



**EXPLORING THE REAL-LIFE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVISM ON
SOCIAL CHANGE IN GHANA**

BY

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT – DISSERTATION

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original research and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute.

I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR

This Project Work has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of Project Work laid down by the Institute of Journalism under the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC-IJ)

Dr Lawrencia Agyepong
Supervisor	Signature	Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to Honorable Francis Xavier-Sosu, Esq. for his unwavering support and mentorship throughout my academic journey. To all the staff of F-X Law and Associates, I dedicate to you this dissertation for your support and encouragement during the difficult moments I encountered in the course of my study.

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the real-life impact of social media activism on social change. The study aims to discover the role of social media in grassroots Mobilisation for social change. The study further examines the role of social media platforms and social media activism on the formulation and implementation of social policy in Ghana. Finally, the study explored whether social media activism helped in achieving the desired results or goals of the organizers in seeking social change in Ghana

It was discovered that, social media plays a significant role in the mobilisation and participation of the citizens in demanding for social change. It was also discovered that, social media activism has a real-life impact on policy formulation and implementation in Ghana. Finally, social media serves as an important tool for activist in their quest to demand lasting social change in Ghana. This study contributes to understanding the impact of social media activism in effecting positive social change.

Keywords: Social Media, Social Change, Activism, Social Movements, Policy formulation and Implementation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

Social media has grown ubiquitous. The capacity to instantaneously interact with friends, family, and strangers has changed the way we build and sustain connections, altering the social strata (Lewis et. al, 2014). Social media has bridged the gap in communication and has drastically eliminated the barriers to social interactions, commerce etc. While some people use it as a tool for random social interactions, others use it for business. In the case of social activists, it is a platform to demand for social change from duty bearers or to raise awareness about social issues which demands immediate attention or intervention (Joshi, 2017).

Murthy (2018) observed that, researches conducted to ascertain the influence of social media and social movements do not fully establish the degree to which social media has changed the scope of organizational communication and the ability of stakeholders to galvanise support from grassroot to effect social change. Meanwhile, in highlighting the relevance of social media in modern day activism, Jones and Wayland (2013) opined that, social movements have made civic participation easier and boosted positive social change.

However, contrary to the opinion of Jones and Wayland (2013), some scholars argue that, social media has little impact on mass movements or revolutions, and that the environmental condition ultimately determines the true outcomes (Ray & Tarafdar, 2017). It is suggested by Ray and Tarafdar (2017) that, the ability of governments and duty bearers to appreciate that social movements emanate as a result of breakdown in communication between citizens and the government will aid them to use the same channel to reestablish communication and disseminate critical policy decisions.

Activists are generally people or groups that seek to achieve social or political reforms (Murthy, 2018). Activists use different channels to communicate and demand for the positive social changes they desire and social media is one of the many channels used by activists. But as noted by Jones and Wayland (2013), some scholars who do not subscribe to social media activism describe it as “slacktivism”. The term “slacktivism” denotes the substitution of real-life activism with social media activism where the former is considered effective and the latter ineffective (Jones & Wayland, 2013).

A study conducted by Scherman and Rivera (2021) on “Social Media Use and Pathways to Protest Participation: Evidence from the 2019 Chilean Social Outburst” suggests that irrespective of the social media platform being used by Chileans, social media influences the political behaviour of people. Again, they discovered that, persons who participate in social media political activities are likely to attend protests than people who use it to share information of common interest with other people.

In Hong Kong, it was observed that, social media was deployed as a tool to mobilise university students during the umbrella movement to participate in social protest (Shen et al., 2020). Furthermore, in examining the significance of social media activism in three different political systems, that is in Taiwan (young liberal democracy), Hong Kong (partial democracy), and China (one-party state), Chen et al. (2016) observed that, although these are different political systems, social media plays a critical role in the dissemination of information which impacted civic engagement both online and offline.

Although the activate social media participation did not reliably predict political results, they had a substantial impact on differing levels of involvement in the three political systems (Chen et al. 2016).

On the African continent, social media has played a critical role in social movements, activism and social campaigns. For instance, Miladi (2016) observed that, social media domains of communication indicate the creation of a remote yet lively environment for political advocacy and inclusivity, particularly among young and vulnerable populations. It is further suggested that social media platforms such as Twitter (X), Facebook, YouTube etc. provided the platform for the democratic uprisings being experienced by the Arab spring countries and the self-governance transitions being experienced (Tunisia & Miladi, 2016).

Similarly, Gheyntachi and Moghadam (2014) opined that, the gradualist movement for women's rights and democratization used social media activism as one of its major strategies to effect social and political changes in Morocco. In South Africa, students through social media activism and Mobilisation protested against the institutionalization of racism and the culture of exclusion in the University of Cape Town. Through the "Rhodes Must Fall" (#RMF) campaign, students used Twitter as the main platform to demand the removal of the statue of British colonialist Cecil John Rhodes (Bosch, 2017).

Ghana has experienced its own share of social media activism and protest. Social media has been used to demand for social justice such as the fight against domestic violence, illegal mining (Galamsey), and to effectively mobilise for a social course. For instance, Abdul-Malik (2021) observed that, social media, particularly Facebook offered victims of domestic violence the opportunity to share their stories and to mobilize support against domestic violence.

Furthermore, it is observed that Twitter (X) was used as the major social media platform to mobilise support for #OccupyFlagstaffHouse and #RedFriday campaigns to demand for better standards of living and good governance in Ghana (Nartey,2022).

Therefore, the importance of social media activism and protest cannot be underestimated. It has offered citizens the opportunity to discuss issues that affect them by eliminating

communication gap, aiding in dissemination of information and reaching out to diverse constituents within a short period of time. Social media has become an avenue to mobilise resources and gather momentum for street protests in demand for social change. However, whether or not these online movements have any real-life impact or permanent impact on social change is still an ongoing debate among scholars. It appears that, there is limited knowledge on the real-life impact of social media movements and the reasons for their failure or success has not been fully investigated by researchers. Therefore, it is important that we critically examine the impact of these movements on effecting positive social change, particularly in Ghana.

1.1 Problem Statement

The issue of social media activism and its impact on social change gained academic traction, and communication experts have discussed how communication plays a role in enhancing these activisms.

On the theme of social media activism, Jones and Wayland (2013) examined the role social media play in ‘slacktivism’. The authors serialized the various social media protests over the period and examined how they impact social change in contemporary development. Key social media movements reviewed include; Iranian movement, Green Movement, Kony 2012, Cover the Night, etc and these movements were protests within the Western and European Zones. The authors failed to discuss the role of social media in ensuring social change in Africa.

A related study by Yilmaz, (2017) explored how social media activism influence the new wave of change. The author focused on political change driven by social media activism. Contextually, the literature did not discuss how recent activisms impacts social change with Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The gap in existing literature is how social media activism enhanced social change in a developing economy like Ghana. The study by Tufte, (2014)

explored the emerging cases being made by protesters through social media. The author proxy the role communication played in the use of social media activism in seeking for social change.

A study by Velasquez and LaRose (2015) focused on the political efficacy of social media activism among students. The authors sampled perspective three students' groups. The authors did not discuss the impact to social change in contemporary era, hence the need for further studies focusing on how social media activism influences social change. The recent social media activism which resulted in physical or in-person protest is the Kenyan Gen Z protest, which instigated a similar protest in Nigeria, etc. Considering the nature of these protests, this study becomes relevant to examine how social media activism impacts social change in Ghana.

Cortés-Ramos, et al., (2021) linked youth activism and communication to social media participation of youths. The literature was discussed in relation to the experience of youths in online activism. The authors further discussed the preferences of these selected youths. The qualitative approach was used in the study. The authors did not link the data to social change in a developing economy within SSA like Ghana.

Another study by Brown, Ray, Summers, and Fraistat, (2017) used the case study approach to evaluate social media activism. The authors sampled about 400,000 tweets regarding the hashtag(#SayHername) in direct relation to females' non-police violence. Reviewing the literature, there was no discussion on how activism via social media influences social change. This leaves a plethora of knowledge gap concerning the effect of social media activism on social change. Hence, the need for further studies on examining the effects of social media activism on social change in developing economies.

In a study by Shirazi, (2013) on "Social media and the social movements in the Middle East and North Africa" the scholar did discuss the role of communication discourse in across Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The theory of social network was used in discussing

the role played by social media and communication across MENA via social media platforms. Kretschmer, Njuguna and Budree, (2023) in their study, focused on how South African internet activists view the inherent advantages and drawbacks of social media. Due to social media's ability to create an open public place where people may speak their thoughts with less limits, the number of users has more than doubled in the previous ten years. Online activism might potentially reach a wider audience when conducted in an open public space with minimal regulations. Greater reach and awareness are made possible by social media's capacity to transmit information more quickly. A qualitative approach was used to examine social activism in South Africa. The authors were silent on how this activism impacts social change in an economy.

The study by Masungu, (2022) focused on students' activism and participation in South Africa, specifically examines the value of universities as transformational democratic environments for the growth and improvement of students' political capacities. In order to provide an explanation of how such action may contribute to the expansion of important political liberties and revolutionary change, the research sought to comprehend student viewpoints and experiences. Social media is criticized for not having a significant impact on actual policy change, despite claims that it encourages political discourse and engagement. The requirement for a theoretical justification and analysis in the face of opposing viewpoints has also been brought to light by research on social media student activism in South African higher education. A qualitative case study was conducted at the University of the Free State, based on recent events in South African higher education institutions that saw a return of student protests organized in person and via social media. In order to get a university perspective, interviews with institutional staff members knowledgeable about student governance were conducted with volunteer students from the Students' Representative Council (SRC), activist organizers such as leaders, and student participants to learn more about their perspectives on activism. I

identified the knowledge gap since the author did not discuss how these students' activism influences any form of social change in the university and the society.

The above notwithstanding, there is scanty or little literature exploring the influence of social media activism on social change in developing economies in SSA(Ghana). This study will, THEREFORE, focus on how the use of social media activism in recent times turned to impact social change, based on the motive of selected organizers of these activities in Ghana. The study further explored instances where social media activism leads to policy-formulations and its implementation in Ghana. The main purpose of social activism is to cause a positive change in society hence the need to ascertain the level of changes made by these protests in recent years. This study is timely considering the numerous activisms been organized through social media within SSA. The very recent one is the case of Kenya Gen Z leading series of social media and street protests against harsh economic policies of the government of Kenya.

1.2 Research Objectives

The purpose of this to explore the effects of social media activism in driving social change in Ghana in recent times.

The following research objectives help shape and provide answers to the purpose of the study;

1. To evaluate how social media platforms, enhance grassroots Mobilisation and involvement in demanding for social change in Ghana.
2. To assess how social media activism contributes to influencing policy formulation and implementation in Ghana.
3. To evaluate whether social media activism helped in achieving the desired results or goals of the organizers in seeking social change in Ghana.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were derived from the research objectives;

1. How do social media platforms, enhance grassroots Mobilisation and involvement in demanding for social change in Ghana?
2. How do social media activism contribute to influencing policy formulation and implementation in Ghana?
3. How effective has social media activism been in helping organizers achieve their desired goals for social change in Ghana?

1.4 Scope of Study

This study on exploring the real-life effects of social media activism in ensuring social change in Ghana covers selected social media protests spanning from 2019 to 2024. This time frame is crucial since it covers durations the economy experienced some changes in economic variables and how social changes were affected. This study focused on protests organized between the stated durations and these selected protests were organized within the national capital, Greater Accra Region and this placed a limitation on the coverage of the study. Restricting the study to protests within Accra can affect the possible outcome of the study. The dynamics may vary across regions in Ghana. The study covered how social media activists made use of different social media platforms in Mobilising towards the selected protests hashtags like open legal education (2019), fix the country (2019), and Occupy flagstaff house (2024).

1.5 Significance of Study

The findings of this study are of much significance to these main stakeholder-policy-makers, industry, academia, etc. The study provides valuable insights into how social media platforms contribute towards awareness creation and Mobilisation for social change. The study further

explores the strengths and limitations of using social media to fuel protest and seek for social change in Ghana.

The results contribute to the understanding of the role of social media in public debate and social movements by government officials and policymakers. Comprehending these processes can aid in formulating more adaptable and efficacious policies that tackle the issues brought out by social media activism over the period. The study provides actionable insights into the best practices for activists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who use social media to influence social change in society. This can increase the impact of activism activities and make subsequent campaigns more effective.

Through highlighting effective instances of social media activism, the research can stimulate increased civic involvement and engagement. It may inspire more people to participate in campaigns for social change and to use social media as a forum for activism. The study's conclusions, which highlight obstacles to and chances for successful social media advocacy in Ghana, can aid in addressing regional issues. This may result in focused interventions that forward the objectives of activists and bring about significant social change.

The study contributes to the body of knowledge on social media and social change, especially as it relates to Ghana. It offers theoretical ideas and empirical data that can be applied to future research, including cross-national comparisons.

1.6 Operational Definition

Social Media Activism: It refers to the use of social media platforms (like Facebook, X, Instagram, etc) by individuals and groups to promote social causes, mobilize support, raise awareness, and influence public opinion and policy. This includes activities such as organizing campaigns, organizing protests, sharing information, and engaging in discussions related to social justice, governance, and community issues.

Social change: this simply involves the transformation of cultural, social, economic, and political institutions and relationships within a society. It encompasses shifts in public attitudes, behaviours, and policies that lead to improvements in social equity, justice, and overall community well-being.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The paper is organized into five main chapters, each focusing on a specific aspect of the study. Chapter One provides an introduction to the topic, including the background, problem statement, purpose, objectives and questions, and significance of the study. Chapter Two offers a comprehensive literature review, discussing the conceptual review, theoretical underpinnings, conceptual framework, and empirical findings related to the topic. Chapter Three outlines the methodology employed in the study, detailing the study design, population and sample, sampling techniques, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter Four presents the data and analysis, while Chapter Five concludes the study with a summary and recommendations.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter examines the background to the study and further captures the problem statement which sets the premise of the study. The research objectives are outlined in this chapter, capturing the scope of the study, the research questions and the importance of the study. The organizational structure and the words that take unique definitions for the purpose of the study has been clearly defined. The chapter gives an overview of the study and sets out the expected outcomes of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section of the paper examines the various concepts underpinning social media activism, its effect on social change, and other related terms regarding the subject. The chapter further discussed the theoretical framework and empirical review of the study.

2.1 Conceptual Review

This subsection explains the concepts in relation to the subject under discussion.

2.1.1 Social Media

The term “social media” has multi definitions from different scholars. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010:9), as an organized internet application that is simply built on ideological and technological foundations emanating from web 2.0 which allows for seamless exchange of user-generated content over a medium. This includes mobile and web-based technology used in communication to generate an interactive dialogue between parties. Key examples of these platforms include; Facebook, X (formerly twitter), YouTube, etc. These tools are mostly referred to as “media” since they serve as storage, sharing or disseminations of discussions or information between parties unlike the traditional media platforms like televisions and radio, social media platforms allow for an interactive engagement between parties through exchanges of opinions and information.

From another practical perspective, Spassov and Agbozo, (2019) described “social media” as a “read-write Web,” where users move beyond merely viewing content to actively contributing to it by sharing their opinions, etc. The phrase “user-generated contents or participation” runs through all the known definitions expressed on what entails “social media”. This sets “social

media'' apart from the mainstream traditional media outlets (Spasov & Agbozo, 2019). Social media allows end-users the freedom to choose the kind of information they want or prefer. While this choice diminishes the shared experience typical of traditional media audiences, it fosters a network of individuals with similar interests and preferences.

Social media is becoming more and more conventional, ranging from popular sites like Facebook and X (Twitter) to solutions designed specifically for organizations (Murthy, 2018). This is demonstrated by the variety of applications, which include the usage of Snapchat by heavily monitored activist groups and Twitter and Facebook during the Arab Spring (Murthy, 2013). Social media is increasingly being viewed by many social movements as a way to crowdsource cooperatively with a variety of stakeholders (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Social media is frequently encouraged in large companies because technology can create a feeling of a "digital village" (Valenzuela et al., 2014), where people can "see" the lives of others in the company and feel more connected to them (Brzozowski, Hogg & Sandholm, 2009).

2.1.2 Benefits of Social Media

Social media has been used across vast areas of social development. For instance, Amedie (2015), argues that social media is an effective tool for product marketing. Businesses use social media to create awareness about new products and to reach a wider audience. Similarly, Asur (2010), used social media, particularly Twitter (now X) to predict box-office revenues for movies by creating a model which analyses the rate at which tweets are generated on the particular subject matter. Again, it is observed by (Antheunis et al., 2013), that between health professionals in obstetrics and gynaecology and patients, Twitter (now X) and Facebook are the primary social media platforms for sharing knowledge and seeking social support. Healthcare Organizations can actively post information on illnesses, therapies, and

preventative care to customers' social media newsfeeds instead of waiting for them to do internet searches for health-related issues (Kotsenas et al., 2018).

On the benefits of social media in Tourism and Hospitality, (Leung et al., 2013) observed that, travellers use social media during their planning process. It is further asserted by Gretzel and Yoo (2017), that consumers research their travel on social media during the pre-trip stage, when users use reviews and other information to get inspiration, weigh their options, and make decisions. In the public sector, (Khan et al., 2014) observed that, social media greatly impacts positively the operations of public sector employees through the establishment of stronger social connectivity, interaction and the flow of information.

2.1.3 Negative Effects of Social Media

Some scholars argue that, social media has eroded the confidence and solace shared among people by substituting physical human connections with illusive virtual relationships (Amedie, 2015). In discussing the adverse effects of social media among students, Siddiqui and Singh, (2016) observed that, students are easily misled by information posted on social media by writers and bloggers who lack expertise on a particular subject matter. This creates challenges in an education system and leads to failure.

Furthermore, Elsayed, (2021) cited lack of privacy as one of the major adverse effects of social media. It is further observed that, teenagers share personal and misleading information about themselves and other people which could endanger their privacy and safety. The lack of security does not only affect teenagers but businesses as well.

Businesses that rely on social media for its branding and marketing prospects face challenges such as difficulty in ascertaining the outcome of social media advertising or fall victims to cyber-attacks such as hacking (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016). In citing Spira and Feintuch (2006),

it was observed by Brooks, (2015) that an average worker is interrupted at least six to eight times a day, which takes around 28% of a knowledge worker's day. It is further observed that, workers respond to interruptions around 40% of the time rather than concentrating on their original activity.

Another challenge identified by Dumas and Stough, (2022) is the inability of social media users to ascertain the authenticity of the people they follow or people who influence them. This result in innocent and unsuspecting people being easily misled by unscrupulous people.

2.1.4 Activism

Throughout history, activism has been used to highlight social injustices and promote a better world. Activists use many techniques to achieve their goals, such as petitions, public displays, demonstrations, and boycotts (Torres, 2024). Activism aims to build stronger communities by increasing awareness and knowledge. Awareness and knowledge foster fresh perspectives on the world around us. Innovative thinking allows for diverse approaches to problem-solving.

According to Schwedler and Harris, (2016) activism means organizing a protest or whipping up resistance to a certain policy; at other times, activism is what social organisations accomplish, such as shaping public opinion spanning over decades. It is further explained that, activism is the process adopted by activists and organized groups to exert pressure on an organization in a manner that results in the desired change of policies, structures and operations (Smith & Ferguson, 2010).

Smith and Ferguson, 2010 observed that, activism includes advocacy using the media, lobbying through meetings with duty bearers, and public demonstrations or protests. To summarize what constitutes activism, it is when a group of people identify a problem in the society and take positive steps to solve them. They achieve this by creating awareness, Mobilising support from

like-minded people and deploying direct and indirect pressure on the authority responsible for solving the identified problem.

Direct action, such as protests, strikes, boycotts, and civil disobedience, plays a crucial role in social change processes. However, activism may not necessarily imply direct action. Some kinds of activism function inside the political and legal systems, rather than via direct action.

Activism takes different forms such as judicial activism which involves challenging the state and businesses in court, whereas lobbying aims to persuade lawmakers or governments (Cammaerts, 2007).

On the other hand, political activism is defined by the activity phenomenon, which specifically consists of collective acts by individuals and social groups focused on achieving their political desires. Political activism, then, is a multidimensional concept that reveals the collective action and output of the energy of individuals and social groups focused on altering their political status and environment (Drozd, 2015).

2.1.5 Social Media Activism

Media platforms have played a significant role in political and social transformations throughout history. Barassi, (2018) observed that, the field of media activism has undergone yet another significant change as a result of the rise of social media activism. The various ways that political activists were utilizing social media platforms to plan and participate in massive protests, and organized actions were queried and examined by academics.

According to Yilmaz, (2017) this concept refers to the involvement and participation in social movement through social media platforms. This form of activism mostly employs the various technological tools like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, etc. to mobilize group of like-minded persons to join an advocacy in demand for social, political, environmental, etc.

changes. This form of activism leverages digital tools to mobilize support, raise awareness, and drive action on various issues.

Social media use in movement contexts is not only extremely varied, but frequently intricate or divisive as well. Regarding the latter, for instance, microblogging might be viewed as a delicate kind of activism (also known as slacktivism), in line with the infamous claim made by Gladwell (2010), that it is largely ineffective. But contemporary social movements like ‘‘Black Lives Matter’’ went from online discussions to street protests, which had a significant impact on the "national discourse about race" (Carney, 2016, p. 180). Social media is becoming more and more valuable to activist organizations for recruiting, communication with the public, and campaign organization.

Social media has the potential to facilitate data or information exchange beyond conventional boundaries like location. For instance, social media users worldwide "checked in" as though they were at the actual demonstration to support activists on the ground evade police surveillance based on Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking, which in turn helped fuel the Dakota Access Pipeline (NoDAPL) movements (Worland, 2016). Women are more likely than men to be active social media users, according to research on the subject (Correa, Hinsley, & De Zuniga, 2010). This could have significant ramifications for organizationally gendered movements and eventually allow women to participate in democracy to a greater extent.

As established by extant literature, Tweet-like microblogging was found to promote "more team cohesion and lead to faster problem solving" in research on the use of social media in businesses or social movements (Brzozowski et al., 2009). During the Occupy movement, Twitter has been discovered to have connected geographically dispersed organizations (Croeser & Highfield, 2014). In practice, social media can be challenging to implement in terms of fostering a clear organizational structure, they are vulnerable to governmental and other

forms of surveillance, and they frequently require enormous amounts of resources to keep social media networks alive, even though they can ultimately foster a powerful "sense of virtual community" in demanding for social change (Majchrzak et al., 2013).

2.1.6 Social Change

The shared beliefs and actions of a society's constituents define it. Such conduct is indicative of people making deliberate decisions in light of their surroundings (Guner, 2008). Social change could summarily be described as the alteration in the characteristics of a society. Therefore, social change is just a modification in the portion of society that adheres to a specific mindset or way of acting. Similarly, Wahab et. al. (2021) defined social change as an essential and pervasive aspect of social fact that explains how human societies evolve and how fundamental society elements, structures, procedures, and institutions modify.

Cited by Wahab et. al (2021), Tijani and Edinyang (2011) asserted that, since no phenomenon ever stays the same, change is characterized as unavoidable, ever-present, and continual. An event, person, group, or item is said to have changed when an alteration is observed in them. It also refers to the shifts in interpersonal relationships and interactions. A shift in the system of social interactions is referred to as social change. Society is a web of relationships between people. Therefore, positive changes in social interaction, social processes, and social organization are referred to as social change.

According to Servaes, (2022) social change is the significant shift in the culture or organized social activity within a particular community, society, or setting. Again, Blackwood et. al., (2013) opined that, when social change is defined in its general term, its effect could be limited. They contend that a vague allusion to "social change" has replaced a thorough description and examination of the mechanisms underlying the evolution of interpersonal relationships both within and across civilizations.

Social change must be viewed as the result of the sum of individual acts; otherwise, it would not occur. Undoubtedly, what we often identify as societal change is people's lives, particularly shifts in their own situations, attitudes, and actions. Understanding social change for a time and place means understanding social life as the culmination of people's experiences.

Wahab et. al (2021) opined that, societal change may be positive or negative/ progressive or retrogressive. According to them, social change either results in beneficial improvements to specific aspects of social institutions or structures or in the entire social system, bringing about progressive growth and always improving human situations. Negative social change may be characterized as a shift or adjustment of the status quo that results in disorder or failures in some areas of institutions and social constructions and distorts or derails human and social development.

According to Lipset, (2017), there are three types of social change: cultural, gradual, and profoundly systemic (revolutionary). De la Sablonniere, (2017) explains that, the term " Incremental social change" refers to a scenario in which a slow occurrence causes a significant but gradual shift in society, altering the social and/or normative framework gradually or posing a danger to the cultural identity of group members. It must move slowly in order for societal transformation to happen gradually.

Regarding cultural factors which affect social change, Wahab et. al., (2021) opined that, social transformation is influenced by cultural variables. For example, in many global countries, colonialism-induced changes in cultural characteristics including values, beliefs, attitudes and also resulted in changes to social structures, institutions, cultural patterns, and language. Another instance where culture influences social change is observed where cultural exchanges between various societies lead to social transformation. Diffusion is a significant social change mechanism that allows one civilization to absorb the cultural characteristics of another through

extended interaction, such as travel, trade, and business, as well as through unexpected occurrences, such as war, when previously unknown technology become apparent.

Personal interactions and interactions between people from two or more cultures can contribute to the diffusion of cultural features. Mass media also contributes to diffusion as it disseminates information to a broad audience. By bringing aspects of other cultures to individuals who live far away, it has sped up the process of change and produced a type of cultural modernization.

Also, revolutionary factors result in social change. Katz, (2021) opined that, when significant and swift social, economic, and political factors alter people's sociopolitical value systems and have an impact on their financial well-being, revolutionary circumstances arise. Katz, (2021) further stated that, the 2011 popular uprising in the Arab world was sparked by social media's influence and the worldwide effects of the political shifts that took place during and after the Arab Spring. The events in the Arab world have altered how politics are conducted in the modern era of social media and international communication.

People learn about themselves and the social world through education, which is a significant change agent. Wahab et. al., (2021) supported this assertion by stating that, by increasing people's knowledge and comprehension of the social world and moulding their minds toward creativity and productivity, education positions itself as a tool for social change. People are given opportunities and experiences through education that they can develop and adapt to new needs and societal philosophies.

2.1.7 Social Movements

A social movement is a collection of people, organizations, and/or groups involved in political and/or cultural issues who, through coordinated activity and/or communication, "learn to regard themselves as part of the side in a social struggle (Ishkanian, 2020). Social movements

formed to highlight concerns about their own rights, welfare, and well-being. Pais, (2023), defined social movement as large associations of people or groups that concentrate on certain political or social concerns. These groupings of individuals endeavour to bring about positive social change. They implement, oppose, or start social change. A range of group efforts to alter the current social and political order through institutional and non-institutional means are collectively referred to as "social movements."

Social movements are collective endeavours by individuals, organizations, and communities united by shared objectives who band together to act and overcome their circumstances, take on social concerns collectively, or oppose oppression. In a continual process of social change, social movements are the most intense and obvious periods of social advocacy (Melucci, 2024).

Offe and Offe, (2019) views social movement as people who are organized and motivated to combat injustice and who have a common cause based on a shared social, political, and cultural identity as well as an interest in justice are said to be part of a social movement. This concept is naturally adaptable and may be used to describe a variety of group initiatives aimed at enacting social change. Social movements aim to effect change by contesting established power structures, swaying public opinion, and inspiring group action. They frequently start in response to perceived social injustices or inequality. Social movements can have a local, national, or international reach and involve a diverse variety of players, including individual activists, official organizations, and online communities. They can have tight connections to political institutions.

A social movement is frequently characterized as a concerted collective endeavour to bring about socio-cultural transformation. However, the process is not one-way. In addition to bringing about change, social movements may also spark societal transformation. A lot of the time, social change leads to social movements, which in turn lead to more change (Pais, 2023).

Social Movements can be categorised base on the object of the movement. For instance, a determination of whether a social movement intends to oppose or bring about a change in the society. Furthermore, an innovative (liberal) movement aims to bring about a change in organizations, policy proposals, behavioural norms, or culture. The aim of a conservative social movement is to fight change and keep things as they are or maintain the status quo. Meanwhile, a reactionary movement aims to restore historical institutions, behavioural patterns, or cultural aspects. On the other hand, a revolutionary movement seeks to replace one or more significant social institutions in order to effect significant structural change. These are but a few categorizations of social movements based on their objective in the society.

In the African society, Larmer, (2010) observed that, when Africans participated in large-scale efforts to achieve political independence and self-rule in the 1950s and 1960s, it was generally accepted that nationalist political movements were not cohesive and cohesive forces with the only objective of achieving "political" independence. Although these were huge social movements, their efforts were not properly organized and coherent.

During the post-colonial periods, the rise of a post-independence state with a centralized governing party, which tended to see the independent social groups that had been instrumental in galvanizing anti-colonial dissatisfaction as a danger to or diversion from the post-colonial state's main national-developmental objective. Therefore, nationalist governments asserted a monopoly on the expression of "national" interests, which was negatively opposed to social movements' expression of "specific" complaints or desires. State support for and authority over rural projects like cooperatives tended to stifle local social movements' developmental self-initiative.

During the post democracy era, Larmer, (2010) observed that, African social movements made use of concepts and methods that were, in many ways, defined by Western activists and

intellectuals, including self-government, democracy, collective organization, general strikes, political parties, and civil society. In reality, social movements in Africa are inherently hybrid, drawing from and modifying Western concepts, resources, organizational structures, and activist techniques. However, as African culture has become more diverse in recent decades, the focus of social movement campaigns and the participants have changed significantly.

According to Christiansen, (2009) there are four stages of social movements. The emergence is the initial phase in the life cycle of a social movement. Social movements are relatively early in this stage, and there is little to no structure. Rather, this phase might be viewed as a generalized dissatisfaction. Potential movement members could be dissatisfied with a social situation or a policy, but they haven't done anything about it or if they have, it's probably individual rather than group action.

The second stage as considered by Christiansen, (2009) is the Coalescence. Some social movements have conquered challenges that many others never do. Social unrest or dissatisfaction frequently occurs without any planning or broad Mobilisation. For instance, a community's members may voice grievances to one another over a widespread injustice, but they do not band together to address these grievances, and the social movement does not advance. The second stage, referred to as coalescence or the "popular stage," is distinguished by a more distinct sense of dissatisfaction. There is now a feeling of what the uneasiness is about and who or what is causing it, rather than just a general uneasiness.

Bureaucratization is the third level. This stage, which Blumer refers to as "formalization," is distinguished by coalition-based tactics and increased degrees of organization. Social movements have had some success at this point as they have increased awareness of the need for a coordinated approach.

The final stage of social movement is the decline stage. This does not imply that the social movement failed to achieve its objective. Rather, it is the “institutionalization” stage of the life-cycle of social movements.

Pais, (2023) further stated that, Mass movement theory, resource Mobilisation theory, relative deprivation theory, reference group theory, political process theory, and cultural theory are only a few of the numerous theories of social movements.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p. 13) simply defined “theory” as “a collection of related propositions that offer a structured perspective on a phenomenon by outlining the connections between concepts.” The concept also categorized how the various concepts and the world operates in a given situation (Severin & Tankard, 2010, p. 11). These scholars identified four key objectives on mass communication theory (i) to clarify the impacts of mass communication (ii) to explain the uses people make of mass communication (iii) to detail the learning outcomes from mass media (iv) and to describe how mass media affects people's values and beliefs (Pratt, 2015).

The study explored two main theories in explaining social media activism and social change. These theories include social network theory and technological determinism theory.

2.2.1 Social Network Theory

Social Network Theory (SNT) provides a base framework for describing the relationships between the various concepts on social media activism and social change. Social Network Theory is commonly employed by social scientists to investigate the relationships among individuals, groups, organizations, or entire societies (Tye, Leong, Tan, & Khoo, 2018). It is also applied in media and communication research to analyse these relationships. The theory

can be used across various levels of analysis, ranging from small groups to global systems. Its primary focus is on understanding how the patterns of connections between people, groups, or organizations shape opportunities and structures for human behaviour (McCabe, & Harris, 2021). A network consists of a collection of objects (referred to as nodes in mathematical terms) and a description or mapping of the relationships between these objects or nodes (Kadushin, 2004, p. 3). This concept reflects the connections between individuals on various social media platforms.

Social network analysis has its roots in the scholarly work of Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tönnies. Tönnies (1887) (cited in Pratt, 2015) distinguished between personal, direct social ties that connect individuals through shared values and beliefs, and impersonal, formal, influential social links. Durkheim (1893) suggested that social phenomena emerge when networks of individuals create a shared reality that cannot be fully understood by examining individual characteristics alone (Pratt, 2015). According to Kadushin (2004), social scientists have explored three types of networks: ego-centric networks, which focus on individual-centered connections; social-centric networks, which examine the relationships among groups; and open systems networks, which study the interactions within broader, more fluid contexts.

For connections to be classified as networks, they must include not just lists of people or organizations, but also detailed information about how these entities are linked to one another. Without this relational data, a true network cannot be analysed. In a common parlance, particularly when discussing social support, a list of acquaintances might be referred to as a "network." For instance, someone with many reliable friends is said to have a large "network." However, this type of network cannot be analysed in social network terms unless we understand how these individuals are interconnected (Kadushin, 2004). This type of network is not

applicable for the current study because it focuses on social media platforms where the networks involve multiple nodes or individuals.

Kadushin (2004) notes that socio-centric networks are typically defined within a bounded system, such as the connections among students in a classroom or employees within an organization. These are closed systems and are commonly analysed in detail regarding network structure. Since social media networks are open-ended and do not fit the criteria for socio-centric networks, this study does not consider them. Instead, this research focuses solely on open system networks where social media fits appropriately.

This paper draws on the work of SNT to depict how activists leverage networked online social platforms in Mobilising for change. This theory plays an essential role in influencing how information travels quickly on social media through social media activism and fosters the connection between users of these platforms (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011). As discussed by Tufekci (2017), the theory plays central role in organizing social media campaigns. The use of this medium helps in increasing awareness from the global perspective and empowers Mobilisation of resources for this social actions. These actions are directed towards the achievement of social change in every jurisdiction. Scholars explores how networks facilitate the resource Mobilisation of things like funding, expertise and input. Social networking help activists to reach and solicit these resources through their social networks, thereby facilitating the ability of carrying out campaigns at reduced costs (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011). However, the combined strength of their social networks will allow activists to be resourceful and consequently more successful in executing their campaigns for social change.

2.2.2 Technological Determinism Theory

The Technological Determinism theory is another central theory underpinning this study on social media activism and how it enhances social change. This theory views technology, particularly communication technologies, as the foundational element of society across different historical periods and into the future (Logan, 2010). The theory proposed that the advent of technology has transformed society and made society more interrelated or globally connected. Society in this case includes agencies, organizations, groups, etc. and these assert a broad array of social and cultural phenomena are shaped by technology, with human factors and social arrangements considered secondary (Pratt, 2015). This theory is relevant to the study of emerging technologies such as social media, which are reshaping and transforming the ways activists engage with their target audiences (McLuhan, Gordon, Lamberti, & Scheffel-Dunand, 2011). Because social media offers new tools and channels for organizing, Mobilising, and audience engagement, it has significantly changed activist operations. Social media is viewed from the perspective of technological determinism as a transformational force that alters the way activism is carried out. Owing to the unparalleled reach and immediacy of social media platforms, activists are able to coordinate campaigns, disseminate messages, and mobilize supporters with greater effectiveness than they could have done with traditional media (McLuhan et al.,2011). Due to this dynamic, activism is now different since it allows for swift dissemination of information, immediate reaction, and the development of international networks of solidarity (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). According to the notion, activists' interactions with their audiences and the larger public conversation are shaped by these technological advancements. Technological Determinism has drawn criticism for emphasizing technology as the main force behind change, even though it does highlight the significant influence social media has had on activism over the period. The complicated interactions between technology and other social elements, such as political, economic, and cultural

contexts, are argued to be overlooked by critics of this perspective (Fuchs, 2017). Furthermore, the idea that technology acts alone to bring about social change undervalues the agency of people and groups in influencing how technology is utilized and perceived in modern day social activism.

In relating this idea to the study, social media offers features that let its users engage with the content and one another. In order to promote involvement and interaction, it also allows users to provide information to other members of their networks in addition to receiving it. Furthermore, social media can refer to several forms of communication, including text, photos, and videos. Interactivity is also encouraged by features like "like" on Facebook and "retweet" on X (Twitter).

2.2.3 Relevance of the theory to the study

The rise in advancement technology and internet connectivity influence participants of these social media engagements. The presence of X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, etc enhances the rapid disseminations of information between parties hence aiding in grassroots Mobilisations for social events. These two theories; social network theory and technological determinism theory underscore the complex interplay between technology, social structures, and activism. In Ghana, social media serves not just as a tool for communication but as a transformative platform for social change, enabling a more engaged and connected citizenry. The exploration of these theories in real-life contexts reveals valuable insights into how social media activism can drive significant societal shifts.

Traditional activism methods like protests and rallies are now enhanced by online campaigns. Social media creates a platform for voices that might be overlooked, encouraging greater involvement in social movements (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). It plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing political discussions. In Ghana, initiatives like

#FixTheCountry illustrate how digital Mobilisation can exert real pressure on government policies (Aidoo, 2021).

Social media creates networks between supporters, activists, and organisations, facilitating faster mobilisation around a range of issues. These networks facilitate messages and increase the likelihood of group action. The approach emphasises how social connections facilitate the spread of information. Ghana's youth are using social media more and more for advocacy, which is indicative of their access to technology and participation in social networks. This change is changing the nature of political participation and engagement (Baku, 2020). While social media creates new opportunities, it also presents difficulties including false information, digital inequity, and censorship by the government. Using both theories to analyse these dynamics can aid in the development of successful strategies for activism (Graham & Zook, 2013).

2.3 Empirical Review

Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garci's (2014) study was an influential study in this field. The authors proposed a stage-based model to aid in the understanding of social movements and political activism using social media tools. They also attempted to identify the essential elements of political activism and what could be categorized as cyber activism 1.0 and 2.0 based on their operationalization of the terms. Additionally, the researchers looked into the connection between political and social activism and information technologies. The study used both quantitative and qualitative techniques, combining online and conventional data collection methods. The primary data source was used which included news articles, cases that were documented, and websites pertaining to the three historical social protests they had examined.

Theocharis et al., (2015) examined the degree to which three protest movements—the Indignados, Agantismenoi, and Occupy Wall Street movements—used social media in their campaigns for Mobilisation, organization, and political communication in Spain, Greece, and the United States. Their main goal was to ascertain whether content shared on Twitter by users served as the basis for discussions, organizing, Mobilisation, information sharing, or logistical coordination. A comparative content analysis was carried out on tweets that were sent during the campaign's peak periods. The findings show that while Twitter (now X) was used extensively for political discourse and the dissemination of information about protests, participation requests were not the main form of communication. The organization and coordination of protests were mentioned in just a very small fraction of tweets. Additionally, examining the actual content of the Twitter information exchanges exposes both the three movements' commonalities and differences, which can be attributed to their various national settings.

The goal of Anduiza, Cristancho, and Sabucedo's (2014) study was to identify the main pathways of Mobilisation for the 15M demonstration, which served as the impetus for the indignados movement in Spain. Between 2010 and 2011, they participated in nine demonstrations in Spain and gathered information from participants and participating organizations. They found that human contact and online social networks were the primary methods employed for Mobilisation. They also found that the participants were less politically involved, younger, and better educated.

A study by Gaby and Caren (2012) sort to ascertain what drew Occupy Wall Street supporters to the movement's Facebook sites. Utilizing a database of 1,500 Facebook pages dedicated to Occupy, they examined the kinds of posts that attracted new members. A selection was made from the top 100 postings on the movement's pages between its founding and October 17, 2011. They divided the posts into six major categories: aggressive messages, posts showing elite

backing for the revolution, informal movement member surveys, personal narratives, media distortions, and posts expressing solidarity. They found that user-generated material, enhanced by Facebook's features to connect potential supporters, was the driving force behind Facebook's success in bringing in over 400000 new users. They also found that posts that incorporated modern modes of communication like sharing photos and status updates were the most effective at attracting active Facebook involvement. The majority of posts that used strong and unapologetic messaging were found in the top posts. The study found that online social networking sites like Facebook gave protest movements a potent tool for rapidly disseminating messages and reaching large audiences.

According to Tufekci and Wilson (2012), social media in general and Facebook in particular offered new information sources that the Egyptian regime could not easily control and played a significant role in influencing the decisions Egyptians made about whether or not to participate in protests, how those protests would be carried out, and how likely they were to succeed.

They showed that Facebook, phone calls, and in-person interactions were the main ways that individuals were informed about the protests. The primary research questions posed by the researchers were whether or if participants' usage of social media influenced how they became aware of the protests, how protestors organized their participation through social media, and how participants themselves documented their participation. The study revealed the level of participation was largely driven by the choice of social media platform used in creating awareness and Mobilising protesters.

The objective of Singhmar et al., (2024) is to examine the role of social media in creating awareness and influencing public policy in India by comparing two well-known incidents: the 2020 Hathras incident and the 2012 Nirbhaya event. It was observed that through a well-

coordinated online campaign, pressure was mounted on the authorities to pass legislations which addressed the issues of sexual violence and gender-based violence in India. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2013 was enacted as a result of the ability of social media to mobilize public opinion, organize group efforts, and hold authority responsible.

Similarly, a study conducted by Khan, (2024) to ascertain the use of Digital platforms and its revolutionary effects on policy advocacy and civic involvement. The study considered relevant social media campaigns such as Black Lives Matter movement and the Arab Spring to demonstrate how social media activism creates awareness, builds community, and impacts policymakers. Khan, (2024) analysed the role of hashtags, viral content, and online petitions in mobilising public support and exerting pressure on duty bearers for legislative change. It was observed that, social media activism is a vital instrument in today's policy-making process, highlighting its capacity to broaden public debate and change the political landscape.

According to Mindel et al., (2024), a study conducted to determine what makes online activism most likely impactful on effecting institutional changes, they examined the case of the “Swedish Cabotagestudien”, an online campaign which resulted in institutional field-level industry and policy changes. Through a longitudinal case study of Cabotagestudien, they investigated the institutional work that underpins a bricolage of data analytics, social media, and crowdsourcing. It was observed that, in spite of institutional resistance, successful and persistent digital activism promotes innovation, technology, and institutional policy change.

Ghobadi and Sonenshein, (2024) studied how Social Movement Organisations use social media activism to create wider social change through mutual agreements with businesses to achieve compliance with established standards. They studied online campaigns of huge International Social Movement Organizations and through a comparative analysis of three global businesses, it was observed that Social Movement Organizations deployed content positioning and social

networking strategies to force three global organizations to effect changes to their environmental policy and practices and their industry standards.

A study by Ahuja et al., (2018) focused on how, within the context of digital activism, social media affects mass action. They achieved this by applying the theoretical lens of media affordance to the group goals of network synthesis and construction, as proposed by Mobilisation theory. Using data from 384 digital activism events across 100 countries, the proposed hypotheses categorize digital activism success as either partial or complete by using the latent class logit regression test. It was observed that, media with more affordances for fostering environmental shaping were positively correlated with the success of digital activism when its goal is network building. However, media with more affordances for spreading contagion were positively correlated with the success of digital activism when its goal is synthesis.

Similarly, to determine the role of social media activism in achieving social objectives, Melki and Mallat, (2014) conducted a study to ascertain social media activism within Lebanese social movement organizations (SMOs) utilizing a theoretical framework for social movements. The study analysed advantages and disadvantages of the frequently used social media platforms. By adopting the mixed method approach, they combined qualitative interviews, focus group, and participant observation during the study. It was discovered that, social media platforms provide numerous advantages for activism work, but they also pose major challenges in both the online and offline domains, and that digital activism is expanding rapidly.

Shi, (2016) conducted a study to examine how the final results of digital activist movements were impacted by their organizational structures and the tactical use of media applications. The study used the findings from four professional interviewees with experience and knowledge of social media activism in both offline and digital platforms, as well as multiple case studies of

successful and unsuccessful digital movements, were added to survey data from the 2013 Global Digital Activism Data Set (Digital Activism Research Project). It was observed that, political and human rights-related digital activism had a lower success rate than civic development-related activism. It was further observed that, activism aimed at governments had a lower chance of success than that directed at unofficial groups, individuals, or institutions.

Again, Gray-Hawkins, (2018) reviewed current literature about protests, online activism, and collaborative movements. He analysed data from AP-NORC Center and Pew Research Center to determine among others the proportion of social media users who claim to have worked or volunteered for a campaign, contacted elected officials, donated money to the campaign, attended political rallies or events, or publicly expressed support for the campaign on social media and the proportion of teenagers who have raised money for a cause they care about, signed a paper or online petition, worked or collaborated with others to try to solve a problem affecting their school, city, or neighbourhood, volunteered for a cause they care about, and/or participated in a peaceful protest, march, or demonstration. It was observed that, protest organizers may employ social media platforms to provide critical logistical support for protest participants.

2.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter examines the various concepts underpinning social media activism, its effect on social change, and other related terms regarding the subject. The chapter further discussed the theoretical framework and empirical review of the study and the conceptual framework. The chapter further examined social media and social media activism. It also considered relevant theories to the study such as the social network theory and further established the importance of these theories to the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter of the paper discusses the various methods used in undertaking the study. It entails the research design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, data sources and collection, data analysis and ethical consideration. These are the main structure covered under this section of the paper.

3.1 Research Design

The study design outlines the systematic approaches necessary for conducting research. Cresswell and Cresswell (2017) describe it as a framework detailing the strategies for addressing research objectives and questions. Yazan (2015) emphasizes that the primary purpose of a study design is to organize and plan the entire research process. A well-structured research design is essential for ensuring the validity of a study. Basu and Dixit (2022) noted that, for some scholars, this process resembles corporate decision-making procedures that follow a sequential order.

As defined by Burns and Grove (2013), research design is an organized, methodical process for obtaining and analysing data that is both economical and relevant to the goals of the researcher. Babbie (2013) defined research design as the processes and approaches used in gathering data as well as the means of analysing the data in line with the stated study objectives. The main approaches include; qualitative, quantitative and the mixed approach. Creswell (2014) discussed the qualitative approach as a component of research techniques that enhances its flexibility and effectiveness in resulting in profound insights into specific phenomena. The qualitative approach expresses the respondents' thoughts in words and allows for further

probing during the data collection. The respondents are allowed to express themselves on the subject under discussion and it enriches the data process. The quantitative research methods deal with inherently statistical or measurable data (Creswell, 2014).

The study adopted the qualitative approach in exploring the role social media activism plays in ensuring social change in Ghana. The qualitative approach is best suited for achieving the goal of this study, which is to gain a deep understanding of the impact of social media activism and assess whether the organizers of various protest groups met their objectives in causing social change through social media activism. Abdulsaleh and Worthington (2016) explain that the qualitative method enables researchers to form a detailed narrative through words and actions, thus documenting findings based on participants' perspectives.

3.2 Population

Defining the study population is a key aspect of research, as it focuses the study on a specific group of target respondents (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These group of respondents must have some common characteristics that makes them suitable for the study (Willie, 2023). In qualitative research, fewer participants are mostly involved because data collection stops once the saturation point is achieved. This is because respondents in qualitative studies provide in-depth insights and detailed discussions about the topic, making a smaller sample size sufficient.

In this study, the population include all active participants in social media activism from 2019 to 2024.

3.3 Target Population

It is important to identify the general, target and accessible population in a qualitative study when the population size is huge (Asiamah et. al, 2017). According to Willie (2023), the target population is the portion or section of the greater population that is the major focus of a study.

In this study, the target population shall include all main actors or leaders of the social media activism protests organized from 2019 to 2024. These main actors or leaders have unique characteristics which make them suitable to the study. They are selected based on the research objective.

3.4 Sample Size

Sample size refers to the number of individuals selected from a larger population to participate in a study (Hendren, Luo, & Pandey, 2018). In the context of social media activism, determining an appropriate sample size is essential for capturing a diverse range of perspectives and experiences related to online activism. A well-chosen sample size allows researchers to analyse various dimensions of social media activism, such as the effectiveness of campaigns, the motivations of activists, and the impact on different communities. Given the dynamic and expansive nature of social media, a carefully considered sample size helps ensure that the findings are representative and meaningful, providing insights into how different groups engage with and influence activism through digital platforms. Considering the nature of this study, five respondents were selected from four social media activism groups between 2019 to 2024. These respondents will provide contemporary insight to social media activism due to their recent involvement in social media advocacy. In qualitative research, participants must be selected based on their knowledge and personal experience to respond to the research questions and contribute to the overall understanding of the research objective (Sargeant, 2012).

3.5 Sampling Technique

Sampling involves selecting a representative subset from a larger population for a study (Creswell, 2017). In this study focusing on social media activism in Ghana, two sampling techniques were used: purposive sampling and random sampling. First, purposive sampling was used to identify specific groups within the population who are relevant to the study.

Zikmund and Babin (2019) highlight that purposive sampling involves intentionally selecting particular demographic groups that have the necessary information for the research. Once these groups are identified, random sampling was employed to randomly select participants from within these groups for interviews. This approach ensures that each individual within the identified group has an equal opportunity to be chosen for the study, thereby enhancing the representativeness of the findings (Ahiadeke, 2019).

3.6 Data Collection Methods

The study adopted the interview guide in gathering data from the selected participants of the study. The interview session provides participants with an opportunity to openly discuss how the use of social media activism helps in ensuring social change in Ghana. This approach enables the researcher to delve deeper into specific areas that require more detailed insights, allowing for a thorough exploration of the participants' perspectives on how these initiatives can drive meaningful social change through digital platforms.

The researcher further used semi-structured interview for data collection. This allowed the researcher to draft an open-ended interview guide to properly regulate the interview sessions. The Semi-structured interview guide enabled the researcher to ask follow-up questions which may not be contained in the interview guide. It provided the researcher with an opportunity to probe further during data collection.

3.7 Data Analysis

The researcher transcribed all interviews and code them under common themes. The various categorizations were then clustered under patterns to aid analysis. This study used the generic qualitative research inquiry (GQI) approach (Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015). This method is highly suitable and effective for addressing the research topic at hand (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative inquiry focuses on understanding and interpreting social phenomena from

the viewpoints of the participants themselves (Morse, 2015). Unlike other qualitative research methods, GQI is characterized by its flexibility and openness. It is designed to adapt to a broad spectrum of research questions and can explore various phenomena without being constrained by a specific theoretical framework or approach.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study follows the university's ethical guidelines and standards for academic research. Essential ethical principles, such as confidentiality and voluntary participation, were upheld throughout the study. Approval from relevant authorities was obtained, and efforts were made to ensure that participants' confidentiality was protected by collecting data anonymously and allowing only the researcher access to their responses. Participation in the study was fully voluntary, with no coercion involved. The researcher was dedicated to respecting participants' dignity, valuing their individual opinions, and honouring their personal beliefs. The researcher took appropriate measures to ensure that his personal biases or prejudices did not influence the nature of questions contained in the interview guide but rather focused on the research objectives.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter generally focuses on the research methodology. It entails the research design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, data sources and collection, data analysis and ethical consideration. The chapter outlined the overall structure of the research and provides insight to the methodology. The chapter further identifies the population, the sample size, sampling techniques, data collection and analysis techniques and proffers reasons for the choices made by the researcher to achieve the study objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter of the paper presents the data and discussions of the research based on the research objectives. The responses from five participants involved in social media campaigns such as #FixTheCountry, #OccupyFlagstaffHouse, #OpenLegalEducation and #StopGalamseyNow are presented, critically analysed and discussed in this chapter respectively. The chapter discusses the experiences of the respondents in relation to Social Media Activism and its impact on effecting social change in Ghana. As a qualitative study, the data was analysed using thematic analyses method.

4.1 How do social media platforms, enhance grassroots Mobilisation and involvement in demanding for social change in Ghana?

This question of the study seeks to examine from the perspectives of organizers and protestors, how useful social media platforms have been in Mobilising for social protests. The question addresses the issues of having a successful protesters and how social media platforms aids the process. The impact of social media platforms on the success of any protest enhances the achievement of social change. As discussed in extant literature by Kalyango, & Adu-Kumi, (2013), the role of social media platforms in organizing any form of protest cannot be discounted. Scholars opined that; social media augment the traditional media platforms to propel the Mobilisation drive of organizers in their quest for social change (Hwang, & Kim, 2015). In the light of this background, interviewees selected across different agencies into the organization of social media activism shared their perspectives on how social media platforms help in grassroots Mobilisation. The paper discussed this objective under the three main themes; digital Mobilisation, engagement and campaign and relevance to success. Under the

theme on digital Mobilisation and reach, with the use of social media platforms in Mobilising for protest, the organizers with the prevalence of different platforms are able to reach local, regional and global communities within a short time. Using social media in grassroots Mobilisation helps to connect individuals from various socio-political backgrounds and geographies. With the use of social media platforms, organizers and leaders of these groups rely on retweets and shares to expand their reach and infiltrate more communities with their message.

The excerpt from an interview session with participants and leaders for the various social media hash tags used recently in Ghana to mobilize against excesses in leadership;

“.....all it takes is a couple of retweets for your tweet to go far. And we needed something fast and something interactive. And interactive because even though I said social media is a portable billboard, for the billboard, it's like the message only speaks to the audience. The audience is not able to speak back to the message. Let's say it that way. And so, it was easier to educate people on what was happening. Let them know that they have the power to make a change. And then give them the steps that they will need to make that change. We used tweets. One of the conveners for Free the Citizens is a 'social media influencer'. He also put in a lot of effort and he put in a lot of time to get his followers to come for the protest” (Leader 4).

Leader 5 discussed how Gen Z and Gen Alpha generations used social media for information and entertainment;

“...You know, nowadays a lot of people are on social media, and that's where they get their news from. So, if you want to get to them and get people responding as fast as possible, especially for a certain age group, what do they call them, I think it's Gen Z and Gen Alpha, right? With this particular group of people, even with some millennials,

yeah, a lot of them spend the majority of their time and get their information from social media, and hardly do they use traditional media, TV, radio, and news prints. So, it makes it easier, and that's where the numbers are, so, yes, it's extremely effective''(Leader 5).

As opined by ‘‘Leader 4’’ during the interview sessions, the speed of social media is considered as the strengths of activism, which allows and facilitates the spread of messages; retweets, shares and likes move faster and reach global communities. This is a significant advantage over traditional forms of Mobilisation, which take more time to organize. The viral nature of social media content helps grassroots movements gain attention and momentum quickly, especially in urgent situations like protests such as #FreeTheCitizens, where swift Mobilisation is essential to rally support and raise awareness on pressing social issues.

The Social Network Theory explains this discussion in the context of organizers using social media platforms as their main online presence and tools to drive the numbers towards their respective hashtags. As noted by Tufekci (2017), the theory is crucial in organizing social media campaigns. The platform enhances global awareness and empowers the Mobilisation of resources for social actions aimed at achieving social change across different regions. Researchers examine how networks play a role in the Mobilisation of resources such as funding, expertise, and other contributions. Social networking allows activists to tap into their networks to gather these resources, making it possible to conduct campaigns more efficiently and at lower costs (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011).

Another interviewee opined the use of social media platforms to drive grassroots to join in social protests. This interviewee discussed how social media aided in influencing the youths to join protests aimed to demand for social change. An excerpt from the interview;

“..... social media now has given a voice to the young people, has given a voice to the grassroots, has given a voice to the youth. And so, from the comfort of your home, wherever it is you are, you have a voice and you can speak so that everyone else can hear you. Now if there is a challenge, or if there is a problem with the way the politicians are governing our country and I speak about it in Accra, somebody else who is in, say the North, or Aflao in the Volta Region, also speaks about the same issue. Some else somewhere in Kumasi speaks about the same issue, in Akim Oda speaks about the same issue, the it becomes a trending matter on social media. And then it draws all of our attention as stakeholders, as participators in our democracy to a common challenge we are facing as a democracy, and to effectively put the seat of government to the fire of accountability” (Leader 3).

Leader 1 stressed the fact that, social media helps in creating awareness during protests which aids in grassroots Mobilisation. This is the excerpt from the interview with Leader 1;

“... it creates awareness. It creates awareness on how far things are in our society, so that if people become aware that things are going on which are not right in our society, and then they will get to know that this is how you intend to address it, then, it will help the demonstrators, or those embarking on the struggle to bring everybody on board. So, the awareness that it creates and the sensitization of the protests helps in pushing the interests that you are fighting for. So, social media creates awareness” (Leader 1).

The statement (Leader 3) emphasizes how social media has democratized the ability to voice concerns, particularly for marginalized or grassroots communities, including young people. Traditionally, power dynamics and access to platforms of influence often marginalized these voices, especially in rural or less economically developed regions. However, with social media, geographic and socio-economic barriers are reduced. Whether from Accra, the North, or Volta

Region, individuals can speak up on issues that affect them, allowing for a broader and more inclusive discourse. As opined by Jenkins, (2016) this process of grassroots Mobilisation through social media allows for a collective expression of dissatisfaction, rallying diverse voices around common issues. As more people from different regions speak out, the issue can gain traction quickly, becoming a trending topic that captures national attention. This type of Mobilisation creates a powerful tool for holding government and political leaders accountable. Social media provides an avenue for citizens to collectively challenge governance and demand accountability, amplifying the voices of those who may otherwise remain unheard in traditional political systems. This finding collaborates with that of Theocharis, et al., (2015), where they opined that social media used in Mobilising for Wall Street Movement.

The key benefit here is the speed and reach of social media. A single post or tweet, especially when shared across multiple regions, can quickly go viral, making it possible for grassroots movements to scale. As the issue trends, it draws public attention, forcing the government to confront the widespread concern. The statement underscores social media's ability to give the grassroots a unified platform to influence national discourse, making it an essential tool for Mobilising social change and ensuring that government remains responsive to the needs of its people.

On the theme of **engagement and interaction in campaigns**; in social media activism, engagement and contact are essential, particularly when it comes to grassroots Mobilisation. With the use of social media platforms, activists may now more effectively raise awareness and mobilize support through real-time communication, group action, and educational initiatives. Social media is a potent tool for social change because it can be used to engage with a worldwide audience, gather resources, and foster solidarity. To ensure consistent and meaningful interaction, however, the problems of slacktivism, disinformation, and

informational overload must be addressed. Campaigns on social media can have an instant and lasting social influence by carefully utilizing contact and participation.

4.1.1 Awareness and Mobilisation through social media

This sub-theme of the paper discusses how social media helps to create awareness and enhances Mobilisation through various means. Social media's ability to connect and mobilize large audiences, especially younger generations, and amplify messages is essential for social change movements. Below is an excerpt from a respondent identified as Leader 01;

“So...uhm...it creates awareness. It creates awareness on how far things are in our society, so that if people become aware that things are going on which are not right in our society, and then they will get to know that this is how you intend to address it, then, it will help the demonstrators, or those embarking on the struggle to bring everybody on board. So, the awareness that it creates and the sensitization of the protests helps in pushing the interests that you are fighting for. So, social media creates awareness” (Leader 01).

The statement by the leader of one of the organizing groups underscores the relevance and the impeccable role played by social media in Mobilisation towards any social action through the media. Social media is a powerful tool for bringing attention to social issues and injustices. As the statement mentions, people become aware of problems in society that they may not have otherwise known about. This heightened awareness is crucial for sparking collective action. In many cases, social media can help spread the word about incidents, events, or causes that are not covered by mainstream news portals. This finding corroborates with that of Yunus (2013), where the scholar asserted that, social media plays an important role in Mobilising for political actions.

Another interviewee further underscored the role social media plays in Mobilising the youths for social protests in Ghana. The interviewee stated that the platform gives youths the voice to contribute through any platform

“...social media now has given a voice to the young people, has given a voice to the grassroots, has given a voice to the youth. And so, from the comfort of your home, wherever it is you are, you have a voice and you can speak so that everyone else can hear you. Now if there is a challenge, or if there is a problem with the way the politicians are governing our country and I speak about it in Accra, somebody else who is in, say the North, or Aflao in the Volta Region, also speaks about the same issue. Some else somewhere in Kumasi speaks about the same issue, in Akim Oda speaks about the same issue, the it becomes a trending matter on social media. And then it draws all of our attention as stakeholders, as participators in our democracy to a common challenge we are facing as a democracy, and to effectively put the seat of government to the fire of accountability” (Leader 02).

This statement highlights the transformative power of social media in enabling widespread participation in political discourse, especially for young people and grassroots communities. It underscores how platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and others have democratized the process of speaking out and raising awareness on societal issues, offering a space for marginalized voices to be heard. Traditional media often reflects the views of a select few, but social media provides an equal platform where anyone with internet access can raise awareness and organize around important issues. In many African countries, young people have used social media to highlight issues like corruption, education reform, and electoral processes (Adeoti, 2023). This creates solidarity across regions, making it harder for governments to ignore widespread concerns, as issues can quickly go viral and gain national attention.

4.2 How do social media activism contribute to influencing policy formulation and implementation in Ghana?

This research question primarily seeks to establish the role social media activism plays in policy formulation. Contemporary governments are shifting from an elitist approach to public policy development—where decisions were predominantly shaped by managers and experts—towards a more democratic model that emphasizes active citizen participation (Androutsopoulou, 2018). This transition reflects the principles of participatory democracy, fostering greater involvement of stakeholder groups in policy formulation. Social media activism has emerged as a powerful tool in this context, enabling diverse organizations to implement participatory practices and amplify citizen voices in shaping public policies (Bherer & Breux, 2012).

Social media provides robust tools for leveraging the concept of crowdsourcing, enabling governments to gather ideas and insights from citizens to address social challenges and collaboratively design public sector innovations (Brabham, 2013). This approach has facilitated the adoption of open innovation within the public sector (Androutsopoulou, Karacapilidis, Loukis, & Charalabidis, 2017; Hilgers & Ihl, 2010), fostering the co-production of public services through active collaboration between governments and citizens.

From the interview sessions had with selected respondents or interviewee among organizers of sampled protests using social media, the role of social media activism in building a resilient policy-formulation cannot be underestimated. Interviewee 1 opined that, social media activism alters national policy-formulations and its implementations. The respondent further cited the significant change in law school admission due to pressure from citizens via social media. Below is the excerpt of this interview session;

“.....through social media, the pictures and the videos went viral. Alright? And then, we were able to achieve our aim. 2019, the Ghana School of Law admitted only one-hundred and twenty-eight (128) students. The following year, they admitted one thousand thirty-five students (1035) students. Which was unprecedented. So. After 2020, the figure hadn't come down below one thousand. So, it is a great achievement that we were able to have. And the objective of going out there to demonstrate and the use of social media and the viral nature of each the demonstration and the antecedents went through social media, we achieved our aim” (Leader 01).

This statement by Leader 01 highlights the transformative role of social media activism in influencing policy formulation and implementation. Social media platforms serve as a catalyst for public discourse, amplifying societal concerns and pressuring decision-makers to enact change. The example of the Ghana School of Law illustrates how activists effectively utilized social media to broadcast grievances, mobilize support, and draw attention to restrictive admission policies. Through the viral spread of videos and images from demonstrations, social media engaged a broader audience beyond physical protest spaces, creating significant public pressure on policymakers. This pressure led to a dramatic increase in student admissions—from 128 in 2019 to over 1,000 in 2020—a tangible policy outcome.

By sustaining attention on the issue, social media activism ensured the persistence of reforms, as admission figures remained consistently high in subsequent years. This case exemplifies how social media can democratize advocacy by providing marginalized voices with a platform, fostering transparency, and holding institutions accountable. It reflects a broader trend where online activism transcends awareness-building to actively shape public policy and its implementation, reinforcing the concept of participatory democracy in the digital age.

Discussion another respondent from a different social media protest group (Leader 02) affirms the earlier position that social media activism plays an integral role in policy-formulation and implementation. Below is an excerpt of this interview session;

“...uhm... I mean, galamsey for example. It is a policy that we would need government to implement to regulate, you know safe... safer forms of mining, the legal forms of mining, right, so it doesn't destroy our water bodies. So, the whole conversation that happened on social media it just... it plays an integral role when it comes to policy ehh... discussion and formulation. I must say that, in fact, social media is now the most powerful avenue or the most powerful platform to get the opinions of people and that is why in other jurisdictions, countries are using social media as a... as a technical part of governance” (Leader, 02).

Social media provides an accessible and interactive platform for public engagement, enabling citizens to express their concerns and share ideas with policymakers. In the context of galamsey, discussions on social media have brought widespread attention to the environmental and social consequences of unregulated mining, such as the destruction of water bodies and ecosystems. These platforms allow stakeholders—including affected communities, activists, experts, and government officials—to exchange information, debate solutions, and build consensus around policy measures.

The statement emphasizes that in many jurisdictions, social media has become a technical component of governance, allowing governments to collect public opinions, track emerging issues, and enhance transparency and accountability. For instance, governments can analyze data from social media discussions to identify public concerns and priorities, which can then inform policy decisions. This participatory approach aligns with the principles of open

governance and participatory democracy, as it encourages citizen involvement in the policymaking process.

The case of galamsey highlights how social media can shape public discourse around policy issues. Through viral campaigns and online activism, citizens have not only raised awareness about the dangers of illegal mining but also called for stricter regulation and safer, legal mining practices. Social media's capacity to mobilize public opinion puts pressure on governments to act decisively, often compelling them to adopt or revise policies that address public demands.

Despite the positive relationship between social media activism and policy-formulation, another respondent shared a mixed reaction suggesting there is no direct link or nexus between these variables. Below is an excerpt of the interview discussion with respondent 04;

“Unfortunately, the COVID screening was done in the form of a questionnaire, and so I took to social media, I made a post about it, and I also sent a letter to the chancellor of my university. At that time, this person was former President Kufuor, so I had to send a letter to his house, and by, if this was on Friday, by the next Monday, we had received word that because there's going to be, because you know there's COVID, we don't necessarily have to come to the various classrooms to take our exams. We can take our exams on our computers in our hostels. Yes, so I can't say for sure that maybe social media directly impacted the result, but I think it's prudent of me to say that media houses taking up my tweets and sharing them widely was good enough to make an impact. I can't say like, oh, directly” (Leader 04).

This statement highlights the increasing influence of social media activism in shaping policy decisions, especially in addressing urgent issues like public health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. Social media serves as a powerful tool for elevating individual voices,

Mobilising public support, and driving institutional change. The example demonstrates that even indirect digital activism can prompt policy modifications. The interviewee acknowledges that while the direct effect of the social media post is uncertain, the role of traditional media in amplifying the message was crucial and impacts policy-formulation. The collaboration between social and traditional media is essential for ensuring that localized or individual concerns gain broader visibility, reaching policymakers effectively. This finding of this study collaborates with Khan (2024)'s study. This shift has revolutionized how individuals and groups mobilize, advocate for change, and influence public policy. Traditional activism, which often depended on in-person events, protests, and printed materials, has been complemented—and in many cases, overtaken—by digital activism. This modern approach harnesses the connectivity and immediacy of social media to engage a broader audience. The impact of this transition is particularly evident in prominent movements like Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, and various environmental campaigns, where digital platforms have played a key role in rallying support, spreading information, and pressuring policymakers.

4.2.1 Government engagement with social media platforms

This sub-theme from the impact of social media activism in policy-formulation seeks to explain the how social media platforms influence government engagements in policies. Social media activism influences government action, with officials recognizing its power to sway public opinion and affect policy formulation, as seen in government responses to issues like galamsey and the betting tax. **Excerpt of interview discussion by an interviewee (Leader 03);**

‘...so some of the hashtags you’ve mentioned, Fix the Country, we saw the situation of our economy at that point in time. Inflation was on the rise, exchange rates, the dollar was on the rise, some of those things. There was untold hardship. You understand. And so, coming up with the Fix the Country hashtag, you saw that we collectively exerted

so much pressure on the government to the point where from time to time they have to give us indication as to what they were doing. You understand. In recent times, stop galamsey, we have seen the devastating effects of galamsey on our environment, on the people who are within the galamsey-prone communities''(Leader 03).

Social media is recognized as an essential tool for communication with the public, especially youth, who play a critical role in electoral outcomes. Politicians use social media to gauge public sentiment and adjust their policy priorities accordingly.

4.3 How effective has social media activism been in helping organizers achieve their desired goals for social change in Ghana?

This research question seeks to examine how social media activism enhances the achievement of social change in Ghana. The end-result of social media activism is to achieve or influence certain changes in society hence the need to assess whether social media activism has been effective in achieving this desired goal of protestors over the period.

Social media activism is a powerful catalyst for social change, offering platforms for marginalized voices, Mobilising collective action, and influencing public policy. While it has demonstrated its potential in achieving desired results, its effectiveness is reliant on strategic planning, the ability to sustain momentum, and the integration of online efforts with the traditional media platforms. By addressing its limitations and fostering greater inclusivity and collaboration, social media activism can continue to drive meaningful and transformative change in society. The various representatives from these protest platforms opined that, social media activism plays a significant role in shaping policies for a desired social change.

A representative from one of the groups opined that social media activism in achieving the desired social change. This is an excerpt from the interview;

“...Yes. Let me think about that some more and see if I can get some points for you. Yes. I would say that social media has a role to play when it comes to activism because it helps people to understand why they should engage in decision making in the country. Let's call it that. They should do their civic responsibility” (Leader 03).

The statement by Leader 03 highlights a fundamental aspect of social media activism—its ability to inform, educate, and inspire individuals to fulfill their civic responsibilities. By fostering awareness, encouraging participation, and equipping individuals with tools for engagement, social media plays a pivotal role in achieving social change. However, for activism to lead to meaningful outcomes, it must transcend digital spaces and influence real-world policies and behaviours. When used effectively, social media activism has the potential to transform societies by empowering citizens to shape their futures.

Leader 05 stated a mixed reactions or opinion on whether social media activism helps in achieving desired social change; the respondent opined;

“Not positive or negative, but yes, it has a huge role. Like, that can be somebody's literal way that they do. Because, mind you, again, murdering people is not easy, right? And getting people to die into whatever it is you are selling, again, it's not an easy job. I told you, if you're creating hashtags and it has to do with something personal, people won't mind you, because they don't see how it impacts them. But once it's something that impacts everybody, or for instance, a larger sector of the population, immediately you see that, yes, people will now jump on board, and it spreads like wildfire because a lot of people who might not have known what was going on or had any idea what the issue was about will now get to know. You understand? So, it's a jump on its own, and of course, it makes a huge impact” (leader 05).

This statement emphasizes the significant role social media activism plays in driving social change, particularly in Mobilising collective support for issues that resonate with a larger audience. It highlights how the success of social media campaigns depends on their ability to make the issues relatable and impactful to a broad demographic. The discussion reflects key aspects of social media activism, including its potential for widespread influence, its reliance on collective relevance, and the challenges in generating meaningful engagement.

The use of hashtags is a defining feature of social media activism. Hashtags serve as rallying points that connect individuals to causes and allow for collective action. The speaker's observation about the difficulty of engaging people with personal or niche hashtags highlights the importance of framing campaigns in ways that appeal to collective interests.

Another respondent (Leader 02) opined that, social media activism has helped shaped and achieved social change over the period. The respondent further stated that, the use of these media platforms has a way of directing public policies in the country. An excerpt of the discussion;

“...Why not! What is policy implementation and formulation? It is when stakeholders are consulted and stakeholders uhm... put in their... their... their contribution to the policy. So, that is why even a major part of policy discussion and policy formulation and implementation is what we call the Townhall Meeting...where those who draft the policies or enact the policies are supposed to consult the various stake holders, you know, that the policy is going to affect. So, what more can you have as a platform as social media that allows people to express their opinion on a particular matter. So, if you are talking about eliminating betting tax..”(Leader 02)

Social media has emerged as a vital platform for stakeholder engagement in policy formulation and implementation, bridging the gap between traditional town hall meetings and modern participatory democracy. As highlighted in the statement, social media provides an inclusive space where individuals and groups can express their opinions on policies, such as the elimination of betting taxes, allowing policymakers to gauge public sentiment and incorporate diverse perspectives. This digital engagement democratizes access, enabling marginalized voices to participate in discussions that might otherwise exclude them. Social media also facilitates advocacy, with activists rallying support and building momentum for or against policies, as seen in movements like #stopGalamsey, which influenced governance and legislative reforms. Additionally, the real-time nature of social media allows for monitoring policy implementation, holding authorities accountable, and addressing gaps, ensuring tangible social change. It transforms activism into a dynamic force for social change, ensuring policies reflect the needs and aspirations of the broader society.

4.3.1 Public Education on social changes through social media activism

This sub-theme focuses on how social media helps in educating the public on central issues and social change. Social media has become a powerful tool for public education and activism, raising awareness and driving social change. It provides new opportunities for political and social movements, particularly empowering marginalized groups, youth, and grassroots communities. Through platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, individuals can share information, advocate for policy changes, and challenge power structures. Social media's ability to mobilize people for collective action is key to its effectiveness, enabling the organization of protests, marches, and petitions. Movements like #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo have sparked significant offline actions, influencing policy changes and social norms, demonstrating how social media can turn activism into real-world impact (Breuer, 2016).

Leader 03 opined that the use of social media activism has compelled government to alter policies in the interest of the citizens. This is an excerpt of the discussion;

‘That was Drop the Chamber. And because of that agenda, government changed the idea of building an entirely new chamber in parliament at that outrageous cost. And so, the primary purpose of that activism that we did was to get the government to ditch the idea, which they did at the end of the day. And so, you can see that when it is effective, you get the end goal. But other times too, government are intransigent. They remain insistent on their agenda. So for example when we did the fix the country campaign, you saw that government-sponsored surrogates and associates also came on social media to counter our collective agitations with Fix Yourself’ (Leader 03).

The "Drop the Chamber" campaign serves as a clear example of successful social media activism in achieving its intended outcome. Activists used social media to mobilize public opposition against the government's plan to build a new parliamentary chamber at a high cost. Through coordinated online efforts, the movement gained significant public attention, leading the government to abandon the plan. This demonstrates the power of social media in Mobilising collective action and pressuring the government to reconsider or abandon certain policies.

4.4 Discussion of findings

From the discussions, the leaders and participants in the various social media activism protests under the following hashtags; #OpenLegalEducation, #OccupyflagStaffhouse, #StopGalamseyNow, #FixTheCountry, were in agreement with extant literature on the role social media plays in grassroots mobilisations. The statement by leader 3 and 1, strongly points to the impeccable role played by social media in mobilising the grassroots for social protest. These findings collaborate with Tufekci and Wilson (2012), Gaby and Caren (2012)’s findings

in their respective studies in different jurisdictions. As established by Gaby and Caren (2012), social media aided in Mobilising for the Occupy Wall Street protest. Majority of these protesters were from Facebook. These scholars (Anduiza, Cristancho, and Sabucedo, 2014; Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garci, 2014) confirmed the role social media plays in grassroots Mobilisations in seeking social change.

As revealed by the respondents, social media activism has a great influence on policy-formulation as well as its implementation in Ghana. The study by Singhmar et al., (2024) confirms the findings of this study. The study revealed that policy-formulation and implementation is influenced by social media activism and this impacts on the overall outcome of the policy. The findings of the study collaborate with Khan, (2024)'s study on Black Lives Matter.

On the objective of achieving desired results through social media activism, the respondents confirmed that social media activism influences social change in Ghana. The interviewees recounted series of media engagements like protest against mass failing of law students and the narration changed in subsequent years as most these students passed their common entrance examination. The finding of this study corroborates that of Mindel et al., (2024), the study explored the nexus between online activism and how it influences institutional changes in "Swedish Cabotagestudien". The participants opined that social media activism influences policy-formulation and helps in achieving social change. The respondents agreed that, social media activism as a tool facilitates the achievement of social changes in society. As elaborated by the Miladi, (2016), the present of social media activism serves as a vibrant space to drive social change.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter of the paper presents the findings and discussions on the subject under discussion. The following research questions including but not limited to: How do social media platforms enhance grassroots Mobilisation and involvement in demanding for social change in Ghana? How do social media activism contribute to influencing policy formulation and implementation in Ghana? How effective has social media activism been in helping organizers achieve their desired goals for social change in Ghana? The paper presents a synopsis of the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This section of the paper presents summary, conclusion and recommendations on the real -life impact of social media activism on social change in Ghana. This chapter summarizes the research outcome, taking into consideration the research objectives based on #FixTheCountry, #OccupyFlagstaffHouse, #OpenLegalEducation and #StopGalamseyNow. The chapter further outline some recommendations for further studies on the research topic.

5.1 Summary

The use of social media has expanded over the years. While some organisations use social media to effectively market their products by raising awareness of new items and reach a larger audience, others use it as a means to socialize or their source of entertainment. The literature supports the assertion that, the importance of social media in our daily lives cannot be overlooked. This has created the platform for people to engage in social discourse, to establish social bonds and also to mobilize for positive change. Importantly, social media has bridged the communication gap between people and offers the opportunity to reach a wider range of audience.

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to explore the real-life impact of social media activism on social change in Ghana. The study examined how social media platforms, enhance grassroots Mobilisation and involvement in demanding for social change in Ghana. It further assessed assess how social media activism contributes to influencing policy formulation and implementation in Ghana. Finally, the study explored whether social media activism helped in achieving the desired results or goals of the organizers in seeking social change in Ghana.

Given the nature of this study, five individuals were chosen from four social media advocacy groups between 2019 and 2024. They were active participants in either of the following social media protests, #FixTheCountry, #OpenLegalEducation, #OccupyFlagStaffHouse and #StopGalamseyNow. The participants were selected, first, based on purposive sampling and then random sampling from the targeted population. Four active male participants and one female were selected to respond to interview questions.

Data was obtained through a semi-structured interview. The various interviews were transcribed and analysed using the thematic analysis approach in qualitative inquiry.

5.2 Key Findings

This subsection presents a summary of the findings from the study. The study revealed that, as observed by Tufekci and Wilson (2012), Gaby and Caren (2012), social media plays an important role in Mobilising the support of the grassroots for social change in Ghana. The participants agreed that the importance of social media as a tool in galvanizing support for social course cannot be underestimated.

Again, the research revealed that, social media activism has an impact on policy formulation and implementation in Ghana. This finding supports the observations of Khan, (2024)'s study on Black Lives Matter where policies on racism were influenced by the social media protest against racism. The finding is also supported by Singhmar et al., (2024) on the impact of social media activism on policy formulation and implementation. It corroborates the assertion that duty bearers respond to social media protests.

Finally, the study revealed that, social media activism helps activists to achieve their objectives for desiring social change in Ghana. This finding supports the study of Mindel et al., (2024) which discovered that social media activism drives the required social change among institutions in Sweden. It is observed that, in Ghana social media has become the avenue for

citizens to participate in conversations that affect their lives and where necessary, demand change from the duty bearers. The respondents confirmed that social media activism is effective in influencing social change in Ghana. They cited examples like protests against the mass failure of law students, where media engagement led to improved outcomes, as many students passed their exams in subsequent years. This finding aligns with research by Mindel et al. (2024), which explored how online activism leads to institutional changes. The interviewees emphasized that social media activism plays a key role in policy formulation and societal change. Overall, the study supports the idea that social media serves as a powerful tool to drive social change.

5.3 Conclusion

The study aimed at exploring the real-life impact of social media activism on social change in Ghana. The study relied on relevant theories and concepts which underpinned social media activism. These include the Social Network Theory, Technological Determinism Theory among others. The objectives of the study which include assessment of social media activism on policy formulation and implementation, the impact of social media on grassroots Mobilisation and the role of social media in achieving the goals set by activists.

It was discovered that, social media plays a significant role in the Mobilisation and participation of the grassroots in demanding for social change. It was also discovered that, social media activism has a real-life impact on policy formulation and implementation in Ghana. Finally, social media serves as an important tool for activists in their quest to demand for lasting social change in Ghana.

The outcome of the study, the role of social media as a tool for activism in Ghana can be evaluated. The study offers empirical evidence on the role of social media activism in demanding for social change and its impact in Ghana. The study highlights the significance of

social media in raising awareness and Mobilising social change in Ghana, offering valuable insights for policymakers, industry leaders, and academics. It explores both the strengths and limitations of using social media for protest and social change, providing a deeper understanding of its role in public debate and social movements. The findings can guide policymakers in crafting adaptable and effective policies in response to issues raised by social media activism. Additionally, the study offers practical recommendations for activists and NGOs to enhance the impact of their campaigns. By exploring successful examples of social media activism, the research encourages greater civic participation and engagement. It also identifies obstacles and opportunities, which can help address regional issues and drive meaningful social change in Ghana and beyond.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The study has certain limitations which has the potential in influencing the study's outcome. The study is limited in methodology as it used qualitative approach in analysing data. The choice and method for data collection is another key limitation of this study, the interview approach has some biases which can influence the findings of the study. The study is limited geographically, the study covered series of protests within Greater Accra or Accra as the central business capital of Ghana. Extant literature confirmed the availability of social media activism by people from other geographical locations other than Accra. While social media platforms can mobilize large groups, the effectiveness of online activism is often hindered by unequal access to digital resources across different segments of the population. In Ghana, rural and marginalized communities may lack reliable internet access or the necessary technological tools, limiting their ability to participate in online campaigns or benefit from the awareness created through social media activism. This creates an inequality in representation, as those with access to digital platforms are more likely to influence public discourse and drive change, while others are excluded from the conversation. Consequently, social media activism may not

fully capture the voices or needs of all societal groups, weakening its potential for broad-based social change. The sample size of five respondents could also impact the findings as an increased sample size may offer a broader perspective on the research topic.

5.5 Further Study

A further study on the research topic should consider participants resident in other geographical regions in Ghana. A future study can consider a comparative study on the subject to explore the dynamics in other jurisdictions by comparing same with Ghana. By analyzing similarities and differences in activism strategies and outcomes across the region, researchers can identify cultural, political, and economic factors that influence the effectiveness of social media-driven social change. As part of the ongoing debate on the subject of social media activism on social change, further studies can be conducted using the longitudinal approach to track the influence of social media activism on the policy-formulations and social changes in society. The mixed method approach can be used by future studies to explore how social media activism influence social change.

Researchers should investigate how state institutions respond to online public pressure and whether social media campaigns influence legislative or administrative changes. Studies could also explore the mechanisms through which activists engage with policymakers and the challenges they face in effecting change.

Future studies on social media activism in Ghana should adopt diverse research methodologies and focus on both the opportunities and challenges associated with digital activism. By examining various dimensions such as campaign effectiveness, demographic influences, policy impact, and ethical concerns, researchers can contribute to a nuanced understanding of how social media activism drives social change in Ghana.

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APPENDICES

INTERVIEW GUIDE

SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

This research is a study on the real-life impact of social media activism on social change.

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to explore the real-life impact of social media activism on social change in Ghana. The study examined how social media platforms, enhance grassroots Mobilisation and involvement in demanding for social change in Ghana. It further assessed assess how social media activism contributes to influencing policy formulation and implementation in Ghana. Finally, the study explored whether social media activism helped in achieving the desired results or goals of the organizers in seeking social change in Ghana.

Given the nature of this study, five individuals were chosen from four social media advocacy groups between 2019 and 2024. They were active participants in either of the following social media protests, #FixTheCountry, #OpenLegalEducation, #OccupyFlagStaffHouse and #StopGalamseyNow. The participants were selected, first, based on purposive sampling and then random sampling from the targeted population. Four active male participants and one female were selected to respond to interview questions.

Data was obtained through a semi-structured interview. The various interviews were transcribed and analysed using the thematic analysis approach in qualitative inquiry. The study revealed that, as observed by Tufekci and Wilson (2012), Gaby and Caren (2012), social media plays an important role in Mobilising the support of the grassroots for social change in Ghana. The participants agreed that the importance of social media as a tool in galvanizing support for social course cannot be underestimated.

Again, the research revealed that, social media activism has an impact on policy formulation and implementation in Ghana. This finding supports the observations of Khan, (2024)'s study on Black Lives Matter where policies on racism were influenced by the social media protest against racism

Finally, the study revealed that, social media activism helps activists to achieve their objectives for desiring social change in Ghana.

It is observed that, in Ghana social media has become the avenue for citizens to participate in conversations that affect their lives and where necessary, demand change from the duty bearers.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The study follows the university's ethical guidelines and standards for academic research. Essential ethical principles, such as confidentiality and voluntary participation, were upheld throughout the study. Approval from relevant authorities was obtained, and efforts were made to ensure that participants' confidentiality was protected by collecting data anonymously and allowing only the researcher access to their responses. Participation in the study was fully voluntary, with no coercion involved. The researcher was dedicated to respecting participants' dignity, valuing their individual opinions, and honouring their personal beliefs. The researcher took appropriate measures to ensure that his personal biases or prejudices did not influence the nature of questions contained in the interview guide but rather focused on the research objectives.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This questionnaire seeks to gather the perspective of participants on “the real-life impact of social media activism on social change in Ghana.” This research is solely for academic purposes and all responses are used for this purpose and in accordance with the ethical standards of the university.

1. What role does social media play in the Mobilisation and participation of the grassroots in demand of positive social change relative to your social campaign?
2. What practical methods did you deploy via social media in galvanizing grassroots support for your social campaign?
3. Does social media activism have any real impact on policy formulation and implementation in Ghana?
4. Can you identify any practical instances where social media activism directly or indirectly influenced policy decisions by duty bearers?
5. Would you say social media provides the platform for achieving the goals you set out for yourself during social media campaigns?
6. Do you think social media activism has a role to play in Ghana for driving positive social change?
7. What limitations are there to social media activism and to what extent do they impeded the demand for social change?

Interview with 1st Respondent.

Q1: What role do you think social media plays in the Mobilisation and participation of grassroots in the demand for positive social change when it comes to social campaign.

Answer: So...uhm...it creates awareness. It creates awareness on how far things are in our society, so that if people become aware that things are going on which are not right in our society, and then they will get to know that this is how you intend to address it, then, it will help the demonstrators, or those embarking on the struggle to bring everybody on board. So, the awareness that it creates and the sensitization of the protests helps in pushing the interests that you are fighting for. So, social media creates awareness.

Probe Question: what practical measures did you employ in galvanizing support for #OpenLegalEducation. During that social media campaign, what...what social media method did you employ or deploy? What mechanism did you use?

Answer: So, we...we ensured that we kept on sharing the hashtags. And also getting certain key people to come on board. For example, Professor Kwaku Asare known as Professor Azar or Kuku Azar. Alright.

We got him on board. And we got erhh... the various opinion leaders. Like for instance Kofi Prempeh also to speak out. Exactly. And also, we got the current MP for Madina, Francis Xavier Sosu to also speak on behalf of the students. Right? So we got the opinion leaders also to get on board and share their opinions on the matter on social media so that it drew the attention of uhh... many Ghanaians to come on board and in the struggle to ensure that access to the Ghana School of Law or Legal Education will not only be limited to the few privileged but to all Ghanaians. So, what we did was to bring on board people who are influential in the society. Alright. Especially even those in the judiciary to also come and then express their opinion.

Q2: Does Social media activism have any form of real impact on policy formulation and policy implementation in Ghana?

Answer: It does. You can give an example, the recent erhh demonstration that went on with respect to demonstrating against galamsey. Alright. Yes. The impact has been felt, to the extent that, although things did not go down well in terms of how the demonstrators were treated even in the court proceedings how things went. But to the larger extent, they have achieved their

aim. It drew the attention of Ghanaians that...look...to the extent that people who have not engaged in any form of crime, went on the street to demonstrate are being treated unjustly, unfairly. And those who are involved in the crime are left off the hook. That means that there is something bad in the society which we are refusing to address. So quickly it drew Ghanaians to what...to speak out...to come out and then share their grievances, to let government speed up the process of stopping galamsey. So, right after that, government decided to what.... To bring out the task force to stop the galamsey. And then, this has brought down the level of the menace we have in our society. So, it is very true that social media is very useful.

Probe Question: When you set out on the campaign #OpenLegalEducation would you say that you achieved...you had an objective, a clear objective. And were you able to use social media to...or online activism, social activism. **Were you able to use that to achieve the aim, the objectives you set out at the end of the day? Were you able to achieve that.**

Answer: Yes, we did. Especially the videos that went viral, you understand. I mean when we were demonstrating the attack of the police on the innocent students. And through social media, some of the videos went viral. Okay, of how students were beaten, I mean students were arrested. These are not just mere students oh, these are law students. And some are even professional law students. They were arrested. You see. Erh-hehn. So, through social media, the pictures and the videos went viral. Alright? And then, we were able to achieve our aim. 2019, the Ghana School of Law admitted only one-hundred and twenty-eight (128) students. The following year, they admitted one thousand thirty-five students (1035) students. Which was unprecedented. So. After 2020, the figure hadn't come down below one thousand. So, it is a great achievement that we were able to have. And the objective of going out there to demonstrate and the use of social media and the viral nature of each the demonstration and the antecedents went through social media, we achieved our aim.

Q3: Would you say that social media has a role in driving positive social change, generally.

Answer: It depends on the program, or the project, or whatever we are doing. You may not have social media as a positive channel to drive your activisms. You understand. Because some people may use social media to undertake certain projects or certain activisms which may not be positive to society. You understand. So, it depends on the activisms that you are undertaking. You get about that. Eh-hehn. So, for me I believe in the major..... the utilitarianism principle. You understand. If it's for the interest of the majority of society, and you use social media, its

positive. But if it is not for the interest of majority of society and you use social media, it will not be positive. Because people want to use social media to drive some agenda like the LGBTQ.

Eh-hehn. But to the majority of Ghanaians this is something that is not positive so uhh...it's something that we.... uhh...I...we don't buy into. You get it. So that is why I believe that...I believe in the principle of utilitarianism, for the interest of the majority. And that is how social media can be useful if you use that.

Probe Question: Okay, but you agree with the opinion that it had a role to play. It's important to have social media activisms

Answer: Yes. Yes, it has a role to play. A-A-A massive role. These days you cannot undertake anything without eh-eh-eh an activism without social media. You understand. These days you can't undertake any activism without social media. Campaign on whatever platform. Even religious activities. It's all on social media. So, it's very important.

Q4: While you were undertaking your acti.... your campaign like Open Legal Education, **what practical challenges did you face when it comes to issues associated with social media activisms.** If I am to help, maybe like misinformation or where they.... if you get what I mean. What challenges did social media pose to you in trying to drive home the #OpenLegalEducation Campaign.

Answer: Yeah. Some of the comments that you see online, you get me, some of the reactions. Even no matter what people will have their negative opinions. You see. Even if you get one out of ten, that is someone's opinion that what you are doing is not right. That you should allow the system to operate. Eh-hehn. So, it's the understanding that we are all not the same. You understand. Eh-hehn. So, using social media, of course, it's a form of communication, and the feedback that you will get, they are not always something that will align towards what you are doing. So, we just also have to understand that, whether positive or negative feedback, you will get what...what you have. Alright?

Just move on with whatever that you are doing. Because some of the feedback will not be positive, it will be negative. Especially, it will be tagged as someone who is a hooligan or who is engaged in some vandalism or someone who is a what.... a-a-a trouble causer. You see. But, ideally, you are an activist. And most activists are not liked by society until they achieve their goal. Jesus Christ was an activist. He wasn't liked by his own Jewish people until his death and

resurrection, and He is being loved all over the world. You will not be liked or loved by people. So, do what you are supposed to do.

Probe Question: Okay. Alright. Thank you very much. So uhm... **if you have any general comment to make on the whole topic on...**

Answer: Yeah so, as an activist, you ought to be consistent. Activism comes with consistency. Don't let poor comments or views about you deter you or stop you from doing what you are supposed to do. If you are engaging in activism of whatever nature or to achieve a certain goal using social media, you have to be very consistency. Nothing should stop you. At no point in time should anything stop you. Just do what you are doing, consistently. You may start small, you may start small, but people will say all manner of thing to discourage you. Or you may think people are not watching you. The people are beginning to observe you. You do what you are doing and at the right time you'll get what you are looking out for. So, consistency is very key when you are using social media as an activist, no matter how small you think you are at the moment.

Interview with 2nd Respondent.

Q1: What role do you think social media plays in the Mobilisation and participation of the grassroots in the demand of positive social change ehh... relative to social media campaign or social campaign.

Answer: Yeah. So, social media offers the...or allows for a wider reach, in terms of information dissemination. And you are able to reach out to different demographics based on which type of social media platforms that you use. But, in general, social media affords you the opportunity to reach a wider.... you know.... audience, to reach a wider group of people. Uhm... in the case of disseminating information about social causes and.... you know...information about protests. So, social media also gives people the opportunity to see or to remember past events using the...uhm...various media ehh... types that people use to upload information. So people can upload videos, people can upload pictures, people can upload.... you know. So, it serves as a storage ground for people to...to ehh... save information about past protests. So... so that is also one other thing that it does. Social media also gives everyone the opportunity to express themselves once they have access to that platform. So, it does not restrict or... you know gag or censor... you know, opinion. Unless of course that

social media app has been given that... you know... uhm... I mean uhm... that particular... uhm censorship, you know, by the owners of that media... ehh...social media platform. But, generally, in the past, before anybody will have the opportunity to express themselves on an issue and contribute to public discourse or discussion, you would to be an expert in the particular area before the traditional media platforms will engage them. Which is the radio, the TV, the news uhm...uhm papers. But now, social media have brought the opportunity that everybody can express themselves at every given point in time, which is one other thing. Social media offers the opportunity for people from every part of the world, regardless of difference, to contribute to a conversation that is ongoing in a particular country. So, social media has done all of these things.

Probe Question: When it comes to #FixTheCountry, which social media platform did you use in galvanizing support, the grassroots support?

Answer: It was on Twitter. It was on Twitter. We started to put posts out where young people are to complain about their... their lived experiences of bad governance in their various communities. People took pictures of bad roads, people took pictures of the deplorable state of schools, hospitals, I mean, general social amenities and infrastructure. And then, that conversation, you know, started gaining attention with the #FixTheCountry. And then it moved into a physical form of protests. So, it started primarily on uhm... the Twitter app, which is now X. And then Facebook.

Q2: So, in your opinion and from your experience ehh in... social media activism, **would you say that social media activism has any real impact of policy formulation and policy implementation in Ghana?**

Answer: Why not! What is policy implementation and formulation? It is when stakeholders are consulted and stakeholders uhm... put in their... their... their contribution to the policy. So, that is why even a major part of policy discussion and policy formulation and implementation is what we call the Townhall Meeting...where those who draft the policies or enact the policies are supposed to consult the various stake holders, you know, that the policy is going to affect. So, what more can you have as a platform as social media that allows people to express their opinion on a particular matter. So, if you are talking about eliminating betting tax, or you are talking about let's say uhm... I mean, galamsey for example. It is a policy that we would need government to implement to regulate, you know safe... safer forms of mining,

the legal forms of mining, right, so it doesn't destroy our water bodies. So, the whole conversation that happened on social media it just... it plays an integral role when it comes to policy ehh... discussion and formulation. I must say that, in fact, social media is now the most powerful avenue or the most powerful platform to get the opinions of people and that is why in other jurisdictions, countries are using social media as a... as a technical part of governance. They have a whole uhm... wing or a whole institution in government that monitors the comments of the citizens and then acts on those what... those comments, those sentiments. So, social media is very important. Yeah.

Probe Question: So, practically, have you identified any uhm... social media campaigns that you would say had the real impact on subsequent policies and implementations, any practical instances. Or for example, when you started Fix the Country, would you say that you were able to see some practical changes or results?

Answer: Yes! I mean, look at the example of the Legal Education, where we jumped on the streets, protested, now you can see that there is some uhm... you know, freeway, and when I say freeway, its not to say that uhm.... The General Legal Counsel is not doing something right. They have been some... some adjustments to the criteria earlier. In the past, the number of people you will always see go into law school are just about five hundred (500), or three hundred (300) sometimes. But now, we have these people taking over thousand (1000) students each year since we had that problem. Right? I mean uhm... for Fix the Country and the others, we...we will... we may not see uhm... some level of proactiveness from the government to... to stop... to... to... to address the concerns we have, because one of the major concerns of the Fix the Country Movement was a reform, a constitutional reform. Now, we may not have government doing that, but we cannot also say that because of that, then it means that it has been useless. Because more and more, we are seeing more young people getting interested in the political conversation and the political discourse, as a result of these projects that are happening, especially, the past five years. You see. So, it... it is the objective also to get more young people involved in the civic discussion, civic engagement. So, once we... we decided to conclude that we have complained about galamsey, we have not heard... you know, probably the president saying something to end galamsey, but we just come out... I mean, you look at the most recent galamsey protest. At least, we have had government come out to say that they are putting interesting measures. The government has communicated some of the things they want to do. Although it may not be like what we want, at least it is a response to you know

the... the... the protest action that went on. You understand. So yes, protests are yielding results and...

Probe Question: Alright. Thank you. So, but... so but on the same point uhm... so when you started Fix the Country, #FixTheCountry, like you mentioned, you may have not achieved all the objectives you set out for yourself. But can you mention one or two objectives that these are clear objectives you had from the beginning and these ones you have been able to achieve them using social media activism

Answer: That is what I said...that we are seeing more young people engage in the political conversation. We have seen the increased numbers in the what... the physical protests. Numbers have been increasing from time to time. We have also seen that the tweets and the... the ...the... the social media posts have also been increasing from the people. For us, it is one of the major concerns so we feel that we need to have... you know, a-a-a political landscape, or a political climate where we do not leave the hardcore political talk to the older generation, but the younger people are also getting more and more interested in the conversation.

Q3: Alright. Thank you. So, generally, you have already mentioned how social media is being deployed in other jurisdictions to drive positive change. **Do you think that social media has come to stay in the Ghanaian society and does it have a place now in our society for driving social change?**

Answer: Yes, it has come to stay. It has come to stay. People are now using social media as a tool to even get updated on what... news and issues that are happening. So, it has come to stay. It has really shown us that uhm... we... we...we ought to not take you know, lightly the comments that people put on social media. And one of the things that social media does is, it creates spotlight. It creates spotlight from the global community. So, something is happening in Ghana and within a short time, people living across the globe get to know about it. Okay? So that is one of the things it... it has done. That it has come to stay that, when there is an issue... even in Nigeria, this End SAS protest, everybody got to know about it in the world so much that END SAS started trending, even in Ghana. It started trending in various parts of the world. You see. So, social media has come to stay as a tool where people communicate and vent out their grievances with their government. You know. And Ghana is leading that charge when it comes to what... Africa. Kenya, of course, are very vibrant. We have the youth of Kenya who are using you know, social media as a tool to keep their government on their toes. Nigeria is also there, and Ghana is also there. South Africa is also there. So, more and more,

increasingly, we are seeing that in the developing democracy of Africa, people are using social media as a tool to put government on check.

Q4: Alright. The question is what limitations from your personal experience so far with social media activism, **what limitations have you identified with the use of social media platforms for activism and to what extent do those limitations impede your success?**

Answer: So, the limitation is that those who do not believe in the... the... the... the... the cause that is being pushed or the agenda that is being advocated for on social media. They tend to use opposing hashtags, or they tend to use mistake hashtags. So, if they think it is even spelled A-M-A, #AMA, you see that what the people start doing is, they will start trending A-N-A, or A-M-M-A, or A-N-N-A to try and dilute or to try and, you know, reduce or water down the effects of the hashtags that is ongoing. So, that is... so one of the things we have done is always remind people of the exact hashtag to use. Because the more, you have more opposing or incorrect hashtags going around the place, it infiltrates and then it you know, waters down the effect of the hashtag, and then the virality of the posts and then the comments you are trying to put across. So, that is one of the limitations that if even as you are using it as a platform for a course, somebody can use it as also... as a plat... someone who is against you can use it as a platform to counter what you are doing. So, certain strategies are very important. Also, uhm... we have seen the increase in people using pseudo account, fake accounts, bot accounts, to... to speak as though these are original people, you know, so speaking for a particular issue. And uhm... I think most of the social media platforms are using uhm... you know, security checks to try and you know, filter out these bot accounts and accounts that are not legitimate. But, uhm... it still exists and people use these accounts for counter agenda.

Probe Question: Alright. Have you encountered any challenges with misinformation?

Answer: Oh certainly, yes. I mean certainly. That is why the hashtag I am telling you about is the misinformation. It's the misinformation, where people are trying to put out things that do not represent the exact nature of what it is. You see. So, news put out there may not be very accurate.

You know. About, you know... for instance, social media has helped everybody become more or less like a journalist. There can be something happening in my area right now, before even the main media organization representatives get there to cover the story, you will have people

taking photos and videos and already put it on social media. So, it offers that positive you know, eh... eh... thing, right? But on the other side, people can also use AI. You know, right now with the use of AI you can even you know, eh... eh falsify information, pictures, videos and post the others. It all falls under misinformation and disinformation to the public.

Interview with 3rd Respondent.

Q1: What role do you think social media plays in the Mobilisation and the participation of the grassroots in demanding for positive social change in terms of social media campaigns, taking into consideration all the hashtags, for example #OpenLegalEducation, #StopGalamseyNow, #OccupyFlagstaffHouse, #FixtheCountry. What role do you think social media plays in grassroots Mobilisation and participation?

Answer: Okay. Thank you very much. I would say that over the years, young people, especially the youth, have been disinterested in our body politics. They have not been so much enthused, neither have they been involved in the politicking, democratization, and then development processes of our country. And so, most of the time we find that we have the older generation, octogenarian, people who have barely ten years or six years to live, let me put it lightly. Pardon me for that, govern us and then they take decisions in their own interest and not in the interest of the younger generation. And we over the years, who these decisions adversely affect have been disintegrated from the entire process. And so, with the advent of social media, you know young people are enthused about social media. We are always on social media. With the advent of social media, you find that there is now an increasing interest in our governance system. Social media now has given a voice to the young people, has given a voice to the grassroots, has given a voice to the youth. And so, from the comfort of your home, wherever it is you are, you have a voice and you can speak so that everyone else can hear you. Now if there is a challenge, or if there is a problem with the way the politicians are governing our country and I speak about it in Accra, somebody else who is in, say the North, or Aflao in the Volta Region, also speaks about the same issue. Some else somewhere in Kumasi speaks about the same issue, in Akim Oda speaks about the same issue, the it becomes a trending matter on social media. And then it draws all of our attention as stakeholders, as participators in our democracy to a common challenge we are facing as a democracy, and to effectively put the seat of government to the fire of accountability. And so some of the hashtags you've mentioned,

Fix the Country, we saw the situation of our economy at that point in time. Inflation was on the rise, exchange rates, the dollar was on the rise, some of those things. There was untold hardship. You understand. And so, coming up with the Fix the Country hashtag, you saw that we collectively exerted so much pressure on the government to the point where from time to time they have to give us indication as to what they were doing. You understand. In recent times, stop galamsey, we have seen the devastating effects of galamsey on our environment, on the people who are within the galamsey-prone communities. I effectively participated in that call to stop galamsey. I am not in the area where galamsey is happening. So many people who poured out on the street of Accra to demonstrate against galamsey are not directly.... I mean directly, we may be indirectly impacted but we are not directly impacted by the menace or the canker of galamsey. You understand. But through the power of social media, you were able to mobilize...okay, campaigned and participated in the demonstration to exert pressure on government to give concrete actions to deal with the menace of galamsey. Without that... without social media giving us that platform, I'm not sure... I'm not sure that, you know, we would have successfully executed that concerted action to ensure that government takes measures to curb the issue. Because of our agitation, because of our collective voices on social media and which eventually led to the demonstration, you had organized labour, you had UTAG, you know TUC... in fact the entirety of organized labour declare that they will go on strike should government remains intransigent in this fight against galamsey. And so for me, I think that the advent of social media today has given us a voice, a platform to cause change, effect change and demand for accountability and you know, some level of responsibility of the people we put in power to govern us.

Probe Question: So, like you mentioned, you have been part of demonstration, social media activism. What practical methods did you deploy through social media in galvanizing support for your social media campaign? Which measures do you usually use?

Answer: For me, what I have noticed has to do with the power of hashtags. And so, if there is a challenge, and you are to speak about it on social media, you use a hashtag. Once you use the hashtag, it will draw the minds of people, other people who are observing, to the hashtag, at one glance conveys a message about the challenge you are speaking about, it brings their conscience to also jump unto the hashtag. Then the social media algorithm now realizes that this has become a sensational topic, this has become a topic that everyone is talking about. And once you go onto social media, your first item, or topic, or post you will see on the timeline will have to do with that particular hashtag. That way it draws the minds of so many people,

millions of people who are using the various social media platforms, it draws their mind and attention to the challenge. Most of the time, when they are real challenges, you see that organically they all jump to add their voices. And so for me, I think the power of hashtags that social media introduces has been a game changer when it comes to the practical ways we organize ourselves to have our voice heard, which subsequently translates into real-world efforts by young people, and the youth in the grassroots. It has to really do with hashtags.

Q2: Do you believe that social media has any real impact on policy formulation and implementation in Ghana?

Answer: I think that it has, in the sense that, for example, even the ongoing stop galamsey agenda that we have been pushing over the period, right? We have seen government representatives, even the president himself has come to assure the people of Ghana that they in putting in concrete measures to ensure that the menace of galamsey is curtailed. And so that way we see that our agitation on social media feeds into the policy orientation of government. Also, for example, there was this time that the government wanted to invest in a new chamber in parliament, two hundred and fifty million dollars. At the time we thought Ghanaians were going through unprecedented hardships. You know there was limited fiscal space to even engage in that sort of profligate agenda or project. And so we went of social media, we agitated, we conveyed our grievances and through that government abandoned the project. And so that way you can say that the policy of government... the policy prioritization of government, in some ways, are affected by our social media activism.

Probe Question: That leads me to my next question. **Would you the say that when you set out on your social media campaign, is there any instance you achieved your goals.** For instance, at the beginning of the campaign you set out that these are my objectives... one, two, three. And are they any practical instances that at the end of the day you achieved those objectives.

Answer: So, I would say yes. The first would be the Stop the Chamber activism we did on social media. Exactly, Drop the Chamber. That was Drop the Chamber. And because of that agenda, government changed the idea of building an entirely new chamber in parliament at that outrageous cost. And so, the primary purpose of that activism that we did was to get the government to ditch the idea, which they did at the end of the day. And so, you can see that when it is effective, you get the end goal. But other times too, government are intransigent. They remain insistent on their agenda. So for example when we did the fix the country

campaign, you saw that government-sponsored surrogates and associates also came on social media to counter our collective agitations with Fix Yourself. When we were crying about unpredicted hardship, the cost of living increasing in the country, the unbridled corruption we were facing at the time, government instead, instead of listening to our voices, was sponsoring people to counter our campaign by telling us to fix ourselves. So some other times, you do not entirely reach your primary objective of which you set out on a campaign but you will see that you have exerted some level of pressure on the government. You would also see that, you would also have caught or drawn the attention of the international community on the happenings in your country. So, for example, the Stop Galamsey agenda we did recently, you had diplomats, members of the diplomatic core also calling on our government, based on the demands we were making, encouraging them, or prompting them to take adequate measures to curb the menace of galamsey. And so sometimes it is not entirely about reaching your primary goal, it is also about exerting pressure and bringing to the halt so many challenges your country is affected with, either by the action or nonaction of government.

Q3: what role do you think that generally social media platforms play in activism? Do you think that they give you the platform, or social media platform, whether Facebook, Twitter, now X, Instagram or whichever social media platform, do you believe that is the proper avenue for social activism?

Answer: Yes, yes it has. Now social media has become a formidable platform. In fact, it a force to recon with. And so, you find out even government, during campaign periods sponsor a lot advertisement on social media, because that is where the numbers are. That is where the young people whose future are at stake in these times, that is where you find them. And so, through social media, we are able to galvanize ourselves, organize ourselves and convey a strong message through a collective voice. So, I would way that to me social media has become so effective and convenient for us. We have seen the palpable and real time results of campaigns that have started on social media. You recall for example, Black Lives Matter, which had to do with an incident in the U.S. Because of the social media advocacy, you would find people in Ghana who were adding their voices. People from other parts of the world adding their voices to Black Lives Matter, a situation that happened in the U.S which led to very extensive systematic reforms in the police regime in the United States of America. And so, yes, you see, so, social media has given us a universal platform were together we are able to make changes across board, like vastly. From Nigeria, from wherever, Africa Europe, South

America, North America, wherever it is, not just limited to Ghana. And so, I think we cannot overstate the importance and the effectiveness of social media in this time.

Q4: What limitations are there to social media activism and to what extent do these limitations hinder or impede the demand for social change? For instance, you mentioned counter hashtag earlier on. What other limitations do you identify?

Answer: Some of the limitations... one of the limitations I identify would have to do with some people who are on social media and still do not see the importance of it. And so sometimes you are pushing a hashtag and they think that probably it's just social media based and cannot really translate into any real time result. And so, even though some people would add their voice, when it is time to actually go out and campaign or do a demonstration, you see people telling you that "I'm not going to go out to do anything. And I'll probably just speak online". Some other people too when you are speaking, they discourage others by telling them the world does not revolve around social media, if you want real change, you go out there. That is discouraging to so many people who want change and are on social media. So, I think we as young people in these times, in these times of Generation Z and all that, we must really realize that social media is a powerful tool for social change. And we all must embrace it and ensure that any matter or challenge that affects our society, we are able to use social media as a platform to collectively, you know, vent our grievances, our upsetion and it will highlight these challenges that poses a threat to our collective survival as a people in society.

Interview with 4th Respondent

Q1: what role do you think social media plays in the Mobilisation and participation of the grassroots in demand for positive social change relative to social media campaigns?

Answer: Okay, all right. I think that social media is a great way to educate the masses and bring people together. I believe it was the most convenient way to bring the people together. Specifically, I'm going to speak on the Free the Citizens protest, because that's the one that I was more actively engaged in. And the others, I only just participated when I was around. So, social media is great because you essentially have portable billboards. Let's call it that. Portable billboards. And you make a tweet. You put out a tweet, and you have thousands of people seeing it. All it takes is a couple of retweets for your tweet to go far. And we needed something fast and something interactive. And interactive because even though I said social media is a

portable billboard, for the billboard, it's like the message only speaks to the audience. The audience is not able to speak back to the message. Let's say it that way. And so, it was easier to educate people on what was happening. Let them know that they have the power to make a change. And then give them the steps that they will need to make that change. We used tweets. One of the conveners for Free the Citizens is a 'social media influencer'. He also put in a lot of effort and he put in a lot of time to get his followers to come for the protest. And we also made use of volunteers. We asked for volunteers to give some of their time to helping us organize the protest. So, these volunteers... We have a volunteer group on WhatsApp. And they were very effective in sharing messages that we wanted to put out. Be it press releases or just information that's good to have. This includes how to prepare for a protest. And we also got volunteers with background in software engineering. So, they built the website for us. They built the website.

They paid for it. They also exerted themselves to get the protest to where it was and to get things done. We didn't use much of... How do you say? Like underground work. We didn't use a lot of the underground work. And we believe that if we had done that, there would have been a bigger turnout. However, we counted on the volunteers and the people who felt that the message resonated with them. To tell their family members and to tell their friends about the protest. So, it's really just word of mouth. And that's essentially how social media played a role.

Q2: Do you think that social media activism has any real impact on policy formulation and implementation in Ghana? So, do you think that the government or the duty bearers respond to pressure from social media or otherwise, if they don't?

Answer: Yes. So, I think social media activism does have an impact on policy. And I don't know if I'm allowed to bring this up. But I'll say this because recently, I don't know if you saw on the timeline on Twitter particularly, that some social media influencers were being paid to type good messages about Ofori-Atta. So, it just goes to show you that if these people... When I say these, I mean the government. If these government officials believe that the public liking them on social media was not a big deal, they wouldn't go to that much effort to get people to tweet worse about them. And social media making change, I'd say that if the influencers or like if generally the public on the social media didn't speak about the betting tax, it's not something that would have come up during... when the politicians do their rallies, when they go on their rallies, how do you call those again? Are they called rallies? Yes, the campaign rallies. Campaign rallies, yes. So, exactly. And aside from that, we know that this is the information

age and a lot of the information that we get, we get it from social media. The news sources, unfortunately, they are not trusted by the general public. And understandably so, because even during the last bust one protest with regards to stopping galamsey, one of these media houses put out a front page that said something that insinuated that the protesters were NDC protesters. Meanwhile, they are just regular Ghanaians like you and I, trying to make a difference in the world. And they are trying to be the change that they hope to see in the country, in the government, in the citizens, in the policies. Yes, so the real impact, social media definitely has a real impact. I hope I've answered your question.

Probe Question: Yes, you just have to express yourself, don't worry. So, with all this, can you identify any practical instance, regardless of whichever hashtag it is, any instance where social media produced direct results? Any instance where you can see that, well, there was this issue that came up, and because it went on social media, and all the activism that went on social media, this was... you were able to achieve this result. Do you have any of such instances?

Answer: I don't think I can say that. I feel as if it's more of a joint effort, because even though we will speak about something on social media, it really takes, unfortunately in this part of the world, it takes a letter or a petition to actually see something. So even though that's not how it's supposed to be, like, you know, people should be, like, the government should be able to, I mean, okay, let me start from the members of parliament. The members of parliament, your duty is to listen to what the members of your constituency want. So, if clearly you are a Minister of Gender, and then you are seeing that there's some outrage about a 13-year-old being sexually harassed by her caretaker's boyfriend, and then the minor back to the home where she was being abused, when you see something like that, you are supposed to act. Nobody has to come and write a petition, oh, we are petitioning minister of gender, blah, blah, blah, to do this, to do that. So, I think that it's a, unfortunately, it's a, how do you say, it's a joint effort. I'll say this, not relating directly to stop galamsey, but relating to my time in university, when COVID was, let's say, discovered in Ghana. When COVID was discovered in Ghana, at that time I was supposed to write some examination, and we were supposed to go through some sort of COVID screening. Unfortunately, the COVID screening was done in the form of a questionnaire, and so I took to social media, I made a post about it, and I also sent a letter to the chancellor of my university. At that time, this person was former President Kufuor, so I had to send a letter to his house, and by, if this was on Friday, by the next Monday, we had received word that because there's going to be, because you know there's COVID, we don't necessarily have to come to the

various classrooms to take our exams. We can take our exams on our computers in our hostels. Yes, so I can't say for sure that maybe social media directly impacted the result, but I think it's prudent of me to say that media houses taking up my tweets and sharing them widely was good enough to make an impact. I can't say like, oh, directly.

Q3: Do you think that social media has a role to play in driving positive change in the Ghanaian society?

Answer: Yes. Let me think about that some more and see if I can get some points for you. Yes. I would say that social media has a role to play when it comes to activism because it helps people to understand why they should engage in decision making in the country. Let's call it that. They should do their civic responsibility. What else?

Q4: What limitations are there to the use of social media for advocacy? Let me give an example. Do you think that because of social media activism there's misinformation or disinformation where people also bring counter hashtags or people try to twist the facts? Do you see those things as challenges?

Answer: Yes. I definitely see that as a challenge. What else? I also think that it's very easy for people to forget about what is happening when we come out on social media.

Sometimes we want to see the change physically or sometimes we want to do something that feels more concrete. I'm so sorry. I feel like I'm drifting away from your question.

Your question has to do with the challenges. So the challenges are the people that we hope... okay at least for me, how I see about it is that, the people that we hope will step up and also could add their voices, like the people with a large following or the people with, for lack of a better English word, clout. For people with clout on social media, somebody like Sakordie, a lot of us like his music. We are all hoping that the economy is a little poor at this time. We are suffering. We want to be able to support him, other artists, and also support ourselves. If we are experiencing a problem and somebody like Sakordie is not talking about it, a lot of people respect him. I wouldn't say it necessarily rubbishes the cause, but the message doesn't hit as much on social media. Let's say the rulers of social media are not talking about it. Only the regular people with 500 followers are talking about it. Then it's probably not even a big deal. But at least that's how some people feel. Actually, fans of Sakordie, because they will come and attack Sakordie on social media and say, oh hey, you are not posting about something and

say why. Then the fans will come and rather be against us, as opposed to trying to fight for themselves. That's one thing that I've had a problem with when it comes to social media activism. Yes, the people who try to change the message, as you said, the misinformation, those guys, they always look for ways to discredit people. Every day they want to... you know, perpetuate some falsehoods, create some problems. You know, pick something and make it a problem, meanwhile that's not the main topic. Exactly, divert their attention.

Perfect. Perfect. Perfect. Yes. So definitely, that was the first thing I said. Aha, they forget. Yes, they forget. When we do social media activism, social media is usually a place where people come to have fun. So, when you have to talk about real-life problems on social media, especially because we are all talking about the same thing, we all have different opinions. It's not like you are watching the news and then the host will say one or two or three things, and then it's like, okay, this message is with you. On social media, you get so many messages, everybody wants to say something. By the time you realize, it's like information overload, and then you just even forget the main point. You even forget the main problem. Because recently, I wanted to seek somebody about why is it a good idea to go and vote and to also look at the policies and then look at... the track records of previous administrations. There was so much noise in my mind that I couldn't even pin-point things. Like I forgot to say, oh, maybe Cecilia Dapaa lost \$1 million and she didn't even bring it up till a year later. That's how much money she had in her room. Like you forget these things because the information is a lot. I don't really know whether that's because of the death tolls or that's just because the scandals are waging in this country. What else? What else is my challenge? Oh, yes, fraudulent people. Okay, I think I've already said fraudulent people, but I said this with regards to them spreading misinformation. But this time, I mean, again, like, maybe you get this fund, you want to start a project, you want to take this with you. You start collecting funds, and then you can't even verify the people that are collecting the funds. They can run away with the money, and what can you do? There's absolutely nothing you can do. It's not regulated that way. It's not regulated that way. I mean, everything has a good and bad side. If the government could come and get our email, our cell phone number, our location from our social media feed, then that would be a problem because I don't trust them to leak our information wise. Exactly. They will come and get you, arrest you, all over. Somebody like me can come and arrest you anyhow.

I hope this thing has been helpful. One other thing. One other thing. The problem with social media is that you don't get the people that you actually want to get. Because the social media, let's say me for example, me really, my followers are usually a combination of my friends and

their friends. And we all grew up in sort of the same way. We all have similar lifestyles, and we all have similar ideas of things, and different ideologies and stuff. But they are all very similar. But the people who we want to get, they are not the people who are in support of, let's say, #VoteWisely or #StopGalamsey. The people I want to reach out to are the people in Koforidua, that when you go to Koforidua and you even take out your phone and record it, people come and they want to slap you. Why are you trying to take their livelihood away from them? Are you a journalist? Why are you trying to stop galamsey? Those are the people that we want to reach out to. And unfortunately, with social media, you can't reach those people. You have to go and look on your feed. And now we are looking for someone who probably has been supported by the people of power. And then now convince them so that others can now come and start convincing people. Because they are not going to listen to you as a stranger. So that's one problem I have with social media. We are all seeing the same thing, sort of. We are not getting people with diverse backgrounds. At least diverse enough backgrounds. That's another problem with social media.

Interview with 5th Respondent

Q1: What role do you think social media plays when it comes to the Mobilisation and the participation of the grassroots in the demand for social change?

Answer: It plays a heavy role. You know, nowadays a lot of people are on social media, and that's where they get their news from. So, if you want to get to them and get people responding as fast as possible, especially for a certain age group, what do they call them, I think it's Gen Z and Gen Alpha, right? With this particular group of people, even with some millennials, yeah, a lot of them spend the majority of their time and get their information from social media, and hardly do they use traditional media, TV, radio, and news prints. So, it makes it easier, and that's where the numbers are, so, yes, it's extremely effective.

Probe Question: Thank you. Yes, so in any of the campaigns you have participated in, what practical measures did you deploy on social media to galvanize support for that particular or specific campaign?

Answer: The first thing was getting the hashtag right, right, because, and having a particular theme for that hashtag, so let's say, for example, the one we did was on Stop Galamsey Now,

right? What you want to do is, you type in Stop Galamsey, and once you start using #StopGalamsey, or anything at all that you talk about, not necessarily even having to do with galvanizing, at the end of any post, you're still typing Stop Galamsey. What it does is, there's something, well, social media runs some algorithms, right? And what it does is, any mention of any particular word several times starts gathering numbers. So, you type in galamsey, or anybody who types in galamsey, it pushes you towards all posts or related posts that have anything to do with galamsey, it's going to pop up. So, it's just pick a team, pick a hashtag, and just start pushing. And as for a cause, of course, if it does not resonate with people, it's dead on arrival. If it's something that people do not care about, you can create a hashtag for it, and it won't trend, because people genuinely don't care about it, or there's nothing to talk about when it comes, or it's something very particular, peculiar to one particular person, therefore, that will be flagged. But if, for example, it has to do with a social issue, and you put a proper hashtag to it, it generates a conversation. Then, for people who use TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, right, you're best served off of live videos, okay? And then you use, again, the same with the hashtag, but it also allows people to now hear you, hear what you're about, what is it that you're talking about, and they have people contributing with the comments, and then you ask them to use the hashtags. And, yeah.

Q2: Do you think it has any real impact on policy formulation, policy implementation on the part of the duty-bearers in Ghana?

Answer: Yes, of course. I mean, but you find all of them now on social media. Like I said, it's the only means of getting data, and talking to people, or having a conversation with, especially the youth, a certain targeted group, right, which make up the numbers. Look, you take Ghana's population, or in this case, as we are discussing policy, if you take the voting population, it's just around, what, 16 million. Out of that, you look at the number of youths that are actually going to vote, we found more than 60% of the voter population. It tells you that if you want to have a proper conversation with them, those are the means to get to them. And once they say they want something done, if you don't get it done, of course, then they are not going to vote for you. So, you push an agenda. Look, like, the way Free SHS was pushed, right, they used traditional media, they used social media, it was pushed so that it was free, a lot of people jumped on it, and people voted for that. Today, the conversation has changed. It has to do with how galamsey should stop, how corruption is widespread and all, and it's informing how even manifestos were written, because questions were being asked, youth forums were held, right.

What do you call it? Polls were held. And constantly, polls are being held. And if you look at the voting pattern, it tells you that when somebody says, oh, I'm cancelling E-Levy, that is something that gets a vote. So, it's a change. Oh, I'm cancelling betting tax. Oh, I'm bringing this, I'm bringing all those things. So, yes, huge impact. Huge, huge, huge. And, of course, it informs the decisions that are made.

Probe Question: Would you say that social media provides a platform for achieving goals that you set out for social campaigns? For instance, if you take #StopGalamseyNow, would you say that the primary objectives you had from the beginning of the campaign, were you able to use social media as a tool to achieve those objectives?

Answer: Yes, for some, not all. But the major objectives, like, so it was two hashtags, right, Stop Galamsey Now and Free the Citizens. And now we see that those that were remanded have been freed. And some of them have had their charges dropped, albeit the court cases weren't across board. But at least now they are home with their families. So, that has been achieved. It's a win on our side. You saw the numbers. You saw how angry the youth were. And they knew that if they didn't take action now, what was coming, they would not have been able to contain. So, by doing what we did, instead of them trying to sort of scare us or push us into a corner by saying, you should do this, we are going to kill you and all of that. Now, the song has changed. Again, another way of making an impact. When we set up Stop Galamsey Now, you saw all of a sudden there is a, what do you call it, Operation Hulk. Right? In as much as it is terrible, it's a way of response. And it doesn't end there. Now that we've seen how impactful it is, now that we've seen the results that we are getting, it means that the more we push and how bigger we push, the faster we'll get answers.

Q3: Do you think the concept of being a social media activist has a role now to play in Ghana when it comes to driving positive social change?

A: Not positive or negative, but yes, it has a huge role. Like, that can be somebody's literal way that they do. Because, mind you, again, murdering people is not easy, right? And getting people to die into whatever it is you are selling, again, it's not an easy job. I told you, if you're creating hashtags and it has to do with something personal, people won't mind you, because they don't see how it impacts them. But once it's something that impacts everybody, or for instance, a larger sector of the population, immediately you see that, yes, people will now jump on board,

and it spreads like wildfire because a lot of people who might not have known what was going on or had any idea what the issue was about will now get to know. You understand? So, it's a jump on its own, and of course, it makes a huge impact.

Q4: What limitations have you identified when it comes to the use of social media for activism, and how, to what extent, do these limitations hinder or impede the demand for social change?

Answer: So, there's something we call keyboard warriors, right? They're people who, mind you, like you said, it's still social media, so some people might not take it seriously. Some people think once they have been online and they've spoken about it, that is where it ends, and that is the sort of limitation you have. To actually get people to come out now, physically, it's easier to sit behind a computer, and of course, being in a technological world, or in a global village where everything is evolving, we saw at the height of COVID, people were asked to work from home, right? So, people feel it's easier to sit behind a computer, or sit behind your phone, or sit on social media, and if it is by them clicking on the keypad or the keyboard for them to get their job done, they feel that is enough. But the majority of these issues actually requires you to step out, and that is where the limitation comes in. And also, there are very few people that have also decided, whatever you do, they want to be the anti-atheism or anti-whatever-is-good, keep combating you with false hashtags or try to drive conversation away with what you've spoken about. And that also sort of makes it a bit difficult. But the pros far outweigh the cons.

Probe Question: So, any general remarks on the whole subject matter? If you have any comments to add, or to sum it up to your experiences, and what you think should be the way forward?

Answer: I mean, there are more people involved on better issues. That's all I can say. Like, you know, get them to understand what the issues really are. There are some people who jump on a hashtag or an issue and still not understand what it is about. Just before we've seen a couple of people talking about it, they also come talking about it, and that is where the problem sometimes is. So, it's not just a matter of creating hashtags. Sometimes people who start these, should I call it social media activism or hashtags or programs or whatever it is, right, should understand that you should break it down, not just make it about a simple issue or not just, once

you create a hashtag, now let the explanation go down. Don't leave it just at that, because people will ask questions, and people nowadays ask a lot of questions. You understand? Otherwise, I think it's okay.