambition and willingness as well as the resources and power to contribute to the homeland’s development. However, interaction with the Ukrainian diaspora is sporadic and unstructured, and its members are rarely included or consulted in the design of policies or decision-making processes. Members of the diaspora are often perceived as ‘money senders’. However, what are often not emphasised enough are the other forms through which the diaspora provides valuable contributions to the economic development of the homeland, such as trade and investment, job creation, the transfer of know-how and innovation and promotion of the country globally, etc. Effective diaspora engagement relies on two-way communication, with benefits achieved only when working jointly on common development goals. Although many of this potential remains largely untapped, the diaspora is considered as one of the key players in the development of a homeland. Here I discuss some of the key means of influence and the variety of contributions which the diaspora has made to Ukraine.

#### *Economic influences: from humanitarian to development assistance*

One of the most important influences which a diaspora can have on its country of origin is through economic contribution. Private remittances from the diaspora can help individuals and families to survive during conflict and to rebuild their lives afterwards. The great majority of my interviewees agreed that remittances by individuals constitute the most sizeable and tangible form of Ukrainian diaspora contribution to development.

From the interviews and observations and, by referring to the categorisation offered by Van Hear and Cohen (2017), it became evident that diaspora engagement in Ukraine tends to be privately orientated towards family and the known community rather than concerned with broad societal renewal. This orientation toward recovery and development – implicit and rarely articulated – is largely private, focused more on fostering the survival of and supporting kin and community, rather than geared to notions of recovery and development led by the state, which they often mistrust.

Recognising the importance of remittances by individuals as a reliable source of funds in the development context, in this section I focus on the humanitarian aid and development assistance which the Ukrainian diaspora has provided for the homeland. Remittances, on their own, will not result in development if the conditions for those sending and those receiving remittances are not conducive to development.

In the context of the Euromaidan and the subsequent and ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine, the Ukrainian diaspora efforts in the UK and Poland are directed towards the provision of humanitarian aid. It should be stressed that organising humanitarian aid is not the monopoly of skilled members of the intellectual diaspora only; instead, all diaspora groups make contributions to the home country. Many low-skilled or even undocumented migrants in both countries actively contributed to activities like the provision of humanitarian aid. An old diaspora representative in London summarises the situation thus:

*One of the things I was very proud of when the Euromaidan started in Ukraine was that each and every Ukrainian community group was doing its bit. The Ukrainian Medical Association in the UK took over medical issues, issues with hospitals, wounded people. ‘London Euromaidan’ had people to collect, fund-raise and get supplies for the front line, for volunteering battalions. At the same time, people from the same group who had skills in networking would approach the media and talk in front of cameras and microphones to raise awareness. Others with skills and networks would go to parliament and raise issues [there] [UK3].*

Although the Ukrainian diaspora continues to engage in a number of important issues in Ukraine, the scope of their engagement has shifted as events have unfolded. At the beginning of the Euromaidan movement, solidarity activities were organised but, when things turned violent, humanitarian aid became a major field of activity; this gained further importance due to the war in Eastern Ukraine, when people were wounded in the fighting. As explained by one of my interviewees:

*It all started with the organisation of the mini-Maidan near our Embassy [in Warsaw], then I went for two weeks to Ukraine to be on the Maidan in Kiev. I went there two days before they started shooting at Maidan. It was end of January. Later, in February, wounded Ukrainian soldiers were brought to Warsaw. We organised a mini-chain of the volunteers in Warsaw. Someone was cooking, someone was dealing with the documents, translations, others were dealing with the accommodation of the wounded after their stay in hospital. Then we organised a concert with fundraising for the Maidan. Every member of the community was mobilised: those who came here to work long term, those who came here for one to two months and those who were born here [P20].*

Since the start of Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine, new organisations have been created, in both the UK and Poland, which aimed to support specific stakeholders in Ukraine in multiple ways. For instance, many were helping Ukrainian soldiers and volunteers by providing military and medical aid, whilst others were providing humanitarian aid to and helping more than 1.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). The ‘new diaspora’ representative of the British-Ukrainian organisation which supports people suffering from armed

conflict and the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, including the injured and wounded, orphaned children, the elderly, IDPs and families who lost their breadwinners, shared her experience:

*The first time we came up with this idea [of volunteering] was more than one year ago, when we saw how many people in Ukraine were injured and wounded. Being very active since Euromaidan started, we had actually experienced the fact that our government and state could not be very helpful and we decided to do what we could, what possibilities there were for us to help. Several months later we decided to start the process of registration and, at the same time, began to do some fundraising to try to deliver some help already to Kiev military hospital. Gradually we developed three main areas of assistance. First, help with prosthetics and with providing medical treatment. Second, help to families and IDPs. The third area was help for children who had lost a parent during the war. I would say we have a fourth area as well – we try to help hospitals by delivering medical equipment [UK9].*

As noted before, not only organisations but many individuals in both countries are actively involved in humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. It has to be stressed that a number of interviewees confirmed Marienstras' (1989) argument that 'time has to pass' before we can know that any community that has migrated 'is really a diaspora' and strongly emphasised this temporal dimension of diaspora formation. One Ukrainian volunteer in Poland (a representative of the new diaspora in Warsaw) explained how her diasporic consciousness had been formed:

*I have been living in Poland for 15 years. I arrived here in 2000 when I was 10 years old. Now I am 25 years old. I received my Master's degree in International Relations here. I was not involved in any volunteerism for Ukraine before the Maidan. I have been helping some children from the orphanage, some animals, but I haven't had anything to do with Ukrainian people. It needed some time to develop. I lived and studied in Lublin, after I entered University in Wroclaw and lived there for one year. Later, when I moved to Warsaw I got to know the Ukrainian diaspora; I got to know people who maintained Ukrainian traditions and were involved in all sorts of activities. The Ukrainian community that lives here maintains Ukrainian traditions, probably even more than Ukrainians in Ukraine. It was before Euromaidan and I had a big wish to do something but did not know what I could do. Then the Euromaidan started and all the people who wanted to help united. They wanted to help from here [Poland] as much as they could [P20].*

Another individual in Warsaw first started volunteering at an individual level but later united her efforts with those of the Monastery and proceeded with the organisation that helped people in Ukraine. She explained:

*Last year I decided that I had to do something. I decided to organise, together with the Polish Monastery, the collection of humanitarian aid, namely – clothes. The priest announced that we would collect clothes for IDPs in Ukraine and many Polish people donated clothes. We collected 50 huge sacks and all of them were delivered to my home. I was sorting all this together with my friends. It took us three days. Then we gave these clothes to the Foundation 'Open Dialogue', and they delivered them to Ukraine. This how my volunteering started [P13].*

However, it should be pointed out that the contribution of a diaspora to the development of its countries of origin goes far beyond financial remittances, including the transfer of skills and knowledge, entrepreneurship, trade, investments, network building and bridging cultural divides.

### *Social and cultural influences*

Members of the diaspora have, in many cases, acquired not only financial but also human capital, such as skills, networks and ideas that can be of use to their countries of origin. In addition, they can capitalise on their 'insider status' in two countries, which may allow them to understand the particular issues facing their countries of origin, while leveraging their resources and influence in their countries of settlement.

The great majority of my interviewees agreed that social remittances are extremely important for Ukraine. A remarkable example of social influence is an academic project entitled *Leadership Education and Development* (LEAD), organised by Young City Club in 2014, an arm of the London-based non-profit organisation Ukrainian-British City Club (UBCC). LEAD aims to develop and support talented Ukrainian students who are keen to drive positive changes in their native country by implementing social initiatives or pursuing public-sector careers. Within the framework of the programme, Ukrainian students spend 10 days in London gaining exposure to and insights into the professional environment, work ethics and corporate culture of the UK's public- and private-sector institutions. Through attendance at topical presentations, participation in workshops, case studies and group projects, participants hone their communication, organisation and political skills, and explore concepts of transparency, compliance and public governance. Under the patronage of UBCC and with the endorsement of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, LEAD endeavours to motivate young Ukrainians to learn from the best Western practices and to use this knowledge to reform systems, institutions and values in their native Ukraine.

Another example of how social remittances are used is the project *Children of Heroes* run by The Ukrainian Youth Association of Great Britain. This latter organised several summer camps in the UK for children who had lost a parent during the war. For a number of years, Ukrainian children have been invited to the UK to experience the summer camp at Tarasivka – a unique opportunity to meet their peers of Ukrainian parentage who were born in Great Britain, and to enjoy a brief respite from the continuing turmoil in their lives at home in Ukraine.

It is important to note that, in their daily activities, the volunteering Ukrainians adhere to European values such as human dignity, freedom, democracy, transparency or non-corruption, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. European values are not only shared among the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland and the UK but are diffused in interactions with the authorities and non-state actors in Ukraine.

*In December, I went to the Maidan in Kiev for the first time. I have joined the self-defence of the Maidan. It was difficult to combine work in Warsaw and my Maidan activities. I also was responsible for the security of the volunteers. We were in charge of gathering information about human rights violations [P3].*

Another value of great relevance for volunteers' own activities is transparency. The Ukrainian activists wanted to support the idea of the Europeanisation of Ukraine. Therefore, most of the Ukrainian activists aim to be transparent in their own activities and publish on-line progress reports in order to set precedences and only cooperate with Ukrainian partners whom they consider to be reliable.

One more sphere in which the diaspora can play a significant role and contribute to the home country is the promotion of Ukraine abroad. A representative of the old diaspora in the UK highlighted that:

*The diaspora can help to promote Ukraine, which we do a lot from the cultural aspect and also to try re-educate people who still think that Kiev is Russian or that Ukraine is part of Russia. And also, I am not sure that I heard much from the Ukrainian government emphasising the Ukrainian aspect of things and this*

*war, the Russian invasion of Eastern Ukraine, has helped a bit, but there are still occasions when people still do not understand the differences between Ukraine and Russia [UK10].*

At the same time a representative of the new diaspora suggested that:

*We must offer more to modern people, because sometimes we are more concentrated on our culture, on our national clothes, songs. But we have a modern culture as well and it is not represented at exhibitions here [in the UK]. If there are exhibitions, they are sponsored by Firtash.<sup>2</sup> Recently we were invited to Glasgow by a Scottish charity to show photos from our exhibition and we were asked to present a short video of Ivan Kravchyshyn's 'Letters to the front'. I travelled overnight by bus with S. to Glasgow; we did not sleep, then had to prepare the exhibition. We came back to London by plane and next day we went back to work. On the Sunday we had another charity event. Sometimes it is too much – we all have ordinary jobs – volunteering we do in our free time [UK11].*

Cultural diplomacy using diasporic communities as facilitators of interaction between states has long been important. For example, the Ukrainian Institute in London has been making a big contribution to the development of Ukraine.

*It [the Ukrainian Institute] is 'working de-facto as Ukraine's cultural institute and serving a platform for debate about Ukraine, engaging key influencers in the UK, bringing Ukrainian artists and thinkers over to the UK, working with leading UK institutions, such as British Library, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, promoting Ukrainian-Jewish understanding, running Ukrainian language school, initiating a roundtable on Ukraine culture policies in Chatham House [UK19].*

Thus, the Ukrainian diaspora became an important stakeholder actively contributing social and cultural remittances: ideas, new values, expectations and social capital that can have an impact on post-war reconstruction and the county's development.

### *Political influences*

There are various channels of political engagement open to diaspora members. One such route is through lobbying their host governments to take action in some manner *vis-à-vis* the conflict. On the other hand, lobbying and awareness-raising could have the more general purpose of promoting international attention to a homeland conflict. The Ukrainian diaspora turned out to be a source of the soft powers of the country – for example, these actors spontaneously act as voluntary ambassadors and cultural diplomats abroad. Their lobbying activities had the general purpose of raising international attention to the war in their homeland conflict, challenging the partly neutral international stance over the conflict and specifically counter-misperceptions of Ukraine and the conflict and (Russian) misinformation. At present, the Ukrainian diaspora is firmly involved in political activities, as a representative of the new diaspora in London explained:

*We became very active in political terms. Another area of Euromaidan work is political lobbying. Our activists attend different sessions in parliament, speak to members of parliament [UK4].*

A representative of a new diaspora organisation in Warsaw stressed that one of their most important activities is a political one:

*This includes the preparation of official letters and petitions to Ukrainian and international politicians who can influence the situation in Ukraine. We also organise political events, marches and the picketing of embassies. In addition, we lobby for Ukrainian interests. We have good contacts and have established good relationships with Polish and European politicians who support Ukraine [P10].*

Furthermore, almost all my interviewees agreed that the diaspora has the ability to counter misinformation on Ukraine. As expressed by one of them:

*The other thing the diaspora might be able to help with is trying to prevent or stem the flow of misinformation about Ukraine. So, the diaspora can fight against all this misinformation. It needs to be organised and coordinated in some way because this is very important. There was a lot of misinformation or disinformation around and that needs to be fought at every step. Because if there is no response to that then people start believing [UK10].*

The diaspora is also understood to be an active part of civil society in Ukraine. Its integration could thus be important for national development. For instance, the representative of the Ukrainian Embassy in the UK viewed the diaspora as an ‘ambassador’ of goodwill for the country of origin: ‘Diaspora is an active part of civil society in Ukraine. Every Ukrainian is an ambassador of Ukraine and everybody should contribute’ [UK20]. My interviewees confirmed that they have both the willingness and the ability to represent Ukraine:

*Often there are no official representatives of Ukraine and we try to fill this niche. We also approach the Polish mass media, organise different events and attract the attention of the Polish media to Ukraine. We are often invited on TV to comment on some event. I believe it is very positive when, on Polish TV, Ukrainians speak about Ukraine but not as a sort of ‘expert’ who was only once in Ukraine. It helps to show real the Ukraine, not the Ukraine that was shown in books or articles [P10].*

Crucially, in addition to providing substantial aid to Ukraine, the diaspora has been at the forefront in supporting the country diplomatically. For example, the AUGB urged Westminster to ‘freeze all Russian assets in the UK and EU and to provide urgent medical and military assistance to Ukraine’s government’ (Robertson 2014). In terms of future post-war activities of the Ukrainian diaspora, an activist in London explained: ‘We will still be active. We will still have the victims of war, they will need further assistance. They will need humanitarian aid’ [UK4].

Finally, the diaspora became a fairly critical actor of development in Ukraine, aiming to maintain the momentum of the Maidan revolution:

*We still have to communicate with the governments in Ukraine and here and make sure that we help the government to stay on track with reforms and keep up the dialogue with the British government in order to continue support for Ukraine [UK4].*

The above demonstrates the Ukrainian diaspora’s huge contribution to the economic, political and social development of Ukraine. The diaspora claims to be recognised as an important stakeholder. If the Ukrainian government and the diaspora work together, utilising each other’s strengths, they can, collectively, have a greater impact on Ukraine’s development and in reforming the country.



*Ukraine: perceptions of diaspora, the realities and the prospects for collaboration*

The growing prominence of diaspora communities around the world has led to increased recognition of the role they play in the domestic affairs of their respective homelands and as global actors and agents of change in their own right (Odermatt 2016; Vullnetari 2013; White, Grabowska, Kaczmarczyk and Slany 2018). However, the Ukrainian diaspora seems to have been less successful in becoming involved in the politics of the homeland than other diasporas (Satzewich 2002). It seems to have had little influence on developments in Ukraine – for instance, on reforming the country after the end of communism – unlike Lithuania, where diaspora returnees from the USA joined the first post-communist government.

The Euromaidan protest movement unified Ukrainians from otherwise-diverse political, ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. We observe the mobilisation of different actors of the Ukrainian diaspora in the UK and Poland who are engaging diaspora and international migrant communities in helping Ukraine. It should be noted that some positive developments in terms of diaspora influence took place in Ukraine after the Euromaidan protest. The most prominent examples are the Ukrainian diaspora returnees who have had or continue to hold high-level positions in the Ukrainian government, such as Dr Ulana Suprun, acting Health Minister of Ukraine since 2016, who was previously the Director of Humanitarian Initiatives of the Ukrainian World Congress, and Natalie Ann Jaresko – Ukrainian former Minister of Finance.

However, from my interviews with diaspora members it became clear that they believe that the Ukrainian government does not consider them to be a significant development actor, and the recent focus on remittances, although good in itself, has further overshadowed the development issues that the diaspora is involved in.

Despite the strong connections between the diaspora and the country of origin, the data collected during my fieldwork allow me to identify several challenges which have implications for homeland–diaspora relations and which add to the negative perception of the diaspora by certain members of local communities. The first challenge is the perception held by many in the homeland that the diaspora is trying to come in from the outside and teach: ‘Why are you teaching us? We know better’ [UK14]. The second challenge relates to two different contradictory perceptions of the Ukrainian diaspora. As an expert from Ukraine explained: ‘On one side, the diaspora is perceived as beggars who constantly want something and, on the other hand, as a “cash cow”’ [U2]. However, there were some positive shifts in perceptions of the diaspora in Ukraine, as a Ukrainian expert explained:

*I think there are different stages of country development. And now society is getting older, more responsible and there are some positive changes in perceptions. In the USSR, emigration abroad was considered as a betrayal. So, within 20 years society went through big changes from a closed society to being more open. Because at that time those who left the country were traitors and those who came to the country were spies. There was a lot of mistrust of foreigners. Even though those perceptions of migrants have changed, Ukraine is still far from understanding that the diaspora is a powerful resource. But there is understanding that migration is a natural process and not a crime [U3].*

Overall, Ukraine’s collaboration with Ukrainians abroad was highly criticised by the Ukrainian community. A representative of the old Ukrainian diaspora in Warsaw described it as ‘two parallel worlds’. Other interviewees added that there is very little understanding of the scale of activities done in this sphere and that a dialogue between the Ukrainian state and Ukrainian communities abroad is needed. Practically, such collaboration is almost non-existent and is somewhat declarative.

In addition, several representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora complained that Ukraine is probably the only country in the world that does not support its own diaspora. As one representative of an old diaspora explained:

*We don't have any expectations of the Ukrainian state. Diaspora always relies on itself... Ukrainian society here (in London) always supported Ukraine in difficult times. When the catastrophe in Chernobyl happened, when there were floods, the diaspora organised fundraising. Also, the diaspora has helped in all the revolutions – The Orange Revolution, in the last Revolution of Dignity. However, unfortunately the Ukrainian state did not support Ukrainians here [UK6].*

It has to be stressed that members of the old and the new diaspora have divergent expectations *vis-à-vis* the Ukrainian government. A representative of the old diaspora pointed out:

*We expect nothing. We chose to make this our country and I am British as much as I am Ukrainian. So, I expect nothing from the Ukrainian government; however, we use every opportunity to communicate our strong desire to support their work and we wish them luck in achieving a corruption-free country which is open to Europe. We have no expectations of the Ukrainian government per se, but we obviously have a lot of hopes and dreams that things will settle and the government will function for the purpose of the public and not the oligarchs, as so many people claim [UK8].*

Meanwhile the new diaspora has high expectations of the Ukrainian government. One activist from a newly created diasporic organisation in the UK shared his view:

*The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has to elaborate a concept of collaboration with the Ukrainian diaspora in different countries. The diaspora has to participate in this programme elaboration. A road map and action plan should be prepared together. We are ready to represent Ukraine abroad and work effectively in the lobbying for Ukraine's interests. On the other hand, feedback is very important for us. We want the Ukrainian authorities to react to our criticism, to work better and more efficiently [UK4].*

This demonstrates that the diaspora claims that it is being recognised as an important, almost equal political stakeholder.

Answering the question of whether the Ukrainian diaspora is a positive agent for change, a Ukrainian expert pointed out:

*The diaspora might be a positive agent for change. There is no doubt that there is great potential. This is a two-sided issue. I would rather ask whether the state is able to use this agent, whether there is an understanding of this resource. There should be certain mechanisms in place for use of this resource. The diaspora needs support, but not everything depends on money issues. Many problems can be resolved with the help of organisational activities and they do not need to be funded [U2].*

The representatives of the diaspora and experts believe that it will take very serious work to build trust between a state and a diaspora. As expressed by a Ukrainian expert:

*Today there is no trust in the state. Citizens of Ukrainians who live in Ukraine do not have trust; what can we say about those who are outside Ukraine? If there is no trust, there is no collaboration [U2].*

It became clear from the interviewees' accounts that the Ukrainian diaspora has little trust in Ukraine's government and politicians. An old diaspora representative in the UK expressed his scepticism:

*One of the problems was that there had been no collaboration in the past because of mistrust of the Ukrainian government and I think the Ukrainian government needs to get itself sorted out first. Mistrust is maybe too strong a word but is due to the fact that we did not have confidence in believing in what we were trying to do. You know there are different ambassadors here in Great Britain. Some of them have been very co-operative and wanted to mix with a diaspora, others have been very official and not wanted to mix and to work together. Because I think working together we can do more. If we are always doing our own thing without any coordination, it is really not good, I think [UK10].*

The long-term project of building partnerships between governments and diaspora is much more likely to succeed if it has a strong foundation of good communication and trust. Building trust is a necessary element of diaspora engagement strategy (Agunias and Newland 2012).

## **Conclusion**

This study has mapped and discussed the Ukrainian diaspora in the UK and Poland and specifically its role in Ukraine's development in times of war. We have seen that the Ukrainian diaspora community in the two countries is quite diverse. It has within-group differences and similarities in terms of its historical background, initial migration motives, skills, duration of stay (old and new diasporas) and migratory status. However, in one sense, the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland is distinctly different from that in the UK because in Poland there is a historic Ukrainian ethnic minority, a feature that does not exist in the UK. From the interviews with the Ukrainian diaspora it became evident that, in both cases, to a greater or lesser extent, the Ukrainian diaspora displays divisions, conflicts and differences. It seems that there is competition and thus more division and conflict between migrant organisations in Warsaw than in London, which hinders the development of the Ukrainian community in Poland. This could be due to the personalities of the various leaders as there are no other obvious reasons. One of the key conclusions is that, due to the Euromaidan and the war in Eastern Ukraine, the Ukrainian diaspora has mobilised, grown stronger and became more united. A fresh surge of diasporic and similar activities was triggered in the UK and Poland. The empirical evidence shows that, due to these events, the Ukrainian diasporas became more powerful and influential. Furthermore, it transformed from more inward- to more outward-looking communities which, as a result, are now engaging more with but also claiming a stake in Ukrainian affairs.

From the interviews with different representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora, it became clear that, in both host countries, the diaspora has made an important contribution to Ukraine's economic, social and political development and has the willingness and potential to support post-war reconstruction efforts. All diaspora groups make contributions to their home countries – they are not a monopoly of skilled/intellectual diaspora members only. These are indeed hugely significant and there is massive potential for increasing this further. However, as became evident from the interviews, despite the fact that the Ukrainian diaspora claims to be recognised as an important stakeholder in the development of Ukraine, one of the most significant barriers to more comprehensive diaspora involvement in development lies in the lack of recognition by the Ukrainian government of the contributions of the Ukrainian diaspora. Ukraine barely engages with its diaspora. The main challenges to diaspora engagement with affairs in Ukraine have been described as a lack of commitment by the origin country, notably its authorities, mistrust between governments and some diaspora organisations and, in some cases, a lack of unity among diaspora members.

To address this discrepancy, the first step could be to build trust and then, second, to implement other activities depending on the diaspora's potential and on state needs. Furthermore, in order to benefit from the

resources of the diaspora, the government should make diaspora engagement one of its foreign policy priorities. The major policy challenge is to understand how the Ukrainian diaspora can be better engaged to support development and foreign and socio-economic policies in Ukraine and link to and reintegrate the Ukrainian diaspora in the future development of the country.

This study generates a number of further questions that are relevant for research on the Ukrainian diaspora. How can the diaspora's motivation to engage in Ukrainian matters be maintained? Which determinants drive people to fade out from diaspora activities? How can the diaspora's engagement in development be stimulated? Finally, what are the diaspora's engagement determinants and dynamics?

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> UK14 is a code for the interviewee, where UK refers to the UK, 14 is the number of the respondent, P refers to Poland and U refers to Ukraine.

<sup>2</sup> Dmytro Firtash is a Ukrainian oligarch, highly influential during Viktor Yanukovych administration. Firtash long seen as pro-Russian, has lost considerable influence in Ukraine since the Maidan revolution.

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