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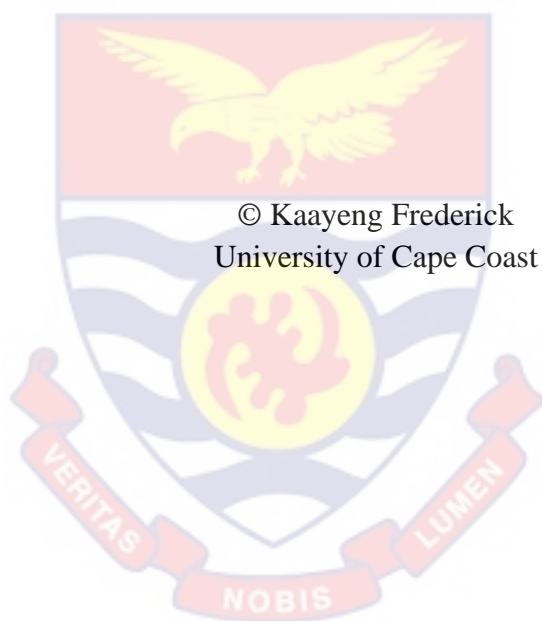
MOBILE MEDIA AND CITIZEN JOURNALISM IN SOCIAL ACTIVISM:

A CASE OF #FIXTHECOUNTRY MOVEMENT



KAAYENG FREDERICK

2024



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MOBILE MEDIA AND CITIZEN JOURNALISM IN SOCIAL ACTIVISM:
A CASE OF #FIXTHECOUNTRY MOVEMENT

BY

KAAYENG FREDERICK

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Communication Studies of The
Faculty of Arts, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy in Communication
Studies

APRIL, 2024

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I Hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:..... Date:.....

Name: KAAYENG FREDERICK

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature..... Date:.....

Name: DR. JACOB NYARKO

ABSTRACT

The proliferation of smartphones among citizens in Ghana has accelerated their contribution to user-generated media content on social media to political discourse and activism in Ghana. The attention of researchers on citizens-led political activism on social media platforms against economic quagmire and political failures has not been impressive. The present study explored the communication styles and challenges used by citizen journalists in #Fix-the-Country Movement on social media in Ghana. The study adopted qualitative research approach and case study design. Using purposive sampling and snowballing, the researcher selected five convenors and ten citizen journalists for interviews and ten selected online posts from the official Facebook handle of #FixTheCountry movement. Guided by social movement theories, the researcher analyzed the data and discovered that citizen journalists utilized hostile communication style largely to communicate their grievances through the social media platform. The communication styles were effective, and this was informed by the platform or channel of delivering the information. Also, the study revealed that convenors and citizen journalists faced challenges such as threats from political authorities, financial constraints, verbal attacks and politicization of the movement. The underlying factors that preempted the movement are social, economic, health, governance and educational issues in the country, Ghana. The researcher recommends comparative study of social activism onsite and online.

KEYWORDS

Social media, Activism, Communication, #FixTheCountry, Citizens

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Last but not the least, I extend my heartfelt indebtedness to my interviewees for their understanding and cooperation during the process. This work would not have been without their support.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Madam Sapapoka Nagroug, whose love and sacrifices have been my guiding light. It is also dedicated to the blessed memory of my late father, Mr. kaayeng Saklob, for his legacy that continues to inspire and motivate me. To my beloved wife and children, for their patience, understanding and continuous support that have been my driving force.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CJ	Citizen Journalism
SNSs	Social Networking Sites
FB	Facebook
NCA	National Communication Authority
NMC	National Media Commission
SMIT	Social Movement Impact Theory
CHRAJ	Commission for Human Rights Administrative Justice
CNN	Cable News Network
MSNBC	Microsoft NBC
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
CDD	Centre for Democratic Development
NPP	New Patriotic Party
IMC	Innovative Management Concept Mojo Mobile Journalism
CMC	Computer-Mediated Communication
SMOs	Social Movement Organisations
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
IRB	Institutional Review Board
NDC	National Democratic Congress

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The advent of technology has brought several innovations in journalism and its practice (Siapera, 2018). In the media, there is a mutual relationship between technology and media. As opined by Dominick (2005), there is a symbiotic relationship between media and technology. While media promotes technological diffusion, technology enhances the convergence of media. As opined by Siapera (2018), different names bring to fore different attributes, and by prioritizing different elements, they focus attention on some aspects and overlook others. Therefore, describing the new innovation in media practice that is unique from these two mainstream media thus print and broadcast becomes a difficult task.

According to Siapera (2018), the terms digital media, online media and social media are used as alternative names for new media. Digital media key feature is encoding in numbers; online media is characterized by connectivity while social media key attributes is interactivity through internet-based applications. In each alternative term for new media, there is a tendency of limiting the scope and attributes of the emerging, if not emerged, paradigm of media (Manovich, 2001). The term new media therefore attempted to the greatest extent in describing the emerging media paradigm. One aspect of new media that is driving the mediation in a novel way is mobile media. Mobile media is the use smartphones which combines the attributes of computer, internet, telephony and camera to form a novel way of communicating information. Mobile media as the term connotes refers to the use of mobile

phones for mediation of content. Mobile media has the characteristics of new media such as interactivity, connectivity, sociality and portability. The convergence of media that is made possible through mobile technology has greatly impacted media practice and in a way altered content generation and mediation. People can enjoy rich mainstream content via their mobile phones. All the traditional mainstream media platforms in Ghana have internet links and social media platforms that are accessible to a mass audience via mobile phones. *MyJoy online, Graphic online, Ghanaweb, Adom Online, Citi FM online* among others have online platforms that are accessible to audiences via mobile phones. What is not widely noticed is the fact that mobile media is gradually becoming a medium through which newsworthy contents are generated, circulated and accessed by audience. This has increased the practice of citizen journalism.

The definition of citizen journalism is as diverse as the names by which it is known which include guerrilla, networked, participatory, and street or open-source journalism. Bowman and Willis (2003) describe citizen journalism as “the act of citizens or groups of citizens who actively participate in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information.” By this, citizens focus on current research and on equal amount of information resources available to journalists in particular and other professionals through social media and internet (Allan, 2013). As a result, these technological innovations are redefining the essential operations of journalism. Indeed, anyone who owns a smartphone, computer or tablet, with access to the Internet and social networking platforms can post their opinions, information and news online, hence performing some journalistic functions. In other words, media information production process or publishing, which was considered costly,

laborious, and time-consuming decades ago, is now available to the public, because anyone with hand-held computerised devices and has a good internet connection can go live on Facebook (FB), Twitter, Instagram among others in seconds (Hassan, 2022).

In this regard, the participation of the masses with independent social networking sites (SNSs) such as YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, FB and Yahoo Messengers among others is undisputed. Many studies such as Association for Media Research (AIMC) (2020), highlight the high level of public exposure to SNSs, especially during times of crisis like COVID-19 or the Arab Spring. Consequently, these users are increasingly doing what professional journalists and media professionals generally used to do and are expected to do. In other words, users participate in discourse which is now commonly known as citizen journalism (CJ) (Hassan, 2022).

Generally, activism is defined as the action or policy of applying vivacious campaigning to bring about social, environmental and political change (Cooper, 2021). Additionally, activism is the application of direct action to accomplish an outcome, either against or for an issue (Ousey & Kubrin, 2019). Furthermore, activism is engaging in an action that goes beyond traditional or conventional routine on behalf of a cause. O'Brien, Selboe and Hayward (2018) also defined activism as engaging in a set of activities to stop a change or make a change in society. These definitions indicate that activism involves engaging in a set of activities or actions that are directed toward attaining a certain change or maintaining it.

Activism can be broadly categorised into action and advocacy, although some argue that advocacy in itself is action (O'Brien et al., 2018). Furthermore,

Cooper (2021) maintains that activism can be grouped into traditional and modern activations. The traditional form of activism refers to the use of physical activity to achieve an expected change or attain a set of outcomes, whilst modern forms of activism refer to the use of the online medium to promote a certain action. That is, traditional activism does not apply to technologically related tools like the internet and social media, whilst modern activism makes use of these tools to reach a larger group of people. The literature, thus, delves into traditional and modern (online) activism.

In this respect, the lynching of Major Maxwell in his line of duty caught public attention because of the use of social media to circulate the information. Likewise, the murder of African-American, George Perry Floyd Jr. which shocked the world and influenced American public opinion could not have reached millions of audiences around the world, if it had passed through the mainstream media. Darnella Frazier won the hearts of the international community because she recorded the incident on her phone and posted it on social media. The video was also used as evidence in the trial involving US police officers. In short, without the participation of this citizen journalist, the incident might have gone unnoticed (Hassan, 2022).

CJ studies have not received sufficient attention from media scholars compared to other studies investigating the mainstream media. Although, there are some studies looking at different aspects of CJ (Goyanes, 2020; Salaudeen, 2021), there is a gap in the literature on the different uses that contents created by citizen journalists are used for. It is noteworthy that some studies have also evaluated similar contexts focusing on issues related to conflicts in society (Durante & Zhuravskaya, 2018; Hoxha & Hanitzsch, 2018; Zahoor & Sadiq,

2021), many aspects such as demonstrations and protests among others have not received much attention. To fill this gap, this study seeks to establish how citizen journalists use mobile media to engage in online social activism.

Mobile media and civic actions

In many cases, mass media scholars might have found appropriate theoretical frameworks and methods to analyse online user behavior and change attitudes towards these journalistic activities (Borah, 2017, 2011; Neuman & Guggenheim, 2011). Siapera (2018) observed that the use of mobile phones for organising and coordinating political activities is notorious. While the cited examples of smart mobs have been based on the agitation of mobile users against injustice such as the Philippines online campaign against Joseph Estrada, and the Seattle World Trade Organisation protest in 1999, #EndSARS (2022) in Nigeria, there is still little attention on how mob groups' activities are guided and controlled by mobile media. The experience in Ghana during the campaign against party militia, illegal mining and the recent fix the country movement appears to show that social media is not a neutral platform, but equally an activist platform for charting worthy course. Moreover, the availability and use of mobile media are making the number of users of social media more than before.

The advent of mobile media has added a medium to mainstream media, but this time it is highly controlled by the audience. Rantanen (2005) found that new media has become the message and that through it; audiences are able to counter mainstream media and inform the public with immediate information. Goddard (2015) also discovered that mobile media is transforming the way information flows. The top-down media communication between media

organisation and audience is gradually competing with the bottom-up media communication through mobile media. In Ghana, the #FixTheCountry movement hits the country at a time when social media had become the popular means of communication due to global restrictions on the Covid-19 pandemic. Many people seem to have joined the movement using their phones and other wireless devices to access the social media and to register their concerns over certain developments in the country.

According to Siapera (2018), the terms *digital media*, *online media* and *social media* are used interchangeably for new media. The key feature of *Digital media* is encoding in numbers; *online media* is characterised by connectivity; while *social media* holds the attribute of interactivity through internet-based applications. In each alternative term for new media, there is a tendency of limiting the scope and attributes of the emerging, if not emerged, paradigm of media (Manovich, 2001). To the greatest extent, the term *new media* therefore attempts to describe the emerging media paradigm. One aspect of new media that is driving the mediation in a novel way is mobile media. Mobile media is the use of smartphones which combines the attributes of computer, internet, telephony and camera to form a novel way of communicating information. Mobile media, as the term connotes, refers to the use of mobile phones for mediation of content. Mobile media has the characteristics of new media such as interactivity, connectivity, sociality and portability (Siapera, 2010).

The phenomenon of citizen journalism is constantly evolving due to the nature of newly created content. Therefore, a thorough understanding of this phenomenon requires the correct selection of the approach to relate to it. In the context of citizen journalism, it takes a personal contribution or a creative effort

to consider the activities involved in it. On the basis that traditional media content is produced and broadcasted by media organisations that have different regulations and editorial policies, in citizen journalism, the content generated can be personal or unorganised (Radsch, 2016; Vickery & Wunsch-Vincent, 2007). Most amateurs independently produce, edit, and broadcast such content without contracting with professional media organisations.

Citizen journalism is based on an assumption or principle that media content presented to the public does not depend on official sources or organisations, but is produced and reproduced individually, then distributed to the public through a non-linear process. As a result, citizen journalism offers people more voices and alternatives than other news organisations and media can provide. In this case, it is a dynamic process in which online users can communicate their messages and interpret different types of content without encountering bureaucratic, regulatory, and policy barriers, editorial and other requirements by professional journalistic work. It is important to point out that there is a significant difference between citizen journalism and traditional journalism in terms of professionalism. Many users produce and publish citizen journalism content unprofessionally and are called amateurs; while for traditional media, one of the conditions is that journalists must be professional or at least have prior professional journalism experience (Allen & Thorsen, 2009; Singer et al., 2011). This distinction gives professional journalists many advantages over amateur journalists in terms of influence, objectivity, and the ability to mobilise public opinion at home and abroad.

Citizen journalism is a rapidly evolving form of journalism in which members of the public take the lead in reporting the news and voicing their opinions about

events within their communities. It is news from the people, by the people, and for the people. Citizen journalists are independent freelance citizen reporters. They are not constrained by traditional journalism processes and methods and typically work without editorial oversight. Citizen journalists collect, process, research, report, analyse, and publish news and information, most often using a variety of Internet-enabled technologies (Ross & Cormier, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Mainstream news media: newspapers, magazines, radio and television were the primary channels for the dissemination of information and large-scale messages, with trained professional journalists acting solely as disseminators of news and information (Dominick, 2007). However, this exclusivity between mainstream media and professional journalists came to an end with the advent of new media technologies (Bruns et al., 2012). News and information that were previously made available to the public through expert scrutiny and careful gatekeeping are now being provided to the public in seconds due to the spread of the internet (Jurrat, 2011). Thus, citizens, armed with Internet-enabled devices, who were primarily media consumers, have become active media content creators (Bowman & Willis, 2003). These journalism endeavors by the general public are called 'citizen journalism' and the platforms that disseminate this content are called *digital*, *online* or *new media* (Bowman & Willis, 2003; Dare, 2011).

The advent of *digital media* has brought an influx of user-generated content that appears to rival mainstream media content (Jack, 2010) in terms of speed of delivery, ease of access, and ubiquitous use (Siapera, 2008). Also, the bottom-up interactive nature of *online media* seems to challenge the top-down

hegemonic structures of traditional media (Kramp, 2015). The differences in the nature, structure, and practices of digital and mainstream media have generated many concerns among different segments of the population. While media professionals are debating the ethics and professionalism of these media platforms (Keen, 2007), media consumers' concerns about the authenticity of information are not limited to broadcasting out daily from these media platforms (Banda, 2010). The emergence and rise of social media have posed great challenges to traditional media, thus starting to face fierce competition, thereby making the emerging new media have stronger feedback models than traditional media sources (Jefferson, 2008; Yan, 2020). Amid these developments where gatekeeping hindrances of the traditional media may stifle free expression of public concerns widely; it is a rising phenomenon where individual persons in society capitalise on the speed and reach of the internet across national and global boundaries through miniaturised computer devices to mobilise people towards a cause. In Ghana, for instance, purported socio-political and economic lapses among others seem to have triggered the application of new media tools to mobilise and organise the public, particularly the youth on a massive scale to stage protests against leadership of the country tagged #FixTheCountry movement. Even though studies (Schwartz et al., 2012; Martin, 2014; Goddard, 2015) have explored citizen journalism and activism in other contexts, there is limited knowledge on the communication styles, strategies and challenges deployed and faced respectively by citizen journalists. Goddard (2015) also discovered media as transforming the way information flow. The top-down media communication between media organization and audience is gradually competing with the bottom-up media communication through mobile media

(Schwartz et al., 2012; Martin, 2014). In Ghana, the fix the country movement hit the country at a time where social media had become greatly the means of communication due to Covid-19 restriction. Many join the movement on social media to register their displeasure over certain underdevelopment in the country. Even though the movement got the attention of political leaders and stakeholders, there is no known study accessing the nature and effectiveness of the mobile media use in citizen journalism. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how citizen journalists use mobile media to engage in online social activism.

Research Aim and Objectives

The main aim of this study is to explore how citizen journalists in the #FixTheCountry Movement use mobile media to engage in online social activism.

The specific objectives of this research are to;

1. Explore the communication styles used by citizen journalists in the #FixTheCountry movement.
2. Assess the effectiveness of the communication styles used by citizen journalists in the #FixTheCountry movement.
3. Examine the challenges of citizen journalism in citizen advocacy on governance issues.
4. Investigate the underlying factors that informed the actions of social activists.

Research Questions

The main research question of the study is, how do citizen journalists in the #FixTheCountry Movement use mobile media to engage in online social activism in Ghana?

Specific Research Questions

1. What communication styles are used by citizen journalists in the #FixTheCountry movement?
2. How effective are the communication styles used by citizen journalists in the #FixTheCountry movement?
3. What are the challenges of citizen journalism in citizen advocacy on governance issues?
4. What are the underlying factors informed the actions of social activists in the #FixTheCountry movement?

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to literature on citizen journalism and mobile media by exploring how the two are used to drive advocacy for change in society. The study will add to knowledge on the communication styles, effectiveness and challenges of citizen journalism in online advocacy. Considering the adverse security and business/economic implications of organising and mobilising the masses to stage a purely offline demonstrations in densely populated regional capitals like Ghana, a study into online activism to explore the activities of the #FixTheCountry movement is expected to endorse such actions in virtual spaces without sacrificing its impact in effecting change in the governance system. This is expected to reduce the streets and placards actions in favour of the social media platforms and blogs.

Moreover, the study contributes to theory by exploring how newer technologies such as social media have contributed to the evolution of the nature and implementation of social activism. The study contributes specifically to social activism theory by adding the new media perspective that enhances opening citizen participation in democracy beyond the streets and placards to the social media platforms and blogs. The goal to create awareness of the effectiveness of online social activism by exposing the effective communication of social activism in the digital era.

Beyond its significant role in Ghana and the global community, the media has also been labeled as an instrument of conflict generation due to communication lapses that sometimes engulf its delivery. By this, this study is expected to add to knowledge on the communication styles to employ in conveying information to audience who are somewhat already agitated, examined their effectiveness, the underlining factors that inform the actions of social activists on governance issues and challenges of citizen journalism in online advocacy. For instance, the knowledge of communication styles will guide novice citizen journalists to be aware of which style serves their interest better. Generally, the study contributes to exploring how new technologies such as social media have contributed to the evolution of the nature and implementation of social activism.

In practice, the government communication machinery, policy makers and other statutory bodies such as the Ministry of Information, National Communication Authority (NCA) and National Media Commission (NMC) could consider the findings of this study as crucial to regulate social media content in ways that are not detrimental to governance and media freedoms, but

rather relevant in promoting democracy in Ghana. Largely, this study adds to the democratisation process because it unveils participation avenues that the citizenry can utilise to express their opinions and views in society. In the end, this work contributes to the theory of social activism from a Ghanaian and African perspective.

Organisation

The study is organised into five chapters. The first chapter presents the introduction and background to the study. It encapsulates statement of the problem, the research objectives and questions as well as the significance of the study. The second chapter entails the literature review which provides the conceptual framework, empirical review and the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study. The third chapter outlines the methodology which involves the research approach and design, sampling procedure, data collection procedures and analysis, ethical considerations, validity and the constraints to the study. The fourth chapter presents the results and discussion of the study to answer the research questions. The final chapter draws the conclusion and adds recommendations for future study.

The next chapter generally presents information on literature review of the study, theories applied and the conceptual framework.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The emergence of a new technology is always an improvement and convergence of already existing technology. What is new about new technology is the added value it offers over existing media (Dominick, 2005). This section therefore provides a conceptual framework, empirical review and a brief theoretical framework to inform the study.

Ghana's transition to democratic Governance and freedom of expression

There is hardly any debate that the existence of vibrant democratic opposition and dissident movements and groups within the Ghanaian political system in the last three decades has boosted the efforts towards consolidating democratic governance since 1992 (Ekiert & Kubik, 2001; Linz & Stepan, 1996; Matanga, 2000; Tar, 2008). The latest of such rebellious civil society groups in Ghana's democracy under the fourth republican dispensation is the #FixTheCountry movement, a protest movement formed by various youth activists and political dissidents led by a Ghanaian postgraduate student from the Cambridge University, Mawuse Oliver Barker-Varmawor.

Many governments in Africa have tolerated the activities of associational activities in response to rising demands from their citizens for greater democratic accountability, political representation and participation. Thus, in Ghana and under the fourth republican democratic dispensation, civil society organisations actively work to deepen the democratic process through advocacy on government or state policies. These include media engagement, public debate and articulation of alternative narratives on social and economic

policies (Botchway, 2018). While articulating their demands of which include the change of the constitution, #FixTheCountry and their leaders have been categorical that, such exercise should take place only within the remit of the democratic political process. The main convener of the group, Oliver Mawusi Barker-Vormawor, reacting to the August 2021 military overthrow of the Guinean government of Alpha Conde, draws a linkage with the Ghanaian situation and asserted that, if the people of Guinea had been allowed to freely use the existing democratic structures to reform their society and politics, the military takeover in that country would have been unlikely. He therefore admonishes Ghanaians to endeavor to reform their polity, re-emphasising that “the 1992 Constitution of Ghana should not be changed through the barrel of the gun! It should be changed through our voices” (3News, 2021).

Furthermore, he affirms that, “no soldier can take away our sovereign right to decide the fate of our Constitution” (3 News, 2021 cited by GhanaWeb, 2021). This position of #FixTheCountry and its leaders buttresses the various postulates of democratic consolidation by theorists such as Almond and Verba (1963), Diamond (1999) and, Linz and Stepan (1996). These scholars are unanimous in their views that positive attitudes, beliefs and behaviors from both the citizens and the elites are vital in the efforts towards consolidating democracy. For instance, Linz and Stepan (1996, p. 40) suggest that attitudinally, “democracy becomes the only game in town when, even in the face of severe political and economic crises, the overwhelming majority of the people believe that any further political change must emerge from within the parameters of democratic procedures.” Moreover, for civil society to truly play a part in the expansion of the frontiers of democracy, it has to be dominated by

individuals and groups who believe in democratic norms and ideals of the state. Again, civil society must be strong enough to simultaneously resist the institution's subordination to the state and the ruling elites and demand adequate representation and inclusion into the democratic political process (Sahoo, 2013). Thus, attitudinally and behaviorally, the insistence by #FixTheCountry of using the existing laws defined mainly by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana to reform the Constitution itself instead of resorting to any extra-constitutional means is not only a testament of the group's unalloyed faith in the democratic process, but also a proof that Ghana's democracy is treading on the right track. This is remarkable given the resurgence of coups, counter coups, failed coups and other unconstitutional means of changing government in Africa particularly in some neighboring countries in recent years. For instance, writing for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Mwai reveals that this year has seen two takeovers in Burkina Faso as well as a failed coup attempt in Guinea Bissau. In 2017, a military takeover brought Robert Mugabe's 37-year rule to an end in Zimbabwe. In April 19, 2021 after the death of the Chadian leader, Idriss Déby, the army installed his son as interim president leading a transitional military council. His opponents called it a "dynastic coup". We are only three years into the current decade and while in 2020 only one coup was reported (in Mali), in 2021 a noticeably higher than average number - six coups or attempted coups were recorded. There were successful coups in Chad, Mali, Guinea and Sudan and failed military takeovers in Niger and Sudan all in that year. Overall, Africa has experienced more coups than any other continent. Of the 14 coups recorded globally since 2017, all but one - Myanmar in 2021 - have been in Africa (Mwai, October 3, 2022)

Scholars of democracy are unanimous in their opinion that in consolidating democracy, associational life is expected to drive the political process by providing additional social infrastructure to challenge the arbitrariness and abuse of state power and corruption by the ruling elites and state institutions (Alagappa, 2004; Diamond, 1994; Gibson, 2001). Significantly, Diamond (1994) stresses that, there is nothing more scintillating in the democratic polity than the stories of civil society represented by “brave bands of students, writers, artists, pastors, teachers, labourers, and mothers challenging the duplicity, corruption and brutal domination” of the state and its agents or institutions (Diamond, 1994 as cited in Tar, 2008). Consequently, the emergence of aggressive civil society like #FixTheCountry movement at this stage of the nation’s democratic journey is seen by many observers as an opportunity to improve the governance process regarding the canker of corruption in the public arena, particularly when the problem seems to have so far defied any conceivable solution. Specifically, the fight against corruption has been one of the major demands of #FixTheCountry. For instance, since the middle of 2021 when the movement was formed, street actions have been used to pressure members of the governing New Patriotic Party (NPP) and other members of the ruling class to step up their efforts towards fighting corruption which to them has been the foundation of all the problems of the economy and social life of Ghanaians (Krippahl & Kaledzi, 2021). In this regard, the group was able to organise Ghanaian citizens of all socio-economic and political backgrounds to embark upon its maiden protest in Accra on August 4, 2021 against corruption and lack of equity in the Ghanaian society with a promise to expand the street actions across other parts of the country and in many major

cities across the world (FixTheCountry, 2021). The organisation has also used the power of the social media including WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter to influence public opinion on their stance against corruption (Krippahl & Kaledzi, 2021). These new media platforms were complemented by the traditional media such as radio and TV in the battle for the hearts and minds of the general Ghanaian public. While there is no data yet to gauge the true impact of #FixTheCountry in the fight against corruption, many observers have applauded the movement for its uncompromising and tough stance on corruption and abuse of power in Ghana.

Few will contest the view that Ghana's economy has faced dire challenges, imposing unbearable hardship on the ordinary citizenry in recent times. However, critics including #FixTheCountry have linked the present economic challenges to poor governance and mismanagement, accusing the ruling class of imposing intolerable hardship on the general populace. Many scholars have argued that, in consolidating democracy, civil society has the onerous responsibility of challenging the state on individual's economic problems such as high cost of living, unemployment and widespread poverty. Thus, the activities of #FixTheCountry movement in the campaign against the poor management of the economy and the resultant hardship mirrors the important assumptions articulated by Tocqueville which perceives civil society as an important tool that could confine the state to its assigned role as a facilitator and promoter of the economic well-being of the citizens within the liberal political atmosphere (Alagappa, 2004). Remarkably, various narratives and protests carried out by members of #FixTheCountry movement including those in the diaspora focused on wide-range of issues including high cost of

living, unemployment, and poverty, among other social and economic maladies bedevilling the youth (#FixTheCountry, 2021). In this regard, members of the group, which cut across different professions and social backgrounds, criticised the poor working conditions of Ghanaian workers and called for a fairer distribution of the national cake among Ghanaian citizens of all backgrounds. They argued that, since time immemorial, annual increment of the National Daily Minimum Wage by the state has not been commensurate with the rise in the rate of inflation and exchange rate depreciation, thereby undermining the purchasing power of the ordinary Ghanaian worker (Ghanaweb, 2021). To them, this fosters poverty and economic inequalities among the citizens despite sustained efforts at consolidating democracy (#FixTheCountry, 2021). The group again blames the 1992 Constitution for creating what they describe as a class society where the problem of inequality is aggravating on daily basis. According to a press statement by the group, “we are rejecting the fraudulent Fourth Republic (Constitution) that impoverishes its citizens, disables accountability from the political class and creates an imperial presidency” (Ghanaweb, 2021). This insistence on better living condition for Ghanaian citizens by the group is firmly rooted in Przeworski’s (2000) study which highlights the strong interface between economic prosperity and better living conditions of the citizens on the one hand and democratic consolidation on the other. According to him:

...the probability that a democracy would die in a country with an income above \$4,000 was almost zero. Indeed, no democracy has ever been subverted, not during the period we studied nor ever before, nor after, regardless of everything else, in a country with a per capita income

higher than that of Argentina in 1975: \$6,055. There is no doubt that democracy is stable in affluent countries: The probability of it collapsing is almost zero... (Przeworski, 2000).

Thus, the struggle for better living conditions of Ghanaians by #FixTheCountry movement can sufficiently be equated with a struggle for democratic consolidation in Ghana.

While Ghana has made inroads in the protection of human rights and civil liberties, there is no debate that there are still numerous human rights violations committed by different governments since 1992. Hence, Ghana features constantly in various human rights reports. For instance, the 2021 US Department of State report cited Ghana for various human rights abuses such as infringement on freedom of expression and speech, politically motivated killings and other forms of inhuman treatments (Nyabor, 2022). However, building on the various propositions of both John Lock and Adam Smith on safeguarding citizens' natural rights and protecting them against state arbitrariness, Tocqueville articulates the interaction between civil society and the new global democratic order (Merket, 1999). In his view, in any democracy, voluntary associations are vital in "protecting individual liberty, preventing tyranny of the majority, decentralising power and authority, and fostering active engagement of citizens in politics and governance" (Whitehead, 1997 as cited in Alagappa, 2004). Moreover, both Diamond (1999) and, Linz and Stepan (1996) concur on the indispensability of civil liberties in the attainment of democratic consolidation. In this regard, #FixTheCountry movement has since its formation been at the forefront of the fight against human rights violations. The group has on various platforms and during their numerous protests and

demonstrations demanded justice for victims of human rights violations including victims of politically-motivated murders. One of such victims was Ibrahim Mohammed (also known as Kaaka) who was not only a key member of the group but also a central pillar of their organisation and online activism, particularly in the Ashanti Region of Ghana (#FixTheCountry, 2021). At a press conference on August 3, 2021, the group accused the state and its security apparatuses of dereliction of duty and complicity in many politically-motivated murders in the country in the past and warned of sustained campaign to make the murder of Kaaka an “exception” to the situation (Starrfmonline, 2021 cited by Ghanaweb, 2021). Arthur (2010) stresses that in consolidating democracy, civil society should be free, autonomous and assertive in their activism including mobilising citizens to embark on mass protests and other methods of civil disobedience.

Consequently, the movement mounted intense pressure on the security apparatuses of the Ghanaian state with intermittent protests and other civil activism when their leader, Oliver Barker-Vormawor was arrested by the Ghana Police Service on Friday, February 11, 2022 and put before court for what the state security apparatuses described as attempt to stage a coup and disrupt the democratic process (GhanaWeb, 2021). However, Barker-Vormawor insisted he was exercising his freedom of speech for declaring that there will be (a legal) coup against the controversial E-levy tax policy, if it is ever passed by the nation’s legislature. He subsequently went on hunger strike to demand his freedom from what he and his supporters considered as illegal detention by the security services (Ghanaweb, 2021).

The Media Environment in Ghana

Ghana, under the Fourth Republic, boasts of a robust and liberal media environment, influenced by its post-independence political and media history. The 1992 Constitution, considered superior to its predecessors, dedicates article twelve under Chapter 12 to press freedom provisions, because its provisions on the rights/liberties of citizens and the press are clear and detailed (Owusu, 2012).

Ghanaian journalists benefit from both freedom of expression enshrined in Article 21(e), and freedom of the press as according to Article 162 (1). Freedom of the press as guaranteed by the Constitution, explicitly forbids censorship and state control. The establishment of the National Media Commission (NMC) further ensures independent oversight of press operations. The repeal of the Criminal Libel and Sedition Laws in 2001 was a significant milestone, although heavy financial penalties in civil libel cases still pose challenges (Jamil & Appiah-Adjei, 2019). The enactment of the Right to Information (RTI) Act 2019 (Act 989), aims to enhance media freedom by granting access to information held by public cover entity or officer.

The media landscape of Ghana is most liberal and the Ghanaian press is freest in Africa (Nyarko, 2016; Reporters Without Borders, 2019). It has evolved over the years, transitioning from government monopoly to a diverse mix of private electronic and online media outlets, where Ghana now boasts of several radio and television stations, newspapers, and online platforms, catering for various linguistic preferences. While English-language media remains popular among the elite, local language media channels such as Twi, Ga, Ewe, Dagbani and Fanti among others, takes care of the middle and lower classes.

Ghana has adopted a liberal stance towards foreign media, with representation from prominent global media outlets like Associated Press, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Cable News Network (CNN), and Al Jazeera. However, access to foreign media content is often limited to the elite due to cost and language barriers. To address this, some free-to-air channels broadcast content from foreign channels to a wider audience.

Social Media and Freedom of Expression

Social media platforms have become an essential communication tool. The strength of a country's democracy can be measured by the extent to which its citizens enjoy freedom of expression. In fact, through them individuals can exercise fundamental freedom, that is, the right to express opinions and exchange information, including ideas. According to Pennington (2014); Barnidge et al. (2018), the number of think tanks advocating for greater freedom of expression has increased in many countries. Think tanks also advocate for justice and accountability of powerful authorities as well as for the recognition of human rights and freedom of expression.

The Black Lives Matter protest in the United States in 2020 and the Arab Spring revolution in 2011 highlight the enormous role of social media platforms in the fight for basic human rights and freedom of expression (Ricknell, 2020). However, freedom of opinion and expression does not give the citizens of a country the right to express themselves or even to publish without the greatest possible responsibility. However, the legislature usually enacts laws that restrict the right to freedom of expression. However, social media technology is vulnerable to misuse as several cybercrimes can easily be committed through social media. Rocheforta (2020), Irum and Laila (2015) note

that this practice entitles a country's government to control online content to protect the interests of the general public, a necessity that the government cannot deny its citizens. Constitutional values are generally under enormous pressure on social networks and the topic of democracy is not neglected either. Online media companies are recognising that it's not just extremists, terrorists and other anti-democratic groups who use social media to spread their messages. Various countries around the world, including some on the African continent, have contacted social media companies to take urgent action on this news. Researchers have suggested that governments in many countries around the world are taking actions regarding social media discourse. However, it is also known that non-governmental organisations and movements influence online media companies (Dzisah, 2018; Ganesh & Bright, 2020; Klos, 2020; Nyarko et al., 2018). In the latter case, family and social constraints can sometimes represent a serious obstacle to freedom of speech and expression. Women in particular are discouraged from speaking out and many, particularly those living in rural and suburban areas, refrain from speaking out. There is also great interest in respecting traditional authorities, as many people are afraid to criticise their traditional leaders. Blackwood (2020) notes that in the political sphere, citizens' reluctance to speak out, for fear is becoming increasingly common. More and more journalists are being intimidated, including politicians and the police, simply for expressing their opinions (Barberá, 2020). Bureaucrats, civil servants and entrepreneurs also find it difficult to speak out because they fear losing their job or contract (Rochefort, 2020). The constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of speech and expression and the relative freedom of expression of citizens are being questioned due to the lack

of easy access to legislative information. Although the constitution states that everyone has the right to receive information, there is a lack of guidelines and laws which have hindered easy access to both ordinary citizens and journalists (Rocheft, 2020). This challenge is further complicated by poor record keeping and knowledge management. Nyarko and Akpojivi (2017) noted that the efforts of various stakeholders in recent years have led to the introduction of a law that guarantees everyone the right to information.

Social media may contribute into the development of democracy, leading to the development of at least two features that according to Lipset (1959) are typical for democracy. These are the freedom of expression, freedom to form and join organisations and indirectly to the dependence of policy making institutions in government (Lipset, 1959). Speaking about social media which implies social mobilisation, one should also mention social movement concept. Scholars interpret the concept of social movements differently – in a broad and in a narrow way.

One of the main definitions of a social movement was made by Herbert Blumer (1995). He defined social movement as a collective enterprise seeking to establish a new order of life (cited in Crossley, 2002). One may argue that the enterprise may try to establish another order rather than a new order, since a new one usually means the one that was never the case before, while social movements may be directed at establishing an order that existed earlier. Therefore, collective enterprise and a new order are not considered in this definition.

Drawing the difference between the above-mentioned concepts, perhaps, it is necessary to give a general notion of social media or new media

as used interchangeably in the study. The key lies in the two words. As Safko (2010) points out, social media refers to the instinctual needs' we humans have to connect with other humans. The second part of the term refers to media we use which make those connections with other humans (Safko, 2010). However, in the given paper social media implies Facebook.

Another worthy definition was made by Eyrman and Jamison (1998). It implies that social movement is a temporary public space, as a moment of collective creation that provide societies with ideas, identities and even ideals (cited in Crossley, 2002). Here the important feature is temporality of a movement and new ideas.

Sidney Tarrow (1998) states another important feature here, claiming that a social movement may consist of ordinary people often in league with more influential citizens (cited in Crossley, 2002).

Thus, making sense out of all these definitions, one may define a social movement as a temporarily collective enterprise consisting of ordinary and more influential citizens seeking to establish a new order of life and/or provide society with new ideas.

Social media is a perfect example of a social movement. People are mobilised with new ideas, desires to establish new orders or to improve the current. However, mobilisation of people from different society groups is different. As Zibechi (2010) rightly points out, elites and masses are mobilised in completely different ways. The former does it vertically, closely linked to the institutions; social action takes place in a 'cautious and controlled' manner and its high points comes in electoral contests. However, the mobilisation of the poor is, on the contrary, horizontal, more spontaneous and based 'on the

traditional kinship and territoriality or associations of class' that appear linked to the insurgency (Zibechi, 2010). Therefore, the social media in Egypt is quite likely to function according to the above-mentioned principles.

With the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies and new media, citizens became able to be journalists themselves avoiding unnecessary mediation of traditional media. As Castells (2009) puts it:

“The powerful have been spying on their subjects since the beginning of history, but the subjects can now watch the powerful, at least to a greater extent than in the past. We have all become potential citizen journalists who, if equipped with a mobile phone, can record and instantly upload to the global networks any wrongdoing by anyone, anywhere” (Castells, 2009, p. 14).

Multiplying the spaces for exchange of ideas, the Internet also improves mutual understanding by allowing for the development of multiple, critical public spheres. As networked media has the potential to re-configure communicative power relations, by facilitating social networking and ‘user-centred innovation’, citizens are said to be able to challenge the monopoly control of media production and dissemination by state and commercial institutions (Loader & Mercea, 2011). Freed from the necessities of professional media and journalist skills or the centralised control and distribution of industrial mass media organisations, social media is instead, seen to be technologically, financially and (generally) legally accessible to most citizens living in advanced societies (Ibid). Equipped with social media, the citizens no longer have to be passive consumers of political party propaganda, government spin or mass media news, but are instead actually enabled to challenge

discourses, share alternative perspectives and publish their own opinions. Diamond (2003) rightly notes, in an age of widespread communication and political consciousness, people expect political participation and accountability much more than they did in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Diamond, 2003). However, whether this new ways of expressing opinion may be regarded and should be regarded as rational, political and public – that is the question.

Those which are more attuned to the potential changing perceptions of citizens less inclined to be dutiful and open instead to a more personalised and self-actualising notion of citizenship. An approach that does not valorise the more rigid one-dimensional political identities of previous times but instead recognises the multiplicity of identity positions that citizens are required to grapple with in contemporary societies, where the spheres for democratic engagement reach into the private spaces to enable the person to become political (Hawthorn & Lund, 1998). In this framework, it may be possible to interpret the democratic potential of social media in a new light (Loader & Mercea, 2011).

The distinctiveness of current social media is the displacement of the public sphere model with that of a networked citizen-centred perspective providing opportunities to connect the private sphere of autonomous political identity to a multitude of chosen political spaces (Papacharissi, 2010). It thus represents a significant departure from the earlier restricted and constrained formulations of rational deliberation with its concomitant requirement for dutiful citizens. In its place is a focus upon the role of the citizen-user as the

driver of democratic innovation through the self-actualised networking of citizens engaged in lifestyle and identity politics (Papacharissi, 2010).

Most sites of public discourse do not remain public in their entirety and for eternity, and therefore issues that are debated in the public sphere simultaneously are discussed outside of it (Papacharissi, 2010). That makes democratic discussions robust, transnational and diverse. Thus, one could look for the kinds of government policies has a lot experience and works through a variety of text, visual, audio and graphic communication forms. The playful repertoires of innovative YouTube videos, mobile texting language, Facebook posts, protest music and the celebration of trivia may all be regarded as aspects of the political as well as public and rational.

Finally, the main argument which allows discarding large amount of the critique of the democratic influence of the new media is that the latter evolves extremely quickly providing the public with qualitatively new opportunities for sharing views and ideas. Needless to say, that Facebook, one of the biggest social networks was created in 2004, the biggest video sharing website YouTube did not exist before 2005 and the most popular micro blogging site Twitter goes back to only 2006. Each year the technology and specialists of those social media giants allow us to indulge with new features. All these factors make it difficult to be confident making conclusions of any kind. Even the given paper may be easily disregarded e.g. in 6 months because of possible ICT revolution that completely changed the way social media used to function.

The situation of social media in Ghana

There are about six million social media users in Ghana (Global Digital Report, 2020). The report identified Facebook and YouTube as the two leading

social media platforms, with other platforms like Twitter and Instagram emerging in recent years and gaining prominence. In terms of demographics, most social media users include the youth, educated people, and individuals who belong to the middle and upper class. There are also more males than females in terms of usage. Social media platforms in Ghana, like other parts of the world, have become tools for political mobilisation and have thus been used by Ghanaian political parties together with traditional modes of communication such as radio, television, and the press. This is most evident in the last three general elections (2012, 2016, 2020), where the platforms were used to mobilise support and membership for various parties, raise funds, discuss, and elicit people's opinions on sociopolitical issues and articulate policies on key socioeconomic and governance issues (Gyampo, 2017).

The use of social media for activism and resistance is a new trend in Ghana and the “fix the country” campaign examined in this work is one of the most recent online protests in the country. Other campaigns that have been launched in the past include #SaveTheGHMovieIndustry, #DropThatChamber, #OccupyFlagstaffHouse, #HijabIsAnIdentity, #DumsorMustStop, and #RedFriday. The “fix the country” campaign aimed at expressing outrage about economic hardship and the level of underdevelopment superintended by successive governments. The campaigners, predominantly the youth, tend to lament the country's inadequate and/or non-existent social amenities, deplorable infrastructure, poor sanitation, housing deficit accompanied by exorbitant rent, high levels of unemployment, and general high cost of living. The online campaign was launched on 3 May 2021 and was followed by an offline protest on 21 September 2021. According to the convenors of the

campaign, “#FixTheCountry” is a non-partisan and non-political civic movement by Ghanaian youths for Ghana and seeks to mobilise ordinary Ghanaians for a new Ghana. To them, three cardinal principles undergird the movement: (1) demanding a new [Ghanaian] society founded on justice, (2) political leaders refusing to play by the rules of the constitution of Ghana, and (3) asking for a reset in the direction and the assumptions that pervasive immorality thrives on in [Ghanaian] politics (www.fixthecountrygh.com).

Generally, pandemics affect all facet of social life and may bring activities in communities to a standstill. The COVID-19 vastly limited activities and forced online communications to incorporate all aspects of media, the behavior and attitude of people towards government and official reports were seen as bipolar and lacking consensus (Wu, 2020). In early 2020, Ghana imposed a complete lockdown due to a sudden outbreak of the coronavirus called COVID-19. As a result, the country found itself in unprecedented difficulties as social and economic activities had to be suspended. The worrying challenges that have characterised this country make it seem like a syllogism to call Covid-19 a smokescreen or, for lack of a better phrase, to attribute all failures to the coronavirus pandemic. It has therefore become necessary, if not inevitable, for Ghanaians to express their grief. In May 2021, the hashtag #FixTheCountry and some variations such as #WeGoDemonstrate appeared on social media and were created by some Ghanaians. The purpose of these hashtags was to urge the government to implement social and economic reforms aimed at addressing the socio-economic difficulties that appear to be plaguing the country (Brobberry, Da-Costa & Apeakoran, 2021). The power of social media quickly made the campaign viral as thousands of people joined the protest

on social media, which was also directed against successive governments and largely against the current government, which was said to have done nothing to improve the socio-economic lives of Ghanaians, rather, it has not implemented any political measures as prudent. They have worsened the situation of Ghanaians.

The social media movement, which initially faced the challenge of failing to define specific issues or the direction in which reparations should be demanded (Cobblah, 2021), sparked protests in 2021 by some thoughtless government officials and supporters of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) complaining of unfairness because they saw it as a way to intimidate their government. May be they misunderstood the whole concept of social movements and campaigns, thought it was a joke (Cobblah, 2021) and therefore gave the counter hashtags like #FixYourself. Meanwhile, subsequent discussions, polls, questions and comments on various traditional and new media platforms (Cobblah, 2021) provided protesters with additional information and explanations to clarify and express their concerns (Cobblah, 2021). Current challenges facing protesters include the high cost of living, high taxes and utilities, relatively high unemployment and oil prices compared to neighbouring countries, and corrupt officials. Unsurprisingly, the protests were then ignited by the tragic death of young activist Ibrahim “Kaaka” on June 29, 2021, prompting members to demand for justice not only for him but also two others who were killed by the police at Ejura in 2021. Over time, not only did protesters' demands expand to include insecurity, but the number of protesters also increased, angering people who left cyberspace and took to the streets despite the Covid-19 pandemic in a series of physical protests in local and

geographical locations around the world in the style of blatant civil disobedience (Brobbery, Da-Costa & Apeakoran, 2021).

The Choice for Facebook

Social media, especially Facebook, has been recognised as a new platform for individuals to connect with others through their networks (Richardson & Hessey, 2009). The use of Facebook has received considerable interest and attention and has been studied from many perspectives. For example, Giannakos et al. (2013) used uses and gratification theory to study the habits of Facebook users.

The selection of news on Facebook is deliberate and has two reasons: Facebook offers an almost complete overview of the latest news from the most important journalistic media at the beginning of the crisis. Facebook is a very important distribution channel for news media as it continues to overtake other social media platforms (Beisch et al., 2019). Furthermore, this allows a comparison with previous working paper (Boberg et al., 2020), which focused on “alternative media” messages that position themselves as “corrective to the traditional”, “heritage” or addressed to the “general public media” (Holt et al., 2019). This is particularly interesting as alternative media outlets have criticised the traditional mainstream media's handling of the crisis, claiming to present a truer picture of events and provide a wider range of voices, including the opposition, influencing public statements and government actions in ‘Ask a Question and public employees’ (for a detailed analysis, see Boberg et al., 2020).

The Internet and online media have continued to contribute to the development of journalism: the dissemination of information “online first” in a

continuous process has marked the beginning of a new “era of fluid terms” (Buhl et al., 2019). Such fluidity implies not only immediacy as a central norm (Lim, 2012; Quandt et al., 2006), but also the potentially continuous updating and modification of news (Saltzis, 2012), the constant monitoring of competitors (Boczkowski, 2010; Lim, 2013) in the online information ecosystem (Anderson, 2010; Buhl et al., 2018) and minimising information cycles (Rosenberg & Feldman, 2008). New platforms like Facebook and Twitter have come into play because they are designed for a continuous flow of information; chronological, extremely short messages and the culture of pushing texts into an evolutionary flow when thinking or writing have contributed to a greater compression of time and journalistic processes and even to the disappearance of deadlines (Karlsson & Strömbäck, 2010) not just for special occasions. In such a context, information must be published quickly and under great pressure, all the more so when large amounts of information are requested on a particular topic and competing information providers respond in virtually parallel fashion (as in the case of the pandemic).

In addition, the use of Facebook has been studied in different kinds of environments: Building social capital through connections (Johnston et al. 2011; Steinfield et al., 2009), commitment to personal innovation and sustained use (Chen, 2013), education (Mazman & Usluel, 2010; Roblyer et al., 2010), and health communication (Buis, 2011; Liang & Scammon, 2011).

For example, Facebook has been found to be highly effective in reaching and engaging a wide range of individuals and groups of interest by providing a space for high-quality policy discussions (Kushin & Kitchener, 2009). Facebook is undoubtedly one of the most popular social networks and, according to Boyd

and Ellison (2007), it constitutes a “public network that supports sociability, like public spaces without intermediaries”. Furthermore, the presence of young people in these online public spaces has multiplied channels of interaction and connection to spread the message and mobilise participation. Overall, it is argued that online social networks can enhance online and offline engagement, and thus offer alternative models of participation (De Zuniga et al., 2009). One basic claim is that the Internet is a structure of opportunity that opens up new possibilities for citizens in the realm of “new politics” and can thus help bridge the democratic deficit (Dahlgren, 2009).

The field of journalism became interested in social media when they saw its potential, influence and impact on society as a form of communication and information tool (Alejandro, 2010). After all, social media is about communicating and networking through multiple ways of conveying and sharing messages and news. Evidently, some researchers were found to have stated that social media are transforming the way information travels within and between networks of individuals (Gangadharbatla, Bright & Logan, 2014). Furthermore, with the advent of social media, the public now have the ability to create any content they want. As a result, social media has experienced spillover effects transcending several areas such as politics and cultural boundaries of business and industry sectors.

However, not everyone searches for news after connecting to their Facebook account. Instead, news has “found” them. Previous study states that Facebook is a platform where users will find news without having to search for it (Mitchell & Page, 2013).

Social Movements

Sociologist Charles Tilly defines social movements as a series of controversial performances, demonstrations, and campaigns in which ordinary people collectively demand on others (Tilly, 2004). To Tilly, social movements are the primary means by which ordinary citizens participate in public policy. He argues that there are three main elements in a social movement:

1. Campaigns: a sustained, organised public effort making collective claims of target authorities;
2. Repertoire (repertoire of contention): employment of combinations from among the following forms of political action: creation of special-purpose associations and coalitions, public meetings, solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, statements to and in public media, and pamphleteering; and
3. Worthiness Unity Numbers Commitments displays: participants concerted public representation of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitments on the part of themselves and/or their constituencies.

The Origins of Social Movement

The social movement, as it is known today, is a relatively new organising vehicle for social change. Charles Tilly, who has done extensive historical research into the origins of social movements in the Western world, cites a 1682 "movement" document in Narbonne, France, to make this point: There was a little movement in Narbonne on the occasion of the collection of the cosset tax, which had been ordered by an act of the royal council. Many women gathered with the common people, and threw stones at the tax collectors,

but the Consuls and the leading citizens hurried over and put a stop to the disorder (Tilly, 1984).

Although this 17th-century incident has been called a “small movement”, it was not the same as what we would now consider a “social movement. The term small movement was part of the lexicon of the time, used to refer to “the local collective action of ordinary people that the authorities deem necessary and appropriate to end by force” (Tilly, 1984, p. 4). Tilly points out that today we would not consider this kind of action a social movement unless it was more sustainable, part of a series of collective actions rather than an incident and carried out by participants with shared interests and distinct identities who have broader goals. Furthermore, the forms of protest have changed. Today, tax opponents are unlikely to stone the tax collector - now a government bureaucracy - although they can protest taxes in the style of protest favored by the current Tea Party in the United States or they can use the ballot initiative process like the activists did in the 1970s to pass Proposition 13 to limit property taxes in California (Lo, 1990).

Tilly (1984) uses the concept of a repertoire of collective action to get the idea that limited forms of protest are familiar during a given time. Using the repertoire of tactics available to them, activists engage in what Tilly calls claim-making performances in interaction with targets. Repertoires and performances evolve over time through incremental transformation in use (Tilly, 2008). When we compare long periods of history, we can see major changes in repertoires; our contemporary protest repertoire has changed dramatically since the women of Narbonne stoned their tax collectors.

Social movements have used a variety of strategies and tactics to bring about enormous social change, influencing cultural arrangements, public opinion, popular discourse, and government policies. Protest tactics allow those lacking power and influence to gain public attention and force the government's attention and concessions, sometimes even toppling the government. This was clearly demonstrated in 2011 during the “Arab Spring” when movements in Tunisia, Egypt and other Arab countries demanded democracy and the overthrow of repressive regimes. These uprisings, coupled with the global economic crisis, inspired movements in other parts of the world, including the Indignados in Spain, which brought hundreds of thousands of protesters down streets in cities like Madrid and Barcelona to express their outrage in front of them about high unemployment and what they see as “collusion between bankers and politicians” (Castells, 2012, p. 40). In the United States, the Occupy Wall Street Movement was inspired by these protests and fueled by inequality related to the economic crisis. Beginning with the occupation of Zuccotti Park in New York in September 2011, the movement has spread across the country and to cities around the world. Protesters set up camps in public spaces and declared “we are 99%”, in contrast to the affluent 1% of the population. Although the Occupy camps were eventually dismantled by the police, the movement continued in various forms and had considerable impact on public discourse on inequality.

Media, Technology and Politics

Mobile media and politics have been studied by new media scholars. Siapera (2018) explains that the context of mobile phones use point to a different kind of dynamics. Taking into consideration that smartphones are much cheaper

and easier for accessing the internet, they represent the convergence of telephone, the computer and the camera, thereby allowing people to quickly and easily produce and circulate media content. Hence, Siapera (2018) posits that mobile media is used for witnessing political event, playing surveillance function and authenticating political content.

However, Siapera (2018) observes that the commercialisation of mobile media commons may prevent them from fulfilling their democratic potential. To Linchua Qiu and Sey (2007), it is not therefore the media that cause any kind of effects, but rather their use, as embedded in existing socio-cultural and political contexts. In other words, mobile media influence politics in terms of mediation and not structure. In this case, political information such as vigilantism can be circulated through mobile media, but the nature may not change as a result of mobile media. Linchua Qiu and Sey (2007) argue that the use of mobile media affects secrecy of politicians' and discloses private information. Agar (2003) concludes that the use of horizontal social networks in governance issues are critical of central authority and observes that mobile media is a mundane means of communication in the USA or an agent of political change in the Philippines. For instance, the study of Joseph Estrada was largely due to protests organised and coordinated through SMS messages (Castells et al., 2007), the Seattle World Trade Organisation protest in 1999 and the Athens riots in December 2008 among others were orchestrated by mobile media. In his study, Rheingold (2008) discovered the use of mobile media for smart mob actions. Rheingold described mobile phone organised groups action as Smart mob or an intelligent swarm. Smart mob is mobile phone horizontal, network-style organisation, characterised by lack of a central authority and by the

autonomy of the 'subunits' that make up the network. This use of mobile media for smart mob is seen as always critical about central authority. Anden-Papadopoulos (2014) argues that the smartphone's digital camera has provided citizens with a powerful means for bearing witness to brutality, allowing for creation and instant sharing of persuasive personalise eyewitness records with mobile and globalised target population. Exploring the relationship between mobile media and politics, Siapera (2018) notes that it seems it is not politics that has democratised mobile media in the hands of citizens, but its mediation. In other words, while politics, at least formally, remains as hierarchical and closed as always, its mediation, or the ways in which we acquire information and form opinions about politics, can be seen as democratised in the sense that it is no longer the

The Emergence of the movement

In the early part of the year 2020, Ghana experienced a total lockdown due to the sudden outbreak of the Coronavirus dubbed COVID-19. Consequently, the country began to suffer untold hardships since both social and economic activities had to come to a halt. The ominous challenges that the country faced, therefore, seemed a syllogism for COVID-19 to be used as an excuse to blame all failures on the Coronavirus outbreak. It became therefore necessary, if not inevitable, for Ghanaians to voice out their anguish. In May 2021, the hashtag #FixTheCountry and some variations such as #WeGoDemonstrate which were created by some Ghanaians emerged on social media. The objective of these hashtags was a wakeup call to the government for social and economic reforms aiming at fixing the socio-economic hardships that seem to have bedeviled the country. The power of social media quickly made

the campaign go viral, as thousands joined the social media protest, which also took aim at successive governments, and to a large extent, the sitting government, that was perceived as having done nothing to socially and economically better the lives of Ghanaians, but rather implementing policies that were presumed as worsening the plights of Ghanaians. The social media movement, which initially had a challenge of not providing specific issues and direction of which they were calling for the fixing (Cobblah, 2021) had some ill-advised government officials and sympathisers of the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) government crying foul because they perceived it as a victimisation of their government. Perhaps, they misunderstood the whole concept of social movements and campaigns, taking it for a joke (Cobblah, 2021), and hence providing counter hashtags such as #FixYourself. Meanwhile, subsequent discussions, queries, questioning and commenting on various traditional and new media platforms (Cobblah, 2021) provided additional insights and clarifications for the protestors to streamline and shape their concerns (Cobblah, 2021). As it is to be expected, the protests were subsequently fueled by the fatal beating of a young activist, Ibrahim “Kaaka” on 29th June 2021, which then, saw members additionally demanding for justice for Ibrahim “Kaaka” and two other Ghanaians who were shot dead by police in Ejura in the Ashanti Region. Overtime, the demands by the protestors did not only increase to include insecurity, but also, the number of protestors escalated, giving impetus to them building up angers, and regardless of the Covid-19 pandemic, left cyberspace and took to the street in series of physical protests in local and other locations worldwide in a manner reminiscent of gross civil disobedience. In the unfolding of events, one dominant feature, which stood out as the root of the success of

the protests is the diverse and pervasive application of media technologies, especially, the social media, to champion their course (Brobberry, Da-Costa & Apeakoran, 2021).

Traditional Activism

Traditional activism encompasses a wide range of tactics and strategies aimed at challenging power structures, raising awareness, and mobilising communities to create positive social change. There are three main types of traditional activism, which include demonstrations and protests: boycotts, strikes, petitions: and social media campaigns (Lin, 2018). Arguably, demonstrations and protests are considered the most popular form of activism. Studies have shown that demonstrations are when a group of people united by a common belief comes together to march, hold a vigil or sit at a specified location in order to create attention (Nyanang, 2021). In Ghana, there have been a lot of demonstrations, for example, the ‘Kumi Preko Demonstrations’, the ‘dumsor’ demonstrations, and quite recently the ‘fix-the-country’ demonstrations. Demonstrations are mostly conducted as the rights of people to engage in a peaceful protest, although they have to seek permission from the security agencies before conducting the demonstration (Asante & Hellbrecht, 2019). However, it has been observed that demonstrations mostly become complicated when counter-protesters and law enforcement officers come to the scene of the demonstration. Furthermore, studies have shown that demonstrations and protest are more successful when they involve a large group of people (Selinam, 2021).

Another form of traditional activism is boycott. This type of traditional activism involves a group of people, mostly workers of an organisation or labour

group, who intend to desist from working in order to protest or push an agenda (Oppong, 2018). As maintained by Oppong (2018), due to the nature and intention of boycotts, it is much likely to take place when it involves a large group of people. An example was when a group of universities students in the USA and UK pressured their universities to boycott products from the Fruit of the Loom, when they engaged in unfair labour practices in Honduras- their activities led to the loss of about 1800 jobs thus the intention of the university students to ensure the workers get their jobs back (O'Brien et al., 2018). This method of activism has been extensively used outside Ghana, and by gender and LGBT+ rights activities. Another case in point was when the Ireland Parliament, boycotted a speech by the government of Ghana, during former president John Dramani Mahama's administration, due to the entrenched position of the government on gay rights (Oppong, 2018). In Ghana's parliament, members of minority or majority caucus have occasionally boycotted proceedings to register their displeasure. Boycotts are mostly effective as they can cause pressure to the party involved, an accomplishment that was achieved by the university students when they boycotted the products of Fruit of the Loom- as the company was forced to reopen the closed industries and re-employ the laid-off workers. Furthermore, Sandbrook et al. (2019) were of the view that for boycotts to work there is the need for a strong leadership, with clear and effective goals.

Strike is another form of traditional activism and as the name implies, workers refuse to work until their demands are met. This happens when workers are forced to work in dangerous or unfair working conditions, with low wages and unpaid salaries (Sarathchandra & Haltinner, 2020). Numerous studies have asserted that strikes were a dominant feature of the industrial revolution era,

because during those periods, there were little to no worker protection and companies needed mass labour (Blee, 2017; Sibiri, 2021). During those periods, few countries made strikes illegal to prevent workers from participating in them, although recently it has become a dominant means of workers getting their claims across (Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). In Ghana, most labour unions engage in strikes, for instance, the University Teachers Association of Ghana, Educational Workers Union, and the Senior Administrative Staff Association of the various Universities, amongst others (Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). These strikes are mostly to get the attention of government about unpaid salaries, low wages, and other delayed/unavailable benefits.

Traditional forms of activism have been tested decades ago, and they have been found to be effective in attaining set goals and objectives (Blee, 2017). A key advantage of traditional activism is that it has a physical and real-world impact as it required physical action (Greger, 2017). The tangibility of traditional activism cannot be overemphasised, which is an advantage that it has over online activism. Furthermore, the traditional form of activism also gets the needed attention, especially when it has a larger population and people with influence. Additionally, the coming together of people with shared principles and values enforces the beliefs attached to a certain cause. Moreover, traditional activism tends to create a sense of empowerment and belongingness that comes with people with like minds coming together (Greger, 2017). Also, Chon and Park (2020), were of the view that activists coming together increases interactions amongst the people, which helps them strategise well to achieve set goals and objectives. In addition, traditional activism has a lot of options available to achieve the desired action or response (Berriane & Duboc, 2019).

Nonetheless, there are a few challenges and disadvantages associated with the use of the traditional form of activism. According to Hensel (2017), due to geographical challenges, it becomes difficult to mobilise all the people that support a cause, thus leading to only a few within a certain geographical location joining demonstrations and protests. This challenge becomes less of an issue when using social media activism. Besides, traditional activism does not allow the views and opinions of a wider set of individuals, as the platform for communication and interaction may become one-way not allowing effective communication and attitudinal change (Kaniuka et al., 2019). Again, traditional activism can easily be interrupted by external force from counter-protesters and law enforcement agencies. This can be done with the use of physical force or persuasion. Additively, the use of traditional activism may lead to destruction, harm, deaths, and even disasters due to the physical nature of the approach, especially when there is violence (Wilner, 2020).

Activism is a relatively new term introduced in the mid-1970s to describe the ability to take action and reshape history. "It reminds us that the world not only exists, but is made." Gitlin (2003) wrote to young activists. However, what is implied here is theorised at the level of social change theory, social movement theory, or the concept of resistance, advocacy, or protest (Goodwin & Jasper, 2003; Kling & Posner, 1990; Tarrow, 1998). In any case, social agency and feasibility are central to the tentative definition of activism. As Jordan (2002) points out, "activism creates the future of society". From this perspective, activism represents the practice of striving for change and can be driven by reactionary tendencies and goals, as well as progressiveness.

Although not the only form of activism, direct action or what Kluge (1982) calls "immediate struggle on the ground", but is nevertheless at the center of historic struggles not only for the extension or securing of existing rights, but also for new ones (Mellor, 1920; Wallerstein, 1990). Direct action is at the heart of the process of social change, through protests and demonstrations, strikes, sit-ins, consumer boycotts and non-violent civil disobedience. But this does not mean that activism is synonymous with direct action. There are also practices and activism that operate within the prevailing political and judicial systems rather than being directly action-driven. Examples include legal activism (challenging or lobbying countries or corporations in court) to try to influence legislators or governments.

The process of social change, activism and social movements, which in some ways can be seen as the institutionalisation of a particular struggle, cannot be seen without considering the concept of revolution (Lenin, 1929; McLaren, 2001; Robert, 1978; Wood, 1992). The American, French, Russian, and Cuban revolutions, each in its own way, radically changed societies, not only locally, but far beyond the region in which they took place. But the collapse of established hierarchies within society and other structures, even economic structures, has come at a price. The coercive and often highly violent practice of forcing the ruling elite to relinquish power and the bloody repression that usually follows a revolution would be seen today as unacceptable.

In recent history, a delicate balance has been seen between the evolution of social, cultural and political conflicts established by public pressure, conflict and sometimes violence, on the one hand, and by the economic, political and legal elites ruling within a democracy, on the other (Dahl, 1998; Harvey, 1989;

Roots & Davis, 1994). In this context, we can also refer to the “Janus Head strategy” that activism is increasingly adopting. According to Servaes and Carpentier (2005), activism combines continuous resistance with independent criticism and strategic and partial integration.

As a result of these developments, and for other socio-economic and cultural reasons, violence - at least in the West - has largely lost its legitimacy as a tool of protest or promotion change. The recent rather peaceful transitions in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004) and Lebanon (2005) are also evidence of this, despite exceptions such as the bloody breakup of Yugoslavia. However, this does not lead to a decline in direct action, but the reverse. Empirical research shows that mobilisation and protest by citizens, as well as civil society actors, are increasing in advanced capitalist countries compared with other periods in Western history (Meyer & Tarrow, 1998; Norris, 2002). Direct action – civil disobedience, demonstration, and action-protest is more than ever a necessary tactic for any movement or activist to draw public attention to causes and goals for which they fight. Political participation has also shifted partly from participation in political parties and social movements previously to participation in civil society organisations, NGOs, campaigns or some direct action (Norris, 2002).

Today's social movements and activists no longer seek to achieve change by "conquering" formal political power, like the early 20th-century labour movement or green movement practiced appeared in the 1980s. Subcommandante Marcos, leader of the Zapatista-uprising in Chiapas, stated in 1996:

We do not struggle to take power; we struggle for democracy, liberty, and justice. Our political proposal is the most radical in Mexico (perhaps in the world, but it is still too soon to say). It is so radical that the entire traditional political spectrum (right, center left and those of one or the other extreme) criticise us and walk away from our delirium. It is not our arms which make us radical; it is the new political practice which we propose and in which we are immersed with thousands of men and women in Mexico and the world: the construction of a political practice which does not seek the taking of power but the organisation of society (Marcos, 1996).

Online/Social Media Activism

Online activism, can be defined as any form of activism that applies advanced technologies in the form of the internet and other forms of communication to elicit an action or for advocacy (Chon & Park, 2020). It also refers to when individuals use the internet or social media to support or promote a cause that is of concern to them, such as signing petitions, sharing information, or participating in online campaigns. Studies (such as Chon & Park, 2020) suggest that these have become a huge platform for advocating for change, as they provide access to a larger group of people and individuals. Social media, falls under online activism, as a medium that applies advanced communication and social interaction tools for activism (Lee, 2018). The use of online mediums like social media platforms has become popular in recent times, both as a means of getting support for a certain cause, as well as taking action on the cause (Wang, Yang & Thorson, 2021).

To examine the extent of the power inherent in the use of social media platforms for activism, one can look at the Egyptian uprising, the #metoo movement, the #blacklivematter movement, the LGBTQ+ advocacy, and the #FixTheCountry movement. These clear examples provide evidence to the fact that online activism, using social media platforms are very vital in mobilising and enforcing change within the political, social, environmental, and economic landscape of every country. According to statistics from Serrano (2020), 90% of forms of activism start from social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook, with proponents advocating for a certain change within society. Also, evidence suggests that more than 70% of these movements gain momentum and causes a lot of disruptions that promote change within society. In most forms, these are called social media campaigns (Smith & Ferfuson, 2010).

Sen et al. (2020) opine that social media activism is a relatively novel form of activism that has taken the world by storm. It has also been nicknamed the 'hashtag activism' where people express their opinions and views on contentious issues creating arguments and further contentions. Using these platforms, research indicates that people, organisations and governments, are able to create awareness about issues, through videos, posts, and graphics, amongst others. According to a study published by Pew Research (2020), the popularity of social media reached an all-time high during the Blacks Lives Matter Movement, which relied on social media for its mobilisation and attention seeking strategies. The data showed that the hashtag was used more than 47 million times on Twitter from 26th May to 7th June, 2021 showing how powerful social media activism is.

Additionally, writing petitions and open letters have been a medium used by activists to drive home an idea, advocate for a change, and to help change the opinions of people about an issue (Blee, 2017). This form of activism is used in pressuring corporations, public officials, and other people at the helm of authority. However, the efficacy of such platforms relies on the number of signatories to the letter and/or petition, due to the fact that the more the number, the more attention it gets (Sarathchandra & Haltinner, 2020). This form of activism is mostly captured under the online/social media activism due to the fact that petitions and letters are likely to gather a lot of signatories when it is sent through social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Gofundme, and emails (Siribi, 2021). Moreover, they have been noted to be beneficial as it can reach a lot of people and gather a lot of support within a short period of time. A case in point, was when about 5,000 mothers came together to sign a petition to remove Rick Ross, an American musician, as a brand ambassador for Adidas, due to certain statements that he made (Sandbrook et al., 2019). In Ghana, such petitions do exist but mostly involve the petitioning of the law courts, and other institutions like the Special Prosecutor's office, CHRAJ, and the government.

The benefits associated with the used of social media platforms for activism are enormous. According to statistics, social media is a much larger group of people, thus getting the required reaction from a broad range of groups, individuals, institutions, and governments (Wang et al., 2021). This increases the information shared, explanations made and discussions carried out with the purpose of reducing the wrong notions attached to a certain issue, a case in point is the LGBTQ+ (Nyanang, 2021). Additionally, using social media allows people to express themselves as they seek recognition, redress, and support, thus

reducing the repression that they feel when they voice out their opinions. It further gives everyone a voice. Furthermore, evidence suggests that social media reaches a much younger generation between the ages of 18- 45, thus creating more influence and desired social change (O'Brien et al., 2018). Likewise, social media platforms create a lot of engagement, which is impossible with the traditional media, due to the enhanced interactions and communication that it allows (Wang et al., 2021).

Contrarily, the application of social media in activism has its disadvantages. Studies have shown that social media activism cannot be effective without the added traditional form of activism (Ousey & Kubrin, 2018). The researchers are of the view that posting videos and graphics, as well as using hashtags, may only end up as a post without any real-world change or action. That is to say, creating hashtags like #FixTheCountry and #blacklivesmatter does not change the problem that occurs in real life without people actually taking the needed steps to push for more physical activity. What is more, the application of social media in activism has been noted to be performative rather than action oriented (Oppong, 2018). This creates the view that social media activism, may be appropriate for interaction, influencing, attention seeking, and mobilisation, and without the needed action it becomes useless.

Advocacy

The term "advocacy" has many contemporary meanings and it is often used interchangeably with similar words such as "lobbying" and "political activism" by different authors in various fields. Pekkanen and Smith (2014) have shown that advocate behavior is generally resistant to scientific analysis

for a number of key reasons. That is, advocacy is difficult (1) to measure because it involves many actions (Salamon & Geller, 2008) and (2) to determine causality. Some scholars use the term advocacy to describe what others call “lobbying” (Bass et al., 2007). Beth Leech (2010) argues that a broad definition is needed about lobbying. On the other hand, Salamon and Geller (2008) make an analytic distinction between "political lobbying" and "lobbying". By their definition, "political advocacy" is the most general term and "aims to influence government policy at the federal, state, or local level and may include a wide range of activities" including conducting research on public issues, writing opinions on public policy issues, building coalitions, or participating in a working group to form views on a policy issue. Lobbying is a specific subset of political advocacy and involves communicating an organisation's views to political decision-makers, either directly (directly lobbying) or by public mobilisation (popular lobbying). Salamon and Geller (2008) also point out that the key difference between lobbying and other forms of policy advocacy is that lobbying involves taking and promoting a position specific legislation. Bass et al. (2014) explain that lobbying and policy advocacy are often seen as synonymous policy, but advocacy is a broader concept related to lobbying.

Policy advocacy has changed dramatically over the past two decades. One of the most important changes has been the emergence of the Internet and related technologies as a ubiquitous and interconnected platform for information, expression, and political participation. In many societies, citizens are given immediate access to political news and views via desktop and laptop computers, smartphones and tablets, as well as the ability to participate in voting and launching campaigns through these devices and social media services such

as Facebook and Twitter. Political activists have also used social media services and tried to exploit their technological means to their advantage (Obar, Zube & Lampe, 2012). By reducing the cost of participation for both individuals and organisations, these services enable activists to connect with supporters faster, coordinate actions more effectively, and raise funds from multiple supporters and expand their tactical portfolio (Borge & Cardenal, 2011).

Despite the beneficial ways activists can use social media, some researchers have raised concerns that social media services may increasingly influence the way citizens and activists engage in politics online through specific techniques and policies they choose to accomplish a phenomenon that can sometimes disrupt the work of activists and activist organisations (MacKinnon, 2012; Youmans & York, 2012). Such disruptions can have significant consequences for the conduct of advocacy, especially if they become widespread and systematic.

The widespread use of the Internet has prompted not only changes in the way organisations and individuals conduct operations, but also academic debates about the specific impact of the Internet on operational practice. Depending on who is making the argument, the internet has spurred the emergence of internet-based advocacy organisations that are very different from their predecessors (Karpf, 2012); has facilitated the emergence of forms of networking activities that to varying degrees, move away from traditional organisations (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Shirky, 2008); pre-existing processes that simply improve or advocate are fundamentally reshaped, depending on who conducts the research and what they study (Earl & Kimport, 2011); had little effect in giving a new voice to a political system still dominated

by elites (Hindman, 2009); or create a misconception about what constitutes activism in the digital age (Gladwell, 2010).

Civil Unrest

Civil unrest contagion occurs when social, economic and political tensions gradually build up and are spontaneously released in the form of short-term social unrest in the immediate and distant vicinity vulnerable to social, economic and political stress (Biggs, 2005; Moore, 1978; Perrot, 1987; Polleta, 1998; Scarman, 1981). These troubles led to important socio-cultural changes throughout history. Examples include the spread of discontent in France in 1848, spreading throughout most of Europe and parts of Latin America; wave of urban racial riots in the United States in the 1960s; and anti-communist uprisings in 1989 in many Central and Eastern European countries, typified by the fall of the Berlin Wall. More recently, social unrest has spread rapidly throughout the Arab world - from nonviolent protest movements in Tunisia and Egypt that toppled long-standing dictatorships, to a protest movement developed into a real civil war in Libya. These events of social unrest ranged from civil wars, revolutions, and coups that killed millions to relatively peaceful forms of internal conflict, such as anti-government protests, riots, and general strike (Dowe et al., 2001; Gurr, 1970; Quinault & Stephenson, 1974; Rude, 1964; Scarman, 1981; Waltin & Seddon, 1994). A relevant question from the perspective of large-scale social dynamics and policymaking is what causes the extent and spread of civil unrest. Social unrest is attributed to a variety of social, political, economic and environmental causes, including racial and ethnic tensions (McAdam, 1983), food scarcity, and rising food prices (Dowe et al. 2001; Gurr, 1970; Quinault & Stephenson, 1974; Rude, 1964; Scarman, 1981;

Waltin & Seddon, 1994), international commodity price movements (Arezki & Bruckner, 2011; Bruckner & Ciccone, 2010), shock economic (McAdam, 1983), climate change and precipitation shocks (Burke, 2009; Zhang et al., 2011) and demographic changes (Goldstone, 1993). Despite these conditions, it was found that external causes were not necessary to explain the observed scale of nearly a century of riots and mass protests around the world. Instead, an elaborate explanation of the dynamics of social unrest is given on the assumption that general unrest is the result of internal positive feedback processes and effects cascading response in the form of social contagion and diffusion over spatially interdependent regions connected by social networks and mass media. From national political upheavals, such as protests in Thailand, Spain, Turkey, and Brazil, to revolutionary waves, such as the Arab Spring and Occupy movements, the early 2010s saw many parts of the world engage in a controversial policy to oppose authoritarianism and demand social change. During these civil uprisings, mass demonstrations, riots and even civil war broke out sporadically, affecting civilian and military activities in the affected areas. Policymakers have struggled to anticipate the development of civil unrest and initiate effective preparedness and mitigation efforts. These constraints prompted research to predict short-term peaks in civil unrest (Camton et al., 2013).

Research indicates that social media played an important role in the Arab Spring uprisings (Howard et al., 2011), where their impact is partly due to their function as a platform for information dissemination (Stepanova, 2011). For example, positive flows of information regarding the revolution have been detected among several types of Twitter users, including activists, bloggers, and

journalists (Lotan, 2011). Social media provides a space to express collective dissent (Aouragh & Alexander, 2011), shape political debates (Howard et al., 2011) and organise political debates and mass demonstrations (Stepanova, 2011). From the perspective of resource mobilisation theory, social media facilitates large-scale mobilisation (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011) so that the revolution takes place “as soon as possible” (Stepanova, 2011). Furthermore, evidence suggests that real-world events of civil unrest often spike in revolutionary conversations online (Bastos, Mercea & Charpentier, 2015; Howard et al., 2011). As a vehicle for disruptive conversations, opinions, and sentiments during the Arab Spring, we found locally generated social media content the right source from which to measure characteristics of public behaviors. The foregoing popular uprisings have one feature in common: they have been made public through social media (e.g. Twitter). Evidence indicates that activists and other participants used social media during the civil unrest to express political views, converse with fellow citizens, and organise events in the future (Aouragh & Alexander, 2011; Howard et al., 2011; Lotan et al., 2011; Stepanova, 2011;). Research, mainly from computer science, shows a predictive relationship between social media use and offline activities (Bastos, Merc  a & Charpentier, 2015; Boecking, Hall & Schneider, 2011; Kallus, 2014; Ramakriahman et al., 2015; Steinert-Threlkeld et al., 2015;). Studies in political science have investigated the correlation between an individual's involvement in offline political participation and their online activism behavior (Christensen, 2011; Conroy, Feezell & Guerrero, 2012; Valenzuela, 2013).

Citizen Journalism

The definition of citizen journalism (CJ) is as diverse as the names by which it is known. Guerrilla, networked, participatory, street or open-source journalism. Bowman and Willis (2003, p. 54) describe citizen journalism as “the act of citizens or groups of citizens who actively participate in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information.” CJ is a rapidly evolving form of journalism in which members of the public take the lead in reporting the news and voicing their opinions about events within their communities. It is news from the people, and for the people. Citizen journalists are independent, freelance citizen reporters. They are not constrained by traditional journalism processes and methods and typically work without editorial oversight. Citizen journalists collect, process, research, report, analyse, and publish news and information, most often using a variety of Internet-enabled technologies (Ross & Cormier, 2010).

In January 2011, a press release from the Jamaican Constabulary Communication Network (CCN) indicated that a man had been shot dead after assaulting police. But it did not take long for citizens of the country to start circulating video footage telling a different story. Footage shows a man allegedly attacking police, apparently writhing in pain, being beaten with police batons and eventually lying on the ground, subdued and unarmed (Barnes, 2012). The identities of the citizens who videotaped the images that led to the arrest of the two police officers have never been released despite from a complaints from law enforcement officials. This Jamaican citizen's action highlights the fact that information and communication tools such as mobile phones and the Internet provide unprecedented access to information. The

uploading of photos and videos to blogs, forums and the Internet is now called “citizen journalism” as opposed to traditional mainstream or professional journalism.

The idea behind CJ is that people with no professional or formal training in journalism, using the tools of modern technology and the almost limitless reach of the internet, find this kind of journalism thriving. It is about getting the chance to create content that will not be ripped off beyond the scope of professional journalism.

The goal of this type of exercise is to provide independent and broadly relevant information that is important for democratic societies (Barnes, 2012). When comparing these two concepts, it is important to recognise that one of the main drivers of CJ is the ability to disseminate information on the fly. When the World Trade Center in New York was bombed on September 11, 2001, photographs taken by ordinary citizens with their mobile devices showed the horrific event minutes before the traditional news media reached the scene of the event. Traditional media relied heavily on community media to put together pieces as they evolved (Barnes, 2012).

In 2004, when many countries in Southeast Asia were ravaged by a tsunami that claimed thousands of lives, in the early days before the mainstream media could send their reporters in, they relied almost exclusively on the photos taken by people with phones to paint a big picture for their audience (Barnes, 2012). In 2005, when Hurricane Katrina ravaged parts of the East Coast of the United States, it was social media that brought some of the graphics and field situations to the world's attention before journalists with large audiences like

CNN's Anderson Cooper can fly to these regions to bring reports to the world's attention (Barnes, 2012).

During the 2009 upheavals in Iran about the presidential election, when the mainstream media was banned from entering and recording events, some writers began talking about a Twitter revolution, as the networks mainstream media such as CNN (Cable News Network), MSNBC (Microsoft and National Broadcasting Company), BBC (British Broadcasting Company), CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System) and others have relied on information from social media such as Twitter for their information (Barnes, 2012).

CJ issues have not been adequately addressed and communication scholars have focused their investigations on traditional media. While there are some studies examining different aspects of citizen journalism (e.g. Goyanes, 2020; Salaudeen, 2021), and others focusing on conflict-related matters (e.g. Durante and Zhuravskaya, 2018; Hoxha and Hanitzsch, 2018; Zahoor and Sadiq, 2021), thus leaving many aspects unexamined, there is a gap in the literature with the rise of using social media and internet sources as news outlets (Raza et al., 2021). The current research aims to investigate how citizen journalists employ mobile devices to mobilise the masses for activism. In many cases, mass media scholars cannot find appropriate methodological and theoretical frameworks for analysing online users' behaviour and changing attitudes when dealing with such journalistic practices (Borah, 2011, 2017; Neuman & Guggenheim, 2011). Moreover, these scholars do not agree on one perspective regarding citizen journalism in terms of definition, boundaries, and nature. This in turn makes the task more difficult to understand the limits of CJ

and reveal the true nature of such interaction between different online users (Naab & Sehl, 2016).

The phenomenon of CJ is constantly changing due to the nature of the newly generated content, and therefore a deep understanding of this phenomenon requires a correct selection of the intended approach that is related to it. In the context of citizens as journalists, there should be a personal contribution or a creative effort to consider such practices as a form of CJ. We know that traditional media content is produced and disseminated by media institutions that have different regulations and different editorial policies. However, in CJ, the generated content becomes personal or non-institutional (Radsch, 2016; Vickery & Wunsch-Vincent, 2007). Most amateurs produce, edit, and broadcast such content independently and without contracting with professional media organisations.

CJ is based on an important assumption or principle in which the media content presented to the public does not depend on official sources or institutions but rather is produced and reproduced individually and then passed through a non-linear process. Therefore, CJ provides people with a wider diversity of voices and alternatives than news organisations and other media outlets could deliver (Allen & Thorsen, 2009; Singer et al., 2011). In this case, it is a dynamic process in which online users can communicate their messages and interpret different forms of content without facing bureaucratic barriers, regulations, editorial policies, and other demands that professional journalism work requires. It is important to highlight that there is a significant difference between CJ and traditional media in terms of professionalism (Allen & Thorsen, 2009; Singer et al., 2011). Many users who produce and publish CJ content are

unprofessional, and known as amateurs; whereas in traditional media, one of the conditions is journalists should be professional or at least have previous experience with professional journalism (Allen & Thorsen, 2009; Singer et al., 2011). This distinction gives professional journalists much more advantages than amateurs have in terms of the level of influence, objectivity, and ability to mobilise public opinion at both internal and external levels.

In addition, many professional journalists may not trust the content generated by citizen journalists because to them, it often lacks accuracy, professionalism, and objectivity which has resulted in various challenges to accepting or using such content in their professional journalistic work. These challenges include privacy issues, national security, and libel laws, as well as the complexities of the editorial policy of their media organisations (Naab & Sehl, 2016; Vos et al., 2012). Media ethics is one of the most important issues on which a great debate is being raised among communication scholars. Some argue that amateurs who produce and publish digital content do not take into account digital media ethics. They might not have sufficient knowledge about the principles and standards related to professional journalistic work such as impartiality, objectivity, independence, balance, verification, credibility, and so on (Tolmie et al., 2017). This problem becomes more sophisticated in light of the absence of global standards and principles that clarify the philosophy of professional journalism as well as the absence of common ground to develop digital media ethics under the umbrella of freedom of speech, democracy, and pluralism (Ryan, 2001; Singer, 2007; Singer & Ashman, 2009; Ward, 2005). Following the foregoing, it is necessary to shed light on the nature of the relationship, roles, connections, and non-professional practices related to CJ

that bind all users in one system. Strictly speaking, there is an essential need to determine the nature of the information that users share and generate through various CJ platforms. This will certainly lead us to identify the power of the impact of the messages disseminated by different online users on both local and international levels. It is also important to investigate the extent to which CJ has contributed to activism on online spaces.

A Short History of CJ

Some scholars trace the European and American roots of CJ to pamphlets of the 17th and 18th centuries (Gillmore, 2006). What makes it so much more powerful in the 21st century; however, it is the speed, low cost and global reach that topics can be included on national and international news agendas, including those that political officials want to be left out (IMC) (Jurrat, 2011).

At the same time, many mainstream media outlets are under financial pressure, especially the journalism industry, and have cut jobs in investigative and foreign agencies. In some countries, including the United States, many local newspapers are closing. People increasingly feel that the highly controlled and centralised mass media no longer provide information relevant to their lives but only pursue commercial and political goals (Dueze, 2009). In countries with repressive governments, citizens may become weary of the official information provided to them, as the internet provides an alternative source for state-controlled propaganda. This is where citizen journalists can fill the void.

CJ achieved international fame in times of crisis: During the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York and the Pentagon, he was among the first to visit the scene to obtain witness statements; the section was supplemented by news

reports. Then, during the 2004 Asian tsunami, for the first time the term “CJ” was used, the photos and videos that tourists uploaded to their personal blogs were used on television and in print (Jurrat, 2011). However, it was not until the 2005 London bombings that the people affected by the bombing sent their pictures and personal testimony to the mass media, making them realise the potential of the user-generated content (UGC) in situations where their reporters could not be available in time. As a result, many news outlets now encourage their readers to upload photos and information to their websites or create websites specifically for CJ (Jurrat, 2011).

Citizen Journalism: Theoretical background

CJ is a relatively new phenomenon that is gaining exceptional momentum given the high potential impact its content is likely have. Alexander and Levine (2008) explain that the web 2.0 platform’s two features of micro-content and social software have been very elemental in the development of CJ. The micro-content feature enables users to create small chunks of information whose storage does not require much space and whose uploading does not necessitate any web design expertise. The second feature, social software, refers to social media which are organised around people. Both of these aspects create, according to Alexander and Levine (2008, p. 79), “a series of synergistic effects, including conversations that occur across multiple sites and with multiple conversations”. Likewise, Turcilo (2017) buttresses the significance of the online media aspects in sustaining and enhancing CJ. These characteristics include firstly, the attenuation of the domination of institutionalised news sources; secondly, the ability of collecting and sharing content over multiple channels and forms; thirdly, interactivity and participation; fourthly, the

possibility of anybody publishing content; fifthly, user linkages and the possibility of striking discussions ultimately. Flew (2008) believes that the initial inauguration of CJ goes back to 1999 with the development of open publishing architecture by Mathew Arnison and others involved in the ‘Active Sydney Group’, as well as the adoption of open source models like Independent Media Centers (*Indymedia*), which was a milestone that enabled novel forms of news production. Flew also mentions another event that was a turning point in the propagation of CJ: mainly the launch of the Korean website *ohmyNews.com* by the journalist Oh Yeon-Ho who got dissatisfied with Korea’s conservative traditional media. *OhmyNews*’ motto: ‘every citizen is a reporter’ that encourages everyone having some stories to share them with others. This, in fact, points out to the basic underlying features of CJ we bring up in the following definitions:

Dwivedi (2013) states that, the term CJ was coined by Clemencia Rodriguez (2001) who defines it as “The transformative processes they bring about within participants and their communities”. Rodriguez illustrates that CJ is a citizen-generated content that emerged as a response to exclusive mainstream media that most often ignores some social segments and public interests. Moreover, Kolodzy (2006) expounds that CJ is the consequence of “a citizen or citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information”. Allan (2006) also advocates a corresponding account, chiefly as “anyone with something to say and access to the right software can be a publisher, a pundit and an observer of events great or small”. Here, both authors stress the shift of audiences from passive receivers to active, interactive and productive agents; hence, Rosen’s

(2008) account that CJ occurs “when the people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another”. These press tools, include publishing software, digital cameras and video camcorders, and social media websites enable the posting and upload of audio and video clips, reports, pictures on different blogs and forums. This is why, Allen (2009), who uses the labels ‘grassroots journalism and participatory journalism’ stresses the comprehensive and unexclusive features of CJ when he observes that it “includes someone who happens to be in the right place at the wrong time with their smartphone in their pocket and has the presence of mind to bear witness to something unfolding before them”. Indeed, CJ allows any individual who possesses any of the afore-mentioned means to broadcast their content online and make their voices publicly heard. Furthermore, Roos (2021) maintains that it is the members of the public who contribute into CJ rather than the media professionals; henceforth, his assertion that “CJ refers to any type of news gathering and reporting, writing and publishing articles about a newsworthy topic, or posting photographs or videos of a newsworthy event that is done by members of the general public rather than the professional news agencies commonly referred to as ‘mainstream media’”. In other words, it is common untrained people who take part in CJ by sharing distinct content forms which they deem worthwhile.

However, the expansive opportunities CJ procures entail not only significant advantages but serious drawbacks as well. First of all, it enables the underprivileged and the underrepresented, who are often marginalised in mainstream media, to make their voices heard. This is of paramount importance since it gives ordinary people the possibility to challenge censorship and

repression often set by authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. In this respect, Yagodin (2014) identifies the practice of “offshore blogging” wherein offshore bloggers write about and their country’s events but from outside their homeland. In other words, CJ is an enhancement of the standards of democracy as it embodies the ideal of freedom of expression. Consequently, citizen journalists subvert and transcend media organisations’ monopoly and hegemony over news production. Nevertheless, CJ, in the wrong hands, often turns out a golden opportunity for the spread of hate speech, misinformation and libelous statements, which may ruin individuals and businesses’ reputation, nurture fear, instigate hatred, trigger uprisings and threatens peoples’ lives as well governments’ stability. In short, CJ is a double-edged sword whose usages comprise both conspicuous benefits and deep-seated disadvantages.

Non-institutional forms of CJ are extra-institutional, placing the individual at the center of action. This seems to be the concept of CJ that easily fits into different forms of social media, where private citizens use a combination of platforms to create content and distribute it as widely as possible. Thus, non-institutional CJ refers to such individual-centered citizen journalism. To illustrate non-institutional CJ, it has identified how such CJ seems to thrive in a voluntary situation, without any professional constraints. Thus, non-institutional CJ is highly personalised and therefore self-regulating (Banda, 2010).

The subject of this self-regulation is the individual citizen journalist, not a high-level organisation outside of him. Institutional CJ, on the other hand, refers to the type of CJ that has some form of organisational structure or capacity constraints, supplemented by even minimal external constraints. Personalisation

has always been an important aspect of the practice, engaging them in conversational communication with more or less recipients of their content (Banda, 2010).

Mobile Journalism

Mobile handsets have rapidly evolved beyond traditional telephones or even simple written communication to more complex cross-platform delivery systems; some of the latest smartphone models are portable digital media production and data transmission systems with configurations of features such as the ability to capture still images and video, media editing software, exchange media files, global positioning satellite receiver, music player, access to radio and television content, email and web browsers, databases, address books, calendars, clocks, games and more other downloadable and upgradeable software applications (Cameron, 2006).

One of the first practical examples of Mobile Journalism (Mojo) described in the document revolves around a test toolkit developed by Reuters. This kit is based on the Nokia N95 smartphone, a small tripod, a compact wireless keyboard, a solar battery charger and an external microphone. In late 2007, a number of Reuter's journalists used the toolkit to provide field reports published on a website created specifically for the project, and although it is no longer active, it is often cited in the descriptions of mobile news-gathering startups. Reuters journalists used mobile press kits as part of their coverage of the Beijing Olympics, despite plans to distribute mobile press kits to delegates at Democratic conventions in the United States in 2008 was hampered by the lack of 3G and wireless service at the conference venues (Oliver, 2008). *Washington Post* reporter Ed O'Keefe used his cell phone at the Democratic

convention to capture Barack Obama's endorsement by Hilary Clinton - the scene was later edited with footage obtained to broadcast on television to form an online report (O'Keefe, 2008).

Video is one of the key mobile phone features that govern MoJo's current operations. The emergence of commercial services and applications such as Kyte's (<http://www.kyte.com>) mobile production app for iPhone or Symbian 60 device that facilitates field reporting and dissemination of this content across multiple platforms such as broadcast, live online and mobile. One example is *Fox News*' use of Kyte to cover the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti (Hall, 2010). In another example, the *Voice of Africa* mobile journalism project, which has been active since 2007 describes its reporters as "camjos" (videographers) despite being equipped with portable alternative to expensive computers and cameras (Nyirubugara, 2008). Australian scholar Stephen Quinn (2008) described the subsequent moves towards mobile journalism, all of which centered on video recording as a key element.

According to Marymount (2006), the increased use of mobile technology by journalists has also begun to raise questions about how best to integrate this form of news gathering into existing publishing practices. To date, much of the professional activity of mobile journalism seems to have come from print newsrooms that are experimenting with adding multimedia elements to their web publications. Mobile journalists (MoJos) are generally considered to be able to react quickly to news events, often operating away from the newsroom environment for long periods of time. For example, the freelance journalist model responding to grassroots issues and working with the local community was explored at The News-Press, a large format newspaper in Fort

Myers, Florida. While News-Press MoJos does not rely solely on mobile phone technology, they believe that separating journalists from the newsroom can increase their ability to work more closely with the communities in which they operate:

Their job is to share what people are talking about across the fence. Some of it is information provided by our MoJos - updates on traffic jams, elementary school water leaks, opening of a new restaurant. More information comes from readers - their comments on this new restaurant, speculations about who will win the race for mayor, photos of their children's soccer game. Our goal is to give our readers everything they want to know about their community (Marymont, 2006).

Defining and conceptualising street demonstrations

Pierre Favre (1990) is among the first to systematically study street demonstrations – describes how demonstrations, their composition, their participants' motives and mobilisation trajectories are social phenomena that develop in multiple interactions between different actors. These different actors are either directly present or involved at a distance in the moment (ibid. see also Fillieule 1997; Fillieule & Tartakowsky, 2013). Continuing Favre's pioneering work, Olivier Fillieule compared street demonstrations in various French cities. He defined street demonstrations as “any temporary occupation by a number of people of an open space, public or private, which directly or indirectly includes the expression of political opinions” (1997). Nine years later, Casquete (2006) defined street demonstrations as “collective gatherings in a public space whose aim it is to exert political, social and/or cultural influence on authorities, public

opinion and participants through the disciplined and peaceful expression of an opinion or demand.” Street demonstrations are vehicles for expressing political opinions, ideas, and beliefs; they aim their political communication at authorities, the media, and the public. Thus, demonstrations are ritual performances (Casquete, 2006; Eyerman, 2006). Eyerman (2006) argues that street demonstrations are ritual political street theatre. In the expressive dramatisation, he argues, the values, images, and desires of the movement are revealed and membership solidified. The ritual practices help to “frame” understanding by linking present events and practices to those of the past and the future. To understand how street demonstrations are different from other crowds, gatherings, and riots, we turn to the work of McPhail and Wohlstein (1983). These authors argue that the traditional term “crowd” frequently conveys an “illusion of unanimity,” instead, they use the term “gathering” to refer to two or more persons present at one time in a public place, e.g. on sidewalks. If these gatherings protest, it is a demonstration, if it is a festivity or celebration, it is called a parade (e.g. May Day Parade). The term “riots,” finally, they describe as gatherings consisting of individual or collective violence against persons or property. Note that gatherings may turn into demonstrations (on spontaneity, see Snow & Moss, 2014) and demonstrations may turn into riots (McPhail & McCarthy, 2005). To complicate issues even further, hooliganism – violence committed by sport fans – may be very close to riots. This is because hooligans not only use violence in their attempts to humiliate competing gangs who support other club teams, but also to attract attention to their social background and to express grievances related to their social position (Dunning, Murphy, & Waddington, 2002, cited in Vliegenthart, 2013). Street

demonstrations are the same and different every time they occur. The late Charles Tilly would have seconded that. Street demonstrations, according to Tilly, are examples of contentious performances (2008) obeying the rules of what Tilly called “strong repertoires.” Participants are “enacting existing scripts within which they innovate, mostly only in small ways” (ibid. 17). Wright’s (1978) fieldwork observations of crowds, including demonstrations and riots, are of interest here. He differentiates between two broad categories of crowd behaviors: crowd activities and task activities. “Crowd activities” refer to the redundant behavior seemingly common to all incidents of crowds, such as assembling, milling, and departure. McPhail and Wohlstein (1983) delve even deeper, identifying collective locomotion, collective orientation, collective gesticulation, and collective vocalisation among the types of crowd behaviors “repeatedly observed across a variety of gatherings, demonstrations, and some riots” (McPhail & Wohlstein, 1983). To get at the variation in types of crowds, attention must be turned to what Wright conceptualised as “task activities.” These refer to joint activities that are particular to and necessary for the attainment of a specific goal or the resolution of a specific problem. Examples of task activities include mass assembly with speechmaking, picketing, temporary occupations of premises, lynching, taunting and harassment, property destruction, looting, and sniping (Snow & Owens, 2013). It is the similarity of crowd activities and the variation in task activities that makes those street demonstrations the same and/or different every time they occur. Demonstrations may have different functions. Casquete (2006) mentions three functions: (1) demonstrations are staged to persuade authorities, e.g. politicians, employers or CEOs, directors, and to acquire and exert influence for social or

political change by influencing decision-making processes; (2) demonstrations also allow actors to vent frustration. Participants benefit from demonstrating by publicly voicing their anger, indignation, or moral discontent; and (3) demonstrations also serve to consolidate participants. Ritual behavior such as protest demonstrations serves to build, convey, and conserve a sense of “we” and fosters sustained commitment among participants in a social movement. Most demonstrations fulfill all three functions, but some functions will likely prevail under specific circumstances. For example, if targeted government actors are ready to make concessions, the persuasive function will probably dominate. All in all, there is both similarity and variation in how street demonstrations look and feel in their atmosphere (e.g. Eyerman 2006; van Leeuwen et al. 2015), how they are organised (Boekkooi, Klandermans & Stekelenberg 2011; Boekkooi 2012; Klandermans, Kriesi, & Tarrow, 1988), the composition of the crowd (Walgrave & Rucht, 2010), their crowd and task activities (McPhail & Wohlstein, 1983; Wright, 1978) and who they are targeting (Verhulst, 2011). Also, protest venues and even weather conditions lead to variance across demonstrations. Moreover, demonstrations can be ritualised, peaceful, or violent, with or without a permit, and with or without peaceful interactions with the police. Demonstrations are usually staged by a coalition of organisers, but the composition of the coalition varies and the composition of the crowd on the streets varies with the coalition (Boekkooi, 2012). For example, in Spain, the coalition that organised the demonstrations against the war in Iraq in 2003 consisted of major political and social organisations (Walgrave & Rucht, 2010), while the coalition staging the same events in the Netherlands consisted of small radical left organisations. As a

consequence, the composition of the crowds demonstrating in the two countries differed significantly (Boekkooi et al., 2011). Individual participation in demonstrations is the consequence of an interaction between individuals and collective actors such as parties, interest groups, and movement organisations. The more individuals are included in such organisations and networks, the more they get involved in their activities. The interaction is shaped by the wider political and socioeconomic conditions prevailing in a country, such as the maturity of democracy and the prevailing economic circumstances.

Regarding participation in protest, it was widely anticipated that the internet would facilitate the diffusion of alternative forms and avenues of political communication (Bimber, 2003; Mosca, 2008). It would give people opportunities to communicate with political organisations and take part in political actions outside of mainstream politics. Such expectations have been grounded in empirical findings suggesting that rather than disengaging from politics altogether, citizens in liberal democracies have been making use of alternative avenues for expressing their political grievances (Dalton, 2006; Rodgers, 2003). Indeed, protest continues to be a prominent outlet for the popular articulation of political concerns. In the latest instalments, it has been a response to the handling of the global financial crisis by liberal-democratic institutions illustrated by the student protests in the UK (Lewis and Walker, 2010), or the popular upheaval against long-standing dictatorships in the Middle East. Computer-mediated communication (CMC) has been widely viewed as central to the orchestration of these latest protests (Jenkins, 2011; Zhuo et al., 2011) and appears to figure ever larger in the popular reassertion of democratic sovereignty (Castells, 2007, 2009). On the issue of how CMC is contributing to

participation in protest events run by Social Movement Organisations (SMOs); analysts have assessed the influence of the internet on the relationship between social movements and the mass media (Castells, 1997, 2007), and have considered the scope for alternative self-publication they offer social movements (Atton, 2004; Russell, 2005). Increasingly, SMOs may be in a position where they are able to circumvent the traditional filters of media institutions (Gitlin, 2003). Largely, this has been due to the fact that the internet has furnished SMOs with a capacity for mass communication rivalled only by broadcast media (Postmes & Brunsting, 2002). Through their internet use, SMOs may have made their public communication more effective while also enhancing their capacity to coordinate collective action (Ayres, 1999; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2002). CMC has concurrently helped diversify their action repertoires (Van de Donk et al., 2004) while also increasingly blurring notions of what constitutes political activism (McCaughey & Ayers, 2003). A gamut of online forms of activism – boycotts, hacktivism, petitions, sit-ins, strikes – have mushroomed and arguably broadened the field of contention to include the digital domain. Moreover, the internet seems to have allowed SMOs to come into closer contact with participants in their actions, transcending previous spatial, temporal and socio-cultural confines (Castells, 2009; Lievrouw, 2011; Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010). In the attempt to continue in this line of research, the current work enquires how effective CMC might act as a conduit for the mobilisation of new cohorts into protest events; for those cohorts to build a shared identity online and finally for them to contribute to changes in how SMOs running events are organised.

In the last decade, research on the significance of social media for activism, advocacy, and other civic engagement has received increased attention in communication studies. This scholarship has shed light on issues such as gender, feminism, racism, homophobia, xenophobia, Islamophobia, political accountability, and echoes Freelon et al.'s (2016) assertion that digital platforms "have become essential tools for 21st-century social movements." This body of work includes on the tent protest in Israel (Lev On, 2019), feminist social movements (Li et al., 2020), Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement (Bhatia, 2016), and the Arab Spring (Wolfsfeld, 2013).

Various studies in Africa have also examined how social media is influencing sociopolitical engagement and citizenship participation on the continent. Mutsvairo (2016), for instance, explores the potential of new media to transform online-based civil action across Africa using case studies such as the #BringBackOurGirls campaign in Nigeria and the #FeesMustFall protest in South Africa. This collection deconstructs digital activism in specific contexts and demonstrates how social media platforms are deployed by activists, pressure groups, and social movements to negotiate and advocate positive social change in Africa. Dwyer and Molony (2019) also investigate the sociopolitical and historical context of social networking sites in Tanzania, Somalia, Zimbabwe, and Kenya. These works explicate the impact of surveillance, cyber-crime, and cyber-activism on political participation, and reveals that social media often function to highlight existing power relations rather than oppose them. In addition, other research on digital activism in Africa has analysed advocacy and civic engagement in Ghana on Twitter (Nartey, 2022), social media soft power in Kenya and Nigeria (Adeiza & Howard, 2016), the use of

social media as a new source of empowerment in Algeria (Zaghlami, 2020), women and election activism in Uganda (Selnes & Orgeret, 2010), the use of “nano-media” (i.e., performances like political theater, murals, dance, and poetry) in social media activism in South Africa (Dawson, 2012), and cyber-protests in Zimbabwe (Mpofu & Mare, 2020).

Social Media and Mobilisation

It is important to note that every social movement and mobilisation of any kind, especially for collective action, is fueled by communication (Castells, 2007, 2009, 2012; Loader, 2008; Tilly & Wood, 2009; Treré, 2012). While traditional media championed this in the early stages of the evolution of media, technological advancements and the advent of the internet, most importantly, social media has charted a new path for social movements by not only reducing the cost of mobilisation, but also making it easier to mobilise ordinary citizens for collective action (Lopes, 2014; Boulianne, 2015), and to be witnessed by a global audience. Social movements or protesters as this study under investigation intends to argue, have leveraged social media as a mobilising structure to campaign since it allows unlimited amount of information, picture and videos sharing, and encourages engagement online. Sometimes by using Twitter chat, live events can be setup. Consequently, the relationship between social media and traditional media in social movements and protests is a symbiotic one, in that, although social media is now used extensively by social movements, they still rely on the traditional media, this assertion corroborates the earlier works (see Castells, 2007, 2009, 2012; Loader, 2008; Tilly & Wood, 2009; Treré, 2012). So, Castells (2007) for instance, argues that social media has recently been observed as the force behind the new wave of recent popular

protests movements, an assertion which Lim (2012) alluded to, and hence they share opinion with other scholars that it is sometimes referred to as digital activism (Joyce, 2010; Porta & Mosca, 2005; Tilly & Wood, 2009; Treré, 2012). Meanwhile, most of the literature on social movement have been criticised as being “one-medium bias”, because they present myopic perspectives of the information and communicative ecologies present in collective actions and thus, neglecting the ecologies of intertwined communication that could rather help understand the broader picture (McCurdy, 2011; Padovani, 2010; Treré, 2012), this current study focuses on the broad communication strategy adopted by the #FixTheCountry protest movement in mobilising and communicating their agenda for collective action in Ghana.

Furthermore, while social movement has been diversely defined in scholarly discourse, this study operationalises it as a “conscious, converted effort by ordinary people to change some aspect of their society by using extra-institutional means” as is the case or thinking of Goodwin and Jasper (2003). This may include, but not limited to signing petitions, volunteering to a civil society group and writing letters to political representatives (Lopes, 2014). The purpose of social movements which is often as a result of self-consciousness drives the unity among protesters to drive their course until its attainment (Tilly, 2004). Arguably, the new wave of discourse is motivated by the Arab Spring which had a global outlook (Lopes, 2014). The media often serves as the main conduit for social movement mobilisation and message validation. The media is used to persuade and court the sympathy of individuals by employing media techniques and strategies. This implies that, social media and networks are important to the success of social mobilisation because of their in-built

characteristics, and they are powered by the internet. Social media, unlike traditional media as this study maintains, has transformed the mobilisation process from an indirect one to a more direct one where people usually receive invites and information directly on their phones, making it efficient in disseminating information globally. Facebook and Twitter, for instance, are used to share posters, serve as reminders for events, and report on events in real time. It also creates an atmosphere for candid discussions on all matters. Hashtags such as #FixTheCountry used by social movements are also efficient ways of mobilising passive followers because as averred by Sketelenburg and Klandermas (2007), when people identify with a group, they tend to participate in that group's action. Thus, when passive followers see photos and videos of other friends and followers as members of social movements, there is the tendency that they may join the social movement and be in the next protest. As indicated earlier that social movement mobilisation and protests on social media are not new in Ghana, #FixTheCountry seems to be very different because it has garnered massive support from nationals of Ghana, both home and abroad, and tend to focus on the entire national economy instead of specific sector hence the need to interrogate its approaches in this study. In 2015, for instance, some celebrities and citizens voiced out their concerns and deep dissatisfaction about incessant electricity outages experienced in Ghana (dumsor, meaning on and off of electricity in the Akan language), using social media as mobilisation and protest tool. In the end, a peaceful night vigil was organised by these celebrities who invited other well-meaning Ghanaians to join them to demand an end to the power outage via their social media handles. In fact, the hashtag #dumsormuststop was retweeted over 274 thousand times by many Ghanaians

(Acquaye, 2015). In Ghana, governments and people in general react and respond to issues that trend on social media because of the act of citizen journalism. It has become difficult to ignore what goes on via social media, especially when it concerns the citizens. This brings to the fore, the need for government communicators not to underestimate the power of social media protest movements to undermine social movements, instead, use it to educate the populace to promote democracy and good governance in Ghana.

Moreover, mobile media and politics have been studied by new media scholars. As asserted by Siapera (2018) the context of mobile phones use point to a different kind of dynamic. Taking into consideration that smartphones are much cheaper and easier for accessing the internet, they represent the convergence of telephone, the computer and the camera, thereby allowing people to quickly and easily produce and circulate media content. Siaperra hence posits that mobile media is used for witnessing political event, playing surveillance function and authenticating political content. However, Siaperra posits that the commercialization of mobile media commons may prevent them from fulfilling their democratic potential.

To Linchua and Sey (2007), it is not therefore the media as such that 'cause' any kind of effects, but rather there is use, as embedded in existing socio-cultural and political contexts. In other words, mobile media influence politics in terms of mediation and not structure. In this case, political information such as about vigilantism can be circulated through mobile media but the nature as hierarchical may not change as a result of mobile media. Linchua Qiu and Sey (2007) argue that the use of mobile media affects secrecy of politicians' ad discloses private information.

Agar (2003) argues that the use of development of horizontal social networks that in political terms are critical of central authority. Argar (2003) argues that mobile media is a mundane means of communication in the USA or an agent of political change in the Philippines. For instance, the work of Joseph Estrada was largely due to protests organized and coordinated through SMS messages (Castells et al., 2007), the Seattle World Trade Organization protest in 1999 and the Athens riots in December 2008 among others were orchestrated by mobile media.

In his study, Howard and Rheingold (2008) discovered the use of mobile media for smart mob actions. Rheingold (2008) described mobile phone organized groups action as Smart mob or an intelligent swarm. Smart mob is mobile phone horizontal, network-style organization, characterized by lack of a central authority and by the autonomy of the 'subunits' that make up the network. This use of mobile media for smart mob is seen as always critical about central authority.

Anden-Papadopoulos (2014), the most widely known political use of mobile digital cameras is that of witnessing. Anden-Papadopoulos (2014) argues that the smartphone's digital camera has provided citizens with a powerful means for bearing witness to brutality, allowing for creation and instant sharing of persuasive personalize eyewitness records with mobile and globalised target population.

As included by Siaperra (2018), about the relationship between mobile media and politics that it seems that it is not politics as such that is 'democratized by mobile media in the hands of citizens, but its mediation. In other words, while

politics, at least formally, remains as hierarchical and closed as always, its mediation, or the ways in which we acquire information and form opinions about politics, can be seen as democratized in the sense that it is no longer the exclusive monopoly of the mainstream media, but it is shared by citizens.

Theoretical Frameworks

This section examines the various theories that underpin the study. According to Saranthchandra and Haltinner (2020), the theories of social activism can be grouped categorically into two, thus classical and the contemporary approaches. The classical theories are theories that were developed at the turn of the century and they have been observed to border on the causal mechanisms (Amenta, 2006). The main assumption underlining these theories is that social movements are based on structural strains. Thus, structural weaknesses such as rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, unemployment, corruption, and mismanagement of resources put people under subjective psychological pressure, which when a threshold is reached leads to tension within society (Amenta & Neal, 2010). The classical theories postulate that tensions in society, when it reaches a certain limit, leads to a disposition amongst the citizenry to engage in unconventional methods of political participation, such as picketing, demonstrations, and protesting. Examples of such theories are the DE individuation model, mass society theory, and relative deprivation theory, amongst others. However, these theories are limited as they have the assumption that protestors are irrational as they are acting out of frustration and emotions rather than being logical or rational (Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). By this, the study draws from the contemporary approaches, due to the challenges posed by the classical approaches.

The contemporary theories and approaches include structural approaches, resource mobilisation theory, social constructivist approaches, and the social movement impact theory, with all of them looking at social movements from a different perspective or angle (Blee, 2017). For purposes of this study, the researcher relies on the social movement impact theory (outcome theory), as its main intention is to assess the outcomes of activism on society, as well as the factors that led to those effects. This captures the letter and spirit of the study, as the study intends to examine the effect of activism on contentious issues from the social media standpoint of view.

Social Activism Theory

The constructivism school of thought gave rise to social activism. This theory is based on the assumption that "learning occurs in social situations where there exist joint activities, and through these activities, learners connect, communicate, and learn from one another. As a result of this, learners build their own world of knowledge (Tan, 2006). This theory was first developed by John Dewey between the years of 1859-1952, and through that, he has been referred to as "the grandfather of Constructivism" (Roblyer & Doering, 2010). Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky and John Dewey are the academics credited for being the pillars of the development of the social activism idea. Although Dewey primarily proposed this theory to help in research within the educational frame, the theory has also gained relevance in this current study.

John Dewey developed certain educational concepts that upheld the idea that "education must engage with and broaden experience" (Smith, 2011). Learning should be founded on experiences, said Dewey (Roblyer & Doering, 2010). Experience serves as the basis for learning, which in turn develops into

knowledge and competence (Conole et al., 2004). From the social perspective, learning through experience can reshaped individual performance and aid in resolving institutional challenges to bring about desired socio-economic development.

In an equal bid to theoretically ground the activities of social activism as an interdisciplinary concept, Bill Moyer in the 1980s, proposed a model of eight stages through which a typical movement [in this case the fix-the-country movement in Ghana] carries out a social protest through a collective nonviolent activity (Moyer et al., 2001). This theory is based on seven key strategic assumptions which state that:

1. Social movements have been proven to be powerful in the past, and hopefully they can be powerful in the future.
2. Social movements are at the centre of society. Social movements are based on society's most progressive values: justice, freedom, democracy and civil rights. Although they oppose the state or the government, social movements are promoting a better society, not working against it.
3. The real issue is "social justice" versus "vested interests". The movement works for social justice and those in power represent vested interests.
4. The grand strategy is to promote participatory democracy. Lack of real democracy is a major source of injustice and social problems. In the fight for the movement's goal, developing participatory democracy is key.
5. The target constituency is the ordinary citizen, who gives power to power holders by consent. The central issue in social movements is the struggle between the movement and power holders to win the support of

the majority of the people, who ultimately hold the power to preserve the status quo or create change.

6. Success is a long-term process, not an event. To achieve success, the movement needs to be successful in a long series of sub-goals.
7. Social movements must be nonviolent.

Aside the seven assumptions, one of the concepts that has widened and popularised the relevance of this theory is the eight steps of social movements proposed by Moyer. According to him, the first step of the movements is the *normal times*. This refers to a period before the situation that triggers social activism. The second step refers to *prove the failure of official institutions*: This is the period where social institutions responsible for maintaining the status quo are failing the citizens. *Ripening conditions* is the third step. It is the period where the failure of institutions is affecting individual lives at the micro and macro levels. The *take-off* is the period where citizens begin to mobilise themselves to agitate against the conditions because of the dreadful nature of the situations. The fifth step is the *perception of failure* where all the signs are obvious to citizens that the systems are not working. The sixth element is the *majority public opinion*. This is a poll of public opinion on the situation which serves as a support for social activism. While *success* denotes the point where publics engage in the protest or activism and gain approval and hearing, the eighth and the final element is what Moyer indicated as *continuing the struggle*. This is where activist mobilise more members to pursue the course of advocacy through social activism.

Participants in social movements were categorised by Moyer as citizens, rebels, change agents, and reformers. Each job has something to offer, but some

roles are more pertinent at various phases, for example, rebels at the take-off stage (Moyer, 2001). He places particular emphasis on "negative rebels," such as "personal opportunists" who pursue their own objectives. For campaigners, Moyer's model was helpful and realistic. It aids in the strategic thinking of activists. Through these categorisations, Moyer (2001) provides clear cut understanding of participant's attributes and level of commitment to social movement.

To further understand the nature of social activism, the hypothesis of Gene Sharp on "dynamics of nonviolent action" is worth adding (Sharp, 2013). According to Sharp, "nonviolent action is based on a postulation that: people occasionally act in ways that are prohibited and do not always do as they are instructed" (Sharp, 2013, p. 14). As Sharp emphasizes, nonviolent action refers to all forms of protest in which the protestors continue the struggle by refusing to abide by some laws without resorting to violence. People who reject passivity and acquiescence and consider struggle as important can carry out their conflict without resorting to violence by using nonviolent action (Sharp, 2013,).

Sharp divides nonviolent protest into three categories. The first category involves *symbolic measures* including speeches, petitions, demonstrations, vigils, teach-ins, mock awards, and renunciation of honors. The second actions include ways of *refusing to cooperate*, such as shunning, stopping sporting activities, staying in, rent strikes, refusing to sell property, withdrawing bank deposits, embargoes, peasant strikes, general strikes, boycotting elections, administrative stalling, and mutiny. Fasting, sit-ins, alternative communication networks, occupation of work sites, alternative marketplaces, and parallel governments are only a few of the intervention techniques offered by the third

action (Sharp, 2013). Furthermore, Sharp divides the techniques into three categories: noncooperation and nonviolent intervention, protest and persuasion, and protest (Sharp, 2013).

In applying social activism theory in the online setting, studies such as Summer and Harp (2012) found that offline activism comes after online activism. Sometimes the true change is brought by the manifestations on the streets. Therefore, being on the streets with the activists and seeing and analysing the circumstances via their perspectives is the most effective way to study social activism and its dimensions. According to Hirzalla and van Zoonen (2009), offline and online activism are converging. Furthermore, Mercea (2012) highlighted the involvement of online network users in offline protests.

Online activism has been subjected to some criticism. Internet activism is believed to be ineffective at achieving political goals as compared to traditional forms of activism, according to proponents of the slacktivism idea (Vargas, 2013). Political engagement without a strong commitment from the members is known as slacktivism. Putnam (2010) made the argument that the Internet might make it harder for people to interact socially and might have a detrimental effect on how much a citizen participates in politics. Despite these, Bennett (2012) maintained that the internet is a crucial instrument for those who were already engaged in political activity offline to also engage in such activity online.

The present study adopts the social activism theory on two major bases: methodological and theoretical. On methodological basis, it is expected to guide the researcher to understand the critical period of online social activism. According to Moyer's (2001) stages, the critical period is usually from the take-

off to the struggle continues. This means that data collection should focus on data that came within these periods. On the theoretical basis, guided the researcher to understand and classify the social activists into their various categories for better understanding of the results of the study. Moreover, the theory provides for understanding of how offline activism is complemented by online activism. This study is expected to project the online activism as socially effective and devoid of slacktivism.

Social Movement Impact Theory

The social movement impact theory (SMIT) is the least studied theory amongst the social movement theory and this is due to the complexity of the methodology used in assessing it (Wiltorowicz, 2002). However, amongst the theories that examine social activism, this theory is the only theory that assesses the impact or outcomes of social activism- that is, if social activism is effective or not. The SMIT is a relatively new theory that was introduced in 1975 in the book *The Strategy of Social Protest*, written by William Gamson (Smith & Fergusson, 2010). To develop the theory, Gamson examined over 50 social movement organisations between the period of 1800 to 1945, collecting data from them and assessing their impact as the present study intends to do but within limited time frame.

In relations to channels of activism, a key assumption underpinning the SMIT relates to the efficacy of a movement based on the channels used; either, radical and disruptive (general disorder, riots, and violence) or mainstream tactics (including political lobbying, rallies, and marches) (Serrano, 2020). The SMIT assumes that the choice of movement is critical to the success of the movement. The theory further asserts that the success of the choice is also

contingent on the context within which they operate (Smith & Fergusson, 2010). Gamson postulated that the application of violent strikes and other mediums of violence were sometimes met with uncertain results (Wiltorowicz, 2002). They further indicated that social movements that have achieved a certain level of success in earlier endeavors were more likely to apply violence, as opposed to those that had not chalked any level of success. Furthermore, the SMIT postulates that the application of violence in social movements was more of a result of strength rather than a cause of it (Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). Thus, the theory affirms the fact that violence or radical approaches to activism only give an advantage to the side that is already ahead, whether applied by the state or movement. That is to say, the application of radical strategies can only suffice when the person applying the violent approach has an upper hand. Otherwise stated the one with the lower hand has to stick to less radical approaches (Greger, 2017). However, these assumptions still remain largely controversial.

Factors that influence outcomes (Organisational or external factors)

Furthermore, the SMIT assesses the factors that contribute to the impact of social activism. The theory examines the influence of external versus organisational factors. As maintained by (Serrano, 2020), studies have consistently investigated if the success of social activism is based on the organisation or by other external factors. The SMIT theory postulates that although organisational factors play a critical role, they are influenced by other external forces (Wiktorowicz, 2002). The theorist, William Gamson asserted that external supports, mostly in situations where it comes from elite allies, push the impact of social activism movements to achieve more success, as they influence the outcomes (Smith & Fergusson, 2010). Thus, it is difficult for

activism groups to make an impact, without the role of external forces of influence including the media, celebrities, and experts in the field that they are advocating for.

Types of Impact

According to the SMIT, the impact of social activism is enormous; however, there exist four main important outcomes (Blee, 2017). These four impacts or outcomes include individual change, institutional change, cultural change, and political change.

The individual change considers the impact of social activism on the psychology of the people who engage in the movement (Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). Numerous studies have concluded that when individual activists come together to form a movement for a certain social change or to address a contentious issue, they tend to affect each other, as shared values are accentuated and new networks formed. Sarathchandra and Haltinner (2020) argue that the contact and interaction between the individual activists lead to changes within the values of the group members; with Blee (2017) indicating that the change is more of an empowering change, where the individual members become more adept for advanced activism.

Secondly, the institutional changes have been observed to be key changes that occur as a result of social activism (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). Studies have shown that this occurs mostly in state and non-statement institutions where members of the organisation organise a social movement to seek changes within the institution (Darden, 2021; Sarathchandra & Haltinner, 2020). These studies have noted that the institution that the movement target mostly tend to change policies, activities, and strategies that are noted by

activists to be negative to their wellbeing or cause. However, evidence suggests that such movement and its influence on institutions can be weakened due to change within the movement and this comes in the form of (1) decentralisation or diffuseness of organisation, (2) rapid growth in terms of money or members, (3) strength of links between professionals and clients, and (4) ties to the state (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). These factors have been noted to change the structures of a movement, thus reducing the impact that they make over the institution that they intend to influence.

Furthermore, the impact of culture is considered a very important outcome for social activism. It has been suggested that culture is mostly the target of most social activism that is engaged in by social activists (Blee, 2017). This is due to the fact that most issues under contention are subjected to an organisation or societal culture, and a change in culture goes a long way to help make the required changes. According to Luder (2010), culture mostly becomes the target when the challenge has to deal with personal action, and the feminist movement as a clear example. The purpose of this targeting is to help shift the perception, social norms, and values within institutions, societies, families, and individual groups (Velasquez & LaRose, 2015).

Finally, the impact of social activism is also measured within the political domain. Numerous studies have shown that political change is mostly the target of activism (Wiktorowicz, 2002; Malhaner, 2014). The view of researchers has been that social activism mainly targets political institution and ideations, with the intention of changing the political structures and decision making. Furthermore, social activism tends to focus on the policy direction of government and state, as most contentious issues have an underlining policy

implemented or neglected- that is, in situations where a certain policy has contentions around it, activists try to get it changed, whereas in other situations the lack of policy in a certain area becomes a contentious issue.

By the application of Social Activism and the Social Movement Impact Theories, this study seeks to argue that the factors that leads to the formation of social movements have significant impact on societies.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Approach and Design

A research design, according to Groenewald (2004), is a theory of knowledge, which serves to decide how a social phenomenon will be studied. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011), qualitative research allows a researcher to investigate a behaviour or phenomenon in a natural setting without the artificiality that surrounds experimental or survey research. Davidson, Fossey, Harvey and MacDermott (2002) opined that the primary concern of qualitative research is to engage in subjective meaning interpretation, social context portrayal, and the primacy of lay knowledge. Creswell (2013) postulated that qualitative research involves rigorous data collection procedures and rich thick description of findings. Regarding data collection in qualitative research, Wimmer and Dominick (2011) identified focus group, field observations, in-depth interviews and case studies. Through these methods of data collection, a researcher could have a better understanding of the phenomenon under study (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

Creswell (2013) identified five designs under qualitative research which are ethnography, phenomenology, case study, grounded theory and narrative design. The present study is based on the case study design. A case study allows for the investigation of an individual, event or situation of interest to the researcher (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). They added that research questions that focus on how and why usually require case study design. The choice of case study design was informed by Merriam's (1988 cited in Wimmer & Dominick, 2011) three elements of case study. First, a case study should be particularistic.

This means that case study should focus on a particular situation, event or individual(s). Second, case study requires detailed description of the topic under study. Third, author asserted that case study should be heuristic. This means that case study must help people understand what is being studied through providing new insights, perspectives, new meanings and new interpretation. Based on the particularistic, descriptive and heuristic features of a case study, the present study selected the fix-the-country movement as a case. Fix the Country is a recent issue of national interest that caught the interest of citizens of Ghana and the diaspora. The Fix-the-Country Movement also allowed for dissenting opinions among party fanatics who used the social media to reach audience with messages. This case is particular because there are other mobile media related issues that were taken up by citizen journalists such as Galamsey (#stopgalamseynow), party militia (#disbanpartymiletianow), kidnapping (#bringbackourtardgirls) among others. However, none of these issues are current and widened citizen participation like the Fix-the-Country Movement. The Fix-the-Country Movement also appears to reflect the present economic hardship and global rise in exchange rates further increasing the plight of citizens. The purpose therefore, is to explore how citizen journalists use mobile media to engage in online social activism. The Fix-the-Country Movement received maximum participation among citizens through the effortless work of the convenors who engaged communities and celebrities to join the bandwagon of social activism. Also, The Fix-the-Country Movement got the attention of political commenters, state persons and global media so much so that media giants such as Aljazeera, BBC and others covered some of the staged activism by the citizens.

The present study adopted qualitative research as a method to allow in-depth understanding of mobile media and citizen journalism with #FixTheCountry as a case. This is because qualitative research endorses the ontology of multiple realities and epistemology that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered as an objective reality. Using qualitative research allows the researcher flexibility to investigate how citizen journalists used different communication styles through mobile media to reach users with messages on the movement.

Data Sources

The data for this study was collected from primary and secondary data sources. Primary source of data was collected from participants through the use of interviews guide as first-hand data from the field. On the other hand, secondary data was obtained from books, articles, internet and journals, and reports of researches conducted on the subject under study. Secondary information was helpful to complete the literature review of this study.

Primary data is inherently the "king" element in the ecosystem of scientific research. Primary data is original and first collected by researchers for the purpose of the study (Khuc et al., 2020). In each study, scientists sketch out necessary information and data on which to process, analyse and achieve the study's goal. Primary data serves only one specific study (Nguyen, 2019), so the information received will perfectly match the study that scientists are implementing. Moreover, information from primary data sources is accurate and complete because it is collected originally and according to specifically designed content.

High-quality research can be conducted using secondary data, collected by someone other than the user. The secondary data are from a wide range of sources: censuses, information collected by government departments, organisational records, databases maintained by universities and other research institutions, surveys conducted by universities and research institutions, and so forth. There are advantages of using secondary data for researching (Kumara, 2022). First, any researcher using secondary data can enjoy much information that has been collected in the past, and relevant policy variables can easily be generated by using them. Second, the researcher does not have to wait for a longer time for collecting data, and thereby, the research can be conducted in a timely manner. Accordingly, the researcher may be able to skip the stage of ‘data collection’ which allows him/her to proceed directly to the stage of ‘data analyses. Third, generally, the secondary data are available for a larger sample size, and the weights or inflation factors are also provided along with datasets (Kumara, 2022).

Research Site

The research site for this study is social media. Specifically, ‘Facebook’ (see sampling for justification) platform was adopted. Regarding the site for the interview data collection, Accra, in the Greater Accra Region was selected. This is because it is the region where most of the media outlets are headquartered and the convenors also live there. The researcher visited Accra to conduct the interview with the participants. Moreover, Accra is the capital city of Ghana and its cosmopolitan orientation makes it the hub of civil actions and protests. This is evident as many protests and demonstrations have emerged from Accra. These include #FixTheCountry, #DumsorMustStop, #OccupyFlagStaffHouse,

#RedFriday, #WeGoDemonstrate and many others (#FixTheCountry, 2021; Acquaye, 2015; Bobbery, Da-Costa & Appeakorán, 2021; Cobblah, 2021; Ghanaweb, 2021).

Sampling and Sampling Procedure

The researcher adopted purposive and snowball samplings. This study used purposive sampling to select social media posts on #FixTheCountry movement. The purposive sampling is utilized to select the posts because the Facebook platforms include fake accounts, duplicates and AI generated contents. The researcher employed purposive sampling to ensure that the correct posts are selected for the study. Moreover, group pages content could only be accessed after researcher has obtained approval from the gatekeepers (group admin, group members and group creators). This is in line with Tracy (2020) idea that social media equally have gatekeepers who should give consent for data to be accessed from the platforms or groups. In a qualitative study, a relatively small and purposively selected sample may be employed (Miles & Huberman, 1994), with the aim of increasing the depth (as opposed to breadth) of understanding (Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposive sampling is ‘used to select respondents that are most likely to yield appropriate and useful information’ (Kelly, 2010) and is a way of identifying and selecting cases that will use limited research resources effectively (Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposive sampling strategies move away from any random form of sampling and are strategies to make sure that specific kinds of cases of those that could possibly be included are part of the final sample in the research study. The reasons for adopting a purposive strategy are based on the assumption that, given the aims and objectives of this study, specific kinds of people may hold different and

important views about the ideas and issues in question and therefore need to be included in the sample (Mason, 2002; Robinson, 2014; Trost, 1986).

The rate of the growth amongst social media platforms is exponential. Here, Facebook is dominating in many categories of social media platforms and that is not new knowledge, but to look further at the numbers in detail is certainly of relevance to point out when understanding the context of this report. Globally, from a 2011 study, all of the following was calculated and displayed within an information graphic titled 'The Growth of Social Media'. Facebook accrues approximately 310 million daily unique visitors, and has over 640 million registered users (Clark, 2012). Membership share amongst the major social media platforms is 63.46 percent for Facebook, Twitter is at 1.15 percent and YouTube is at 20.5 percent. Twitter though is currently in a constant state of growth exceeding 200 million users and, one in four Americans watch a video online via YouTube daily. To conceptualise this massive growth in terms of population, if Facebook were a country would be the world's 3rd largest behind China and India. The expansion most recently is still notable however because of the aforementioned rapid growth rate, for example users accessing Facebook via their mobile devices increased by 200 percent from 63 million in 2010 to 200 million in 2011, and the growth rate of users of Facebook was at 82 percent between 2010 to 2011 (Henrikson, 2011). There were 1.32 billion active users of Facebook worldwide as of June 30, 2014 (Facebook Statistics, 2014). According to Adzaho (2009), the use of Facebook in Ghana has steadily been rising as the years go by. As of December 2013, there were 1,630,420 Facebook users in Ghana making the country the 9th highest in Africa rankings of Facebook users (Internet World Stats, 2013).

Snowball sampling or chain sampling of a hidden population begins with a convenience sample of the source subject, because if a random sample could be drawn, the population would not be considered hidden. This initial subject acts as a “seed” through which the Wave 1 subject is recruited. A wave ‘one’ entity recruits wave ‘two’ entities; and the sample then expands, wave by wave, like a growing snowball rolling down a hill (Heckathorn, 2015). The snowball sampling method, which is particularly useful when it is difficult to reach the desired population and it is difficult for the researcher to create a list of the population (Oisin, 2007). This allowed the researcher to trace hard-core supporters of the #FixTheCountry Movement through a colleague.

The research recruited twenty-five (n=25) participants composed of five (n=5) Convenors and twenty (n=20) CJs. However, after engaging 10 of the CJs, the researcher got a pull of information enough for the study, hence reaching a saturation point. From a grounded theory perspective, Urquhart (2013) defines saturation as: "The point of coding till it is notice that no new code appears in the data. There are more and more instances of the same code, but no new code." On the other hand, Given (2016) considers saturation to be the point where "additional data does not lead to new problems". Similar positions have been taken by others regarding the (non-) emergence of new codes and themes (e.g. Birks & Mills, 2015; Olshansky, 2015).

Data Collection Methods

Basically, interviews refer to a procedure of discussion in which the researcher try to find out further about a concern as prejudiced by the individual being questioned. The subject of interview process are the interviewees. Interviews are widely classified by their positions in qualitative researches as

structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Structured interviews give much power to the interviewer to fully control the interview and as such, allows the interviewee less opportunity to be flexible and casual (Stuckey, 2013).

Unstructured interviews are discussions organise and focused basically at benefiting the researcher. Jamshed (2014) further discovered sub-types of the unstructured interviews, including non-directive and focused interviews and explained that non-directional type of unstructured interview is the type where the researcher has no pre-planned questions, while in the focused interview; the researcher knows the subject and manipulates the interviewee towards a relevant topic of interest.

Of all the types of interviews, semi-structured interview is the most used interview in qualitative researches (Alshenqeeti, 2014). Stucky (2013) explains semi-structured interview as an outline of topics and questions prepared by the researcher without adhering to rigidity. This type of interview creates more room for participants to response to, or provides answers to questions posed to them within their own perspectives. Unlike structured interviews, semi-structured interview does not require the interviewee to strictly follow any guidelines in responding to the researcher's questions. Stucky (2013) identified the need to conceptualise this form of interviews as narrative interview.

In-depth interviews

The interviews in this study were guided by mainly open-ended questions arranged by thematic order: for example, what communication styles are used by citizen journalists in the #FixTheCountry *movement*, how effective are the communication styles used by citizen journalists in the #FixTheCountry

movement, what are the challenges of citizen journalism in citizen advocacy on governance issues, and what underlying factors informed the actions of social activists in the #FixTheCountry *movement*.

Interviews are a data collection method commonly used in qualitative social research methods (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004; Nunkoosing, 2005). Nunkoosing (2005) emphasised the importance of interviews as a data collection method that allows individuals to reflect and talk about their problems, needs, expectations, experiences and understandings.

As a data gathering tool, interviews allow interviewers to effectively explore the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of respondents. Interviewers can track the thoughts, feelings, and ideas behind your responses in a way that would otherwise not be possible. The subjective nature of interviews is reflected in the fact that interviewees express their own opinions and experiences. The researcher used semi-structured interview to gather data from the participants. This type of in-depth interview allows flexibility in the questions by allowing interviewer to ask probing and follow up questions that might not be included in the interview guide (Reinard, 1994).

The researcher conducted interviews with Convenors of #FixTheCountry *movement*. Researchers use this method because it gives them new ideas. The interview lasted for about 30-40 minutes, and was also been recorded. On the other hand, the study adopts deductive coding procedure since there already exist a predefined set of codes. Keywords such as ‘#fix’, ‘Ghana’, ‘hardship’, ‘mess up’, ‘evil’, ‘thieves’, and ‘enemies’ were keyed into search engines to down load #FixTheCountry movement comments.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected using interviews and coding of social media content posted in connection with the *#FixTheCountry movement*. Interviews is also a useful tool for engaging with individuals who are reluctant to fill out surveys, and who prefer to explain how they feel about certain issues in their own words (Pessoa et al., 2019). These include marginalised and/or hard to reach populations such as people from refugee backgrounds (Jiang, 2021; Nardon et al., 2021), people from ethnic or religious minorities (Doldor & Atewologun, 2021; Fernando & Kenny, 2018; Hwang & Beauregard, 2022; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2020) and people with a disability (Kulkarni, 2020). Qualitative interviews have also been highlighted as being of greater use to practitioners than quantitative research as they provide a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon at hand and more comprehensive and actionable insights (Halbesleben, 2011). In this case, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of the actual situation, and also had access to respondents' experiences on the communication styles used by citizen journalists on the *#FixTheCountry movement*, the effectiveness of the communication styles used by citizen journalists on the *#FixTheCountry movement*, the underlying factors that informed the *#FixTheCountry movement* actions, and the challenges of citizen journalism in citizen advocacy on governance by allowing respondents to voice their opinions. Rather than limiting the opinions of citizen journalism challenge respondents to advocate for citizens on issues. Through interviews, researchers are able to identify stakeholder perceptions, opinions, perspectives, values, feelings, attitudes, and perceptions regarding the use of mobile media in civic affairs.

Social media appearing at the start of the twenty-first century provides “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 5). Some key words such as #FixTheCountry/protest/ were keyed into search engines such as Google to download media content (post/comment) videos. The duration of the interview was about 40 minutes for Convenors and 30 minutes for CJs.

Raw data collected was stored onto the Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). The data was subjected to editing and correction of spelling errors without altering the exact meanings and stored electronically on external drive. The data (file) was password-protected, and access was restricted to the principal investigator. This is to ensure that the data is protected throughout the research.

Data Analysis

The study adopted content analysis as data analysis tool. Content analysis in simple terms is “the study of recorded human communications” (Babbie, 2001). It is a procedure for collecting and analyzing the contents of texts, which could be “words, meanings, symbols, ideas, themes, or any message that can be communicated in spoken, written, or visual forms” (Neuman, 2006). These include “books, newspapers or magazine, articles, advertisements, speeches, official documents, films or video-tapes, musical lyrics, photographs, articles of clothing or works of arts” and online data, among others (Neuman, 2006). Content analysis involves a coding operation to

transform raw data corpus into standard forms (Babbie, 2001), and it can be done using either a quantitative or qualitative approach. While qualitative content analysis comprises of coding acts for underlying themes in materials and texts that are being analysed (Bryman, 2004), quantitative content analysis entails “the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics” (Nuendorf, 2002).

Wimmer and Dominick (2011) suggested two data analysis techniques which are the constant comparative and the analytical inductive techniques. This study is guided by the constant comparative technique of data analysis. The constant comparative technique was proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and later developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). This technique is made up of four main steps of data analysis. Firstly, codes were assigned to the data, then data will be categorised and finally themes that comes up most will be identified. The first step is comparative assignment of incidents to categories. This involves comparing units of analysis and finding similarities among the units that fit the category.

The second step elaborates and refines the categories. In this stage, the content was grouped for easy presentation of ideas. The third step is searching for relationships and meaningful connections among the categories identified. In this step, the researcher ensured that categories were further developed through the subcategories generated from the unit analysis. In coding the data, the researcher thematically analysed the text by grouping the interview responses as well as online posts, comments and audio-visuals into their appropriate themes for easy analysis and presentation of results. Themes were generated based on the empirical, theoretical and objectives of the study.

Regarding the first research questions on styles of communication in the #FixTheCountry movement, the researcher will rely on the styles discovered by Versacomp (2012) which are hostile style, soft style and conversational style. Raw data collected was stored onto the Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to ensure that data is protected throughout the study.

Ethical Issues

The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Cape Coast with the Ethical Clearance ID **UCCIRB/CHLS/2023/29**

In the attempt to deal with procedural and situational ethics, the researcher did not state names of participants but rather replaced them with pseudonyms for the purpose of confidentiality and anonymity and data management protocols. Participant had the right to withdraw from the interview at any point in time because participation is voluntary. The researcher discussed the findings with the participants.

Constraints in the Present Study

The researcher faced financial challenge in relation to several trips to the field (research site) and phone calls, internet data, and printing among others. Accessing the convenors of the #FixTheCountry Movement was difficult due to the security implications of speaking to strangers in an interview. Moreover, some of the respondents (CJs) were not cooperative due to the political connotations of the subject thereby resulting in the use of the snowball sampling procedure. The process of ethical clearance application was

cumbersome and frustrating, because receiving feedbacks and final issuance of the letter from IRB delayed the entire research.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This section presents analysis of the results as well as discussion to answer the research questions. The analysis was guided by comparative analytic procedure as well as the social activism theory. The study seeks to examine the #FixTheCountry Movement and to explore their communication styles, effectiveness, challenges encountered and the underlining factors that triggered its formation.

Communication styles used by citizen journalists in the #FixTheCountry Movement

The present study has revealed that there are three main communication styles that are used by the citizen journalists. On the question of the communication styles applied by the convenors of the #FixTheCountry Movement, the following responses are evident:

.... the communication styles we apply depend on the platform. We have used several platforms in communicating our issues [to our followers] whenever we have interaction with political leaders. We are very conversational, especially when we have radio and television discussions but when we hit the streets to demonstrate, that calls for a hostile communication style (Convenor 1).

Convenor 1 illustrates that Ghana's public sphere has a plethora of media resources and depending on the medium available to them, the Movement deploys the appropriate style of expressing ideas. The Movement communicates with government and/or its officials during which the issues they advocate are

tabled. Moreover, the format of broadcasting (radio/television) and its discursive orientation makes their communication conversational. While conversational tones tend to be generally friendly, it appears to help the convenors to table their issues to the governing class in an atmosphere of trust and understanding. However, the convenor clarifies that there are instances where the movement protest and become adversarial in registering their concerns.

Furthermore, a convenor said;

We [convenors] employ different communication styles. Thus, hostile, soft and conversational. Sometimes when you sit back and think about how this country is being run, and you want to present your grievances, you are tempted to speak angrily but it is not intentional People will think you are being hostile but it is because you are speaking from your heart. (Convenor 1)

Convenor 1 illustrate that #FixTheCountry movement uses all forms of communication style. This implies that, sometimes the convenors seem to be aggressive, calm, and dialogical in their presentations. This convenor shows that the driving force behind their aggressive communication strategy is the expression of their dissatisfaction after a detailed analysis and assessment of the state of affairs in Ghana. By this, the convenor refutes the claim by some critics that their aggressive style of communication is done on purpose. To some extent, the style of communication adopted by the convenors has emotional undertones.

Considering the basis of the revelation by Convenor1, it implies there are two major forms of communication and solving grievances of

#FixTheCountry movement. Convenor1 illustrates that under one circumstance, the grievance of the members of #FixTheCountry movement de-escalate. By de-escalation, it implies that leaders of the #FixTheCountry movement interact with the leaders or officials of government to reach a prolonged statement in which both parties are being settled on a conclusion. By this, it implies that many small steps or discussions are taken by the representatives of the movement and the government.

On the other hand, grievances that do not reach the agreement table to discuss and deliberate upon, the members of the movement escalate those grievances in question. By doing so, they amass themselves and hit the streets to protest or demonstrate to escalate their grievances to a high sound enough to call the attention of duty bearers to make deliberate attempts to de-escalate the issues on the ground.

Another convenor was emphatic that they only used hostile communication style in a statement:

It's not a kind of conversational. These are people who are hungry, demanding for condition of services to be addressed and for that we are a little bit aggressive. We do not massage the issues in the messages. We go straight to communicate our position whether it is the issue of high inflation, depreciation of cedi, high living standard, or corruption and nepotism. (Convenor 3).

Convenor 3 recounts the aim of the movement which seeks to go into all the issues of national development ranging from socio-economic to politics among others and seek for addressing them head-on. Thus, this convenor explains that the style of communication is informed by the membership

composition of the movement itself, largely citizens feeling the heat (hardship) borne out of purported mismanagement of Ghana's national economy. By this, the communication style of the movement has been more aggressive than conversation.

In a more explicit reason for being aggressive in communicating the concerns of the movement, another convenor revealed that they use hostile communication style in a statement:

.....the soft style is very difficult to get government's response so we are hostile. We make sure that we are hostile towards the government (Convenor 2).

This convenor presents a position that appears to depict the governing class as a group or leaders who tend to give 'deaf ears' to concerns of society hence drawing the attention of government to such matters by the movement must be trumpeted in a fashion that is aggressive. In other words, the only language the government seems to understand is hostility. Beyond the hostile communication style discussed above, the study also revealed soft and conversational styles of communication in social activism as deployed by #FixTheCountry movement in Ghana. In affirmation to the conversational communication style, a respondent said;

When we meet the duty bearers, or people in authority on round table discussions, that is conversational form of communication, because it is a platform we deliberate on the concerns and jor-jor to find ways and means of alleviating the plight of the people who are crying for government to hear their challenges (Convenor 5).

On grounds that the hostile communication executes through protests and civil unrests may escalate tensions to a point where the attention of public officials and the entire citizenry are drawn, such actions may deescalate when the concerned officials avail themselves to reason with convenors. Convenor 5 explains that their style of communication is defined by the atmosphere of meeting with the government and its officials. When the convenors of the movement meets government officials at the table, they engage in a conversation and dialogue where they use soft and friendly communication. This is because it is the place where government listens and reflects on their concerns in order to find panacea to them.

Furthermore, another convenor reiterates that the use of the soft style of communication by convenors of the #FixTheCountry movement in their advocacy is medium-dependent. The convenor states;

...for instance, if you are invited to speak about [national] issues on radio or television, of course, you want Ghanaians who have not heard of you [us] to have an understanding and to appreciate whatever you [we] are putting across and so adopting a soft style of communicating or drumming home the issues is an appropriate strategy we employ at that moment (Convenor 1).

Here, Convenor 1 explains that, whenever the convenors of the movement are given the opportunity to discuss their views on-air about Ghana's development and largely clarifies what the movement seeks to achieve, they usually want to clearly convey their message to Ghanaians in such a way that even those hearing the movement's activities for the first time will understand and appreciate. Therefore, they usually would be calm-mannered in the attempt

of expressing their concerns and dissatisfaction of the current situation ordinary Ghanaian citizens are faced with.

On Facebook, the researcher found that the hostile style was often used by CJs to express their displeasure with the economy, political system, social security and many others. For instance, the following comments/posts show that CJs use hostile style to communicate their feelings and displeasure about the country's economic predicament under the leadership of the incumbent government.

Upon all the knowledge and wisdom, they acquire from all the big schools they went to, and their old age, they are messing up Ghana. Someone will say we shouldn't insult but give them solutions. Fcuk [fuck up], do you think they don't have solutions? They are just evil; they have wrong intentions. They are enemies of Ghana's progression, they are enemies of the younger generation, and they are the enemies of equality. They don't like us. These people need to be cleared out quick to free the masses.

#RevolutionUP #Fixthecountryghana #JustrResign

From the above post, the CJ is using the hostile style to communicate the incompetence of the leadership. The hostile style is noticed in the diction where the CJ uses vulgar words and expressions such as 'fuck up', *they are just evil. They are enemies of Ghana's progression, they are enemies of the younger generation, and they have wrong intentions.* These words and expressions disclose the feeling and displeasure of the youth about the situation in the country under the incumbent leadership. The CJ considered leadership failure as the cause of the country's failure. The emphasis on the use of words such as

enemies, evil and many others show that the CJ uses hostile style to communicate their message of the country's development. In the hostile style, the speaker usually tends to be harsh, vulgar, and repetitive in the communication of the message.

Another instance of hostile style is noticed when one of the CJ expressed dissatisfaction about the educational system in Ghana. The CJ asserted that "*till when?? Our educational system is a hell.*" This expression was followed by the drawing and labeling of a cock (see appendix E) as a demonstration of the type of educational system the CJ questioned. The use of the word "hell" shows the poor state of the educational system.

Moreover, a CJ used the hostile style to communicate thoughts on the mismanagement of the Ghana's economy. The words *thieves*, *sia*, *siafo*, *nonsense* is showing the disgusted nature of the speaker. The excerpt below carries the exact words:

Look at this nonsense! Thieves

These thieves think Ghanaians are fools and don't reason: [sia] when these 2 thieves in one chamber you are cutting deals among yourselves and come back to pretend to Ghanaians. U thinks we don't reason, abi? When we were calling for the president to step down where were you? [Siafo)] U think u can fool the people all the time.

From this excerpt, the use of derogative words such as *nonsense*, *thieves*, *siafo* (*fools*) et cetera are hostile in communication style. The repetition of such derogatory terms equally shows hostility as Versacomp (2002) described hostile style as hammer-and-tong approach to discomfort the intended receiver.

Effectiveness of the communication styles used by members of #FixTheCountry Movement

Effective communication involves disseminating information to specific segments of the public, listening to their needs and concerns, and responding with the appropriate solutions. Whether it is a deeper reform program from health, education or rural development to private sector development, or even financial or judicial reform, the goal is to achieve the greatest possible consensus, raising the level of public understanding and promoting an informed dialogue between all parties involved (Capistran, 2011).

Convenors and citizen journalists of #FixTheCountry movement revealed that they employed hostile, soft, and conversational communication Styles. According to the convenors, the communication styles has been effective in their advocacy. To this, a respondent said;

In my personal opinion, our communication styles have been effective. I am saying this because we looked at the way and manner people joined our movement. On Facebook, we take daily records to see how people react on issues that we post. Another thing I would want to say is that it has been effective because we see some of the issues we raised has been adhered to by the government (Convenor 1).

In the judgment of the leaders of the movement, the communication styles they adopted have been impactful. The movement illustrates and attributes this effectiveness to how people have participated massively in the activities of the movement both online and offline. Evidently, Facebook records people's actions and reactions to the topics we post on a daily basis. Convenor

1 recounts that, the success of the communication style is the fact that some of the concerns the movement raised were complied with by the government.

A citizen journalist of #FixTheCountry movement added his voice on the effectiveness of their communication styles. According to the respondent, the communication styles of #FixTheCountry movement have been effective due to the fact that people respond and follow the information that is sent across. To this, the respondent said:

Concerning the effectiveness of the communication styles employed by the movement, it is surely successful. Considering how far our messages travels even outside the country through Facebook and how the information is widely received and acted upon, I believe that the good and important information we sent across achieve its aim. But due to the method or communication style that others adopt, an information can also be rejected (CJ 7).

CJ7 illustrates that, there is always a scale/tool for measuring the failure and/or the success of a phenomenon. When it comes to the effectiveness of the communication style used, the movement certainly recounts that it has been successful due to certain results that are evident to the movement. Moreover, the movement measures the success of their communication style by recounting on how widely the information they send out have reached and are generally embraced by multitudes of Ghanaians and even to the extent of reaching outside the country. Again, the movement believes that a person or group of people may carry important messages and may be accepted or rejected due to the communication style adopted by the communicator. The movement concludes

that their messages have reached far and embraced by a lot of people due to the right communication style adopted.

A CJ added a voice on the communication styles adopted by #FixTheCountry movement. To this, the CJ said;

The movement adopts all styles of communication to send messages across. At the heat of demonstrations, we would not be polite that much. The moment we begin in anger, the people in authority sees the need to heed to our requests and agitations. In general, the dominant style is hostile (CJ 1).

CJ 1 demonstrates that the style of communication the movement adopts heavily depends on the platform through which members of #FixTheCountry movement decides to channel their messages. According to CJ 1, the movement adopts a purely hostile style of communication by protests or demonstrations. In most cases, protests and demonstrations are adopted by the movement and for this reason, CJ 1 concludes that generally, the hostile style of communication is used by the movement.

Another respondent also affirmed that the communication styles of #FixTheCountry has been effective. In response to this, the respondent said;

The communication style of #FixTheCountry movement has been very effective. During those times, it was the period of the [covid-19] pandemic and a lot of people were working from home, and had no option than to use the social media. Authorities were responding quickly to our messages and it served as a motivation factor to continue our action (Convenor 2)

Convenor 2 illustrates that the movement has been successful in its delivery of messages to the mass media and the people of Ghana. During the era of COVID-19 pandemic, movements and large gathering were restricted as a measure of curbing the widespread of the virus. The movement actually utilised the most common and widely used platform (social media). While the government was strictly enforcing measures of curbing the pandemic, some workers work from home and for this reason, social media was used to monitor what was happening elsewhere. The movement recounts that due to this, there was massive feedback from their posts on Facebook.

On the question of whether #FixTheCountry Movement has been able to achieve its objectives or not, respondents recounted the different outcomes that they witnessed or experienced. In response to this, a convenor said;

Even though #FixTheCountry Movement has not met all its objectives, some have been achieved. The mere fact that government or people in authority call us to a round table to listen to us, means they really want to hear us and heed to our quest. Before you can hear someone out, you need to sit with the person and come into an agreement. Once they call us and we sit together, yes, we are okay but you know politicians; after discussion they go to sleep. Some of our quests have been fixed and frankly government cannot fix all at once (Convenor 1).

According to Convenor1, the primary aim of #FixTheCountry Movement was to draw the government's attention to diverse problems that exist and this led the government to convene a discussion with them. By this, #FixTheCountry Movement succeeded in achieving some of their aim. Here, the convenor presents a description of the political class in a context that

connotes that they cannot be trusted in such matters. However, the Convenor also paints a positive picture of the Movement as ‘good citizens’ who come to terms with the reality that solutions to all the problems cannot be solved at once. In affirmation to the foregoing, another convenor added:

We cannot say it [achievement] is 100%. We are in the process, and we are doing our best. Of course, when we communicate our grievances, government listens to us. They may not tell us it is influencing some of the policies, but we are very sure some of the policies are influenced by the voice we make. However, we cannot score ourselves as of now but we are very sure we are making impact (Convenor 3).

The extract above (Convenor 3) depicts the extent to which some objectives of the #FixTheCountry Movement have met by influencing some government policies. The issues raised by the Movement are not issues that can be addressed overnight. This implies that it will take government a deliberate and constant effort over a period of time to address the crucial concerns of the movement. Thus, a continuous agitation from the Movement until all attempts by the government to address the problems is clear enough.

Other Media besides Facebook

Aside Facebook being the main social media platform through which #FixTheCountry movement channel most of their messages, the study also discovered other communication media. According to the study, the other media includes twitter and the traditional media; comprising of the print, radio, and television. These platforms used to complement Facebook as the main social media platform. In a response to this, a convenor said;

Due to the different levels of education and to ensure access, we used the traditional media, that is, radio, television, newspapers as well as WhatsApp and many other social media platforms (Convenor3).

This actually implies that though #FixTheCountry movement adopted Facebook as their main channel of disseminating information across to their followers, they did not only rely on that medium. They also employed other platforms which included television, radio and print media. This portrays that, no matter your level of education and your locality, so long as you have access to any of these traditional media, you will be able to access the ideology of #FixTheCountry movement.

By the virtue of the traditional media, all citizens are able to decode the message delivered by #FixTheCountry movement in their local dialects even in scenarios where listeners are uneducated. The reason is that, almost all the radio and television stations available in the country use the local dialect of the people they are surrounded to educate the citizens in Ghana about the #FixTheCountry movement. This is mostly done and achieved through news broadcasting and panel discussions.

In affirmation of the assertion above, another convenor of #FixTheCountry movement stated;

The traditional media has played a significant role in the activism by the followers of #FixTheCountry movement. Whatever thing we do on social media, we also monitor the airwaves and we see and hear that political actors discuss the issues we raise on radio and television stations (Convenor 4).

Though the traditional media such as the radio and television stations are not the major platforms through which the leadership of #FixTheCountry movement deliver their messages, it cannot be denied that they have played an important role in carrying the messages of #FixTheCountry movement across the nation and even across the international borders through the online streaming of those broadcast stations.

Notwithstanding the role of the radio and television, the print media has also played a major impact. To this end, a respondent said;

By the assistance of the traditional media, the radio and the television, we have had the opportunity of covering our activities, so I can say that the television and the radio have been a major media apart from social media. However, the print media have also shown interest in our activities and have given us coverage to send our messages across to the public in general, and specifically to our followers (CJ 2).

Challenges of Citizen Advocacy on Governance Issues

According to Lin (2018), there are three main types of traditional activism. These include demonstrations and protest; boycotts, Strikes, petitions; and social media Campaigns. Demonstrations and protests are perhaps the most popular forms activism. Research has shown that during demonstrations, groups of people united by a common belief come together to march, hold vigils, or sit in specific locations to attract attention (Nyanang, 2021)

Notwithstanding the above mention, just as movement, social movements are faced with some kind of challenges. #FixTheCountry as a social movement is not exempted. In responses to the challenges of #FixTheCountry movement, a respondent said;

One thing that just comes into mind will be verbal attacks by the politicians particularly; those in government. This is because they know you are expressing your opinion but, in a way, it is making their government unpopular so definitely, they will come after you (CJ 2).

CJ2 recounts that, there is always a challenge associated with being a member of a social movement.

Considering the aim of this movement which partly exposes the rights of people to demand from the government, government official and/or people in authority, deploy verbal attacks as the most common act to frustrate members of the movement. In the attempt of ‘opening the eyes’ of the masses against the failure and inadequacies of the current government, it is a clear disadvantage to a government in power. This will actually make affiliates of the ruling government rise against such a course and more specifically its members.

Another Convenor of #FixTheCountry movement revealed that their major challenge has to do with security issues regarding their activities. In response to this, the respondents said:

The major problem is security. The police are hiding behind the Public Order Act to restrain us. The Public Order Act mandates demonstrators to inform the police so that they can provide security. Due to this provision in the law, the police usually want to restrain you chanting: “do not do it on this day, do not do it at this place”... (Convenor 1).

Massive protests that demand democratic change like the #FixTheCountry movement often stem from government ineffectiveness and official corruption. As national and local leaders of the movement seek to address this dire situation and find solutions to these many challenges, they will

raise countless national security concerns that cannot be ignored. As a result of this, every country has laws to guided situations with national security concerns which basically is the responsibility of law enforcement agencies, specifically, the police service. Convenor 1 depicts that, the police service which is the same agency tasked with law enforcement is taking advantage of the fact that they are the law enforcers and trying to dictate the operations of the movement.

This finding is in line with a research conducted by Asante and Hellbrecht (2019) who argue that demonstrations are usually about people's right to participate in peaceful protests, but permission must be obtained from security authorities before a demonstration can take place.

In line with the resource mobilisation theory (Jenkins, 1983) which emphasises the importance of resources in social movement, the Convenors interviewed revealed financial constraints as one of the major problems of #FixTheCountry movement. In response to the challenges of the movement, a respondent said;

Financing this group [#FixTheCountry Movement] has been a hectic one. Like I mentioned, people think that there are some 'forces' behind supporting with funds and other resources. But the truth is, we the Convenors, contribute our little to do all the activities you see us do. The purchase of data, the [organisation of] demonstrations at the regional level which needs funding comes from our small contributions (Convenor 1).

In affirmation to the above, another respondent reported;

.....the resource to mobilise the people, print our posters, billboards to write our concerns and grievances, resources in transporting others [supporters] to the protesting venues are challenges (Convenor 5).

Again, another respondent also pointed out that resource is the major challenge.

He said:

The biggest problem has been resource in terms of finding money to organize these programmes. Of course, we also talk about logistics and not only money to get out there and be able to get people across the country and the world to know what is happening. So basically, its funds and logistics that is our major problems. (Convenor 1).

Pearlman (2011) analyses the 2011 uprising in Tunisia and Egypt and expresses doubt concerning dominant rationalistic perspectives of social movements even though participants in these protests and demonstrations were faced with unfavorable political climates. #FixTheCountry movement as a social movement is no exception. According to a respondent, political interference was evident in the Ghanaian experience;

When demonstrations happen like this, the government in power thinks that the opposition is taking advantage to bring us together to push them out of office, so intimidation comes in and this is clearly shown by how we are treated by the government (Convenor 5).

A CJ added that we face challenges as members of #FixTheCountry movement in a statement;

..... personally, you are tagged as opposition and remember that our #FixTheCountry movement is a non-political association but once you are speaking against a particular government, you are seen to belong to the opposition party and due to that, you become an enemy to the ruling government which can sometimes bring tension amongst people and surely that is not a healthy situation (CJ 1).

CJ1 illustrates that members of the movement face numerous challenges. While the movement is politically non-aligned, people still tag them as political. In Ghana, even with the knowledge of the movement being propagated as nonpartisan, a member voice against a particular act or decision of a government are basically perceived an adversary of the government. In most cases, this can cause tension between people, which is certainly not a healthy situation for social cohesion. This re-echoes the observation that engaging in protests and demonstrations can be without challenges (Pearlman, 2011).

Specifically, another respondent points out that political threats is one of the major challenges that members of #FixTheCountry movement faces in a comment that;

Political parties' people have been threatening some of us [members].

The threats to do this and that to you are frequent. Do you remember that one of our members is currently being prosecuted? (Convenor 2)

Underlying factors that informed the actions of social activists

For decades, academic researchers have pondered why many types of social movements arise and grow. They have developed many different theories to explain the birth, development and maturity of social movements in many parts of the planet (Sen & Avai, 2016). The major unanswered question about social movement remains; what gives rise to social movements and are the causes political, economic or cultural in nature? This theme sets out to explore the factors that led to the #FixTheCountry movement in Ghana. According to the deprivation theory for example, some social movements arise when certain people or group of people in society feel deprived of a particular good, service,

or resource (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1988; Opp, 1988). This affirms a statement by a Convenor of #FixTheCountry movement;

At least there are some basic things that Ghanaians must have. Like the name of the movement states "#FixTheCountry" and so we want the country to be fixed. We have seen politicians of political parties come into power with so many promises but when they come into power, we don't see their actions. My brother, when you go to the educational reefer system, I can remember when NDC was in power, they mentioned they have built so many schools and that they had removed children studying under trees to the extent that a politician even said that "they removed trees under school whichever became a topic. If you go around, you will see that a lot of children are still sitting under trees. Now NPP took power, they used that to Campaign and promised they are going to build So many schools. Where are the schools? (Convenor 1).

From Convenor 1, a lot of Ghanaian children and teachers are deprived of educational facilities which have resulted in the teaching and studying under trees.

The deprivation theory comes in two branches; absolute deprivation and relative deprivation. Advocates of absolute deprivation addressed these grievances of affected groups regardless of that group's position in the society (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1988). On the other hand, advocates of relative deprivation consider one group to be at a disadvantage relative to another group in that society.

In affirmation to this, a respondent (Convenor) said;

So many factors have motivated us. Issues of the standard of living, the conditions of living The high inflation rate, the increase in taxes, unemployment issues, the corruption, both leadership and government officials, and the fact that the youth are struggling. We felt that we must come together to make our voices heard because our leadership is not listening to us but only listening to people in their circles. For this, we decided to come together as a group and talk about anything we feel is not going on well in the Country (Convenor 2).

The resource mobilisation theory emphasises the importance of the availability of appropriate resources to the birth of a social movement. In line with the view expressed by Convenor 2, this theory holds that when some individuals in the society have certain grievances, they can mobilise the necessary resources to do something to alleviate those grievances. (Dobson, 2001; Foweraker, 1995. McAdam, McCarthy & Bald, 1988; Phongpaichit, 1999). In affirmation to this, a respondent said;

When these two political parties (NPP and NDC) come to power, they have a way of putting fear in everyone. Despite these challenges, we [the convenors] are standing for what is right for this country and will continue to do it with our mega contributions (Convenor 1).

The term “resources” in this context refers to things like money, social status, and knowledge support from the media, means of transportation, among others. (Dobson, 2001, Foweraker, 1995; McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1988; Phongpaichit, 1999).

The study revealed several factors that triggered the actions of the activists. Generally, the deprivation of the average Ghanaian citizen of the basic needs of life emerged. To this end, a convenor said;

Going by the movement's name "fix", we want the country to be fixed. We have seen politicians or political parties come into power with so many promises but we do not see their actions. Whatever they promised to do, we do not see it and that is why we are saying the country must be fixed. My brother, when you look at the educational system, there are still a lot of children sitting under trees to learn. They promised building so many schools, but where are the schools? (Convenor 2).

From the extract above, Convenor1 illustrates the lack of educational infrastructure in the country to be one of the factors that triggered the formation of the movement. This statement clearly depicts that the #FixTheCountry arose due to the fact that a lot of Ghanaian citizen and children though in the 21st century, still are deprived of crucial education facilities that plays an integral role of the quality of teaching and learning in the educational system. This implies that in a society where a group of people are deprived of basic needs that are clearly stated in the constitution of the country, it is an enough breeding ground for escalations of agitations against the ruling government. Again, the political class is described as a group that is not trustworthy because they do not live by their words.

Beyond the poor educational system, another convenor of #FixTheCountry movement also revealed 'economic hardship' as one of the major issues that gave birth to the actions of the activists. To this, the convenor stated;

The driving force behind the actions of the activists of #FixTheCountry movement is basically about the suffering and challenges in the country. A lot of people are going through serious challenges; at least, it is difficult to acquire the basic things in this life. Due to this, people are broke and hopeless. The only way to draw the government's attention to solve the challenges is to make your voice heard (Convenor 3)

Convenor3 explains that the average Ghanaian is economically challenged to the level of not being able to afford the basic things required for the survival of man. The basic things largely include food, water, clothing and shelter as the bare necessities for anyone's survival. For many Ghanaian citizens, these basic needs are crucial to their daily living. This poses higher challenge and it is more depressing for Ghanaian citizens without dependents. For this reason, the average Ghanaian citizen lacking basic needs cannot wait, but to rise for this cause that is basically aimed at fighting for the liberty of the average Ghanaian. In addition to the foregoing submission, another convenor added;

My brother, we are all in this country and we see what is going on, right? You see that in the country things were not going on right, the cost of living, every day prices of goods and services are rising, government policies not being the best, corruption and so many things were not the best. Meanwhile, people who were supposed to be talking were not, and that is why some of us decided to come together for this advocacy for the duty bearers to listen to the citizens (Convenor 4).

Convenor 4 illustrates several factors that triggered their actions ranging from a high cost of standard of living, galloping inflationary trends and unfavorable government policies. Basically, inflation here, is the persistent increase in the

prices of goods and services in a country and can be translated to the decline of purchasing power over time. High inflation implies a sustained increase in the general price level of goods and services in an economy over a period of time. The loss of purchasing power impacts the cost of living for the common public which ultimately leads to a deceleration in economic growth. This situation causes the average Ghanaian citizen to suffer more hardship. Coupled with unfavorable governmental policies and endemic corruption, the economy is heading down the drain and the only means of survival for such an economy has been the imposition of higher or more taxes. As a result many Ghanaian citizens tend to live below the poverty line and this can further result in undesirable conditions in the country. This convenor notes that despite the deteriorating economic situation, culture of silence has become the norm hence the need for the youth to protest.

Recounting the submissions by the convenors, there are diverse factors that triggered their actions resulting in the emergence of #FixTheCountry movement. They note that the motive behind their actions is geared towards the liberation of the average Ghanaian citizen from the hardship and the challenges they face. In conclusion, it is the cry of the Ghanaian citizens that informed the actions of the movement.

Notwithstanding the diverse contributions by the convenors of #FixTheCountry movement, CJ2 also added that;

I believe every patriotic citizen of our dear country would like to see development, have a good job, good roads, good health and educational systems, and proper security. All these influenced my decision to join

#FixTheCountry movement. . When I saw these things are not working and there was a call, we all had to support (CJ2).

CJ2 illustrates the deprivation of the basic things (public goods) that are entrenched in the constitution as fundamental to which the Ghanaian citizen must enjoy as his or her privileges. Yet, the Ghanaian citizen does not have access to these privileges. For this reason, a good and patriotic citizen of the country will respond to a call to make things function properly.

In addition, another CJ affirms and stated;

Looking at the ideology of #FixTheCountry movement, I saw that my objectives are in line with them, so obviously I sided with them. We are all in this country and we know how things are going. I am a graduate and unemployed, but I have just employed myself. Yet the conditions to sustain my business are not available. I cannot go to the bank to borrow; what am I going to use as a collateral? Look at the inflation rate, and the unemployment figures in our system. I am feeling it myself, and I will not sit and watch them [the government] but to also add my voice and use whatever means to catch the attention of these leaders (CJ4).

From the statement above, CJ4 depicts that the mindset of many Ghanaians was already conceived and emergence of #FixTheCountry movement was an opportunity to add a voice. This submission illustrates the frustrations that accompany the attempt of many people setting up their own business in Ghana. It implies that, the enabling conditions that will allow a young Ghanaian citizen to establish his/her own business is unavailable. More significantly, this situation is exacerbated by securing high interest in financial assistance that also requires collateral.

When this happens in a country, the youth, whether graduates or non-graduates would not attempt starting their own commercial ventures to employ themselves so solely depend on the government for employment. In the long term, innovation from the private sector to complement the public sector for a total development is hindered which threatens the country. The reality is that; the government or public sector does not have the economic capacity to employ all youths in Ghana.

Lastly, a Convenor attributed the motivation behind the actions of the activists of #FixTheCountry movement to a multiplicity of factors in the comment;

So many factors motivated us. These include issues of the standard of living, high inflation rate, increase in taxes, unemployment, depreciation of the Ghanaian cedi against major currencies, and the level of corruption in government. We the youth are struggling and we feel that leadership is not listening to us, but to only their affiliates. So we decided to form a group to talk about the administrative lapses in the country. We cannot access them [officialdom], but we believe that through social media, they will hear us. For this reason, we use online medium to start our activism (Convenor 2).

From this extract, Convenor 2 explains the diverse problems that resulted in their actions. Largely, economic challenge emerged as a major blow to the citizens living in Ghana coupled with corruption. While consolidating democracy anywhere in the world presupposes that institutional and legal frameworks would be effective in curbing corruption to the barest minimum within the public sphere, however, in practice, this is not the case in Ghana and many other democracies across the world (Brierley, 2020). For instance, Ghana

under various governments has instituted different strategies since the 1992 democratic transition to nip the menace in the bud through numerous legal and institutional reforms, and the most pronounced policy initiative against corruption in recent times was the passage of the Office of the Special Prosecutor's Act 2018 (Act 663) by the government of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) under the Presidency of Nana Akufo-Addo (Abotsi, 2020). Despite this renewed vigor in the fight against corruption, the Centre for Democratic Development's (CDD) Afrobarometer reports from its nationwide survey that 77 percent of Ghanaians believe that the level of corruption in Ghana has risen over the past year (2021-2022) (CDD, 2022). This revelation is "more than double the proportion recorded in 2017 (36%)." Furthermore, 65 per cent of Ghanaians agree that most or all police officials in Ghana are corrupt, the office of the president followed on the list of the most corrupt state institutions after the Police Service with 55 per cent and then finally the Ghanaian Parliament with 54 per cent (CDD, 2022).

Convenor 2 identified two issues that also gave room for the escalation of protests. First, there was nepotism where officials of government exhibit partiality between their sympathisers and the wider masses. Second, wide communication gap exists between elected officials and citizens where citizens lack access to their own leaders. In this circumstance, the Convenors use the internet to channel their grievance to the authorities that are responsible for the issues raised. These have actually been the main causes of the actions of the members of #FixTheCountry movement in Ghana

The researcher also gathered data on Facebook. During the infant days of August, 2021, Ghana found itself under the microscope of local and

international media because of the mass protest embarked by citizens, clamoring their outright discontent regarding perpetual dwindling of the economy (Sualihu, 2022). In connection with the emergence of the movement, the study sought to discover the factors that led to the formation of the #FixTheCountry movement on Facebook platform.

These include corruption scandals among political elites, high rate of unemployment, and the overall financial hardship faced by the people (Sualihu, 2022), housing deficit, poor roads, financial mismanagement and abandoned projects and properties. The informant explains:

Police bungalows are nothing to be proud about and housing projects are deteriorating by the day. What is really wrong with our system? They waste money on projects and leave it to rot. Just a waste of money!!

The CJ highlights mismanagement of public funds which is one of the factors that led to the formation of the #FixTheCountry Movement in Ghana. According to the CJ, priorities are not given to the issues that need attention but rather needless things and leaving bungalows and housing projects to be deteriorated. In view of the mismanagement of Ghana's economy, another CJ reveals from a video that was shared online. In reacting to the video, the CJ responds:

This video is surely in the national interest. These cars are obviously not National Security installations. They were bought with tax payers' money. You are a true hero. Even if he got it wrong, he was on a mission to expose mismanagement or abandonment of vehicles acquired with public funds or?

From this statement, the CJ bemoans that taxes acquired from the average Ghanaian to be used for development is wasted. Vehicles purchased with the country's hard-earned funds that are accrued through taxation are being abandoned. This act of mismanagement cannot be overlooked by an average Ghanaian facing hardship due to the numerous higher taxes hence our agitation.

Furthermore, a Facebook post on #FixTheCountry by CJ indicated that there are poor roads in Ghana. In the post, the CJ holds a paper written; #FixTheCountry, #Fix-our-roads, and #Fix-the-corruption. According to the CJ, there are currently enough resources in the country to have such bad roads in the capital city fixed. To this, the CJ posted:

*We have too many resources to have such poor roads in our capital city.
I have paid and continue to pay my taxes. I have fixed my attitude, now
it is the time for stewards of our resources too.*

The CJ portrays his dissatisfaction of the nature of the roads in the capital city of the country even though he has accomplished his duty as a good citizen by paying the taxes he supposed to pay yet, there is no change in the state of the nature of roads available. By this, the CJ throws a challenge that appears to debunk a claim by a government official that Ghanaians should rather 'fix themselves'.

Composition of #FixTheCountry Movement Membership: Theoretical perspective

Social movements are composed of different activists who serve different roles or portray different characteristics.

The membership of #FixTheCountry movement portrays all the four roles of activism Bill Moyer identified namely the citizens, rebels, change agents and

reformers. To Moyer (1990), the citizens are those who say “Yes” to the core values of society, while the rebels say “No” to public policies and unfavourable social conditions.

A Convenor of the #FixTheCountry movement describes the composition of the membership of the movement as follows;

We have people that actually make noise to amplify their voices for people to hear what they are saying. We also have people that really stand for the change and so it is a mixture of group of people. We also even have respectable people from the society that push us from the back because they do not want to come forwards to protect their image. They tell us what their grievances are but they support this movement of #FixingTheCountry
(Convenor 1)

Here, Convenor 1 seems to describe rebels as those who amplify their voices to pull attention to the activities of the Movement and in previous analysis, they are hostile in their presentation. Moyer et al, (2001) explain that the effective rebel promotes the democratic process and tries to put issues and policies in the public spotlight and on society’s agenda. They note that through the use of non-violent direct actions such as marches, rallies, leafleting and petitions, rebels educate and inform the public about how official power holders violate public trust.

The change agents encapsulates the many people that really stands for change for the better and finally, citizens as the respectable and all the people in the society that supports the call to fix the country. However, only protesting is not enough, activists and movements also need to be real agents of change who can inform, educate and involve the public to counter present policies and look

for positive and constructive solutions. The last role activists need to engage in is reforming by incorporating solutions into laws and governmental policies through working with official political and judicial structures. Moyer (1990) notes that the effective reformer utilises a variety of means such as lobbying, political campaigns and lawsuits, as they make use of official channels to achieve change.

Again, another respondent comment;

They cut across all these. Of course, as citizens; we need respectable people who can influence across society. Secondly, you also need reformers because; reformers are able to draw government attention to the policies they need to bring to make it easy for everybody. You also need to have the tough talkers; people who are concerned about their own lives, what they think they need and they also come to join to fight for the individual Ghanaian or what they are looking for.

(Convenor 2)

From Convenor 2 of the #FixTheCountry movements, all the roles of activists in social movements are reflected. In order to win over public, activists need to be seen as “good citizens”. Therefore, the effective citizen needs to place itself in the centre of society and promote positive values and principles like democracy, freedom, non-violence and justice. Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela are two excellent examples of effective citizens (Moyer et al., 2001). Change agents; the most prominent task for the effective change is to inform and educate the public regarding existing policies and conditions at the same time as promoting alternatives and positive solutions. In addition, the effective change agent also promotes strategies to counter those of the power holders and

redefines the issue/problem to demonstrate how it affects all parts of society (Moyer, 1990)

The study further revealed two additional types of roles of activism of the members involved in the #FixTheCountry movement based on their activities, and these include *explorers* and *commercialisers*.

The explorers in #FixTheCountry movement are political sympathisers or members who tend to disguise themselves to be members of the movement in order to give details, directions and plans to the ruling party. This emerged as one of the challenges the #FixTheCountry movement faces. As a result of this, some members of the movement experiences threats from strong party members for expressing their dissatisfaction with issues of government policy. On the other hand, the commercialisers are individuals or groups using the movement's platforms and visibility to promote their own businesses or services rather than focusing on contributing towards the objective of the movement. Appendix I portrays a situation where a member of #FixTheCountry movement is advertising a particular product on behalf of another member of the movement.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the major issues raised in this study. The Chapter also draws conclusions of the study based on the research questions addressed. Finally, recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

Summary

In a nutshell, this study has explored how CJs use mobile media to engage in online activism. To achieve this, the researcher critically laid the background to the study during which the four specific research objectives were set to examine the situation. Furthermore, major theoretical concepts and literature related to this work were reviewed. Methodologically, the study applied a qualitative approach, recruited five convenors and ten citizen journalists and selected ten posts for content analysis. The study subsequently analysed and discussed the results. The major factor that triggered the formation of the movement was economic hardships. Additionally, the study makes various recommendations that are outlined below.

The social movement emerged basically to call out on the ruling government and its officials to collectively solve major and pressing problems faced by Ghanaian. More specifically, the underlying factors that informed the actions of activists in the formation of the #FixTheCountry movement include high cost of living, high inflation rates, new and high taxes. Moreover, some other major factors include high unemployment rate, and incidence of corruption among government officials. The study revealed that as a result of

the foregoing problems, the average youth or Ghanaian citizen struggles to fend for the basic needs of life which include food, shelter, and clothing. However, politicians and government officials lived luxurious lifestyles. This economic disparity and hardship triggered the move to form the #FixTheCountry movement.

Generally, members of the #FixTheCountry movement sent messages to Ghanaians home and abroad to give an ear and to support the movement in its activism. However, the movement adopted some specific communication styles in the activism. The study revealed three communication styles adopted by #FixTheCountry movement which included; hostile, soft and conversational communication styles.

The study revealed that the communication styles adopted by the movement heavily depended on the platform or channel through which the message is delivered. Moreover, the study discovered that the hostile style of communication was usually adopted during protests or demonstrations. In such an instance, angry activists hit the streets chanting for change about how pertinent issues of development have been ignored.

Again, the movement resorted to a soft style of communication in a situation they were invited onto platforms such as the radio and television. The reason for this communication was to communicate in a manner to which viewers and listeners would accept the message they send across.

Lastly, the movement adopted a conversational style of communication in an instance when the leaders of #FixTheCountry were invited by the government or its officials to dialogue on matters of national concern. This is the point the leaders of #FixTheCountry and the government leaders and officials try to come

to a consensus to de-escalate issues raised by the leaders of #FixTheCountry movement.

Recounting on the communication styles (hostile, soft and conversational), the study sought to investigate the effectiveness of the styles adopted by the movement. The study revealed that those communication styles adopted are very effective. This finding was heavily anchored and measured by the actions and reactions to the topics posted online on daily basis. Furthermore, the leaders of the movement believed that their communication style was effective based on the number of people who hear their messages and show up to participate in protests, demonstrations and other activities of #FixTheCountry movement.

The movement, like any other social movement is faced with diverse challenges. These include funds/resources mobilisation, verbal and physical attacks, security and misconceptions.

The study revealed that mobilising funds for organising protests and demonstrations; printing poster, acquiring placards, printing shirts and buying data bundles for offline and online activities were proved to be one of the biggest challenges of the movement. Again, members of the movement were sometimes attacked verbally and physically for expressing their dissatisfaction concerning the current governance problems.

Moreover, the study revealed that the law enforcement agency, the police department, usually take advantage of the existing laws concerning demonstration and protest to manipulate the activities of the movement. Lastly, members of the movement were tagged to be members of the opposition parties because they expressed their dissatisfaction of the current economic situation.

Implication of the Study

This study provides insight on the communication styles that are utilized for social activism on social media. The present study will inform the policy on social media activism by guiding convenors on the communication styles and the challenges associated with social media activism.

Conclusion

This study investigated how citizen journalists use mobile media to engage in online social activism using #FixTheCountry movement as a case study. The #FixTheCountry Movement adopted three communication styles to mobilise its members and the general public and they proved to be effective. The movement adopted hostile form of communication styles when they hit the streets, soft communication style when they educate and send messages across and uses conversational style of communication when they are invited for discussions. The factors that informed the formation of the #FixTheCountry Movement cover largely falling standards in economic, education, health, security and other major sectors of Ghana.

The #FixTheCountry Movement membership is composed of rebels, citizens, change agents and reformers who play vital roles in their activism in line with Moyer's four roles of activism. Uniquely, six major roles of activism are identified in the activities of the #FixTheCountry Movement: explorers, commercialisers, rebels, citizens, change agents and reformers.

Recommendations of the study

Based on the literature and findings of this study, the following recommendations are provided for future research in this area of social movements and activism. Two main categories of recommendations are

proposed: recommendations for practice and recommendations for future research are outlined as follows:

- i. The study suggests that activists should interact with each other to conform to the laws of the nation to allow lawful activism which will yield greater results.
- ii. The study recommends that the police department which is the law enforcement agency enforces the laws of Ghana concerning demonstrations and protests fairly and unbiased.

Research recommendations are as follows:

- i. Firstly, further research should be conducted to examine the impact of interference by law enforcement agencies on social movement.
- ii. Additionally, further studies should be conducted on social activism using quantitative method.
- iii. Lastly, further research should be conducted on the roles of social movements in the enhancement of democracy.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR ADULT

PART I: INFORMATION SHEET

Title: “Use of Mobile Media and Citizen Journalism in Social Activism: A Case of #FixTheCountry Movement”

Principal Investigator: Kaayeng Frederick

Address: P. O. Box 1, Takwa

Name of Institution: University of Cape Coast (UCC)

Address of Institution: PMB, Cape Coast

General Information about Research

My name is Kaayeng Frederick, a student at the University of Cape Coast conducting a research on the topic “Use of Mobile Media and Citizen Journalism in Social Activism: A Case of #FixTheCountry Movement”. The objective of the research is to explore how citizen journalists use social media to engage in online social activism. This a research conducted to explore how citizen journalists uses social media as a tool in social activism with reference to the recent #FixTheCountry Movement.

In pursuit to find responses to the questions, I invite you to take part in this research project. Your invitation to take part in this interview is based on our feeling that you have experience as a social-worker and a member of #FixTheCountry movement and can contribute much to this discussion. If you accept, you will be required to participate in an interview with me. If you do not

wish to answer any of the questions posed during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question.

The interview will take place at Accra (conveners and some citizen journalists), and no one else but the interviewer will be present. Information recorded is confidential, and no one else except the Supervisor, Dr. Jacob Nyarko and the two Research Assistants, Mr. Isaac Tindan and Mr. Joseph Adu as expert coders will have access to the information documented during your interview. The expected duration of the interview is about 30-40mins.

This study is not anticipated to cause any risk or discomfort in the form of physical, social and psychological risk to the participant. Every information you provide will be protected to the best of our ability. Your name will not be included in any report. The supervisor and research assistants may access the research records.

Regarding the reporting, it will be done based on themes/objectives. Your statement made may be referred to or quoted directly to support the statement of a fellow participant or an author/researcher in situations when those statements are in line with each other.

Your participation in the research is voluntary and you can withdraw from the interview without any penalty against your will.

For any further explanation or question for clarification, you can contact me or my supervisor on the following numbers respectively: **0246094178** or **0247407264**.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB). If you have any questions about your right as a research participant, you may contact the Administrator at the IRB

Office between the hours of 8:00am and 4:30pm through the following lines
0558093143/0508878309, or on their email address: irb@ucc.edu.gh

PART II: VOLUNTEER'S AGREEMENT

The above document describing the benefits, risks and procedures for the research title **"Use of Mobile Media and Citizen Journalism in Social Activism: A Case of #FixTheCountry Movement"** has been read and explained to me. I have been given an opportunity to ask any questions about the research answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate as a volunteer.

Volunteer's Name:

Volunteer's Mark/Thumbprint:.....

Date:

Witness (Applicable when volunteer cannot read and write)

I was present while the benefits, risks and procedures were read to the volunteer.

All questions were answered and the volunteer has agreed to take part in the research.

Witness's Name:

Witness's Mark/Thumbprint:

Date:

I certify that the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research have been explained to the above individual.

Researcher's Name: **Researcher's Signature:**

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CITIZEN JOURNALISM**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST****DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES****INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CICTIZEN JOURNALISTS**

My name is Frederick Kaayeng, a Post Graduate student pursuing an MPhil in Communication Studies at the University of Cape Coast. I am researching on the topic “Use of Mobile Media and Citizen Journalism in Social Activism: A Case of #FixTheCountry Movement”

This is to formalize the process of gathering relevant information and data required for the purpose of academic research through questionnaire. You are therefore kindly requested to assist in response to these questions as truthful as possible with the facts of the subject under investigation. Your responses would be treated confidential and used for the purpose of this research.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

1. Sex ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age ☐ 20 – 35 ☐ 36 - 45 ☐ 46 – 55 ☐ 56 – Above

3. Highest Education ☐ JHS ☐ SHS ☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor ☐ Masters
☐ PhD ☐ None

SECTION B

1. What influenced the composition of your Facebook posts on the #FixTheCountry movement?
2. Would you agree that mobile media has enhanced the #FixTheCountry movement communication? Please explain your answer.
3. What other medium of communication does the movement use to reach Ghanaians?
4. Will you say that #FixTheCountry movement is more elitist in scope due to its online- centeredness?
5. What factors influenced your decision to join #FixTheCountry movement?
6. Beyond Q5, would you say that some followers also join for other reasons?
7. How did those factors influence your communication on #FixTheCountry movement?
8. How will you rate your style of communication on #FixTheCountry movement?
9. Has #FixTheCountry movement been able to meet its objectives?
10. What are some of the challenges you encountered as a result of your involvement in the #FixTheCountry movement on Facebook?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CONVENORS**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST****DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES****INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CONVENORS OF #FIXTHECOUNTRY****MOVEMENT**

My name is Frederick Kaayeng, a Post Graduate student pursuing MPhil in Communication Studies at the University of Cape Coast. I am researching on the topic “Mobile Media and Citizen Journalism in Social Activism: A Case of #FixTheCountry Movement”.

This is to formalize the process of gathering relevant information and data required for the purpose of academic research thesis through questionnaires and interviews.

You are therefore, kindly requested to assist in response to this interview as frank as possible with the facts of the subject under investigation.

You are further assured that the information provided will not be misused, and that its source and content will be kept concealed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

1. Sex ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age ☐ 20 – 35 ☐ 36 - 45 ☐ 46 – 55 ☐ 56 – Above

3. Highest Education ☐ JHS ☐ SHS ☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor ☐ Masters
☐ PhD ☐ None

SECTION B

1. In your opinion, how did your communiqué amass the citizenry for the mob action?
2. To what extent do people respond to your posts?
3. What do you think is the driving force behind people's actions/reactions?
4. What is people's response to your posts?
5. Are your posts dictated by the agenda of the movement?
6. How will you rate your style of communication on #FixTheCountry movement?
7. What other medium of communication do you use to reach Ghanaians?

APPENDIX D: CHECKLIST

Name of Principal Investigator: KAA YENG FREDERICK

Title of Proposal: “Use of Mobile Media and Citizen Journalism in Social Activism: A Case of #FixTheCountry Movement”		PI TO COMPLETE		
		Yes	No	N/A
Vulnerable/High Risk Group				
1	Is a vulnerable population being studied?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, tick the vulnerable population being studied?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant women <input type="checkbox"/> Adolescents / Children <input type="checkbox"/> Incarcerated / Prisoners		<input type="checkbox"/> Elderly (above 60yrs) <input type="checkbox"/> Refugees <input type="checkbox"/> Those who cannot give consent (sick or unconscious)	<input type="checkbox"/> Persons with mental or Behavioural disorders <input type="checkbox"/> Others	
2	Is the justification for studying this vulnerable population adequate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.	Have adequate provisions been made to ensure that the vulnerable population is not being exploited?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comment(s) of reviewer:				
Scientific and Technical Issues				
1.	Is the rationale for the study clearly stated in the context of present knowledge?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Is the hypothesis to be tested fully explained?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.	Is the project design scientifically sound?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.	Where present, is the control arm adequate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.	Are the inclusion and exclusion criteria complete and appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.	Are the types and methods for participant allocation appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.	Are the procedures for participant recruitment, admission, follow up and completion appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8.	Are the drugs and/or devices to be used fully described?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9.	Does the project design include appropriate criteria for stopping and discontinuing the research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

10.	Are the clinical procedures to be carried out fully described and appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11.	Are the laboratory tests and other diagnostic procedures fully described and appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12.	Is the Statistical basis for the study design appropriate and is the plan for analysis of the data appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comment(s) of reviewer:				

Name of Principal Investigator: KAAYENG FREDERICK				
		Yes	No	N/A
.				
Informed Consent, Decision-making & Confidentiality				
1.	Is the information sheet free of technical terms, written in laypersons' language, easily understandable, complete & adequate?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Does it make it clear that the proposed study is a research?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Does it explain why the study is being done and why the participant is being asked to participate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Does it clearly state the duration of the research?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Does it provide participants with a full description of the nature, sequence and frequency of the procedures to be carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Does it explain the nature and likelihood of anticipated discomfort or adverse effects, including psychological and social risks, if any - and what has been done to minimize these risks, and the action to be taken if they occur?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Does it outline the possible benefits, if any, to the research participants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

8.	Does it outline the possible benefits, if any, to the community or to society?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9	If confidentiality is not possible due to the research design, has this been conveyed to all relevant persons?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10	Does it inform the research participants that their participation is voluntary and refusal to participate (or discontinue participation) will involve no penalty or loss of medical or other benefits to which the participant was otherwise entitled?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Does it describe the nature of any compensation or reimbursement to be provided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12	Does it provide the alternatives to participation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	Does it provide the name and contact information of a person who can provide more information about the research project at any time?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	Has provision been made for participants incapable of reading and signing the written consent form (e.g. illiterate patients)? (Please attach)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Does it conclude with a statement such as ‘I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any question I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to participate as a respondent in this study and understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without in any way it affecting my further medical care’	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	Does it provide information to the research participants on the costs to the participants involved in terms of time, travel, man-days lost from work, etc. and reimbursements, if any?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
17.	Has provision been made for respondents’ incapable of giving personal consent (e.g. for cultural reasons,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	children or adolescents less than the legal age for consent in the country in which research is taking place, respondents with mental illness, etc)? (Please attach).			
18.	Does it outline the procedure that will be followed to keep participants informed of the progress and outcome of the research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comment(s) of reviewer:				
Other materials, documents and study instruments (Patient recruitment material, Questionnaires)				
		Yes	No	N/A
1	Is the Participant Recruitment Material (e.g. advertisements, notices, media articles, transcripts of radio messages) provided both in English and in the local language?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Do these materials make claims that may not be true?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.	Do they make promises that may be inappropriate in the research setting (e.g. provide undue incentives or emphasize remuneration?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.	Does the study involve questionnaires, diaries, study instrument?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.	Are these attached to the proposal (In English and local language)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.	Are the questionnaires written in lay language and easily understood?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.	Are the questionnaires relevant to answer the research question?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8.	Are the questionnaires worded sensitively?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

9.	Does the consent information and form describe the nature and purpose of the questions to be asked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10.	If applicable, does the consent information and form make it clear that some of the questions may prove embarrassing for the participant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11.	Does the proposal describe how confidentiality of the questionnaires will be maintained (i.e. will they be coded or anonymised)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12.	Does the consent information and form state that the participant is free to not answer any question?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13.	Where applicable, does the informed consent form make it clear that the in-depth interview or focus group discussion is likely to be audio or video taped?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
14.	Where applicable, does the consent form mention how and for how long these tapes are going to be stored?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comment(s) of reviewer:				
Yes			No	N/A
Clinical Trials				
1.	Is this a new drug or vaccine trial?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	If applicable, is clearance from the national drug regulatory authority attached?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.	Is the Investigator's Brochure (including safety information) attached?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.	Is the Adverse Drug Reaction/Adverse Event Reporting form attached?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.	Has a Data Safety Monitoring Board been established?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.	Are the names of the chairperson and members of the DSMB available for the records?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comment(s) of reviewer:				
Human Biological Materials				YES
NO	N/A			
1.	Will human biological materials (tissues, cells, fluids, genetic material or genetic information) be collected as part of the research?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Does the consent information and form fully describe the nature, number and volume of the samples to be obtained and the procedures to be used for obtaining them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.	Does the consent information and form indicate if the procedures for obtaining these materials are routine or experimental and if routine, are more invasive than usual?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.	Does the consent information and form clearly describe the use to which these samples will be put?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.	Does the consent information and form include the provision for the respondents to decide on the use of left-over specimens in future research of a restricted, specified or unspecified nature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.	Does the consent information and form cover for how long such specimens can be kept and how they will be finally destroyed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.	Does the proposal describe how specimens will be coded or anonymised?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8.	Where applicable, does the consent form mention that genetic testing/genomic analysis will be carried out on the human biologic materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comment(s) of reviewer:				

APPENDIX E:

20:35

FIX GHANA NOW

Home About Videos Posts Photos Community Groups

FIX GHANA NOW
23h ·

Till when???

Our educational system is a hell,

Draw and label the parts of a chicken

Parts of a Rooster

Comb

Hackle

Shoulder

Wing Front

Wing Bow

Cape

Back

Saddle

Main Tail Feathers

Sickie Feather

Lesser Sickie Feathers

Fluff

Hock Joint

Shank

Spur

Claw

Toes

Send message

Hi! Please let us know how we can help.

APPENDIX F: APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD SECRETARIAT

TEL: 0558093143 / 0508878309

E-MAIL: irb@ucc.edu.gh

OUR REF: IRB/C3/Vol.1/0560

YOUR REF:

OMB NO: 0990-0279

IORG #: IORG0011497

22ND DECEMBER, 2023

Mr Frederick Kaayeng
Department of Communication Studies
University of Cape Coast

Dear Mr Kaayeng

ETHICAL CLEARANCE – ID (UCCIRB/CHLS/2023/29)

The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB) has granted Provisional Approval for the implementation of your research **Deployment of Mobile Media and Citizen Journalism in Civil Action: A Case of Fix-The-Country Movement**. This approval is valid from **22nd December 2023 to 21st December 2024**. You may apply for an extension of ethical approval if the study lasts for more than 12 months.

Please note that any modification to the project must first receive renewal clearance from the UCCIRB before its implementation. You are required to submit a periodic review of the protocol to the Board and a final full review to the UCCIRB on completion of the research. The UCCIRB may observe or cause to be observed procedures and records of the research during and after implementation.

You are also required to report all serious adverse events related to this study to the UCCIRB within seven days verbally and fourteen days in writing.

Always quote the protocol identification number in all future correspondence with us about this protocol.

Yours faithfully,

Kofi F. Amuquandoh
Ag. Administrator

ADMINISTRATOR
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

APPENDIX G: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Tel: 03321-30944
Email: des@ucc.edu.gh
Our Ref: DCS/MP/C/2/V.1/047
Your Ref:



University Post Office
Cape Coast, GHANA

20th February, 2023.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,


LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: MR. FREDERICK KAAYENG

I write to introduce the above-named MPhil student who is reading Communication Studies at the Department of Communication Studies. He is working on a thesis titled **“Deployment of Mobile Media and Citizen Journalism in Civil Action: a case of Fix-The-Country Movement”**.

Mr. Kaayeng is at the data collection stage of his research and I would be grateful if you could grant him clearance.

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

DEPT. OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST


Dr. Jacob Nyarko

THESIS SUPERVISOR

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES, UCC

APPENDIX H: LETTER OF SUPPORT

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Tel: 03321-30944
Email: dcsc@ucc.edu.gh
Our Ref: DCS/MP/C/2/V.1/048
Your Ref:



University Post Office
Cape Coast, GHANA

2nd February, 2023.

The Chairperson
Institutional Review Board
University of Cape Coast
Cape Coast

Dear Sir,

LETTER OF SUPPORT: MR. FREDERICK KAAYENG

We write to request for ethical clearance for the above-named student who is an MPhil. student and is reading Communication Studies in the Department of Communication Studies. The applicant's registration number is AR/MPC/21/0006.

We would be grateful if Mr. Kaayeng received the necessary support needed to produce a well-written thesis that will contribute to knowledge in the academic community.

We count on your usual cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

**THE HEAD
DEPT. OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES
U.C.C.**

Prof. William K. Gyasi
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX I: Advertisement of products

09:28 Fri, 12 Apr

6%

← FIX GHANA NOW 2023

Message Us



FIX GHANA NOW 2023

20h ·

Wow do you know that this shop is owned by a Ghanaian youth who brings goods from USA 🇺🇸?

High quality outfits for both male and female.
Call them now pls let's support the youth into business

050 857 4725

050 699 3595

