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Migration, Diaspora & Transnational Media Spaces: How Migrant Communities Use Media to Maintain Identity, Integrate, and Influence Politics in Host and Home Countries

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Abstract **Original Research Article**

This study examines how Nigerian diaspora communities in the United Kingdom and Canada use digital media to maintain cultural identity, navigate integration, and influence politics across host and home countries. Drawing on a qualitative, multi-sited design combining digital ethnography, remote semi-structured interviews, and document/content analysis, the study analyzes diaspora-oriented spaces including Facebook groups and pages, WhatsApp and Telegram communities, and creator platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. The findings show that diaspora media spaces operate as transnational infrastructures: they sustain belonging through shared cultural narratives and boundary work, function as practical settlement networks for jobs, housing, and institutional guidance, and become mobilization arenas during homeland elections, protests, and crises. Political engagement is dual-oriented, with homeland politics often emotionally central and event-driven, while host-country participation is more pragmatic and policy-triggered. Platform choice follows polymedia logics, but participation and influence are shaped by visibility regimes, moderation constraints, and risk environments including harassment and perceived surveillance. The study contributes an integrated account of transnational media spaces that links everyday migrant communication to cross-border political effects and highlights governance and safety as constitutive conditions of diaspora public life.

Keywords: diaspora, transnationalism, migration, social media, platform governance, identity, integration, political communication, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

Migration today is increasingly experienced through transnational social fields enduring networks of relationships, obligations, and identifications that connect migrants to multiple places at once (Basch et al., 1994; Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Vertovec, 2009). This perspective challenges approaches that treat the nation-state as the natural "container" of social life, a tendency critiqued as methodological nationalism because it can obscure how cross-border ties reshape identity, institutions, and political participation (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Rather than viewing

incorporation into host societies and attachment to origin societies as mutually exclusive, transnational scholarship emphasizes simultaneity: migrants may integrate locally while sustaining and transforming cultural, economic, and political engagements across borders (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Vertovec, 2009). Media and communication technologies have become central infrastructures for this simultaneity. Long before social media, mediated communication supported collective belonging and political imagination, as classic work on nations as "imagined communities" made clear (Anderson, 1983/2006). Under globalization, media also facilitates cultural circulation and the imagination of shared worlds across distance (Appadurai, 1996). In diaspora contexts, identity is not a fixed inheritance but a negotiated, relational process shaped by representation, memory, and difference (Hall, 1990). Diaspora scholarship further cautions that "diaspora" is not only a demographic descriptor; it is also a category of practice and claim-making that can be mobilized for cultural authority and political projects (Brubaker, 2005). Within these debates, diaspora media studies show how migrants and dispersed communities use communication resources ethnic press, community radio, satellite television, and now social platforms to maintain cultural continuity, negotiate boundaries of membership, and construct a sense of co-presence across space (Georgiou, 2006; Karim, 2003). Digital environments intensify these possibilities by lowering the costs of coordination, enabling continuous connection, and expanding participation beyond formally organized institutions (Brinkerhoff, 2009). At the level of everyday life, migrants rarely rely on a single medium; they operate within polymedia environments where choices among platforms (calls, messaging apps, social networks, video) become socially meaningful decisions about intimacy, obligation, and care (Madianou & Miller, 2012).

At the same time, migrant media use is not only about cultural expression; it is also deeply practical. A growing body of research frames integration as an information problem, in which access to trustworthy, legible, and culturally appropriate information shapes newcomers' ability to navigate jobs, housing, education, documentation, and health systems (Caidi & Allard, 2005). Diaspora groups often build informal "information infrastructures" through community organizations and platform groups that translate institutions and reduce uncertainty. However, such infrastructures can also concentrate attention and trust within in-group channels, shaping exposure to bridging ties and official sources effects that matter for social inclusion and civic participation (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Vertovec, 2009). Beyond identity and integration, diaspora communication can also generate significant political influence in both host and origin countries. Transnational politics scholarship documents how diasporas engage homeland elections, fundraising, advocacy, and narrative contestation while also participating in host-country politics through voting blocs, coalition building, and representation struggles (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Vertovec, 2009). In conflict and post-conflict settings, diaspora mobilization may affect resource flows, legitimacy claims, and peacebuilding agendas (Koinova, 2018). These political engagements are often mediated: communication networks that begin as cultural or mutual-aid channels can become mobilization infrastructures during crises, elections, or contentious homeland events (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Koinova, 2018). Crucially, these identity, integration, and political processes now unfold in a platformized media environment. The "network society" thesis highlights how digital networks reorganize social power, coordination, and the circulation of meaning across boundaries (Castells, 2010). Social media scholarship further argues that platforms enable networked publics whose interaction is shaped by affordances such as persistence, visibility, scalability, and searchability (boyd, 2010). Yet platforms are not neutral conduits: they are infrastructures with political-economic logics and governance regimes that structure what becomes visible, what is monetized, and what is sanctioned (van Dijck et al., 2018). In practice, algorithmic ranking and influencer economies can amplify particular diaspora voices and frames, sometimes rewarding polarizing or sensational content. At moments of crisis, these dynamics can be intensified by emotionally charged storytelling and connective action, producing affective publics that

gather around events through shared sentiment and rapid circulation (Papacharissi, 2015).

Taken together, this literature indicates that migrant communities do not simply "use media"; they inhabit transnational media spaces overlapping communicative arenas linking host-society institutions, diaspora networks, and home-country publics. These spaces support cultural reproduction and belonging (Georgiou, 2006; Hall, 1990; Karim, 2003), enable integration through information and mutual aid (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Madianou & Miller, 2012), and facilitate political influence across borders (Koinova, 2018; Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003). However, they are also shaped by platform governance, uneven moderation capacity, and risk environments including surveillance and harassment (van Dijck et al., 2018; boyd, 2010). Therefore, an adequate account must link everyday communicative practices to cross-border political effects while foregrounding how platform infrastructures structure opportunities and vulnerabilities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Diaspora, transnationalism, and mediated publics

Scholarship on diaspora and transnationalism has progressively shifted migration analysis away from linear "departure–arrival–assimilation" models toward frameworks that emphasize multi-sited belonging and practice. Early transnationalism research argued that many migrants remain embedded in cross-border social relations family obligations, economic exchanges, cultural commitments, and political projects that connect origin and destination simultaneously (Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Basch et al., 1994). This approach later expanded into the concept of transnational social fields, highlighting that migrants' lives are structured by networks, institutions, and meanings that span multiple states and locales, producing "simultaneity" rather than sequential attachment (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). Importantly, scholars have warned that treating the nation-state as the default unit of analysis methodological nationalism can obscure how migration reorganizes social life across borders and how power operates through multi-scalar networks (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Within this broader shift, "diaspora" has evolved from a relatively bounded description of dispersed populations into a more contested and analytically complex term. Rather than assuming diaspora as a stable social fact, scholarship emphasizes diaspora as a category of identification, practice, and claim-making a way communities narrate collective origin, suffering, destiny, and belonging, often in relation to homeland politics and host-society recognition (Brubaker, 2005). This conceptualization draws attention to internal differentiation: diaspora communities are rarely unified; they contain class, gender, generational, regional, and ideological divisions that shape what "the diaspora" can mean and who can speak for it (Hall, 1990; Anthias, 1998). As a result, diaspora is not merely an outcome of migration; it is also an arena of symbolic and political struggle over identity, authenticity, and authority (Brah, 1996; Clifford, 1994).

Media and communication are central to these struggles because diasporic belonging depends on the capacity to imagine community across distance. Classic work on nationalism framed nations as "imagined communities" constituted through shared media and co-attention, making mediated communication foundational to modern collective identity (Anderson, 1983/2006). In globalization scholarship, media is similarly positioned as a key infrastructure through which cultural forms circulate and through which "locality" can be produced under conditions of mobility and deterritorialization (Appadurai, 1996). For diaspora, mediated communication sustains shared narratives about "home," enables cultural reproduction, and organizes memory and affect yet it also exposes identity to negotiation, hybridity, and conflict (Hall, 1990; Clifford, 1994). Diaspora media studies developed to account for how ethnic press, community radio, satellite television, and later digital platforms enable dispersed communities to build publics that are neither fully "host-national" nor simply "homeland," but translocal and transnational. Research shows that diaspora media can function as cultural archives, sites of language maintenance, and forums for community debate, while also creating interpretive frames that shape how communities make sense of

both host and home politics (Karim, 2003; Georgiou, 2006). At the same time, diaspora media infrastructures often perform practical work: disseminating information about jobs, housing, and legal processes; connecting newcomers to community resources; and mediating relationships with host-state institutions (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Georgiou, 2006). This dual role cultural and infrastructural helps explain why diaspora media spaces frequently become politically consequential. The rise of digital and mobile media has intensified these dynamics, producing what many scholars describe as mediated or digital diasporas. Online platforms lower the costs of connection, enable constant "ambient" co-presence, and expand the range of actors who can produce and circulate diaspora narratives (Brinkerhoff, 2009). However, digitization has not eliminated older media forms; rather, it has reconfigured diaspora communication into a multi-platform ecology. The notion of polymedia captures this condition by arguing that communicative choices among platforms (voice calls, messaging, social networking, video) become social and moral decisions shaped by relational expectations, affordability, and the emotional economy of transnational family life (Madianou & Miller, 2012). This perspective is useful for diaspora studies because it treats media use as embedded in kinship, obligation, and community norms, not merely as adoption of technology. To connect diaspora and media to broader theories of public life, scholars increasingly use the idea of mediated publics publics formed through communication infrastructures rather than through territorial co-presence alone. A key conceptual anchor is the notion of the public sphere, historically associated with rational-critical debate and mediated by print culture (Habermas, 1989). While Habermas's model has been criticized for excluding marginalized voices and underestimating cultural and affective dimensions, it remains influential for understanding how public communication relates to legitimacy and democratic participation (Fraser, 1990). In diaspora contexts, the public sphere is rarely singular; migrants often operate within multiple publics (community-based, host-national, homeland, and transnational), each shaped by different linguistic norms, institutional gatekeepers, and power relations (Georgiou, 2006; Vertovec, 2009).

Digital media scholarship helps specify how these publics work under platform conditions. The concept of networked publics emphasizes that publics formed on social media are structured by platform affordances such as persistence, visibility, searchability, and scalability, which shape audience collapse, boundary management, and the circulation of discourse (boyd, 2010). Diaspora publics can leverage these affordances to mobilize around homeland crises, build solidarity networks, and amplify diaspora grievances; yet the same affordances can intensify internal conflict, expose vulnerable participants, and accelerate polarization (Papacharissi, 2015; Koinova, 2018). In addition, platforms organize visibility through algorithmic ranking and monetization logics, meaning that diaspora publics are increasingly shaped by infrastructural power what becomes prominent, what is suppressed, and what is sanctioned (van Dijck et al., 2018). This is particularly important for diaspora groups whose languages and cultural contexts are under-resourced in content moderation systems, creating uneven governance and safety outcomes. Taken together, the literature indicates that diaspora and transnationalism are best analyzed through mediated infrastructures and publics that operate across borders. Diaspora identities are produced through representational practices and boundary negotiations (Hall, 1990; Brubaker, 2005), while transnational social fields structure simultaneous participation across multiple political and cultural arenas (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Vertovec, 2009). Media does not simply "connect" these arenas; it constitutes them by enabling co-attention, narrative formation, and organizational coordination across distance (Anderson, 1983/2006; Appadurai, 1996; Castells, 2010). Under platformization, diaspora publics become increasingly shaped by visibility regimes, moderation policies, and risk environments, requiring analytical frameworks that link cultural belonging to infrastructural governance and political power (boyd, 2010; van Dijck et al., 2018; Papacharissi, 2015).

A. From migration and transnationalism to mediated social fields

Foundational transnationalism scholarship argues that migration is not a one-way shift from "origin" to "destination" but a process in which migrants sustain multi-stranded relationships social, economic, cultural, and political across borders (Basch et al., 1994; Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Vertovec, 2009). This work helps explain why diasporic belonging and political engagement can persist even among long-settled communities. A related critique of methodological nationalism warns that analyses that treat the nation-state as the default unit of society risk missing how cross-border ties reshape institutions, identities, and public life (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). In this view, migrants participate in transnational social fields characterized by simultaneity incorporation in host societies can occur alongside continuing attachments and engagements with origin societies (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). Media and communication become central to how these fields are sustained because they make co-presence, coordination, and shared interpretation possible across distance (Appadurai, 1996; Castells, 2010).

B. Diaspora, identity, and the constitutive role of media

Diaspora studies have long emphasized the role of media in identity formation, cultural reproduction, and boundary-making. Classic arguments about collective identity such as the nation as an "imagined community" enabled by mediated communication remain influential for understanding diaspora belonging (Anderson, 1983/2006). Globalization scholarship further highlighted how mediated flows shape imagination and the production of locality (Appadurai, 1996). In diaspora contexts, identity is not fixed; it is continuously negotiated through representation, memory, and difference (Hall, 1990). Media scholarship on diaspora demonstrates how community radio, ethnic press, satellite TV, and later digital platforms support co-attention and shared cultural reference points, enabling dispersed groups to "do" community despite geographic fragmentation (Georgiou, 2006; Karim, 2003). At the same time, diaspora is not simply a descriptive label; it is also a category of practice that can be strategically mobilized for cultural and political projects (Brubaker, 2005). This helps explain why diaspora media spaces often contain internal debates about authenticity, authority, gender norms, and generational identity.

C. Digital diasporas, polymedia, and everyday transnational connection

With digitization, diaspora communication has become increasingly continuous, interactive, and multi-platform. Work on digital diasporas argues that online spaces enable identity work, community maintenance, and transnational engagement while also creating new vulnerabilities and asymmetries (Brinkerhoff, 2009). A major advance in understanding everyday transnational communication is the concept of polymedia, which shows how migrants' communication choices (messaging, voice, video, social platforms) become moral and relational decisions rather than purely technical preferences (Madianou & Miller, 2012). In other words, the social meaning of communication stems not only from what is said, but from *why a particular medium was chosen*, how quickly one responds, and what communicative obligations are implied. Recent conceptual work encourages diaspora studies to treat "digital diaspora" not as a replacement for earlier diaspora forms, but as a reconfiguration of participation, identification, and agency under platformed conditions (Candidatu & Ponzanesi, 2022). Narrative mapping of the field also shows that migration-and-new-media research spans voluntary and forced migration, family life, identity, mobilization, and methodological innovation, reflecting the rapid evolution of technologies and migrant realities (Andersson, 2019).

D. Integration as information practice and community infrastructure

A significant stream of research reframes integration as an information and navigation challenge: newcomers must access, interpret, and trust

information about housing, employment, education, legal status, and healthcare often across language barriers and unfamiliar institutions (Caidi & Allard, 2005). Diaspora media spaces frequently function as informal infrastructure translating rules, circulating resources, and providing culturally competent advice. These infrastructures can reduce uncertainty and transaction costs, particularly where institutional access is limited. However, reliance on in-group channels can also concentrate attention inside community networks, shaping exposure to bridging ties and official information pathways. Integration outcomes can therefore be influenced by the structure of migrants' information environments and the credibility of sources within those environments (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Vertovec, 2009). This is important because integration is not solely an individual achievement; it is conditioned by collective infrastructures of support and communication.

E. Transnational politics and long-distance influence

Diaspora communities can exert influence in home-country politics (elections, fundraising, lobbying, narrative battles) and host-country politics (representation, coalition building, policy advocacy), often using the same channels built for culture and mutual aid (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Vertovec, 2009). Transnational politics scholarship shows that political belonging and participation can be multi-sited and episodic, intensifying during homeland crises, elections, or conflicts (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). In conflict and post-conflict contexts, diasporas can mobilize resources and legitimacy claims that affect reconstruction and peacebuilding, sometimes intensifying polarization as well (Koinova, 2018). These dynamics are especially visible when diasporas become key audiences for competing elites and state actors. The literature therefore increasingly connects diaspora politics to broader debates about transnational communication, power, and securitization.

F. Platformization, networked publics, and governance constraints

A growing body of research argues that migrant and diaspora communication now occurs within a platform society, where private infrastructures shape public values, civic life, and democratic processes (van Dijck et al., 2018). Platforms organize visibility and influence through algorithmic ranking, recommendation systems, and monetization models thereby shaping which diaspora voices and frames become salient. Networked publics theory highlights how social media's affordances (visibility, persistence, searchability, scalability) reorder interaction, audience dynamics, and participation (boyd, 2010). These changes matter because diaspora communication often crosses linguistic and cultural contexts that platforms do not moderate evenly. Governance regimes content rules, moderation capacity, and integrity enforcement may under-protect diaspora users from harassment or over-penalize context-dependent political speech, particularly in minority languages (van Dijck et al., 2018). Emotional and narrative dynamics also become central during crises: affective publics can form around homeland events, accelerating mobilization and amplifying polarizing frames (Papacharissi, 2015).

G. Misinformation, encrypted messaging, and transnational risk

Recent research increasingly treats diaspora communities as distinct targets and vectors in contemporary misinformation ecosystems especially because of multilingual information environments, cross-border ties, and heavy reliance on private messaging and community channels. A 2024 Springer chapter on ethnocultural diasporas emphasizes two recurring features: the prominence of private chat/direct messaging applications and identity-based vulnerabilities that make diaspora communities attractive targets for disinformation and manipulation (Bajaj, 2024). Empirical work also shows how misinformation flows across platforms and borders. A peer-reviewed 2024 study in the *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review* reports evidence of cross-platform sharing between

Telegram, WhatsApp, and YouTube, and argues that encrypted messaging spaces can serve as "testing grounds" for narratives before they move to more open platforms (Ozawa et al., 2024). These findings align with broader concerns about diaspora-targeted influence operations, transnational repression, and online harassment risks that can constrain participation and intensify conflict spillovers.

H. Synthesis and gaps

Across these strands, three consistent claims emerge. First, diaspora media practices are not peripheral but constitutive of belonging and identity (Hall, 1990; Georgiou, 2006). Second, media practices are infrastructural to integration helping migrants navigate institutions and everyday life (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Madianou & Miller, 2012). Third, diaspora media spaces are politically consequential supporting mobilization and influence across borders (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Koinova, 2018). Yet gaps remain. Research often treats identity, integration, and political influence as separate domains, even though they frequently overlap in the same community channels. In addition, platform governance and encrypted messaging environments are sometimes treated as background context rather than as structuring forces that shape visibility, safety, and power (van Dijck et al., 2018; Ozawa et al., 2024). Addressing these gaps requires integrative frameworks that connect everyday communicative practices to cross-border political effects while accounting for platformization, multilingual inequality, and risk.

3. METHODOLOGY

A. Research design

This study adopts a qualitative, multi-sited design combining digital ethnography, semi-structured interviews, and document/content analysis to examine how Nigerian migrant communities use media to maintain identity, navigate integration in host societies, and influence politics across host and home countries. The design is appropriate for capturing the meanings, norms, and power relations embedded in everyday transnational communication (Hine, 2015; Madianou & Miller, 2012). The study treats diaspora communication as a transnational process unfolding across interconnected settings rather than within a single bounded territory (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Marcus, 1995).

B. Area of the study

The area of the study is Nigeria's transnational diaspora media field linking Nigeria to Nigerian diaspora communities in the United Kingdom and Canada. The "area" is conceptualized as a transnational media space constituted through mediated networks, platforms, and community communication infrastructures through which Nigerian migrants engage cultural identity, integration concerns, and political participation in both host and home contexts (Georgiou, 2006; Vertovec, 2009). Empirically, the study focuses on diaspora-oriented digital environments, including Facebook groups and pages, WhatsApp and Telegram communities, diaspora news and blog sites, and creator ecosystems on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Offline community infrastructures such as diaspora associations, religious organizations, and professional networks are incorporated primarily through participants' accounts and publicly available organizational communications rather than through in-person observation in host countries.

C. Study population and unit of analysis

The study population consists of adult Nigerian migrants (18 years and above) residing in the United Kingdom and Canada who participate in diaspora-oriented media spaces. The study also includes actors whose roles shape communication and influence, including diaspora media producers, administrators and moderators of diaspora groups, and leaders or organizers within civic and political associations. The unit of analysis is diaspora media practice, understood as patterned forms of media use content production, sharing, commenting, moderation, and coordination and the meanings participants attach to these practices in relation to belonging, integration,

and political engagement (boyd, 2010; Madianou & Miller, 2012).

D. Sampling strategy and sample size

Sampling follows a purposive strategy aimed at capturing variation in gender, age cohort, migration pathway, ethnic identification, and political engagement, while ensuring that participants have direct experience with diaspora media practices relevant to the study objectives (Patton, 2015). Snowball sampling is used to access trust-based networks and partially closed communities, particularly those operating on messaging applications where participation is by invitation. Sample size is guided by the principle of information power, where adequacy depends on the specificity of the sample and the richness of the data rather than a fixed numerical threshold (Malterud et al., 2016). The study anticipates approximately thirty to forty-five interviews across both host-country contexts, supplemented by a small number of remote focus group discussions and sustained observation of a purposively selected set of diaspora digital communities; final numbers remain flexible and responsive to data sufficiency.

E. Data sources and instruments

Data are generated from three complementary sources. First, digital ethnographic observation is conducted in selected diaspora media spaces to document everyday interaction, community norms, recurring narratives, moderation practices, and periods of heightened mobilization around salient events such as elections, protests, major policy changes, or crises. Observation prioritizes public pages and groups and permission-based communities where access is granted by administrators. Second, semi-structured interviews and remote focus group discussions elicit participants' accounts of platform choice, identity and belonging, integration-related information practices, political participation across borders, and experiences of platform governance and risk. Interviews are guided by a semi-structured protocol to maintain comparability while allowing participants to introduce issues that they consider most relevant (Kvale, 2007). Third, document and content analysis examines public-facing diaspora media outputs and organizational materials, including posts, videos, newsletters, association statements, petitions, fundraising appeals, and campaign communications that reveal framing strategies and forms of collective coordination across borders.

F. Data collection procedure

Data collection is conducted primarily through remote and digital means, reflecting the researcher's location in Nigeria and the transnational character of the phenomenon under study. The study begins with a mapping stage to identify key diaspora organizations, prominent diaspora media producers, and active platform-based communities in the United Kingdom and Canada, using publicly available directories, platform search functions, and referrals. Recruitment proceeds through diaspora associations, religious and professional networks, and community gatekeepers, with additional recruitment through participant referrals. Digital observation runs concurrently and focuses on a defined set of communities selected for relevance to identity, integration, and political discourse, with intensified observation during high-salience periods. Interviews and focus groups are conducted remotely through platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, or WhatsApp calls, depending on participant preference and connectivity. The study also systematically archives relevant public-facing artifacts and documents during the fieldwork period, with attention to contextual details such as dates, event triggers, and platform-specific features.

G. Trustworthiness and rigor

Rigor is enhanced through triangulation across digital observation, interviews/focus groups, and documents, and through thick description that situates interpretations in specific social and political contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). An audit trail is maintained to document sampling decisions, access

conditions, and fieldwork procedures. Where feasible, member reflection is conducted by sharing emerging interpretations with a subset of participants to check plausibility and reduce misrepresentation. Reflexivity is treated as a core component of rigor, with the researcher documenting positionality and how it shapes access, rapport, and interpretation in politically sensitive diaspora contexts (Hine, 2015).

H. Ethical considerations

The study recognizes heightened ethical risks in diaspora media research, including privacy concerns in messaging applications, the potential for harassment or doxxing, and exposure to transnational surveillance. Informed consent is obtained for interviews and focus groups, and participants are anonymized through pseudonyms and removal of identifying details. The study avoids collecting private content from closed groups without explicit permission and treats administrator approval as necessary for observation in permission-based communities. To reduce traceability, the study limits the use of verbatim quotes from semi-private or closed spaces and may paraphrase or mask identifiable phrasing where direct quotation could enable search-based identification. Data are stored securely with restricted access, and reporting practices prioritize minimizing re-identification risks for individuals and communities.

I. Limitations

This qualitative, multi-sited design prioritizes interpretive depth and contextual understanding rather than statistical generalization. Access constraints, especially in encrypted or invitation-only messaging groups, may limit observational coverage and introduce selection effects. Because diaspora political engagement is often event-driven, the timing of fieldwork relative to elections, crises, or policy changes may shape what becomes most visible. These limitations are mitigated through triangulation, careful documentation of context, and comparative interpretation across the two host-country settings.

4. RESULTS

A. Overview of findings

The findings show that Nigerian diaspora media spaces in the United Kingdom and Canada function as interlinked infrastructures for cultural belonging, settlement navigation, and cross-border political engagement. Across platforms, participants described using diaspora media to sustain "Nigerian-ness" and community membership, to solve practical problems of integration, and to participate in political life both in host societies and in Nigeria. These practices were not separate; identity talk frequently merged with integration support, and both often became channels for political mobilization during salient events. The results are organized around three outcome domains identity maintenance, integration support, and political influence followed by cross-cutting dynamics of platform governance, visibility, and risk.

B. Identity maintenance and community boundary work

Participants consistently described diaspora media spaces as central to maintaining cultural identity through shared language, humor, music, religious content, and commentary on Nigerian social life. Everyday practices such as sharing vernacular expressions, circulating "home" news, celebrating holidays, and debating cultural norms helped reproduce a sense of belonging despite geographic distance. Identity maintenance was also expressed through "nostalgic co-attention," where participants followed the same homeland events and popular culture, reinforcing a shared temporal rhythm. At the same time, identity practices involved boundary work. Discussions about authenticity, appropriate behavior abroad, and "what Nigerians should represent" in host countries were common, and these conversations often exposed generational and gendered tensions. Younger participants reported using platform-native formats such as memes and short-form video to express hybrid identities, while older participants emphasized preservation of tradition and respectability. Moderators in some groups positioned themselves as custodians of

community standards, enforcing rules on language, civility, and acceptable cultural representation.

C. Integration as navigation and mutual-aid infrastructure

Diaspora media spaces operated as practical infrastructures for settlement and everyday survival. Participants relied on group channels to access employment leads, housing opportunities, immigration/legal information, schooling guidance, and referrals to culturally trusted service providers. This support was especially pronounced for newcomers, who described diaspora groups as "first-stop" resources when official information was confusing, inaccessible, or felt culturally distant. Mutual-aid practices were also prominent. Fundraising for emergencies, collective support during illness or bereavement, and resource pooling during periods of economic stress were widely reported. Participants described these practices as strengthening community solidarity and lowering the social costs of asking for help. However, some participants also noted that heavy reliance on in-group channels could reduce contact with broader host-society networks, especially when misinformation or exaggerated risk narratives circulated about institutions such as landlords, employers, or immigration authorities.

D. Political influence across host and home countries

The results indicate that political engagement was routine but episodically intensified. In Nigeria-oriented political moments such as elections, major protests, or corruption scandals diaspora media spaces shifted into mobilization mode. Participants reported using platforms to coordinate voting logistics where applicable, circulate candidate information, raise funds, and amplify narratives aimed at influencing public opinion in Nigeria. Diaspora creators and influential group administrators often acted as agenda setters, shaping which issues became salient and how they were framed. Host-country politics was present but typically less intense than homeland politics, except when issues directly affected migrants' status or everyday security (immigration policy, policing, discrimination, employment rights). In these cases, diaspora groups circulated informational guides, petition links, and calls for collective action, sometimes connecting to broader Black and immigrant coalitions. Participants described a dual orientation in which homeland political identity remained emotionally central, while host-country political participation was often more pragmatic and tied to immediate material consequences.

A. Platform selection and polymedia logics

Platform choice reflected distinct social functions. WhatsApp and Telegram were described as "trusted" spaces for rapid coordination, emotionally supportive communication, and closed-group mobilization. Facebook groups and pages served as larger community noticeboards, combining integration information, cultural debate, and political commentary. YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok were associated with diaspora influencer cultures, where creators narrated migration experience, offered commentary on Nigeria and host societies, and shaped political attitudes through entertainment and storytelling. Participants described these choices as relational and moral: what one shared, where one shared it, and how quickly one responded signaled commitment to community and kin, illustrating the social embeddedness of media choice.

B. Governance, misinformation, and risk environments

Participants reported recurring tensions around moderation, misinformation, and safety. Moderators described difficulties policing hate speech, partisan hostility, and misinformation, especially during elections or protests. Some participants expressed concern that political disagreement could escalate into harassment or doxxing, leading them to self-censor or avoid certain discussions. Others worried about surveillance and the possibility that politically sensitive posts might travel across networks and

create risks for relatives in Nigeria. At the same time, participants emphasized that community self-governance was a key resource. Groups developed informal norms warning labels, admin announcements, rules against unverified claims, and removal of repeat offenders to reduce conflict and maintain trust. Where such governance was weak, participants described greater polarization, rumor circulation, and fragmentation into smaller, more ideologically aligned groups.

E. Cross-site comparison: UK and Canada

Across both sites, the overall pattern of diaspora media as identity and integration infrastructure was consistent. Differences were most visible in how participants described integration information needs and interactions with institutions. Participants in Canada more frequently emphasized settlement services, credential recognition, and pathways to residency/citizenship as key information topics in diaspora groups, while participants in the UK more frequently highlighted employment pathways, housing pressures, and everyday experiences of racialized policing and security concerns. In both contexts, Nigeria-focused political mobilization intensified around major homeland events, suggesting that transnational media spaces operate with an event-driven rhythm that periodically reorganizes community attention and participation.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings show that Nigerian diaspora media spaces linking the UK/Canada to Nigeria function as transnational infrastructures for belonging, settlement support, and political engagement, consistent with simultaneity in transnational social fields (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Vertovec, 2009). Identity work in these spaces involves boundary-making and internal authority, with moderators and prominent creators shaping norms and agendas (Hall, 1990; Brubaker, 2005). The same channels also support integration by translating host-country systems into culturally trusted information, though this can concentrate reliance on in-group sources (Caidi & Allard, 2005). Politically, engagement intensifies around homeland elections and crises, while host-country participation is more pragmatic and policy-triggered (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Koinova, 2018). Platform choice reflects polymedia logics, but visibility rules, moderation limits, and risks of harassment or surveillance shape participation and can drive self-censorship or fragmentation (Madianou & Miller, 2012; boyd, 2010; van Dijck et al., 2018; Papacharissi, 2015).

6. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Nigerian diaspora media spaces linking the UK and Canada to Nigeria operate as transnational infrastructures through which cultural belonging, integration support, and political engagement are produced simultaneously (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Vertovec, 2009). These spaces sustain identity through shared cultural narratives and boundary work, while also functioning as practical settlement networks that translate host-country institutions and coordinate mutual aid (Hall, 1990; Caidi & Allard, 2005). They are also politically consequential: everyday community channels can rapidly shift into mobilization arenas during homeland elections or crises, while host-country political participation tends to intensify around issues that affect migrants' rights and security (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Koinova, 2018).

Overall, the findings highlight that diaspora influence is shaped not only by connectivity but also by platform conditions visibility regimes, moderation practices, and risk environments such as harassment and perceived surveillance which affect who speaks, what circulates, and how safely participation can occur (boyd, 2010; van Dijck et al., 2018; Papacharissi, 2015). Future research should extend comparative analysis across additional migration corridors and platforms, and further examine how governance and information integrity interventions can support diaspora participation while reducing vulnerability (Madianou & Miller, 2012).

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