



**FROM DISTANCE TO INFLUENCE: EXPLORING MOTIVATIONS, TRENDS,
AND BARRIERS IN THE POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT OF THE
LEBANESE DIASPORA**

BY

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DECLARATIONS

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I, Grace Anderson, declare that this thesis, except quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere. Therefore, I bear the responsibility for any shortcomings.



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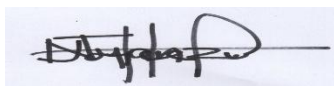
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated first to God and to my beloved family, whose unwavering love, encouragement, and prayers have been my constant source of strength. To my parents, who instilled in me the value of hard work and perseverance, and to all who believed in me even when the journey seemed uncertain, this achievement is for you.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the motivations, patterns, and barriers shaping the political engagement of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana with homeland politics in Lebanon. Guided by Transnationalism Theory and Social Identity Theory, it explores how diasporic identity, emotional attachment, and integration in the host society influence participation. Using a qualitative approach such as one-on-one interviews, document analysis and a qualitative survey, data were gathered from members of the Lebanese community in Ghana, and were analysed thematically. Findings show that political engagement is primarily symbolic and emotional rather than institutional. Participants expressed strong attachment and moral responsibility toward Lebanon, engaging mainly through discussions, donations, and digital activism. Generational differences emerged where older members viewed engagement as a familial duty, while younger ones participated through online platforms, reflecting a “digital diaspora.” Major barriers included distrust in Lebanon’s political system, sectarian divisions, and logistical obstacles to external voting. High integration into Ghanaian society also led to selective detachment from homeland politics. The study concludes that transnational belonging among Lebanese in Ghana is sustained through emotional and symbolic connections rather than direct political participation. Integration and transnationalism are not mutually exclusive; rather, they coexist dynamically, allowing diasporans to navigate dual belonging. The study contributes to diaspora studies by highlighting how identity, integration, and transnational ties interact to shape political behaviour across borders.

Keywords: Lebanese Diaspora, Diaspora Politics, Transnationalism, Political Engagement, Transnational Identity, Diaspora–Homeland Relations, Ghana–Lebanon Relations.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Lebanese diaspora is one of the largest in the world relative to the size of Lebanon's population, and its communities have always kept close ties to their homeland (Becker, 2021). These connections are not only cultural but deeply political. Moments of upheaval in Lebanon, such as the 2019 *Thawra* (October Revolution), sparked waves of activism abroad, with Lebanese in Europe, the Americas, and Africa taking to the streets, lobbying policymakers, and mobilising online (Omar, 2025). This shows that the diaspora is more than a distant community but an active force that continues to shape Lebanon's political and social future.

The study of diasporas has shifted in scope over time. Early research often focused on "classic" diasporas such as the Jewish, Greek, or Armenian communities (Armstrong, 1976). Over the past three decades, however, attention has expanded to contemporary diasporas and their role in global politics and development. Scholars now emphasise how diasporas contribute to economic development (Smart & Hsu, 2004), influence capital flows (Leblang, 2017), affect conflict dynamics (Adamson, 2013), and even shape foreign policy (Shain, 1994; Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007). Within this literature, the Lebanese diaspora stands out for the intensity of its engagement, which blends financial support, political activism, and symbolic attachments to identity and homeland (Becker, 2021).

According to Faist (2010), diaspora political participation is influenced by both opportunities and barriers. Whereas host-country freedoms, digital platforms, and global mobility create new avenues for political engagement among diaspora communities (Adamson, 2016), Lebanese diaspora are confronted with legal restrictions, distrust in institutions, and practical obstacles,

like difficulties in voting from abroad, which often limit their impact (Mirilovic, 2018). Lebanese communities are further divided by sect, generation, and class, making their political engagement fragmented rather than unified (Délano Alonso & Mylonas, 2019).

In Ghana, the Lebanese experience adds another layer to this story. Migration to West Africa began in the late 19th century, with many Lebanese arriving poor and seeking stability rather than temporary sojourns (Akyeampong, 2006). Unlike other migrant groups, they tended to settle permanently, build communities, and take on intermediary roles in trade, retail, and manufacturing (Malki, 2018). In Ghana, this made them an economically prominent “market-dominant minority.” But their visibility also made them vulnerable as colonial and postcolonial governments often subjected them to exclusionary policies, nationalist rhetoric, and restrictions on political belonging (Malki, 2018).

Today, Lebanese in Ghana live at the intersection of two worlds. They are long integrated into Ghanaian society, yet remain emotionally and politically tied to Lebanon (Malki, 2018). This dual position raises important questions about how their hybrid identities shape political participation in their homeland. Despite their significance, very little research has examined the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana or how their integration affects their transnational political engagement. This study addresses that gap by exploring the motivations, barriers, and identity dynamics influencing Lebanese political participation in Lebanon, while also considering how life in Ghana shapes these practices.

1.2 The Lebanese Diaspora in Ghana: Historical Overview

The history of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana forms part of a wider global dispersal of Lebanese communities across the Americas, Europe, the Gulf, and Africa from the mid-nineteenth century. This movement was driven by a combination of factors, including rapid

population growth in Lebanon's mountain districts, religious and political conflict, such as the civil war of 1860, economic crises like the collapse of the silk industry, and the broader decline of the Ottoman Empire (Hourani & Shehadi, 1992; Fawaz, 1993). Migration was not merely temporary sojourning; rather, many Lebanese viewed West Africa as a place of settlement and opportunity, often due to financial constraints that prevented them from pursuing destinations in the Americas (Akyeampong, 2006).

By the late nineteenth century, Lebanese emigrants, many of them Shi'a Muslims from southern Lebanon, alongside Maronite Christians and smaller groups of Greek Catholics and Orthodox, began to arrive in West African ports such as Dakar and gradually moved along the coast to Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana). Lebanese records cite William Ibrahim Chebib and Elias el-Khoury as among the first Lebanese to arrive in Ghana in 1884 (Akyeampong, 2006). Unlike colonial officials or temporary African labour migrants, the Lebanese tended to settle permanently, bringing their wives and families, thus laying the foundations for stable communities (van der Laan, 1975).

Chain migration reinforced this permanence, with families from the same Lebanese villages settling in specific districts across West Africa, thereby recreating extended kinship and community networks abroad (Leighton 1979). While early remittances were sent to maintain family ties and improve conditions at home, Lebanese immigrants increasingly established themselves in the host economies. By the early twentieth century, Lebanese traders were competing with European merchants in sectors such as rubber, textiles, and timber, despite colonial restrictions and discriminatory taxation. In the Gold Coast, they became prominent in the retail, wholesale, and industrial sectors, eventually dominating areas such as dry goods, apparel, automobiles, and construction materials (Bauer, 1954).

Colonial authorities often viewed the Lebanese as intermediary traders in a racialized commercial hierarchy, occupying a middle position between Europeans and Africans (Malki, 2018). This “middleman” status made them both useful and vulnerable. Initially welcomed as facilitators of trade, Lebanese merchants were later restricted by colonial policies such as the “past performance” system of the 1940s, which privileged large European firms and limited Lebanese participation in manufacturing (Malki, 2018). Their expansion into industry was often curtailed because such spaces should be reserved for African artisans.

Following Ghana’s independence in 1957, the Lebanese continued to play a visible role in the economy but were caught within broader debates about nationalism, autochthony, and economic sovereignty (Malki, 2018). As “market-dominant minorities,” they faced waves of suspicion, divestment, and even expropriation during periods of economic and political crisis, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s (Malki, 2018). The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council coup of 1979 under Jerry Rawlings brought further hostility, including seizures of Lebanese-owned businesses. Similar exclusionary policies were experienced by Lebanese in Sierra Leone and Nigeria, illustrating the precariousness of their position as both indispensable economic actors and perpetual outsiders (Akyeampong, 2006).

Despite these challenges, the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana has persisted as one of the largest non-African immigrant communities in the country (Akyeampong, 2006). Their history highlights the intersection of global migration trends, colonial and postcolonial economic policies, and local debates over belonging and citizenship. The Lebanese in Ghana exemplify how migrant groups navigate identities and livelihoods under conditions of both opportunity and constraint, shaping and being shaped by their host society over more than a century.

1.3 Problem Statement

Diaspora politics has become an increasingly significant field of Study in contemporary migration studies, reflecting the growing influence of transnational communities on both homeland and host country affairs. Adamson (2016) and Armouch et al. (2022) underscore how diasporas have evolved into critical political actors, enabled by globalisation, digital technologies, and transnational networks. Diasporas are not only remitters of financial capital but also shapers of political discourses, activists, and participants in homeland governance (Mirilovic & Marinova, 2021). Yet, diaspora engagement is neither uniform nor automatic as it is shaped by historical trajectories, socio-economic status, host–home country relations, and internal diversity (Délano Alonso & Mylonas, 2019).

Research further shows that diaspora political participation is most effective in democratic contexts, where institutional openness allows lobbying and advocacy to flourish (Mirilovic, 2018). However, diaspora politics is not merely institutional as it is deeply tied to identity, collective memory, and symbolic affiliations (Butler, 2001; Shain & Barth, 2003). Studies have shown that Motivations for diaspora political engagement are rooted in nostalgia, displacement, or aspirations for reform, while barriers often include institutional mistrust, sectarian fragmentation, or marginalisation in host societies (Faist, 2010; Délano Alonso & Mylonas, 2019). The Lebanese diaspora exemplifies this complexity. Historically dispersed across the Americas, the Gulf, and West Africa, the Lebanese have been simultaneously celebrated for their entrepreneurial contributions and targeted as “market-dominant minorities” vulnerable to exclusion and expropriation (Malki, 2018; Akyeampong, 2006). In Ghana, their migration since the late nineteenth century has left a long-standing economic and cultural footprint, but their political incorporation remains contested (Bauer, 1954).

Despite this rich literature on diaspora, significant gaps remain. Much of the scholarship on diaspora politics focuses on large communities in Europe and North America, often

overlooking smaller but historically entrenched diasporas in Africa, such as the Lebanese in Ghana. Existing studies on the Lebanese largely highlight their economic roles, particularly their dominance in trade and commerce (Gevorkyan & Issa, 2024; Omar, 2025), but neglect their political attitudes, motivations, and participation in homeland processes. Moreover, while transnationalism theory has illuminated how migrants sustain ties across borders (Vertovec, 1999; Schiller et al., 1992), few empirical studies have examined how integration into African host societies shapes political identities and behaviours toward homeland politics. Thus, the generational dynamics of Lebanese in Ghana, their symbolic attachments, and the barriers they encounter in homeland political participation remain underexplored.

This absence of context-specific research risks homogenising diaspora experiences and ignoring how localised histories and host-country conditions mediate transnational politics. Against this backdrop, the present study investigates the motivations, patterns, and barriers of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana's political engagement with Lebanese politics and explores how their integration into Ghanaian society influences their transnational political identities.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To identify the motivations driving political participation among the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana with Lebanese politics.
2. To analyse trends in the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana's political engagement with political processes in Lebanon.
3. To examine barriers to political participation of the Lebanese Diaspora in Ghana.
4. To assess how transnational identity and integration in Ghanaian society influence the Lebanese diaspora's attitudes toward political participation in Lebanon.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What motivates members of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana to engage in political processes in Lebanon?
2. What forms of engagement with Lebanese politics are most common among the diaspora community in Ghana?
3. What barriers inhibit Lebanese in Ghana from participating in political processes in Lebanon?
4. How do transnational identity and the level of integration into Ghanaian society influence the Lebanese diaspora's attitudes toward political participation in Lebanon?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the growing scholarship on diaspora politics by offering a focused case study of the Lebanese community in Ghana, an important but understudied group within the broader Lebanese diaspora. While research has examined Lebanese political engagement in Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas, little is known about how West African-based Lebanese interact with Lebanese politics. By addressing this gap, the study enriches the literature on transnationalism, identity, and diaspora political participation. Second, the findings provide practical insights for both Lebanon and Ghana. For Lebanon, understanding what motivates or discourages diaspora engagement can inform policies on external voting, citizenship, and diaspora mobilisation. For Ghana, the study sheds light on how long-settled migrant communities balance integration with transnational loyalties, which can inform debates about citizenship, belonging, and multiculturalism. Finally, the study has wider theoretical implications, offering evidence on how identity and integration in host societies shape the way diasporas engage with homeland politics.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study focuses on the Lebanese diaspora community in Ghana, examining their motivations, barriers, and trends in political participation in Lebanon, as well as how their integration in Ghana shapes their attitudes and practices. It draws on interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis to capture diverse perspectives within the community. The scope is deliberately limited to the Lebanese in Ghana, rather than the broader West African Lebanese diaspora, to allow for a deeper and more context-specific exploration. However, the study faces some limitations. Access to participants is constrained by community gatekeeping, while issues of trust and sensitivity around politics could affect the openness of responses. The relatively small sample size typical of qualitative research also limits generalisability, though the goal is depth of understanding rather than statistical representation.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the research problem, objectives, significance, scope, and limitations. Chapter Two reviews relevant literature on diaspora politics, Lebanese migration, and transnationalism, highlighting theoretical and empirical debates. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, explaining the qualitative approach, data collection instruments, and analysis techniques. Chapter Four presents the findings, organised around the study's objectives, and discusses them in relation to the literature and theory. Finally, Chapter Five summarises the key findings, draws conclusions, and offers recommendations for policy and further research.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced the study by outlining its background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, and significance. It has also defined the scope and acknowledged limitations, while presenting the organisation of the study. Taken together, the chapter sets the stage for the literature review, which situates the research within existing literature and provides the theoretical foundation for the analysis that follows.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of the literature on the diaspora politics of the Lebanese diaspora community in Ghana. It discusses concepts, empirical reviews, and theoretical studies related to the study. It takes into consideration relevant materials and publications available on the subject of study to ensure a thorough understanding of the topic to help situate political engagement in diaspora politics.

2.2 Conceptual Review

2.2.1 Transnational Identity and Political Engagement

The study of transnationalism spans multiple disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, and political science (Vertovec, 1999). It examines how migrants maintain and reshape social, economic, and political connections across borders (Schiller et al., 1992; Portes et al., 1999). Originally, the term was used in economics to describe cross-border corporate activity (Peltoniemi, 2018), but it evolved in the early 1990s through the work of Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton, who defined transnationalism as the process by which migrants create and sustain “social fields” linking their countries of origin and settlement. Importantly, transnationalism is not limited to physical or economic linkages but also reflects particular ways of thinking, belonging, and acting that transcend territorial boundaries (Burgess, 2014; Kearney, 1995).

In recent decades, research has focused on how transnationalism manifests through political and civic participation, especially within diasporic communities. Studies on the Lebanese

diaspora (Aitken, 2024; Armouch et al., 2022; Skulte-Ouaiss & Tabar, 2015) show that identity and belonging are expressed through new forms of activism. Aitken (2024) notes that during Lebanon's Thawra protests, Lebanese abroad redefined citizenship by participating digitally and symbolically, transcending geography. Similarly, Armouch et al. (2022) describe the rise of a "transnational public" formed through WhatsApp and Facebook, where Lebanese worldwide engage in real-time political discourse. Yet, this enthusiasm faces limits: structural and legal obstacles, such as restrictive expatriate voting laws (Casanovas & Kerras, 2020), and sectarian divisions (Skulte-Ouaiss & Tabar, 2015), constrain effective political mobilisation.

Beyond formal politics, cultural expression plays a crucial role in sustaining transnational identity. Abdelhady (2008) highlights how Lebanese artists abroad use memory and nostalgia as tools of political commentary, while Pearlman (2014) reveals how Lebanese political factions compete for influence within diaspora networks, turning the diaspora into an arena of political contestation. Brinkerhoff's (2009) concept of "digital diasporas" captures how technology reshapes these engagements, enabling new, mediated forms of activism and identity-building that link individuals emotionally and politically to their homeland.

At the heart of transnationalism lies the question of identity. Tabar (2022) and Baser and Halperin (2019) caution against treating all diasporas as uniformly transnational. Participation levels vary based on integration, class, and generational background. Tabar (2022) distinguishes between "diasporic" and "transnational" identities, noting that migrants act as political agents in both domestic and transnational spheres through "political remittances" — the transfer of civic ideas and values. Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) similarly argue that migrants live "simultaneously" in home and host societies, learning civic norms abroad and sometimes reintroducing them at home. For example, Itzigsohn and Villacrés (2008) found that migrants' political participation depended on feelings of inclusion and representation within their home-country politics.

Generational differences further shape identity and engagement. First-generation migrants often retain emotional and material ties rooted in nostalgia and displacement, while younger generations express identity more flexibly. Brinkerhoff (2009) and Vertovec (2004) note that second- and third-generation diasporans engage politically through digital platforms, online activism, and cultural advocacy rather than formal politics. This reflects hybrid identity, where individuals blend home and host influences. However, such flexibility can also fragment diasporas, as subgroups pursue divergent ideological or religious goals (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003).

Identity is also shaped by the host-country context. Bernal (2006) describes how Eritrean exiles use digital platforms to build a “cyber-nation,” constructing national belonging online, a process mirrored among Lebanese and other diasporas. Similarly, Adamson (2012) argues that diasporic identity politics often emerge as responses to marginalisation in host societies rather than direct reflections of homeland politics.

Recent research shows that crisis intensifies transnational engagement. Becker (2021) found that during Lebanon’s recent upheavals, digital media became a lifeline for diasporic solidarity and mobilisation, transforming distant observers into active participants in national discourse. These insights demonstrate that transnationalism is not a static condition but a dynamic process, shaped by shifting political, technological, and emotional landscapes that continuously redefine what it means to belong and engage across borders

2.2.2 Diaspora Politics

Diaspora politics has become a prominent and complex dimension of global political life. It refers broadly to the political behaviours, engagements, and influences of communities living outside their countries of origin but maintaining strong emotional, cultural, and political ties to

the communities (Mirilovic & Marinova, 2021). Central to understanding diaspora politics is the concept of diaspora itself, a term that, despite its popularity, remains contested. Butler (2001) argues that diaspora is a largely self-ascribed identity, shaped by individuals' decisions to associate with a collective memory or national narrative. Similarly, Shain and Barth (2003, p.542) define a diaspora as “a people with a common origin who live, to some extent permanently, outside the borders of their ethnic or religious homeland, whether that homeland is tangible or symbolic, independent or under foreign governance.” Faist (2010) adds that diaspora definitions typically share three features: migration or dispersion, sustained cross-border connections with the homeland, and some form of cultural distinctiveness from other groups.

This conceptual debate is critical because the political salience of diaspora identity often emerges not from shared ethnicity or geography alone, but from the mobilisation of collective memory and symbolic homeland narratives. Adamson (2016) explains that diaspora politics has grown in significance due to globalisation, digital communication, and geopolitical realignments. Modern diasporas, once considered marginal actors, now influence policymaking, development, and international relations. They are courted by states and international organisations alike, mobilised as lobby groups, remittance senders, and symbolic representatives of national identity abroad. Diasporas often assert influence through what Shain and Barth (2003) call "diaspora politics" a form of political engagement that includes lobbying, advocacy, fundraising, and even shaping foreign policy. Among South Asian diasporas, for instance, Indian and Pakistani communities have leveraged their economic and electoral influence in host countries to shape homeland politics. Varadarajan (2010) illustrates how Indian-American groups mobilised to influence U.S.–India relations and lobbied during Indian elections, framing their involvement as legitimate political participation grounded in transnational identity rather than foreign interference.

This global trend is mirrored in Latin American and African contexts as well. Salvadoran and Mexican hometown associations have collaborated with host and home governments to develop infrastructure projects back home, blurring the lines between civic action and foreign aid (Itzigsohn & Villacrés, 2008). Likewise, Ghanaian and Nigerian diasporas in the U.S. and U.K. have organised around democratization efforts, often sending not just remittances but political ideas and campaign support, which are often termed “political remittances” (Levitt & de la Dehesa, 2003). These remittances are not merely financial but include the transfer of democratic norms, institutional practices, and mobilisation strategies.

However, diaspora political involvement is not always unifying. Adamson (2016) emphasises that diaspora politics can reproduce homeland conflicts, exporting rivalries into host societies. Political divisions within the Eritrean, Kurdish, and Tamil diasporas illustrate how diaspora communities often reflect and amplify homeland factionalism (Adamson, 2019). This contestation extends to representation itself, questions of who speaks for the diaspora and who holds legitimacy are often as politically charged as the issues at stake. States, recognising the strategic utility of diaspora populations, have increasingly institutionalized diaspora engagement. Policies range from offering dual citizenship and external voting rights to creating diaspora ministries or symbolic constituencies, as in France and India. These moves signal a shift in how states perceive sovereignty and citizenship, not as territorially bounded but as extended across national borders through their diasporas (Bauböck & Faist, 2010).

Koinova (2011) and Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) further argue that diaspora politics must be understood as part of a multi-scalar and multi-actor environment. Diaspora actors operate across different levels, engaging in homeland politics, influencing host state foreign policy, and participating in transnational civil society. These engagements may align with, challenge, or circumvent state interests, depending on the context. Given the above discussions, it could be argued that diasporas are increasingly influential political actors, both in their countries of

residence and their countries of origin. The evidence suggests that their political engagement is deeply tied to the construction of transnational identity and collective memory. Therefore, while diaspora politics can support democratisation, development, and cultural preservation, it can also entrench divisions, create new forms of exclusion, and challenge traditional notions of sovereignty and national belonging.

2.2.2.1 Factors Driving Diaspora Politics

Diaspora politics is driven by a complex interaction of factors that operate across structural, institutional, and individual levels, often blending material interests with symbolic affiliations (Armouch et al, 2022). A central driver of diaspora politics is the nature of the political opportunity structure. Thus, diasporas are more likely to become politically active when host countries provide democratic freedoms such as the right to organise, protest, and lobby (Adamson, 2016). At the same time, homeland political environments, especially during moments of crisis, transition, or authoritarian rule, can either mobilise diasporas as agents of reform or suppress their engagement. Perhaps, the reason Mirilovic (2018) emphasises that diaspora political influence is strongest in democracy-to-democracy dyads, where norms of participation and openness align on both ends of the migratory bridge.

Economic leverage, particularly through remittances and investment, also motivates diaspora engagement. As Faist (2010) notes, states increasingly view diasporas as reservoirs of financial, human, and symbolic capital. In turn, diaspora members often use their economic clout to demand representation or influence policy, sometimes securing rights such as dual citizenship or voting abroad. This economic power intersects with elite agency; diaspora politics often takes shape through entrepreneurs, activists, or intellectuals who mobilise communities, shape narratives, and broker relationships with homeland and host states (Waterbury, 2010; Délano Alonso & Mylonas, 2019). Yet diaspora politics is not only about institutions and elites, it is

deeply rooted in identity and collective memory (Armouch et al, 2022). Diasporic belonging is not automatically inherited; it is constructed and negotiated through narratives of homeland, displacement, and return (Butler, 2001). Shain and Barth (2003) argue that diaspora political engagement is often driven by this symbolic connection, an imagined community of shared history and future, which can be reactivated in moments of political significance. This sense of identity may span generations, with some engaging to reclaim lost heritage while others act from lived political experiences.

Délano and Gamlen (2014) aver that the state's role in cultivating or constraining this diaspora engagement is crucial. Governments may selectively recognise certain diasporic communities, based on region, class, or political utility, while ignoring others, thus creating uneven landscapes of engagement (Délano Alonso & Mylonas, 2019). These choices often reflect broader geopolitical strategies, as well as internal hierarchies of ethnicity, religion, or economic status. Moreover, international organisations and neighbouring states can influence diaspora policies through normative pressure or policy diffusion, contributing to the spread of institutional frameworks for diaspora engagement (Gamlen, 2014). Internal diversity, across generational lines, migration experiences, class, and ideology, means that different segments of a diaspora may respond differently to engagement efforts. Some mobilise for reform, others for regime support, and still others for identity affirmation.

As Adamson and Demetriou (2007) suggest, diaspora politics often emerges at the intersection of local, national, and transnational processes, shaped by actors across multiple scales. Adamson (2016) argues that diaspora politics has flourished in a world where technological advances, global media, and the rise of transnational spaces like global cities have enabled migrants to remain politically connected to their homelands in real time. These connections are no longer bound by geographic constraints; instead, diaspora actors use cyberspace and digital platforms to participate in or even lead political movements remotely.

The literature clearly shows that diaspora politics is influenced by opportunity structures, economic leverage, and identity. While remittances and freedoms in host states enable influence, symbolic ties and collective memory maintain engagement across generations. The states also influence these dynamics, and technology now allows diasporas to participate continuously in homeland politics, crossing geographical boundaries.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 Transnationalism Theory

Transnationalism theory provides a framework for understanding how migrants sustain and reshape their lives, identities, and political participation across national borders (Tedeschi et al., 2020). It refers to the multiple linkages, social, economic, political, and cultural—that connect people and institutions across nation-states (Vertovec, 1999; Schiller et al., 1992). Unlike traditional models of migration that view integration and homeland attachment as opposing processes, transnationalism emphasizes simultaneity—migrants can belong, participate, and influence both home and host societies. Schiller et al. (1992) introduced the concept of transmigrants, individuals who create and sustain social fields linking their countries of origin and settlement. These actors maintain emotional, familial, and institutional ties that span borders, shaping both societies through economic remittances, political engagement, and cultural reproduction. Portes et al. (1999) refined this framework by identifying three major dimensions of transnationalism: economic (remittances, investments), political (homeland lobbying, voting), and socio-cultural (language, rituals, community associations). For transnationalism to have analytical value, Portes (2003) argues, such practices must be regular, sustained, and institutionalised rather than sporadic or symbolic.

Tedeschi et al. (2020) expand on this by distinguishing between transnationalism from below, grassroots, people-led connections maintained through family, religion, and community, and transnationalism from above, which refers to state or corporate initiatives to engage diasporas. Most migration scholars highlight the former as the core driver of transnational life (Smith & Guarnizo, 1998; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). Similarly, Itzigsohn et al. (1999) differentiate between broad and narrow transnationalism, occasional symbolic ties versus consistent, institutionalised engagement.

Vertovec (2009) provides one of the most comprehensive frameworks for analysing transnationalism, identifying six interrelated dimensions: social morphology, type of consciousness, cultural reproduction, capital movement, political engagement, and reconstruction of locality. He argues that transnationalism extends beyond actions, it reshapes how migrants imagine belonging and identity. As individuals navigate between home and host contexts, they often form hybrid identities and multi-local attachments, redefining “home” as a networked space rather than a fixed place.

Importantly, transnationalism is not always empowering. Beauchemin and Safi (2020) introduce the idea of rejection-based transnationalism, where exclusion or marginalisation in host societies drives migrants to strengthen ties to their homeland as a form of emotional or social compensation. This underscores how inequality, racism, and political marginalisation influence transnational attachments.

Erdal and Oeppen (2013) challenge the long-held notion that integration and transnationalism are opposites. They show that individuals can be fully integrated into their host society while maintaining active transnational lives. This supports Tedeschi et al.’s (2020) argument that transnationalism is dynamic and context-dependent, shaped by legal structures, socio-economic conditions, and personal motivations.

Methodologically, scholars like Vertovec (2003) advocate for network analysis to visualise and measure transnational ties, assessing their density, frequency, and strength. This empirical lens allows researchers to move beyond abstract theorization toward quantifiable understandings of transnational practices. In essence, transnationalism theory captures the fluid and interconnected realities of modern migration. It recognises that migrants' actions, identities, and loyalties extend beyond single nation-states, forming multi-sited lives embedded in global networks. While some critics caution that the concept can be overly broad or neglect power dynamics (Barrow & Keck, 2017; Moloney & Stone, 2019), it remains a powerful tool for understanding diaspora engagement.

Accordingly, this study applies transnationalism theory to explore how the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana sustains political, cultural, and emotional ties with Lebanon while integrating into Ghanaian society. The framework illuminates how identity, belonging, and participation are negotiated across borders, revealing how diasporas act as bridges between nations, both shaping and being shaped by the transnational social fields they inhabit.

2.3.2 Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Social Identity Theory (SIT), developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979), explains how an individual's self-concept is shaped by their membership in social groups. It distinguishes between personal identity, based on individual traits, and social identity, which stems from belonging to collectives such as ethnic, religious, or national groups. In many social situations, people perceive themselves primarily as part of a group ("we") rather than as individuals ("I"), deriving pride, self-worth, and meaning from their group membership (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012).

Tajfel and Turner (1979) argue that group belonging involves more than simple association—it represents a psychological shift where the self becomes tied to collective goals and values. This helps explain why people often act in ways that favour their group's interests, even at personal cost. Tajfel's experiences during World War II inspired his work to understand prejudice and intergroup conflict, leading to experiments that demonstrated how easily people form group biases. The minimal group studies (Tajfel et al., 1971) revealed that even arbitrary classifications could produce ingroup favouritism and outgroup discrimination. Participants allocated more rewards to their own group, despite no material benefit. This "mere categorisation effect" showed that the simple act of distinguishing between "us" and "them" was enough to trigger bias (Brown, 2000). The finding challenged older theories, such as Realistic Conflict Theory, which linked intergroup conflict only to competition over resources.

At the core of SIT lies the concept of positive distinctiveness, the human motivation to view one's group as unique or superior. People strive to maintain or enhance their group's status because it strengthens their own self-esteem (Rodriguez, 2024). When a group is perceived as inferior, its members may seek to restore pride through strategies such as social competition (challenging other groups) or social creativity (redefining what makes their group valuable) (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012).

In diaspora contexts, SIT offers insight into how migrants manage identity and belonging across borders. Members of diasporic communities, such as the Lebanese in Ghana, continually negotiate between their homeland identity and integration within the host society (Vertovec, 2009). The pursuit of positive distinctiveness may lead some to preserve strong cultural traditions, while others adapt through hybrid identities that blend elements of both cultures (Gupta, 2022). Therefore, SIT provides a useful lens for this study to examine how the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana constructs and maintains a collective identity and how their need for group belonging and distinctiveness shapes their political engagement with Lebanon.

2.4 Empirical Review

2.4.1 General Perspectives on Diaspora Politics

Délano Alonso and Mylonas (2019) highlight case studies from Morocco, Germany, Israel, Serbia, China, and others to demonstrate how diaspora engagement policies are influenced by multiple factors, including the time of emigration, socio-economic status, generation, and host country relations. They argue that states engage with different “sub-diasporas” selectively and that diaspora entrepreneurs play vital roles in shaping these engagements. These comparative findings emphasise that diaspora engagement is not uniformly driven by national interest but often reflects regional political aspirations and historical ties. Their study also revealed that political parties used diaspora not only as voters but as campaigners and fundraisers, despite low actual turnout. This challenges the assumption that diaspora enfranchisement is solely about votes, showing that it is also about political labour and legitimacy.

Adamson (2016) explored how diasporas have become influential transnational political actors, enabled by globalisation, digital technology, and evolving notions of citizenship. Using illustrative examples such as the Kurdish, Tamil, Eritrean, and Libyan diasporas, Adamson shows how diaspora communities engage in homeland politics through advocacy, funding, protests, and lobbying. The study argues that diaspora politics challenges traditional notions of state sovereignty and citizenship, as states increasingly institutionalise engagement through dual citizenship and external voting rights. It further contends that non-state actors like NGOs, diaspora entrepreneurs, and advocacy networks also play critical roles in shaping diaspora influence. While the study is conceptually rich, its empirical contribution is limited to anecdotal illustrations rather than systematic analysis.

Mirilovic (2018) also examined how the political systems of both origin and host countries influence diaspora political engagement in foreign policy. Using a large dataset of over 5,000

country pairs from 1991 to 2007, the study employs logistic regression to test whether diasporas are more likely to influence bilateral relations when both states are democracies. The findings confirm this hypothesis: diaspora political influence is most prominent in democratic dyads, where political openness, institutional access, and shared norms of participation facilitate lobbying, advocacy, and policy pressure. Diasporas from authoritarian regimes are less effective, largely due to suppression by the homeland or strategic constraints in host states. While methodologically rigorous, the study treats diasporas as unitary actors and does not explore internal diversity or specific mechanisms of influence, such as lobbying strategies or grassroots activism. Nonetheless, the research makes a significant contribution to the field by linking regime type to the effectiveness of diaspora.

2.4.2 Lebanese Diaspora Political Engagement

Becker (2021) empirically explored how the Lebanese diaspora engages politically during moments of national upheaval through digital platforms, specifically examining the case of the “Thawra Chronicles” created during the 2019 Lebanese Revolution. Using a qualitative case study approach, the author conducted semi-structured interviews with the site’s founders and contributors, alongside a walkthrough analysis of the platform. Findings reveal that diaspora members used the site to circumvent traditional media and participate in the revolution symbolically and emotionally. Though distant, participants cultivated solidarity and a sense of political agency, offering user-generated content, art, and pledges that fostered belonging. While rich in contextual insights, the study is limited by its small sample size and reliance on a single platform. Nevertheless, it highlights the role of online media in enabling diasporic political participation, especially under restrictive or polarised conditions.

Gevorkyan and Issa (2024) offered a mixed-method empirical analysis of diaspora economic engagement through the Lebanese Diaspora Online Survey (LDOS), which gathered responses

from 123 participants worldwide. It focused on understanding the financial and non-financial contributions of the diaspora to Lebanon, especially amid the country's ongoing crisis. The researchers applied cluster and factor analysis to identify determinants of diaspora engagement, revealing that income, age, and emotional attachment to Lebanon significantly affect financial involvement. Education was positively associated with non-monetary engagement, such as cultural promotion and political advocacy. The study offers valuable insight into the economic dimension of diaspora politics, which is useful for the current study.

Additionally, Omar (2025) investigated the contributions of Lebanese expatriates to their home country's socioeconomic and cultural aspects, focusing on factors influencing their financial and non-financial engagement. The research utilised data from the Lebanese Diaspora Online Survey (LDOS), a custom survey comprising 72 structured questions administered to 123 respondents. Key findings indicate that generational differences, financial capacity, and cultural connections significantly influence the engagement levels of Lebanese expatriates. Systemic constraints, such as institutional mistrust and political instability, were identified as primary reasons for the limited financial engagement from expats. The study concludes that the Lebanese diaspora is crucial for Lebanon's development, but structural reforms are essential to enhance their engagement and maximise their potential for national growth.

ICMPD (2021) conducted a comparative policy case study that assessed how four countries, Lebanon, India, Ireland, and Italy, engage their diasporas through legal and institutional mechanisms. Based on desk research and legal analysis, the report offers detailed empirical insight into Lebanon's fragmented but symbolically rich diaspora strategy. It shows that Lebanese authorities, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Directorate of Emigrants, have attempted to build diaspora engagement infrastructure through citizenship reform, investment promotion, and political enfranchisement. However, diaspora policy in Lebanon remains heavily shaped by sectarian politics and symbolic gestures rather than

structured institutional coordination. It concludes that effective engagement requires depoliticised frameworks, legal clarity, and institutional capacity. The study offers a valuable empirical basis for evaluating diaspora governance in Lebanon and situates it within broader international best practices.

2.5 Gaps in Literature

Literature on diaspora politics has grown significantly, offering insights into how migrant communities engage with their homelands and host states. However, several important gaps remain. First, much of the research is concentrated on large and politically visible diasporas, such as the Indian, Jewish, Kurdish, or Armenian cases (Shain & Barth, 2003; Varadarajan, 2010; Adamson, 2016). While these studies provide useful frameworks, they risk generalising diaspora experiences and overlooking smaller or less-studied communities like the Lebanese diaspora in West Africa. Although scholars have examined structural drivers such as regime type, state policies, and globalisation (Mirilovic, 2018; Délano Alonso & Mylonas, 2019), less attention has been given to the micro-level dynamics of identity formation, everyday practices, and generational differences within diasporas. Studies such as Butler (2001) and Tabar (2022) highlight the importance of self-ascribed identity and “political remittances,” but empirical research linking these to concrete political behaviours remains limited.

Additionally, while digital technologies and online activism are increasingly recognised as central to diaspora mobilisation (Becker, 2021; Armouch et al., 2022), most research relies on small-scale case studies or anecdotal evidence. Broader, systematic analyses that connect digital engagement to offline political influence are still underdeveloped. Finally, the Lebanese diaspora literature often focuses on remittances and economic contributions (Gevorkyan & Issa, 2024; Omar, 2025), or on diaspora policy frameworks (ICMPD, 2021), but rarely integrates these with questions of identity, integration, and political participation in specific

host contexts such as Ghana. This creates a gap for studies that explore how transnational identities interact with local integration to shape political engagement.

The current study fills these gaps by focusing on the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana, identifying the motivations driving political participation, analysing trends in engagement with Lebanon, examining barriers that constrain involvement, and assessing how transnational identity and integration shape political attitudes. In doing so, it links identity, motivations, and structural factors within a rarely studied host context.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the literature on diaspora politics and transnationalism. In doing so, the chapter looked at the conceptual reviews, theoretical reviews, and empirical reviews underpinning the study. The chapter also discussed how transnationalism and social identity theories explain diaspora and engagement with homeland politics. The theories (transnationalism and social identity), along with the concepts and empirical studies reviewed, have positioned the research to understand the intricacies of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana's engagement with their homeland politics.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework adopted to investigate the political engagement of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana, focusing on their motivations, patterns of participation, barriers encountered, and the influence of transnational identity and social integration. Hence, the discussion in this chapter is structured around research design, population, sampling and sampling technique, data collection methods and instruments, and ethical considerations of the study.

3.2 Research Approach

There are three main approaches to conducting a study: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods. Each approach offers distinct philosophical underpinnings, techniques, and purposes that guide the researcher's inquiry process (Creswell, 2014). For this study, a qualitative research approach was adopted to explore in depth the motivations, trends, barriers, and identity dynamics influencing political engagement among the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana. This choice was grounded like the research objectives, which seek to uncover meanings, interpretations, and experiences that cannot be captured through numerical data alone.

As noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world, aiming to understand phenomena in context-specific settings. Unlike quantitative research, which seeks to measure variables and test hypotheses, qualitative research is exploratory and inductive, focusing on subjective experiences and emergent patterns (Creswell & Poth, 2017). It allows for a rich and nuanced understanding of

complex social phenomena, such as transnational identity and diaspora politics, where context, perception, and interaction are central. This study is therefore guided by a constructivist paradigm, which posits that reality is socially constructed and context-dependent (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This paradigm recognises the researcher's role in co-constructing knowledge with participants through dialogue and reflexive interpretation. It assumes that political engagement, identity, and integration are dynamic processes shaped by history, community, and emotion, dimensions best explored through qualitative tools.

Given the lack of generalised data on the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana and the need to explore individual narratives and collective memory, the qualitative approach enabled the research to offer depth, authenticity, and insight into diasporic political behaviour that numerical methods might overlook. This methodological choice aligns with similar research in diaspora and transnationalism studies, where qualitative methods have proven effective in capturing the emotional, symbolic, and relational dimensions of migrant political engagement (Adamson, 2016; Becker, 2021; Baser & Halperin, 2019). Additionally, this study employed an exploratory qualitative approach to explore motivations, barriers, identity factors, and trends in the Lebanese diaspora engagement in Lebanese politics. This approach allowed for a deep understanding of subjective experiences, identity formation, and socio-political factors that quantitative methods might overlook in studying Lebanese (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Data collection is a critical phase in research that involves gathering relevant information to address the research objectives and generate meaningful insights (Creswell, 2014). For this study, which seeks to explore the motivations, trends, barriers, and identity dimensions influencing the political engagement of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana, a triangulated qualitative data collection strategy was adopted. This includes in-depth interviews, a qualitative

survey, and document analysis. The use of multiple methods enhances the study's validity, depth, and contextual understanding by capturing a range of perspectives and data types (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

3.3.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary data collection method. This approach allowed the researcher to probe deeply into participants' lived experiences, motivations, perceptions of transnational identity, and barriers to political participation in both Ghana and Lebanon. According to Kvale (2007), semi-structured interviews offer a flexible format in which the interviewer can explore issues in detail while maintaining comparability across respondents. Zakaria (2017) also posits that interviews are a central feature of qualitative research, as they provide insight into how social actors experience specific social phenomena. They are particularly valuable for gathering data on personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, especially when dealing with sensitive topics. Using this data collection method, an interview guide was developed, covering themes aligned with the research objectives. These interviews targeted Lebanese diaspora members of various ages, professions, and levels of political engagement until data saturation was reached.

3.3.2 Qualitative Survey

In general methodology, the word survey only covers quantitative studies that primarily aim at describing numerical distributions of variables (e.g. prevalence rates) in the population (Bernard, 2006). However, the qualitative type of survey does not aim at establishing frequencies, means or other parameters but at determining the diversity of some topic of interest within a given population (Boyatzis, 1998). This type of survey does not count the number of

people with the same characteristic (value of variable), but it establishes the meaningful variation (relevant dimensions and values) within that population. Johnson (2010, p. 3) puts it shortly, “qualitative survey is the study of diversity (not distribution) in a population”. The researcher adopted this method to allow participants who could not be directly reached to participate in the study. The qualitative survey questionnaire was uploaded to a Google Form and shared online with the participants. It involved semi-structured and open-ended questions that allowed the participants to respond to the questions on the questionnaire. In addition, the researcher made room for additional space for new ideas outside the questionnaire that would solicit information from the participants on their thoughts about the subject matter. This was done to unearth the *diversity* in the ideas and responses of the participants. In all, a total of Four (4) participants were surveyed.

3.3.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis was employed to complement the primary data with contextual and institutional evidence. This method involved the systematic review of both official and informal texts, including Lebanese diaspora policy documents (e.g., electoral rights, dual citizenship legislation), reports by international bodies (e.g., ICMPD, UNDP), and official government institutions’ websites. Bowen (2009) highlights that document analysis supports triangulation and historical depth by offering insight into the formal frameworks and discourse that shape diaspora engagement. It also provides non-reactive data, meaning it is not influenced by the researcher’s presence, thereby reinforcing the study’s credibility (Karppinen & Moe, 2012).

3.4 Population and Sample Size

In research, the population refers to the full group of individuals, entities, or phenomena that a study seeks to understand or make generalisations about (Boateng, 2023). According to Bryman (2006), it represents the universe of units from which a sample may be drawn, while Polit and Hungler (1999) define it as the aggregation of elements that conform to specific criteria relevant to the research inquiry. For this study, the target population comprises members of the Lebanese diaspora currently residing in Ghana who have maintained varying degrees of connection with Lebanon through political, social, cultural, or economic means. Additionally, the population includes all Lebanese regulations and laws on diaspora engagements.

Given the absence of an official or centralised database of Lebanese nationals living in Ghana, particularly one that captures levels of political engagement or identity formation, the study's sample frame is defined by Lebanese descent, age (18+), and residence in Ghana for at least one year. The inclusion criteria also prioritise individuals who express interest or involvement in Lebanon-related political affairs, whether passively (e.g., following news) or actively (e.g., voting, campaigning, donating).

A sample size of 15 to 20 participants was targeted for the study, in line with qualitative research standards that emphasise data saturation over statistical representativeness (Guest et al, 2006). However, due to difficulty in reaching to the Lebanese community and the unwillingness to participate in the study, the researcher, settle on eight (8) respondents for the study. Although the sample is not large, it is enough to provide diversity of experiences while allowing for deep, focused inquiry into participants' motivations, barriers, identity negotiations, and patterns of political engagement (Guest et al, 2006).

3.4.1 Demographics of Sample

This sub-section presents the demographic background of the participants involved in the study. As part of answering the research questions, the researcher first sought to understand the participants' demographic characteristics in order to situate their responses within their socio-cultural and migratory contexts. Understanding their age, citizenship, length of stay in Ghana, occupation, and level of transnational mobility helps to explain variations in political engagement with Lebanon. The interview participants were Lebanese diaspora members residing in Ghana who were purposefully selected based on their varying degrees of integration and interest in Lebanese political affairs. The details are presented in Table 4.1.1 below.

3.4.1.1 Demographics of Interview Sample

Table 4.3.1.1 shows that the interview participants included four individuals, three males and one female, aged between their early thirties and mid-fifties, providing generational diversity. Two of the respondents held dual citizenship (Lebanese-Ghanaian), while two were solely Lebanese, reflecting varied levels of integration.

Table 4.3.1.1 Demographics of Interview Participants

Code	Age Range	Citizenship Status	Years in Ghana	Occupation	Frequency of Visits to Lebanon	Place of Birth
IP1	Mid-50s	Lebanese citizen	25 years	Business owner	Once per year	Lebanon
IP2	Mid-30s to early 40s	Lebanese & Ghanaian	Born in Ghana	Entrepreneur	Once per year	Ghana

IP3	Early 30s	Lebanese citizen	4 years	Self-employed (creative sector)	Once every 1–2 years	Lebanon
IP4	34 years	Lebanese & Ghanaian	10 years	Homemaker / Entrepreneur	Annually	Lebanon

Source: Field Data (2025)

Three of the respondents had lived in Ghana for over ten years, indicating long-term settlement, and one respondent had been in Ghana for four years, representing newer migrants. Three respondents reported visiting Lebanon annually, while one respondent travelled once every one to two years. In terms of place of birth, two participants were born in Lebanon, while two others were either born in Ghana or migrated at a young age. This distribution reflects both first-generation and second-generation diaspora representation within the sample.

3.4.1.2 Demographics of Survey Sample

Table 3.3.1.2 presents the demographic characteristics of the four survey respondents. Participants ranged in age from 31 to 64 years, indicating a diverse mix of generational experiences within the Lebanese diaspora community in Ghana. Two respondents held dual citizenship (Lebanese-Ghanaian and Lebanese-Burkinabé), one was Ghanaian of Lebanese descent, and one was solely Lebanese.

Table 3.4.1.2 Demographics of Survey Respondents

Code	Age Range	Citizenship Status	Years in Ghana	Occupation	Frequency of Visits to Lebanon	Place of Birth

SQ1	60 years	Lebanese & Burkinabé	23 years	CEO, Fadoul Group Ghana	Once or twice a year	Lebanon
SQ2	64 years	Ghanaian of Lebanese descent	Lifetime	Managing Director	Four times a year	Ghana
SQ3	36 years	Lebanese & Ghanaian	24 years	Private sector worker	Once every 1–2 years	Ghana
SQ4	31 years	Lebanese	3 years	Private sector worker	Twice per year	Lebanon

Source: Field Data (2025)

In terms of residence, two respondents had lived in Ghana for over two decades, showing long-term settlement patterns, while one respondent had been in Ghana for only three years, suggesting recent migration. The respondents' occupations, comprises a CEO, managing director, and two private sector workers. Regarding homeland connections, most respondents reported visiting Lebanon between once and four times a year. Place of birth data further highlight generational differences, with two respondents born in Lebanon and two born in Ghana, reflecting both first- and second-generation members of the diaspora. Overall, these demographic characteristics suggest that the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana represents a well-established, economically active, and transnationally connected community.

3.5 Sampling and Sampling Procedure

Sampling refers to the systematic process by which a subset of individuals or units is selected from a broader population to provide data for research analysis (Neuman, 2021). It enables the

researcher to gain meaningful insights without engaging the entire population, particularly when the population is dispersed or difficult to access. In qualitative research, sampling prioritises representativeness (Patton, 2002). In this study, a non-probability sampling approach, specifically purposive and snowball sampling techniques, were employed to carefully select participants with the capacity/knowledge to respond to the research questions (Creswell, 2014).

Purposive sampling involves intentionally selecting participants based on characteristics relevant to the research objectives, in this case, Lebanese descent, residence in Ghana for at least one year, and a demonstrable interest or involvement in political matters relating to Lebanon. This strategy allowed the researcher to gather insights from individuals who are likely to provide in-depth, contextually grounded perspectives (Tongco, 2007). To complement this, snowball sampling was applied to access a broader range of participants within the Lebanese community. As diaspora populations often rely on tight-knit social and family networks, snowballing, where initial participants refer others (Creswell, 2014), was especially effective in reaching participants who may be politically active but hesitant to self-identify for research. This technique has proven valuable in similar studies involving transnational communities and sensitive political subjects (Browne, 2005). This sampling technique prioritises depth over statistical generalizability (Creswell, 2003; Bryman, 2006). Therefore, these techniques were selected to identify members of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana who possess specific characteristics aligned with the research objectives, including political awareness, transnational engagement and varied levels of integration into Ghanaian society.

3.6 Data Management and Analysis

Data analysis is the systematic process of organizing, interpreting, and making sense of the information collected during a study. As Creswell (2014) aptly puts it, the process is similar to peeling an onion, breaking the data apart into manageable segments and then putting the pieces back together to construct meaningful patterns and insights. In line with the exploratory and interpretive nature of this study, a thematic analysis method was adopted to analyse the qualitative data generated from interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews. Thematic analysis enabled the researcher to identify, analyse, and report patterns or themes within the data. According to Alhojailan and Ibrahim (2012), it is particularly suited for qualitative research as it allows the researcher to detect relationships between concepts and compare participant perspectives across varying contexts and timeframes. The flexibility of this method makes it appropriate for studies like this one, which aim to understand motivations, barriers, and identity dimensions surrounding political participation within a transnational diaspora context. Zakaria (2017) emphasises that not all collected data will be relevant to the research objectives, and thematic analysis facilitates the selective focus on data that directly contributes to answering the research questions.

Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase guide to thematic analysis, the data analysis process began with thorough familiarisation with the data through transcription and multiple readings of interview and FGD transcripts. The second step involved generating initial codes, where meaningful data segments were labelled based on recurring phrases, ideas, or behaviours. These codes were then grouped into broader themes reflecting the study's research objectives. After reviewing and refining themes, they were clearly defined and named, followed by the final step of producing the analysis with illustrative quotes and interpretations. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, participants in the interviews were coded as IP1, IP2, IP3, IP4, and IP5, while responses from the qualitative survey were coded as SQ1, SQ2, SQ3,

SQ4, and so on. References to documents reviewed were indicated appropriately in the analysis.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are foundational to all research involving human participants, especially in qualitative studies that require close interaction, trust, and the collection of potentially sensitive information. As Dindiok (2017) notes, three critical principles guide ethical research practice: informed consent, privacy (anonymity and confidentiality), and the management of conflicts of interest. In line with these principles, this study incorporated a rigorous ethical framework from the design phase through to data collection, analysis, and reporting.

First and foremost, informed consent was sought from all participants involved in interviews and focus group discussions. Before participation, individuals were provided with clear information about the purpose of the study, their rights to withdraw at any stage without penalty, and how their data would be used. Verbal consent was obtained from all participants before data collection ensued. To safeguard anonymity and confidentiality, participants' identities were concealed using pseudonyms and, where appropriate, composite profiles, as advised by Creswell (2013). Although some scholars, such as Nespor (2000) and Walford (2005) have questioned the strict necessity of confidentiality in all research, the sensitivity of the subject matter, diasporic political engagement, warrants careful protection of participant identities. Personal identifiers were removed from all transcripts and records, and secure digital storage protocols were observed.

The study also took proactive steps to avoid conflicts of interest and bias. The researcher maintained neutrality during interviews and FGDs, avoided leading questions, and ensured that all participants, regardless of age, gender, political affiliation, or social standing, were treated

equally and respectfully. Furthermore, the interpretation of findings was guided by participant narratives and contextual data, without exaggeration or distortion of responses. Plagiarism and falsification of authorship were also strictly avoided. All sources used in this study were properly cited, and no fabricated or manipulated data were introduced at any stage. To enhance the fairness and transparency of participant selection, the study adhered strictly to its inclusion and exclusion criteria, ensuring that only those who met the research requirements were engaged.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Although the concepts of validity and reliability are traditionally associated with quantitative studies, their relevance in qualitative research has been increasingly recognised and adapted to suit interpretive and naturalistic paradigms. As Golafshani (2003), cited in Zakaria (2017), argues, when applied to qualitative research, these concepts must be reframed to reflect trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility. In this study, which explores the political engagement of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana, both validity and reliability techniques were strategically integrated to uphold the integrity and transparency of the research process.

According to Creswell (2014), qualitative validity refers to the accuracy of findings ensured through systematic procedures, while reliability reflects consistency in applying data collection and analysis methods. In this study, several measures were taken to enhance trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility. First, triangulation was achieved by drawing on multiple data sources, including interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis, to cross-check findings and strengthen their accuracy. Second, member checking was employed, with participants allowed to review transcripts and clarify meanings, ensuring their voices were authentically represented. To support credibility, rich and thick descriptions were provided during the data analysis phase by supporting the analysis with quotes from the respondents to

give a detailed and nuanced account of the findings, supporting transferability and contextual understanding. The researcher also clarified personal biases through reflexivity, ensuring interpretations were grounded in data rather than subjective assumptions. Furthermore, discrepant or negative evidence was included to present a balanced account of perspectives. Lastly, an external review of coding and themes was conducted to verify the consistency and dependability of interpretations. Collectively, these steps ensured that the study's findings are reliable, trustworthy, and a credible reflection of participants' lived experiences.

3.9 Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed the research paradigm, methodology and methods used to collect data. It justified the reasons for selecting the methodology and methods, and further discussed the population and sampling techniques. The chapter highlighted the value of using interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis for in-depth data and underscored the ethical principles adhered to in the study, including trustworthiness, reliability and validity.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of findings from the data collected for the study. The research explored the political engagement of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana with political processes in Lebanon, focusing on their motivations, patterns of participation, barriers to involvement, and the role of transnational identity. The discussion of findings is situated within the theoretical frameworks that informed the study, particularly transnationalism and diaspora political participation theories, and in dialogue with existing literature reviewed in earlier chapters. The chapter is therefore structured around the main research questions that guided the study.

4.2 Findings with Respect to RQ1. What motivates members of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana to engage in political processes in Lebanon?

This research question aimed to explore the motivations driving political participation among the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana in relation to Lebanese politics. The goal was to uncover why and how Lebanese migrants in Ghana, some of whom have lived in the country for decades, continue to follow, discuss, and participate in Lebanon's political processes. Understanding these motivations provides insight into how transnational identities are maintained and how emotional, cultural, and moral ties transcend geographic boundaries.

The findings show that Lebanese individuals in Ghana remain politically attentive due to a combination of personal, familial, and emotional motivations. Many respondents described politics as deeply rooted in Lebanese culture, something inherited rather than consciously adopted. Their engagement often stems from a desire to stay connected to family back home,

safeguard their homeland's future, and fulfil a moral duty to remain informed and involved. Moreover, about 87% of the participants expressed that even after decades in Ghana, their identity remains strongly tied to Lebanon, reinforcing their interest in the country's political life. From this analysis, four central themes emerged as key motivators for Lebanese diaspora political engagement: *Emotional and Homeland Attachment*; *Family and Generational Responsibility*; *Civic Duty and Cultural Identity*; and *Comparative Learning and Desire for Reform*. These themes are discussed in detail in the following section.

4.2.1 Emotional and Homeland Attachment

Analysis of the data revealed that emotional and ancestral attachment to Lebanon remains a core motivation driving political engagement among members of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana. 88% of the respondents across both interviews and survey, consistently expressed that their connection to Lebanon is not merely political, but deeply emotional and cultural. This attachment is rooted in their sense of identity, belonging, and loyalty to their homeland, even after decades of living abroad. 75% of the participants described Lebanon as an inseparable part of who they are, an enduring bond that shapes their worldview and continues to influence their engagement with the country's politics. For example, one participant, who has lived in Ghana for over 25 years, explained:

"I don't like to engage in politics per se, because at the end, I'm living in Ghana, I'm almost a Ghanaian after 25 years. But this doesn't exclude the fact that I'm Lebanese and I have to follow up what's going on in my country. Because no matter how many years you are away, the roots are still there. I'm growing here, yes, my branches and trunk are stronger and bigger here, but the roots are there." (IP1)

Similarly, other respondents expressed a sense of longing and responsibility towards Lebanon. One participant noted that even though he has spent most of his life in Ghana, his attachment to Lebanon remains strong:

“I feel very connected to Lebanon while living in Ghana. I stay in touch with family and friends, follow the news daily, and remain engaged in social and political discussions. Even from abroad, Lebanon continues to be an essential part of my identity.” (SQ1)

SQ2 also noted that he follows Lebanese politics *“out of belonging and interest in my country”*.

Another participant echoed this emotional commitment, ranking his connection to Lebanon as “8 or 9 out of 10,” despite describing Ghana as a second home that has welcomed and supported him (IP1). These expressions suggest that identity and belonging among the Lebanese diaspora are not zero-sum; they can integrate into Ghanaian society while maintaining a powerful attachment to Lebanon.

The study also revealed that this emotional attachment often manifests as diasporic vigilance, a heightened sense of concern for Lebanon’s stability. One participant described how living far away actually intensified his emotional involvement:

“It has the counter effect that I really need to follow more. Whenever something is going on down there, I get more stressed and follow up more. I wake up in the night to watch the news, maybe more than the people who are there.” (IP1)

The findings show that emotional and homeland attachment form the foundation of Lebanese diaspora political interest. Their engagement is not motivated by material or strategic gain but by an enduring emotional bond to Lebanon, a homeland they describe as “roots that never die.” This attachment sustains their sense of belonging, informs their political awareness, and underpins their transnational identity, even as they build stable lives within Ghanaian society.

4.2.2 Family and Generational Responsibility

Another prominent theme that emerged from the data was the role of family and generational responsibility as a key motivation for Lebanese diaspora engagement in Lebanon’s political affairs. For many participants, political interest and emotional connection were deeply

intertwined with family ties, both immediate and extended, and a moral duty to protect their homeland for future generations. Participants often viewed political awareness as an extension of familial loyalty. One respondent expressed that his motivation to follow political developments stemmed not only from concern for relatives still residing in Lebanon but also from a sense of duty to ensure a safer and more stable country for his descendants. As she explained:

“Of course, my family, my land, my home, my friends, my people... I know I belong there, and I’m going to go back there. So I have to make sure that my land is safe and intact, and hopefully there will be promise for my children or my grandchildren to have their home safe and well-stated.” (IP1)

This statement reflects how familial attachment extends beyond the personal to the intergenerational. The same participant described the Lebanese as a people inherently raised in political consciousness, an attitude shaped by decades of conflict, family discussions, and generational exposure to instability. She noted:

“If you know Lebanon, you will know that every Lebanese is a reporter, an analyst of politics. We were raised with war and crisis all the time. Definitely, we would love to know and read the news.” (IP1)

Another interview respondent noted that his family in Lebanon keeps him connected and motivated to follow happenings in Lebanon to be abreast. He noted:

“Because you have your family there, you want to see if things are going well in Lebanon.” (IP2)

Survey data further supported this pattern. One participant remarked that the Lebanese community’s political awareness often originates in the home and family environment rather than formal institutions:

“Lebanese people naturally have a strong political sense, and most of them are involved in politics in one way or another. Even while living in Ghana, I feel

motivated to stay engaged because political life is deeply rooted in our identity and remains a strong connection to our homeland.” (SQ1)

Another survey respondent noted that his family serves as a means to keep in touch with Lebanon and follow its political happenings. He stated:

“My family keep me connected and aware of Lebanon’s politics. They instil a sense of moral duty and responsibility toward improving my country’s situation.” (SQ4)

Another survey respondent echoed the same sentiment, saying:

“It’s my homeland, my family is there. I would like to ensure their safety and that of my Lebanese friends.” (SQ4)

So in all, the findings suggest that diaspora family networks play a vital role in sustaining this engagement. Maintaining contact with relatives in Lebanon, through frequent visits, calls, and remittances, keeps political interest alive.

4.2.3 Civic Duty and Cultural Identity

Another central theme that emerged from the data was the interplay between civic duty and cultural identity as a motivation for political engagement among the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana. For many participants, following political developments in Lebanon was not merely a personal interest but a manifestation of belonging, a civic and cultural responsibility tied to what it means to be Lebanese. Participants described political awareness as part of their civic identity, an expression of loyalty to Lebanon, even from abroad. For instance, one respondent explained that he felt compelled to stay informed about national affairs, even though he no longer lived there permanently:

“I don’t like to engage in politics per se because I’m living in Ghana and I’m almost Ghanaian after 25 years. But this doesn’t exclude the fact that I’m Lebanese and I

have to follow up what's going on in my country. No matter how many years you are away, the roots are still there.” (IP1)

Another participant echoed similar sentiments, linking civic responsibility with an ethical obligation to contribute, however symbolically, to the betterment of Lebanon:

“... taking part in the elections. Choosing the right people to lead the country is the only responsibility I can think of now.” (IP2)

With this response it is evident that even though IP2 engagement is limited to voting, his response reveals a deep awareness of citizenship responsibility, that political participation, however minimal, is a way to uphold one's identity as a Lebanese national.

Cultural identity also surfaced as a strong motivator for maintaining political ties. Many participants associated being Lebanese with a heightened sense of political awareness and civic pride. One participant captured this notion clearly:

“Ghana has become my second home, and I am fully integrated into its society and culture. At the same time, my attachment and loyalty to Lebanon remain strong — it is my homeland, and I carry it in my heart wherever I go. ” (SQ1)

Here, political engagement becomes a cultural trait, an inherited part of Lebanese identity that transcends geography.

4.2.4 Comparative Learning and Desire for Reform

A final theme that emerged from the data is the influence of comparative learning and a growing desire for political reform in Lebanon, shaped by the participants' long-term exposure to Ghana's sociopolitical environment. about 80% of the participants reflected on how witnessing Ghana's democratic processes and social cohesion had reshaped their views about

Lebanon's political culture. One participant expressed a deep admiration for Ghana's political system and lamented Lebanon's inability to emulate it:

"I wish we practised that democratic way of giving every big party the option to rule, maybe for four years. I find it fair. The people here are peaceful; they never fight. I would have loved my country to follow that." (IP1)

Another participant explained that living in Ghana had deepened his appreciation for institutional accountability and public order, values he felt were missing in Lebanon:

"Living in Ghana has given me a sense of perspective and comparison. Seeing how institutions function and how people engage in civic life has made me more aware of what Lebanon is missing, especially in terms of accountability and good governance. It has also strengthened my hope that Lebanon can one day achieve the same level of stability and unity." (SQ1)

This comparative outlook cultivates a critical consciousness; participants no longer view Lebanon's political dysfunction as inevitable, but as something that can and should be changed. In addition to admiration, participants' reflections also revealed a subtle frustration with Lebanon's entrenched sectarianism. One respondent noted that Ghana's environment had taught him tolerance and inclusivity, values he found lacking back home:

"Here I meet people from different areas of my country, different religions and everything, and it made me live with them and leave politics aside, religion aside, everything aside." (IP1)

In a related observation, another participant drew direct parallels between corruption in both countries but noted that Ghana's political system, despite its flaws, seemed more manageable and institutionally controlled:

"Politics in Lebanon is mafia, to be honest... there's corruption in both governments, but in Lebanon it's on a larger scale." (IP2)

This comparison reflects a diasporic consciousness rooted in moral evaluation; participants measure their homeland against their host country, often using Ghana's governance as a benchmark for reform.

4.3 Findings with respect to RQ2. What forms of engagement with Lebanese politics are most common among the diaspora community in Ghana?

The political engagement of diasporic communities is complex, often influenced by emotional attachment, access to resources, and political opportunity structures in both the host and home countries. Previous studies have shown that diasporas participate in homeland politics through various means, including voting, advocacy, online activism, and remittance-based influence (Mirilovic, 2018; Délano & Mylonas, 2019). However, such engagement is rarely uniform; it reflects how individuals negotiate belonging, identity, and the realities of transnational life (Adamson, 2016; Brinkerhoff, 2009). For the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana, the findings suggest that political engagement with Lebanon is primarily symbolic and informational rather than overtly institutional or partisan. Respondents described themselves as closely following Lebanese politics through media, family discussions, and social networks, but only about 38% of the participants actively participated in formal political processes such as voting or party membership. This pattern mirrors the broader notion of “diaspora politics from below” (Tedeschi et al., 2020), where emotional and discursive engagement replaces direct political activism, allowing individuals to maintain transnational connections without necessarily seeking institutional influence.

Interestingly, participants also highlighted how living in Ghana has reshaped their political outlook. Many have adopted new perspectives on governance, accountability, and civic participation through exposure to Ghana's political environment. This has led to emerging discussions around reform and comparative learning, suggesting a gradual transformation of

their political consciousness, even if actual engagement remains limited. The analysis revealed four major themes that capture the nature and diversity of Lebanese diaspora engagement in homeland politics: *Predominantly Informational and Symbolic Engagement; Limited but Increasing Institutional Participation; Digital and Transnational Connectivity; and Shifting Identity and Dual Allegiance in Political Perspective*

The following sections present a detailed discussion of each theme, supported by direct quotes from the interviews and surveys and documents to illustrate how members of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana engage with Lebanon's political processes both emotionally and practically

4.3.1 Predominantly Informational and Symbolic Engagement

Analysis of the data revealed that the most common form of political engagement among members of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana is informational and symbolic rather than direct or institutional. Many respondents described their connection to Lebanese politics as one rooted in awareness, conversation, and sentiment, rather than in voting or formal participation. Most participants indicated that they follow Lebanese politics closely through news outlets, social media, or family networks. For example, one respondent (IP2) shared:

“I always follow what happens in Lebanon on TV and online. Even though I’m not there, it still affects us emotionally, especially when things get bad politically or economically.”

Another participant (SQ3) echoed a similar sentiment, saying:

“I read and talk about what’s happening back home with friends and family here in Ghana. But that’s mostly where it ends, we care, but from a distance.”

Some participants linked this symbolic engagement to generational differences. While older members expressed nostalgia and emotional concern for Lebanon's political well-being,

younger respondents tended to approach it more as an intellectual curiosity or cultural connection. One younger participant (SQ4) stated:

“I know what happens politically in Lebanon, but I don’t feel like I can do anything about it. For me, it’s more about understanding where we come from rather than trying to fix it.”

This shift reflects how political engagement among the diaspora evolves from active longing in the first generation to reflective identity work in the younger generations. This theme highlights how Lebanese diasporans in Ghana remain politically engaged and emotionally invested in Lebanon, even if they do not participate in its formal political processes. Their engagement is rooted in information consumption, discussion, and cultural empathy, revealing a form of political consciousness that bridges identity, memory, and homeland connection rather than institutional activism.

4.3.2 Limited but Increasing Institutional Participation

While most Lebanese in Ghana engage with homeland politics symbolically or informally, a smaller but growing number have begun to participate in institutional processes such as voting and embassy-organised activities. This trend reflects a gradual shift from emotional observation toward limited, yet meaningful, forms of political inclusion. Some participants noted that voting in Lebanese elections from Ghana, particularly the 2022 diaspora elections, marked a turning point. For example, one participant (IP1) shared:

“There was an election before that happened at the Lebanese embassy. We took part, I went and voted. And now, if it will happen again this year, I will go and vote.”

Another respondent (IP2) confirmed a similar experience:

“Recently, we’ve been taking part in the elections. That’s the only responsibility I can think of now, choosing the right people to lead the country.”

The 2017 electoral law of Lebanon makes provision for diaspora electorates to participate in national elections, although with limited participation of only six parliamentary seats. Article 112 of the 2017 electoral law states:

“Six parliamentary seats are designated for Lebanese diaspora, three for Christians and three for Muslims. This decree is to be agreed upon by the Cabinet.”

However, most described these opportunities as rare and poorly coordinated. Institutional participation remains largely dependent on embassy initiatives, which are sporadic and limited in scope. As one participant (SQ1) observed:

“The Lebanese government does not provide real support for diaspora political involvement. There are limited channels for expatriates to participate or express their views.”

This perspective aligns with findings from the Arab Reform Initiative (2022), which reported that despite the introduction of diaspora voting in 2018 and 2022, logistical constraints, limited awareness, and mistrust in institutions have hindered widespread participation among Lebanese abroad.

Nevertheless, a sense of pride and obligation underpins participation for those who do engage. As one respondent (SQ2) expressed:

“The diaspora should pay loyalty to Ghana for giving us opportunities, but also to Lebanon, by voting, we show we still care about our country’s future.”

These views suggest that voting serves not only as a civic act but also as an expression of dual belonging, reaffirming one’s Lebanese identity while recognising Ghana as a supportive host. Overall, this theme demonstrates that while institutional engagement among the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana remains limited, it is gradually increasing through mechanisms like embassy voting and informal mobilisation.

4.3.3 Digital and Transnational Connectivity

Another major theme emerging from the data is the central role of digital media and transnational communication networks in shaping how the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana engages with homeland politics. While geographical distance limits physical participation, technology bridges this gap, allowing diasporans to remain informed, connected, and occasionally mobilised across borders. Participants consistently referenced social media, news platforms, and online discussions as their main avenues for following political developments in Lebanon. For instance, one respondent (IP2) noted:

“I follow events through social media, I scroll, and if something major happens, I read or watch it. It keeps me in touch with what’s going on, even if I’m far away.”

Similarly, another participant (SQ3) stated:

“I stay updated through TV and social media. We have family and friends who send us updates daily. That’s how we keep the conversation alive.”

These statements point to how digital connectivity sustains transnational political awareness. Even when not actively participating in formal politics, many respondents reported using digital tools to discuss, share, and react to political events, especially during crises. For many, these online spaces serve as both information channels and emotional communities. Participants described WhatsApp groups, Lebanese community pages, and news forums as “virtual meeting places” where politics, nostalgia, and identity intersect. One respondent (SQ4) reflected:

“I don’t vote or attend political events, but I read comments and discuss issues on social media with other Lebanese. It’s how we stay together, even from far away.”

The interviews revealed that digital engagement also blurs the lines between activism and observation. Some participants admitted to joining online campaigns or sharing posts in

solidarity with protest movements, while others expressed scepticism about “click activism.”

One participant (IP1) noted:

“I follow and comment online, but I don’t belong to any political group. For me, it’s more about being aware and showing support when something important happens.”

This illustrates a kind of mediated activism shaped by emotion, identity, and awareness rather than direct participation. Yet, it also highlights a subtle political consciousness of the Lebanese diaspora.

4.3.4 Shifting Identity and Dual Allegiance in Political Perspective

Another significant theme emerging from the analysis is the shifting identity and dual allegiance experienced by members of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana. Participants’ narratives revealed complex and dynamic identity negotiations between their sense of belonging to Lebanon and their social and cultural integration within Ghana. This tension between “rootedness” and “belonging” shapes how they perceive and engage in homeland politics. The findings suggest that identity among the Lebanese diaspora is not fixed but rather fluid and situational, influenced by length of stay, generational differences, and experiences of inclusion within Ghanaian society. Participants expressed a deep emotional attachment to Lebanon despite their long-term residence in Ghana. One participant who has lived in Ghana for over two decades, described this dual sense of belonging vividly:

“I’m living in Ghana, I’m almost a Ghanaian after 25 years. But this doesn’t exclude the fact that I’m also Lebanese and I have to follow up on what’s going on in my country. Because no matter how many years you are away, the roots are still there.”
(IP1)

Similarly, another respondent born in Ghana to a mixed Lebanese-Ghanaian parentage, captured this hybrid identity, stating:

“It’s a difficult question because I’m a descendant of a Lebanese father and a mixed Ghanaian mother. I feel more connected to my Lebanese roots, but Ghana feels like home as well.” (IP2)

This statement illustrates the second-generation diaspora experience, where emotional allegiance and cultural attachment coexist with a pragmatic sense of national belonging to the host country. The same respondent explained that he felt fully integrated in Ghana while maintaining loyalty to Lebanon:

“Ghana has become my second home, and I’m fully part of its society and culture. At the same time, my loyalty to Lebanon remains strong—it’s my homeland, and I carry it in my heart wherever I go.” (IP2)

This highlights a pattern of complementary identity, where integration into Ghanaian society does not diminish attachment to Lebanon but instead reinforces a balanced transnational outlook. However, not all participants shared this harmonious balance. For instance, IP3, who migrated to Ghana more recently, demonstrated a sense of detachment from political identity and homeland involvement, stating:

“I don’t follow anything. I left Lebanon because of politics. I’m peaceful; I don’t want to engage in that again.”

Moreover, IP2 offered a critical reflection on loyalty and moral obligation, stating:

“The Lebanese diaspora should pay loyalty to Ghana because when our country was not able to give us, Ghana gave us what our country couldn’t.”

This notion of reciprocal loyalty underscores how long-term residence transforms the diaspora’s moral and political attachments. Participants perceived their integration and success in Ghana as a debt that necessitates social contribution and civic respect, reflecting a gradual shift toward dual national consciousness.

4.4 Findings with respect to RQ3. What barriers inhibit Lebanese in Ghana from participating in political processes in Lebanon?

Understanding the barriers that prevent members of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana from participating in Lebanon's political processes is crucial to explaining the limited scope of their engagement. While earlier sections revealed a strong emotional attachment and symbolic connection to the homeland, this section explores the practical, institutional, and psychological factors that constrain active political participation. Research on diaspora political engagement has long emphasised that access to participation is shaped not only by individual motivation but also by systemic and structural factors such as distance, citizenship rights, and the responsiveness of home governments (Koinova, 2011; Délano & Gamlen, 2014). For the Lebanese diaspora, these constraints are compounded by Lebanon's fragile governance system and the absence of consistent mechanisms for expatriate political inclusion (Hourani & Sensenig-Dabbous, 2007).

Findings from both interviews and surveys in this study indicate that although many Lebanese in Ghana are informed and emotionally invested in Lebanon's political situation, their engagement is curtailed by several barriers. These include logistical challenges such as distance and irregular voting opportunities, limited institutional support from the Lebanese government, widespread disillusionment with political corruption, and shifting loyalties due to integration in Ghana. The following sections present a thematic analysis of these barriers as expressed by participants, supported by existing literature and relevant documentary sources. The themes that emerged from the data include: *Geographical and Logistical Constraints*, *Institutional and Governmental Barriers*, *Political Disillusionment and Distrust in the System*, and *Identity Ambiguity and Host-Country Prioritization*. Each theme is discussed in detail to provide a holistic understanding of the factors that inhibit the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana from fully engaging in Lebanon's political life.

4.4.1 Geographical and Logistical Constraints

A major theme that emerged from the data was the significant impact of geographical and logistical barriers on the political engagement of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana. While participants expressed a deep emotional and cultural connection to Lebanon, many admitted that distance and lack of institutional support made active participation in Lebanese politics difficult. Some respondents described the physical separation from Lebanon as the greatest obstacle to their political participation. The infrequency of elections abroad, coupled with the lack of sustained government outreach, created a sense of exclusion among many participants.

One respondent explained:

“One of the main challenges is the physical distance, which limits direct participation in political events or discussions taking place in Lebanon. In addition, the lack of transparency and accessibility to reliable information sometimes makes it difficult to fully understand what is happening on the ground.” (SQ1)

Participants who did manage to vote emphasized that it was a one-off event and they haven’t had the opportunity again. For instance, one respondent recounted:

“There was an election before that happened at the Lebanese embassy. We took part, I went and voted. And now if it happens again this year, I will go and vote.” (IP1)

Similarly, another participant confirmed that such diaspora voting exercises were exceptional rather than regular:

“They only did this diaspora voting once. Apart from that, I cannot think of anything else. The embassy here doesn’t do activities related to politics.” (IP2)

The survey data further reinforced this view. Several respondents reported that long travel distances, time differences, and a lack of clear information networks discouraged them from more active political involvement. One participant wrote:

“Physical distance makes it difficult to participate directly in political discussions or events in Lebanon, and there are no proper systems to make this easier.” (SQ4)

These sentiments contradict provisions of the electoral law 2017, which mandates Lebanese embassies through the foreign ministry to facilitate the participation of the diaspora in electoral processes. In terms of voter registration, for instance, Article 113 states:

“The ministry, along with the Foreign Ministry, calls citizens outside of Lebanon to register their desire to vote in person or online at Lebanese embassies and consulates outside of Lebanon.”

“The interior and foreign ministers will call on citizens to register at the above-mentioned locations with their national identification number, their religion and sect and their Lebanese passport number, if available.”

In essence, the data underscore that geographical and logistical barriers remain key obstacles to the Lebanese diaspora’s political engagement. Although technological connectivity allows them to stay informed, formal participation remains limited by structural weaknesses.

4.4.2 Institutional and Governmental Barriers

Another key theme that emerged from the data was the persistence of institutional and governmental barriers that constrain the political engagement of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana. Despite the community’s strong emotional and cultural attachment to Lebanon, respondents consistently pointed to structural inefficiencies, lack of government outreach, and weak institutional frameworks as major impediments to their participation. The findings reveal a deep sense of disconnection, not from identity, but from state structures that should facilitate inclusion. One survey participant observed:

“The Lebanese government does not provide real support for diaspora political involvement. There are limited channels for expatriates to participate or express their views, which makes it difficult for them to play an active role in national decision-making.” (SQ1)

This sentiment reflects a broader perception that political engagement is not being institutionally enabled, but rather passively tolerated. Even where the government organises diaspora voting, participants described it as inconsistent and poorly managed.

A respondent in the interviews noted:

“They tried when they had arranged for the voting here in the Lebanese embassy... At least they tried. They tried to ensure that the diaspora outside would be able to voice their voices and make a difference if they really need the change.” (IP1)

Another participant, however, was more critical, stating:

“They only did this diaspora voting once. Apart from that, I cannot think of anything else. The embassy here doesn’t do activities related to politics.” (IP2)

These views highlight the inconsistency in institutional engagement, leaving diaspora members to rely largely on their own informal networks to stay connected politically despite the Lebanese foreign ministry being mandated to coordinate the political activities and affairs of the country’s diaspora. From the ministry’s website, the Political Affairs Directorate is mandated to:

The Directorate for Political Affairs deals with all matters pertaining to Lebanon's foreign policy, tracks information on international issues and relations, studies their political aspect, and drafts briefing notes and proposals regarding these issues.

This responsibility suggests that the Embassy needs to ensure that Lebanese in diaspora are well informed and supported to take active role in the political matters of Lebanon. However, the sentiments from the respondents suggest that the interventions from the foreign ministry have been limited and ineffective. The interviews further revealed that this lack of institutional engagement also stems from Lebanon’s fragmented political culture and clientelist system,

where representation is often mediated through sectarian affiliations rather than national frameworks. As one respondent aptly put it:

“When you are diaspora abroad, you are a diaspora for the whole country, not for a certain political party. But in Lebanon, people are putting themselves under the umbrella of a certain party instead of being under the country. And I don’t think this should pass on and reflect to the diaspora.” (IP2)

Survey responses also echoed this institutional disconnect. About 88% of the participants noted that the absence of consistent government communication and structured political representation for expatriates leaves them feeling peripheral to Lebanon’s governance process.

One respondent remarked:

“There are no real mechanisms or programs to include us in policymaking. The embassy is there, but they don’t reach out or organize forums for us to share our views.” (SQ4)

4.4.3 Disillusionment and Distrust in the Political System

A recurring and deeply emotional theme that emerged from both the interviews and survey data was disillusionment and distrust in Lebanon’s political system. For many members of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana, their detachment from active political participation is not simply due to distance or logistical barriers, but a reflection of profound frustration with Lebanon’s entrenched corruption, sectarian politics, and repeated failures of governance. Participants described politics in Lebanon as “a dirty game,” “mafia-like,” and “hopeless,” underscoring a loss of faith in political actors and institutions.

One participant captured this sentiment vividly, saying:

“Politics is a dirty game. I just want to know how they are playing this dirty game and be aware of it... If I wanted to be involved, I wouldn’t have travelled and left my country.” (IP1)

Another participant was equally blunt in his characterization of Lebanese politics:

“Politics in Lebanon is mafia, to be honest. There’s corruption in both Ghana and Lebanon, but in Lebanon it’s on a much larger scale.” (IP2)

This comparison highlights how living abroad exposes diaspora members to contrasting political environments, amplifying their disillusionment with Lebanon’s entrenched dysfunction. Survey respondents reinforced this view. One noted:

“The political class in Lebanon has failed the people for decades. There’s no trust in the system, no belief that your vote or voice makes a difference.” (SQ2)

Another remarked:

“We have seen the same politicians recycling themselves. There’s no transparency or reform. Even when we vote, it feels like nothing changes.” (SQ3)

Such expressions reflect a shared sense of fatigue and cynicism, a belief that political engagement, whether domestic or abroad, yields little tangible impact.

For many diaspora members, this disillusionment is compounded by personal history. Having lived through Lebanon’s long periods of instability, conflict, and economic decline, they now view political engagement with skepticism and emotional exhaustion. As one interviewee expressed:

“No one leaves a place where they are happy and can earn their living. People leave because of frustration and disappointment. You seek abroad for change, for prosperity, for your hard work to be paid for.” (IP1)

Several participants lamented that sectarianism continues to dominate Lebanese politics, dividing communities and undermining national unity. One respondent observed:

“In Lebanon, people are putting themselves under the umbrella of certain political parties instead of being under the country. And I don’t think this should reflect on the diaspora. We should be Lebanese first.” (IP2)

This call for national rather than sectarian identity underscores a yearning for civic renewal, even amid disillusionment. The cumulative effect of these frustrations is a paradox where the diaspora remains emotionally and culturally connected to Lebanon, but their trust in political institutions has eroded to the point of disengagement. As one participant summarized:

“We care, but we don’t believe our caring makes a difference.” (SQ4)

In essence, disillusionment and distrust act as invisible barriers, more powerful than geographical distance. They erode motivation, suppress participation, and transform political engagement into a form of passive observation rather than active involvement.

4.4.4 Psychological and Social Detachment Over Time

Another significant theme that emerged from both the interviews and survey data was the gradual psychological and social detachment experienced by members of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana over time. The data revealed that many participants began their migration journeys with a strong sense of attachment to Lebanon, emotionally, culturally, and politically. However, as their years in Ghana lengthened, this attachment slowly transitioned from active involvement to distant concern. One participant, who had lived in Ghana for four years, expressed this evolution poignantly:

“Perhaps someone might say that, since your siblings are there, you feel some emotional connection to chat with them and all that. I feel like visiting them every once in a while. That’s all. I know about the issues there. The governance system, but it doesn’t really intrigue me to follow. That’s why I left Lebanon and since then I don’t follow at all.” (IP3)

Another participant, who was born in Ghana and had spent over a decade back in the country, described a similar process of selective attachment:

“It has decreased. I used to follow more, but now I only check major news, big things that affect the country. Day-to-day politics doesn’t concern me much anymore.” (IP2)

This pattern of selective engagement reflects a coping mechanism common among diasporic populations. The survey responses mirrored these sentiments. One participant stated:

“At first, I followed the news every day, but now it’s too draining. You feel angry, helpless, so it’s better to focus on your life here.” (SQ3)

Another echoed this emotional fatigue:

“Lebanon feels like home in my heart, but Ghana is where I live, work, and raise my kids. After a while, you just adjust your mind to where you are.” (SQ4)

These narratives suggest that over time, diasporic detachment is not simply an act of forgetting but a form of self-preservation, a psychological adaptation to manage emotional conflict and protect one’s mental stability. Some participants also noted that as they became more embedded in Ghana’s multicultural society, their social circles and daily interactions began to reflect life rather than Lebanese politics. As one respondent put it:

“Ghana has given me a good home. I know the roads better here. I have many Ghanaian friends who love and respect me, and I do the same. Honestly, Ghana has opened its arms.” (IP1)

This comment reveals a profound sense of gratitude and belonging that naturally shifts the centre of social gravity from Lebanon to Ghana. However, this growing sense of belonging abroad does not equate to complete detachment. For many, Lebanon remains a sentimental anchor, a “home of the heart” rather than of daily life. A participant summarized this dual identity aptly:

“I don’t feel conflicted between my integration in Ghana and my loyalty to Lebanon. Ghana is my second home, but Lebanon is my homeland, I carry it in my heart wherever I go.” (IP4)

The findings resonate with the Arab Reform Initiative (2022) report, which observed that members of the Lebanese diaspora often oscillate between “emotional proximity and practical distance.” This psychological balancing act allows them to maintain cultural pride and empathy for Lebanon’s struggles while prioritising stability and belonging in their host countries.

4.5 Findings with respect to RQ4. How do transnational identity and the level of integration into Ghanaian society influence the Lebanese diaspora's attitudes toward political participation in Lebanon?

The last objective of the study was to examine how transnational identity and the level of integration into Ghanaian society influence the Lebanese diaspora's attitudes toward political participation in Lebanon. In Ghana, the Lebanese diaspora's experiences of social inclusion, political stability, and civic freedom provide a unique context for understanding how integration influences their outlook toward Lebanon's fragmented and sectarian political system. Many Lebanese migrants have developed a deep sense of belonging in Ghana, adopting aspects of its democratic ethos while retaining pride in their Lebanese roots. Yet, this dual orientation can also lead to selective or symbolic participation in Lebanon's politics, often shaped by distance, disillusionment, and the realities of life abroad.

Having recognized this, the researcher examined how the interplay between transnational identity and integration into Ghanaian society affects political attitudes and engagement among Lebanese residents in Ghana. The findings are presented in the subsequent sections, organized under four themes: *Dual Belonging and Hybrid Identity*; *Influence of Ghanaian Democratic Experience*; and *Selective Engagement and Practical Detachment*.

4.5.1 Dual Belonging and Hybrid Identity

Analysis of the data revealed that one of the most significant themes emerging from participants' accounts was the experience of dual belonging and hybrid identity. Members of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana often described their lives as balanced between two homes, Lebanon, which represents their cultural and ancestral roots, and Ghana, which has become their space of stability, livelihood, and daily life. This duality shaped how they viewed their political and emotional connection to Lebanon. While many continued to identify strongly with

their Lebanese heritage, they also acknowledged that their long residence in Ghana had made them feel socially and emotionally integrated into Ghanaian society.

One respondent (IP1) expressed this dual identity vividly:

“I’m living in Ghana, I’m almost a Ghanaian after 25 years. But this doesn’t exclude the fact that also I’m Lebanese and I have to follow up with what’s going on in my country. Because no matter how many years you are away, the roots are still there.”

Similarly, another participant (IP2), born and raised in Ghana but with Lebanese heritage, described his sense of divided belonging:

“I feel I’m more connected to my Lebanese roots. However, Ghana feels like home as well. Culturally, I’m Lebanese, but Ghana has become my home.”

Survey data further supported this theme. One respondent (SQ3) noted:

“I was born here and lived all my life in Ghana. I follow what happens in Lebanon, but I also feel very much at home here.”

Another participant (SQ1) reinforced this dual consciousness by stating:

“Lebanon is my homeland, but Ghana gave me peace and stability. I owe both countries my loyalty.”

Such responses reflect a hybrid political consciousness, where participants’ engagement with Lebanese politics is filtered through their lived experiences in Ghana. The exposure to Ghana’s democratic stability, tolerance, and multicultural coexistence appears to have moderated their political expectations of Lebanon, leading many to adopt a more reflective and less partisan stance toward homeland politics.

As one participant explained:

“Ghana gave me a good home... I know the roads better here because I live 10 months of the year in Ghana and only 2 months in Lebanon. Ghana has opened its arms, and I owe it a lot.” (IP1)

In sum, the findings reveal that dual belonging and hybrid identity define the political outlook of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana. They continue to cherish Lebanon as their symbolic homeland while embracing Ghana as their practical and emotional home. Rather than diminishing their Lebanese identity, integration into Ghanaian society has expanded it, producing a layered identity that bridges cultures, loyalties, and political experiences.

4.5.2 Influence of Ghanaian Democratic Experience

Another key theme that emerged from the analysis was the influence of Ghana's democratic experience on how members of the Lebanese diaspora perceive and relate to political participation in Lebanon. Many participants expressed deep admiration for Ghana's relatively stable political environment, peaceful power transitions, and the general respect for democratic norms. This exposure, in turn, has shaped their expectations and attitudes toward Lebanon's political system, often highlighting the contrasts between Ghana's institutional order and Lebanon's entrenched sectarian politics.

One participant (IP1), who has lived in Ghana for over two decades, articulated this clearly:

"I wish we practised that democratic way of giving every big party a chance to rule for successive years. Here in Ghana, the people are peaceful, and they never fight — that's something I admire and wish my country could emulate."

Similarly, another interview participant (IP2) drew a stark comparison between the two systems:

"Politics in Ghana is less chaotic. In Lebanon, politics is like a mafia — full of corruption and control. Ghana has its issues too, but the corruption is not as deep, and at least here, things move forward."

”

This observation reflects a growing political disillusionment with Lebanon that is shaped by comparison rather than detachment. Participants perceive Ghana's governance as more people-centred and accessible, which has led some to develop more critical views of Lebanon's

system. Exposure to Ghana's democratic processes has, in some cases, enhanced participants' political consciousness, not by encouraging activism, but by promoting a reflective, reform-oriented mindset.

Survey data further affirmed this pattern. One respondent (SQ3) commented:

“Living in Ghana has shown me that democracy can work when people respect the process. It made me more aware of what is missing back home.”

Another survey participant (SQ1) echoed this, stating:

“Ghana's political stability makes you appreciate how peace and good governance matter. Lebanon could learn a lot from that.”

These sentiments illustrate how contextual learning shapes diaspora perspectives. The Lebanese in Ghana use their host country's experiences as a mirror to critique Lebanon's governance failures and imagine possible reforms. Interestingly, the influence of Ghana's democratic experience does not necessarily lead to complete detachment from Lebanese politics. Instead, it fosters a constructive critique, a hope that Lebanon might someday mirror Ghana's model of tolerance and democratic resilience. As one respondent noted:

“Living here has taught me to value dialogue and stability. It made me more hopeful that one day Lebanon can achieve the same.” (SQ4)

In essence, the Ghanaian democratic experience serves as both a contrast and a catalyst. For many Lebanese diasporans, witnessing Ghana's political maturity reinforces their longing for reform in Lebanon while nurturing a more pragmatic, globally informed understanding of governance. This dual exposure creates a bridge between idealism and realism — one rooted in the lessons learned from life in a functioning democracy.

4.5.3 Selective Engagement and Practical Detachment

A significant theme that emerged from the data was selective engagement and practical detachment, describing how members of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana consciously choose when and how to engage with Lebanon's political affairs. This selective involvement reflects a pragmatic adaptation to distance, time, and emotional fatigue. Thus, a recognition that while their homeland remains important, constant engagement in its politics can be draining and unproductive. For many participants, detachment does not signify apathy but rather a deliberate effort to maintain psychological balance and focus on life in Ghana.

One long-term resident (IP1) captured this tension clearly:

"I don't like to engage in politics per se, because at the end, I'm living in Ghana — I'm almost Ghanaian after 25 years. But this doesn't exclude the fact that I'm Lebanese and I have to follow up with what's going on in my country. The roots are still there."

This expression highlights a dual sense of belonging shaped by both attachment and restraint. The participant feels a moral pull toward Lebanon yet prioritises stability and practicality in Ghana. Similarly, another interviewee (IP2) explained that his engagement is mainly informational:

"I follow the major headlines related to the fate of the country, yes, but day-to-day politics I don't follow much. I don't think I have much responsibility apart from voting when I can."

For many, Lebanon's political environment is seen as volatile and entrenched, leading them to disengage from formal participation while retaining cultural and emotional ties.

Survey respondents echoed this sentiment. One participant (SQ3) noted:

"I keep updated on what happens in Lebanon, but I prefer not to get too involved. It's stressful, and honestly, Ghana is where my life is now."

Another respondent (SQ4) added:

“We love our country, but being far away makes it hard to do more than follow the news or vote when there’s a chance. We can’t solve Lebanon’s problems from here.”

These perspectives reveal that selective engagement is shaped by both practical constraints and existential choice. Participants recognize their limited influence on Lebanon’s political processes due to distance, lack of institutional access, and perceived inefficacy of the system. Therefore, they opt for occasional or symbolic participation rather than sustained activism.

Furthermore, the data show that practical detachment often coexists with an appreciation of Ghana’s political stability. Several respondents contrasted Lebanon’s chronic instability with Ghana’s democratic progress, reinforcing their preference to remain peripheral in Lebanese political affairs. As one respondent (IP4) explained:

“Living in Ghana has given me a sense of peace. You see how democracy works here, it’s calm, predictable. In Lebanon, it’s chaos. I follow what happens there, but I can’t let it take over my life.”

In essence, this theme illustrates how transnational identity produces measured engagement rather than full withdrawal. Lebanese diasporans in Ghana sustain their connection to Lebanon through selective participation, guided by emotional endurance and lived realities in their host society.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

4.6.1 Motivations for Political Engagement among the Lebanese Diaspora in Ghana

The study found that motivations for political engagement among the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana are complex and layered, combining emotional attachment, symbolic identity, and pragmatic interests. Many participants’ involvement in Lebanese politics was shaped by a deep sense of belonging and moral duty toward their homeland. This supports Transnationalism Theory (Vertovec, 1999; Schiller et al., 1992), which explains how migrants sustain multiple

ties across borders, engaging with both their home and host societies simultaneously. For most respondents, political participation in Lebanon was less about direct influence and more about maintaining emotional and cultural connection, an expression of loyalty and collective identity rather than practical political ambition.

Emotional attachment to Lebanon emerged as the strongest motivational driver. Participants frequently expressed a moral responsibility to support their homeland amid crises, echoing Becker (2021) and Armouch et al. (2022), who found that Lebanese diasporas often participate symbolically through protest and digital solidarity. This aligns with Omar's (2025) findings that emotional connection and national pride are stronger motivators than material capacity or proximity. Thus, engagement for many participants represented "affective citizenship," a form of moral participation through which diasporans reaffirm identity and belonging.

Generational variation was also evident. Older Lebanese respondents viewed political engagement as part of familial duty and cultural preservation, shaped by memories of Lebanon's instability. Younger participants, meanwhile, expressed engagement through online activism and advocacy rather than formal participation. This reflects Brinkerhoff's (2009) concept of "digital diasporas," where younger generations use virtual spaces to express solidarity and negotiate identity.

Perceived efficacy also played a motivational role. Many respondents engaged in discussions, donations, or awareness campaigns not because they expected immediate results, but because they believed these acts symbolically contributed to reform. This aligns with Levitt and Glick Schiller's (2004) idea of "political remittances," where diasporas export values and ideas rather than tangible resources. A smaller number cited pragmatic reasons — protecting property rights or maintaining citizenship, consistent with Portes et al.'s (1999) "pragmatic transnationalism."

From a Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) perspective, this engagement reflects the need for collective affirmation. Political participation allows the Lebanese in Ghana to maintain a positive group identity and shared sense of belonging within the global Lebanese community. However, unlike some previous studies, this research found that strong integration into Ghanaian society could moderate engagement. Highly integrated participants expressed disillusionment with Lebanon's political system and questioned the efficacy of diaspora involvement. This selective detachment highlights that transnational engagement, is neither uniform nor constant; it fluctuates with trust, perceived legitimacy, and emotional connection to the homeland.

4.6.2 Forms and Nature of Political Engagement among the Lebanese Diaspora in Ghana

The findings indicate that political engagement among the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana is largely informal and symbolic, occurring mainly through digital media, social networks, and community initiatives rather than formal institutions. Participants reported following Lebanese politics closely yet faced limited opportunities for direct involvement, such as voting or party membership. This pattern aligns with Becker (2021) and Armouch et al. (2022), who describe similar "digital diaspora activism," where online and symbolic participation substitute for physical engagement.

Two principal forms of engagement emerged, symbolic solidarity (expressions of national pride, online advocacy, and cultural representation) and practical involvement (donations, diaspora fundraising, and issue-based campaigns). This duality reflects Portes et al. (1999) and Vertovec (2009)'s distinction between broad and narrow transnationalism: the former being occasional and emotional, the latter more structured. Among Lebanese in Ghana, engagement remains primarily broad, shaped by logistical and institutional constraints.

Generational differences were also evident. Older migrants engaged through family networks and traditional associations, while younger generations adopted digital forms of activism. This supports Brinkerhoff (2009) and Aitken (2024), who argue that technology enables youth to re-imagine citizenship as borderless participation. Yet, formal political action is hindered by Lebanon's restrictive expatriate voting system and bureaucratic inefficiencies (ICMPD 2021; Casanovas & Kerras 2020). Consequently, many resort to indirect participation such as online discourse or remittance support. A notable shift toward issue-based rather than sectarian engagement was observed. Participants prioritised anti-corruption, governance reform, and humanitarian causes over party loyalty, diverging from Skulte-Ouaiss and Tabar (2015) who found sectarian alignments dominant in earlier diasporic politics. This evolution likely reflects exposure to Ghana's pluralistic political culture, echoing Levitt & de la Dehesa (2003) and Erdal & Oeppen (2013), who show that democratic host contexts encourage reform-oriented diaspora behaviour.

Theoretically, these trends affirm Transnationalism Theory (Vertovec 1999; Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004), demonstrating that Lebanese in Ghana inhabit overlapping social fields linking homeland and host society. Integration does not diminish engagement but transforms it into flexible, digitally mediated forms. Through the lens of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979), participation reinforces collective belonging and "positive distinctiveness" within the global Lebanese community.

Nonetheless, unlike diasporas with structured lobbying networks (Adamson 2016), Lebanese engagement in Ghana remains fragmented and largely individualistic, constrained by mistrust and limited institutional capacity (Omar 2025; Mirilovic 2018). Overall, the findings depict a hybrid, emotionally driven, and technologically sustained pattern of transnational political participation that both affirms identity and reveals the structural fragility of diaspora influence.

4.6.3 Barriers to Political Participation

The findings revealed multiple barriers that limit the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana's effective political engagement with Lebanon. These include institutional inefficiencies, technological and logistical constraints, political disillusionment, and psychological disengagement. Participants consistently cited the absence of transparent and accessible mechanisms for external voting, confirming Casanovas and Kerras (2020) and ICMPD (2021), who found that Lebanon's expatriate voting procedures are fragmented and bureaucratically cumbersome. Many respondents expressed frustration with delays, lack of credible information, and a perception that diaspora votes have minimal impact on political outcomes.

Technological and communication barriers further constrain participation. While digital tools such as WhatsApp and social media enhance connectivity, uneven internet access, misinformation, and fragmented online spaces often create exclusion rather than inclusion. This reflects Waty (2024) and Cohen et al. (2024), who argue that digital disparities undermine coordination and trust in online political activism. These challenges make transnational engagement inconsistent, reinforcing the dominance of symbolic rather than institutional participation. The study also found strong evidence of psychological and behavioural barriers. Fear of manipulation, apathy toward Lebanon's political elite, and a sense of powerlessness were common sentiments. Respondents described the homeland's politics as "corrupt" and "sectarian," leading to a form of selective disengagement. This supports Jiang and Chen (2024) and Omar (2025), who note that cynicism and institutional mistrust are major deterrents to diaspora political action.

From the perspective of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), such disengagement reflects identity dissonance, where individuals distance themselves from a group perceived as failing to uphold shared values, thereby protecting their self-concept. Cultural and generational

divides also exacerbate disengagement. First-generation migrants, still emotionally tied to Lebanon, expressed disappointment rather than withdrawal, while younger generations—more integrated into Ghanaian society, showed limited identification with homeland politics. This intergenerational divergence illustrates Erdal and Oeppen's (2013) argument that integration may not weaken transnationalism but can redirect identity and civic loyalty toward the host context.

Finally, the lack of cohesive diaspora institutions in Ghana emerged as a major barrier. Unlike larger Lebanese communities elsewhere that sustain active lobbying networks (Adamson, 2016; Délano Alonso & Mylonas, 2019), the Ghanaian Lebanese community relies on informal family or business circles, limiting collective mobilisation. Overall, the barriers identified underscore the complex interplay between trust, access, and identity. While emotional and symbolic connections remain strong, the absence of institutional pathways and sustained organisational frameworks constrains the diaspora's political influence, confirming Faist's (2010) view that both opportunity structures and cultural factors shape the limits of transnational participation.

4.6.4 Influence of Transnational Identity and Integration on Political Attitudes

The findings of the study indicate that the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana experience a nuanced negotiation between their transnational identity and their integration within Ghanaian society, both of which profoundly influence their political attitudes toward Lebanon. Participants demonstrated a strong emotional attachment to Lebanon, sustained through language, culture, and family ties, yet this was balanced by deep social and economic integration into Ghanaian life. This dual belonging reflects Vertovec's (1999) concept of transnationalism, where migrants maintain meaningful connections across borders, and Schiller et al.'s (1992) idea of

“transmigrants,” individuals who construct and maintain multiple social fields linking their societies of origin and settlement.

Consistent with Transnationalism Theory (Tedeschi et al., 2020; Vertovec, 2009), the findings show that participants’ political attitudes are neither entirely shaped by homeland concerns nor detached from host-country influences. Instead, they occupy a hybrid position — emotionally connected to Lebanon but socially grounded in Ghana. This hybridity manifests as dual consciousness, where respondents admire Ghana’s democratic system, tolerance, and stability, while simultaneously expressing frustration toward Lebanon’s sectarianism and governance failures. As one participant reflected, living in Ghana exposed them to values such as peaceful political transitions and civic participation, prompting reflection on Lebanon’s political stagnation. This observation reinforces Smith and Guarnizo’s (1998) and Østergaard-Nielsen’s (2003) assertions that exposure to alternative political cultures can reshape diasporic perceptions and expectations toward homeland politics.

However, this integration also fosters selective engagement, as long-term residence and a sense of belonging in Ghana reduce the immediacy of participation in Lebanon’s political processes. This echoes Al-Ali and Koser’s (2002) and Itzigsohn et al.’s (1999) distinctions between “broad” and “narrow” transnationalism,” where sustained emotional connections coexist with declining practical engagement due to distance and adaptation to host-country realities. Participants’ experiences suggest that integration can simultaneously strengthen transnational awareness while weakening direct political action, a duality characteristic of diasporic life.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings align with Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which posits that individuals continuously balance multiple identities depending on context. The Lebanese diaspora in Ghana demonstrates this dynamic fluidity, identifying as Lebanese through cultural expression and memory while embracing a Ghanaian civic identity

in everyday life. This dual identity fosters empathy for Lebanon's struggles but channels political engagement into symbolic or reformist attitudes rather than direct activism. In all, the findings reveal that transnational identity and integration interact to create a complex political outlook among the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana, one rooted in emotional loyalty, shaped by comparative learning, and moderated by lived experiences in the host society.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and analysed findings from interviews, surveys, and document reviews on the political engagement of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana. The results showed that motivations stem from emotional attachment, family responsibility, and civic identity. Engagement is largely symbolic, limited by distance, weak institutional support, and disillusionment with Lebanon's politics. However, integration into Ghana fosters new political perspectives shaped by exposure to democracy and stability.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents a summary of key findings, conclusions, and recommendations drawn from the study on the political participation of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana. The research examined the motivations driving their political engagement with Lebanon, the trends in their participation, barriers inhibiting involvement, and how transnational identity and integration in Ghana shape their political attitudes. Data were collected through qualitative interviews, surveys, and document analysis, and findings were interpreted in relation to theories of transnationalism, diaspora politics, and identity construction.

5.2 Summary of findings

This study aimed to explore the political participation of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana and to understand how identity, integration, and contextual experiences influence their connection with Lebanon's political processes. As a result, the specific objectives were to:

1. Identify the motivations driving political participation among the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana.
2. Analyse trends in the Lebanese diaspora's political engagement with Lebanon.
3. Examine barriers to political participation.
4. Assess how transnational identity and integration in Ghana influence attitudes toward political participation in Lebanon.

The major findings of the study are thus presented in relation to the four main research objectives. With reference to objective 1, which is to identify the motivations driving political participation among the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana, the study found that the Lebanese diaspora's political engagement is primarily shaped by emotional attachment, family heritage, and a deep sense of moral responsibility toward their homeland. Participants often described their motivation to follow political developments in Lebanon as an obligation rooted in identity and belonging rather than in formal citizenship duties. Many expressed that Lebanon represents more than a place of origin—it embodies cultural continuity, memory, and kinship. This emotional and generational connection drives interest in Lebanese politics, even among those long settled in Ghana. Economic and cultural factors also contribute, as some participants noted that political awareness is a way of safeguarding their family's legacy and supporting relatives in Lebanon during crises. These findings echo Adamson's (2016) and Armouch et al.'s (2022) argument that diasporic engagement often blends material interest with emotional and symbolic affiliation.

With objective 2, the findings showed that political engagement among the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana is largely informational and symbolic, rather than institutional or participatory. Most respondents described their involvement as following news updates, engaging in online discussions, or showing solidarity during national events such as elections or uprisings. A few participants had voted in Lebanese elections when opportunities were made available through embassy arrangements, but such participation remained rare. This reflects Délano and Mylonas's (2019) view that diaspora political engagement often varies across communities and depends heavily on the political opportunity structures provided by home and host states. Social media and digital platforms emerged as critical tools for maintaining transnational awareness, enabling diasporans to stay politically connected despite geographic separation.

In terms of objective 3, it was observed that several significant barriers affect diaspora political engagement. First, geographical and logistical constraints, such as the absence of consistent overseas voting mechanisms and the high cost of travel, limited participation. Secondly, *institutional barriers* stemmed from inadequate government outreach and weak diaspora policies in Lebanon, consistent with ICMPD's (2021) finding that Lebanon's engagement strategies remain largely symbolic and fragmented. Thirdly, many participants expressed disillusionment and distrust toward the Lebanese political system, citing corruption, sectarian divisions, and lack of transparency as reasons for disengagement. Finally, psychological and social detachment developed over time, especially among younger generations who felt politically disconnected from Lebanon. These findings affirm Mirilovic's (2018) argument that diaspora political influence is strongest in democracies with inclusive structures, conditions that Lebanon's unstable system fails to provide.

Finally on objective 4, the study found that participants' integration into Ghanaian society significantly shaped their political perceptions and attitudes toward Lebanon. Many respondents have developed *dual belonging*, feeling emotionally Lebanese but socially Ghanaian. This hybrid identity fosters cultural retention while promoting political detachment from Lebanon's instability. The experience of living in a relatively stable democracy like Ghana has also led participants to value transparency, peaceful transitions, and civic engagement, traits they wish to see replicated in Lebanon. This aligns with Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which posits that individuals derive part of their self-concept from group affiliations. Here, Lebanese diasporans negotiate between two national identities, adopting aspects of both to sustain a coherent self-understanding.

5.4 Overall value of the research

This study contributes significantly to both theoretical and empirical understandings of transnational political engagement among diasporic communities, with particular reference to the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana. The research bridges important gaps in existing literature on Middle Eastern migration and African-based diasporas. Unlike many diaspora studies that focus on Lebanese communities in Western contexts, this study situates its analysis within West Africa, an underexplored geographic and socio-political space in transnationalism studies. The study advances theoretical discourse by applying Transnationalism Theory and Social Identity Theory (SIT) to demonstrate how diasporic belonging operates as both an emotional and political construct. It reveals that Lebanese in Ghana sustain a hybrid identity that negotiates between integration into Ghanaian society and enduring symbolic ties to Lebanon. This dual consciousness provides a nuanced understanding of “selective engagement,” where emotional and moral affiliations persist even as pragmatic detachment from homeland politics grows.

Empirically, the findings offer valuable insights for policymakers and diaspora institutions by highlighting the complex motivations, barriers, and opportunities that influence diaspora political participation. For Lebanon, it underscores the need to reform diaspora voting mechanisms and strengthen trust in governance. For Ghana, the study enhances understanding of how immigrant integration can coexist with enduring transnational attachments, contributing to multicultural cohesion. In all, the study enriches comparative diaspora studies and opens new pathways for policy dialogue on migration, identity, and political transnationalism.

5.5 Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study concludes that the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana maintains strong emotional and symbolic connections with Lebanon, though active political participation remains limited. Their engagement is shaped more by identity, memory, and family ties than by institutional structures. The lack of consistent diaspora policies and political inclusivity in Lebanon further alienates expatriates. Moreover, integration into Ghanaian society has fostered a more reflective and reform-oriented political consciousness. Exposure to Ghana's peaceful democracy encourages comparisons that heighten frustration with Lebanon's sectarian politics but also nurture hope for reform. The study thus affirms that transnational identity is fluid; Lebanese diasporans in Ghana are both participants and observers, connected emotionally to their homeland but socially rooted in Ghana.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations are made to enhance the Lebanese government's diaspora engagement strategy and deepen the political participation of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana. These recommendations also address how identity, integration, and institutional factors can be harnessed to foster a more inclusive and mutually beneficial relationship between Lebanon and its diaspora communities.

Firstly, the Lebanese government should establish a structured and transparent diaspora engagement policy that facilitates consistent communication, participation, and representation of Lebanese abroad. This framework should institutionalise diaspora voting mechanisms, strengthen embassy-led outreach, and create platforms for civic consultation, ensuring that expatriates have a meaningful voice in Lebanon's political process.

To address institutional and logistical barriers, the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs should invest in the digitalisation of political participation systems. This includes secure online voting platforms, digital political forums, and registration systems that allow diasporans to participate in elections and policy discussions without geographic limitations. These initiatives would align Lebanon with international best practices and reduce feelings of exclusion among its global citizens.

Considering the influence of transnational identity and integration, both the Lebanese and Ghanaian governments can promote cultural diplomacy and cross-national exchange programmes that celebrate shared values and foster a dual sense of belonging. Strengthening Lebanese cultural centres, language schools, and heritage initiatives in Ghana would help preserve identity while promoting inclusive citizenship and intercultural dialogue.

Diaspora-led initiatives should be empowered to act as mediators of reform and development. Lebanese communities abroad possess significant financial, intellectual, and social capital. Encouraging their participation in consultative councils, policy advisory boards, or parliamentary diaspora representation could bridge the gap between the homeland and its citizens abroad.

5.7 Recommendations for Further Research

While this study has provided meaningful insights into the motivations, barriers, and identity influences shaping the Lebanese diaspora's political engagement in Ghana, it also opens up several promising directions for future scholarly inquiry. Given the complexity of diaspora politics and the evolving nature of transnational identity, further research is needed to broaden, and contextualise these findings across time, geography, and generations.

Firstly, future studies could adopt a comparative cross-national approach by examining Lebanese diaspora communities in other African countries, such as Nigeria, Senegal, or Côte d'Ivoire, or in regions with more established Lebanese settlements, like Latin America and Europe. This would enable researchers to determine whether the trends observed in Ghana are consistent across other diaspora contexts or uniquely shaped by Ghana's sociopolitical environment.

Secondly, there is a need for longitudinal studies to explore how diaspora political engagement evolves across generations. The current research revealed generational differences, with older members maintaining stronger emotional and familial ties to Lebanon, while younger members exhibited symbolic or detached engagement. Future studies could track these changes over time, analysing how migration history, integration, and exposure to host-country democratic practices shape evolving political identities and behaviour among second- and third-generation Lebanese abroad.

Further research could employ quantitative and mixed-method designs to complement the largely qualitative approach of this study. Surveys with larger, statistically representative samples of the Lebanese diaspora could help quantify levels of political participation, trust in Lebanese institutions, and the influence of dual citizenship or remittance patterns on political engagement. Combining qualitative interviews with statistical modelling would provide a more robust, evidence-based understanding of diaspora political behaviour.

Lastly, future studies could focus on policy and institutional perspectives, assessing how Lebanon's state institutions, embassies, and political parties engage with the diaspora. Examining government strategies, diaspora policies, and institutional barriers would provide insights into the systemic challenges that limit participation and identify pathways for more inclusive policy design.

5.8 Limitations of the Study

Just like all dissertations, this study has limitations. The study is limited by its small sample size and focus on a single host country, which may restrict the generalisability of findings. Time constraints and participants' sensitivity about political topics also limited depth in certain interviews. Despite these limitations, the study provides in-depth responses to the research question, hence filling significant gaps in the literature. So, in all, this study, regardless of its limitations, provides incremental knowledge to the literature on diaspora political engagement and transnationalism.

5.9 Final Remarks

This study set out to explore how members of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana construct and negotiate their political, cultural, and emotional connections with Lebanon. The findings reveal a multifaceted and dynamic relationship shaped by identity, belonging, and pragmatic realities of integration. While emotional loyalty and moral duty continue to motivate engagement with Lebanon, growing integration into Ghanaian society and disillusionment with Lebanese politics have led to selective forms of participation. The study demonstrates that diaspora engagement is not a static phenomenon but a fluid continuum influenced by context, generation, and perceived efficacy. The Lebanese in Ghana exemplify how transnational identities are maintained through memory, culture, and symbolic solidarity rather than continuous political activism. In essence, the study highlights the transformative power of diaspora communities as bridges between societies. It affirms that political participation abroad extends beyond voting; it encompasses the emotional, cultural, and moral practices through which diasporic citizens assert belonging and influence narratives of national identity. The study therefore offers both academic and practical value, contributing to broader debates on diaspora politics, integration, and the evolving nature of citizenship in a globalised world.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW AND SURVEY GUIDE

Hello, and thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. My name is Samuel Nyigmabo, and I am a Master's student at the University of Media Arts and Communication – Institute of Journalism. I am conducting a study on the political participation of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana, with a particular focus on how identity, motivations, and integration shape engagement with Lebanon's political processes. Your views are very valuable to this research.

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Can you tell me about yourself, your age range, occupation, and how long you've lived in Ghana?
2. What is your country of birth? Are you a Lebanese citizen or a dual citizen?
3. How often do you visit Lebanon, if at all?

Section 2: Motivations for Political Participation (Objective 1)

4. To what extent do you follow political events in Lebanon?
5. What motivates you to participate in Lebanese politics from Ghana?
6. What specific issues in Lebanon (e.g., corruption, economic collapse, elections) motivate you to engage politically?
7. In what ways do you feel a sense of moral or emotional responsibility to stay engaged in Lebanon's political life?
8. In what ways does your family or community in Ghana influence your level of political interest in Lebanon?

Section 3: Trends in Political Engagement (Objective 2)

10. How would you describe your involvement in Lebanese politics, passive (e.g., following news) or active (e.g., voting, donations)?

11. Has your level of political engagement increased, decreased, or stayed the same since you moved to Ghana?
12. How do you stay informed about political events in Lebanon (TV, social media, friends, etc.)?
13. How do you participate in political events, campaigns, or fundraising activities related to Lebanon here in Ghana?
14. In what ways are you maintaining political links in Lebanon? (Hint may be being part of political networks, groups, or religious institutions)

Section 4: Barriers to Participation (Objective 3)

15. What challenges have you faced in trying to participate in political processes in Lebanon from Ghana?
16. What barriers prevent you from voting or getting involved?
17. In what way does the Lebanese government support or hinder diaspora political involvement?
18. Have you ever attempted to engage politically and felt excluded or ignored?

Section 5: Transnational Identity & Integration (Objective 4)

20. How connected do you feel to Lebanon while living in Ghana?
21. How do you feel? more Lebanese, more Ghanaian, or both?
22. How/ in what ways do you maintain cultural or emotional ties with Lebanon (e.g., speak the language, food, religion, observe holidays)?
23. In what ways does your life in Ghana affect your views about Lebanon and its politics?
24. How conflicted are you in your integration in Ghana and your loyalty to Lebanon?

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Document Analysis Themes

Each document will be reviewed for relevance to the research objectives and coded accordingly using thematic analysis procedures.

Theme	Key Questions
Diaspora Engagement Policies	What formal mechanisms exist for diaspora participation (e.g., voting rights, dual citizenship)? Are Lebanese in Ghana included?
Representation and Narratives	How is the Lebanese diaspora represented in official discourse or media? Are they seen as stakeholders or outsiders?
Barriers and Challenges	What institutional or structural barriers are mentioned? Are these specific to regions like Africa or Ghana?
Identity & Belonging	What messages about Lebanese identity are promoted to the diaspora? How do these messages relate to transnational political participation?