BEYOND CORPORATE PROFITS:

REMINISCING ABOUT THE FUTURE OF CEO ACTIVISM IN GHANA

by

ERIC KWAME ADAE

A DISSERTATION

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: Beyond Corporate Profits: Reminiscing about the future of CEO Activism in Ghana

This dissertation offers an inquiry into the nascent phenomenon of CEO activism. It addresses gaps in CEO activism research, including a dearth of non-Western contexts, dominance of modernist perspectives, omission of women activist CEO voices, and lack of conceptual models.

It applies alternative theoretical lenses of Caritas, Ubuntu, Africapitalism, and postmodernism to examine CEO activism in Ghana. Data were collected through long interviews with a total of 24 men and women activist CEOs, and data underwent hermeneutic phenomenological thematic analysis.

Employing a process model, the dissertation argues for the *CEO Activism Development Model* that explains the temporality, activity and flow of important junctions in the buildout of activist stances by CEOs, including motivations, issues, tactics, effects, and CEO activism safeguards.

Findings suggest CEO activism in Ghana is motivated by factors previously unarticulated in the literature. Brand activism typologies adequately describe the causes/issues advocated by activist CEOs in Ghana, while extant CEO activism tactic clusters proved insufficient for the full gamut of activist CEOs tactical repertoire in Ghana. Three classes of the effects of CEO activism emerge, namely societal functions,

and positive and negative outcomes for corporations and individual CEO activists. A typology comprising six classes of CEO activism safeguards is presented.

Findings advance perspectives of non-Western society CEO activists; policy implications are discussed, and guidelines presented for activist CEO campaigns. This dissertation internationalizes scholarly inquiry on the CEO activism phenomenon for the public relations literature, while extending CEO activism research; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI), corporate social responsibility/sustainability, postmodern values, and the insider activist perspectives to also include Caritas, Ubuntu philosophy, and Africapitalism. It contributes to the fields of process studies of change in organization and management, the upper echelons perspective, and sustainability transitions.

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This dissertation is dedicated to …

God Almighty;

In loving memory of my father Mr. Victor Kwaku Adae;

to my children and to yours.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It has been suggested that the terrains of business and politics continue to merge in stronger ways than previously thought (Dodd, 2016; Global Strategy Group, 2016). Although corporations have not always been concerned about wider social, political, and environmental issues that are not directly related to their financial bottom line, some scholars have observed that significant shifts are in the offing (Nalick et al., 2016; Chatterji & Toffel, 2018; Wettstein & Baur, 2016; Dodd & Supa, 2014, 2015a; Livonen, 2018; Kotler & Sarkar, 2018b).

Globally, there are rising calls and activism for changes to perceived injustices in the social order (Dodd & Supa, 2014), and social movements have become a pervasive part of the general pattern of contemporary society (Valencia & Jones, 2018). As activists are increasingly targeting companies and nonprofits, indications are that we are witnessing a growing trend of corporations becoming involved in sociopolitical issues (Nalick et al., 2016; Wettstein & Baur, 2016).

In 2019, the Business Roundtable, an association of the CEOs of some of the most influential companies in America, shook the foundations of the business world by issuing a statement that reimagined the purpose of business and companies in terms of creating long-term shared value for multiple stakeholders, rather than solely for its shareholders (Ludema & Johnson, 2019; Business Roundtable, 2019). This new position that was signed by some 181 CEOs in America is a marked departure from positions taken by both Milton Friedman's (1970; 2007) profit-maximizing corporate role, and the previous shareholder primacy postures of the Business Roundtable. The new position makes an

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open commitment for companies to be accountable to five strategic constituencies, namely, customers, employees, suppliers, communities, and shareholders (Business Roundtable, 2019; Gartenberg & Serafeim, 2019).

Corporations, their brands, and corporate leaders are taking public stances on diverse social matters through various activist and advocacy campaigns (Weber Shandwick, 2016; 2017). Particularly, Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) now weigh in on issues that were once the preserve of politicians, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, and other advocacy groups (Weber Shandwick, 2016; Chatterji & Toffel, 2015). This may well be a vanguard of a significant movement in management and cognate fields (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018).

Enter Corporate Social Advocacy/CEO Activism

Although there have been increasing publications about corporate involvement in sociopolitical matters, scholars are yet to agree on various aspects of the phenomenon (Livonen, 2018). There is a palpable disagreement regarding what label to assign to this observable atypical corporate behavior. While some use the label "Corporate Political Advocacy" (see Wettstein & Baur, 2016; Baur & Wettstein, 2016), others prefer the label "CEO activism" (see Chatterji & Toffel, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019; Livonen, 2018), some have proposed "CEO Sociopolitical Activism" (see Hambrick & Wowak, 2019), and still, others opt for "Corporate Social Advocacy" (see Dodd & Supa, 2014; 2015; Dodd, 2016).

Dodd and Supa (2014) conceptualized "Corporate Social Advocacy" as a legitimate field of inquiry within the field of public relations, which spans the boundaries

of two vital areas of scholarship and practice, namely Strategic Issues Management (SIM) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). These scholars describe Corporate Social Advocacy (CSA) as instances of organizations making public statements or taking public stances on sociopolitical issues. CEO activism involves heads of profit-oriented corporations making public statements and taking open stances on social and environmental issues that may not directly relate to the economic bottom line of their corporations (Hambrick & Womak, 2019; Livonen, 2018; Chatterji, 2016; Chatterji & Toffel, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018; Dodd & Supa, 2014, 2015). It has been suggested that whether these organizational stances are planned as part of formal corporate communications, or not, the result is the public's perception that the organization is connected to the issue (Park & Berger, 2004).

Nowadays, big business and big-name CEOs carry protest signs, admonish politicians, and sometimes threaten economic reprisals against politicians and federal governments (Laband, 2016). Some scholars argue that the increasingly polarized political environment has created opportunities for others – other than politicians, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society organizations – to step up and lead from the front on issues of wider social importance (Cronin, 2018; Global Strategy Group, 2016). Thus, within the shifting organizational contexts, it is now more difficult for companies to leave politics to politicians (Weber Shandwick, 2017).

Examples of instances of such comingling of business and politics appear to be proliferating (Weber Shandwick, 2016; 2017). Chatterji and Toffel (2016) observe that these CEOs and other high-profile corporate executives have been publicly weighing in on hot-button and controversial issues like race relations and gender equality that may be

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directly unrelated to their core businesses. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that, following public pressure from the CEOs of Intel, Salesforce, and Unilever, Governor Nathan Deal of Georgia, a Republican, announced his decision to veto a "religious liberty" bill that would permit faith-based businesses and charities to discriminate against same-sex couples. And in 2015, Apple CEO Timothy Cook, publicly opposed a similar bill in Indiana, pressing Gov. Mike Pence, a Republican, to sign a revised version of the law that made it clear that it would not allow discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

These CEOs and several others have become exemplars of corporate chieftains who have taken public stands on an ever-increasing gyre of hot button social and environmental issues, ranging from same-sex marriage, climate change, income fairness, immigration, racial discrimination to gender equality (Weber Shandwick, 2016; Chatterji & Toffel, 2016). Other examples of CEOs who have recently made public pronouncements on wider sociopolitical issues are Lloyd Blankfein of Goldman Sachs, Jim Rogers of Duke Energy, and Eric Schmidt of Google (Chatterji & Toffel, 2015). Others have included Angie's List's CEO William Oesterle, Howard Schultz of Starbucks, and Dan T. Cathy of Chick-fil-A (Chatterji & Toffel, 2016).

According to trend watchers, the tipping point came early in President Donald J. Trump's administration, following his temporary travel ban to the United States for citizens from seven Muslim countries. This caused many CEOs to speak out publicly against the executive order, particularly on social media, and igniting worldwide protests (Weber Shandwick, 2017). Commenting on the trend and the perceived agency of activist CEOs, Marc Benioff, CEO of Salesforce.com believes: "One thing you're seeing that

there is a third [political] party emerging in this country, which is the party of CEOs"

(Weber Shandwick, 2016, p.2). Other CEOs have tersely expressed the need to engage in

activism in somewhat moral and ethical terms. For instance, Brian Moynihan has been

noted to have remarked that the reimagined role of CEOs now included various political

actions that transcended the normal profit-oriented business logic (Chatterji & Toffel,

2018). While recognizing the increasing role of CEOs to pursue causes that appear to be

directly unconnected to the operations and financial profitability of their corporations, it

is noteworthy that some scholars have argued that the aim of corporate political activity is

frequently - some would say always – bottom-line based, with companies traditionally

using lobbying and other behind-the-scenes strategies and actors to pursue their interests

(Wettstein & Baur, 2016).

Scholars have sought to proffer some reasons for the rising incidence of CEO

activism. For instance, some scholars have spoken of a democratic deficit/gap, reflective

of an expectation hiatus between what governments promise, relative to their ability to

deliver such promises (Cronin, 2018). Thus, employees, customers, and other

stakeholders are demanding more from business leaders, even as distrust in governments

escalates (Gaines-Ross, 2016; 2017).

Again, there are significant corporate investments in establishing corporate values

such as diversity and social inclusion (Gaines-Ross, 2017). For instance, technology giant

Google is reported to have invested some $265m on diversity programs between 2014

and 2016. Government attacks against such values have been noted to cause corporations,

their brands, and leaders to speak out (Gaines-Ross, 2017). Not speaking out negatively

affects the ability of corporations to attract and retain top talent, particularly Millennials

(people born between 1980 and 1994) and Gen Z'ers (people born between 1995 and 2015).

Lately, most societies are increasingly caught up in an era of political polarization, where people are significantly cloistered in neighborhoods, social networks, and workspaces that serve as echo chambers of ideological beliefs (Chatterji & Toffel, 2016). Thus, corporate neutrality is becoming anachronistic, and may even be a risky corporate strategy (Chatterji & Toffel, 2016). Besides, as brands seek to tell more compelling stories by personalizing their relationships with customers and brand cults, the adoption of a sociopolitical orientation is increasingly becoming a core part of corporate strategy. More corporations are finding it better to be much loved by a few than remain inoffensive to many (Chatterji & Toffel, 2016).

Dangerous opportunities in the field

CEO activism is fast emerging as a theoretical concept in scholarly circles (Nalick et al., 2016; Chatterji & Toffel, 2017), due in part to the significant media spotlight on the phenomenon (Livonen, 2018; Dodd, 2016). However, the concept has undergone some ambivalence, as seen in the few scholars who have sought to research it applying diverse labels to the self-same phenomenon. This lack of unanimity among scholars reflects the newness of the growing trend of a unique sort of engagement where corporations, brands, and executives take an overt and public stance on sociopolitical issues, with the avowed goal of getting others to also rally to the same cause (Wettstein & Baur, 2016; Dodd & Supa, 2014; Nalick et al., 2016).

Buoyed by notions of brand responsibility, the Triple Bottom Line, and sustainability, corporate efforts branded as corporate social responsibility have tended to serve the dual objectives of creating economic and social value simultaneously, such as initiatives to spark clean technology innovation (Chatterji & Toffel, 2015). However, CEO activism is deemed to be a unique expression of corporate sociopolitical involvement, as some CEOs may even intentionally court some controversy by weighing in on controversial issues without any obvious pretense of raising corporate profits (Chatterji & Toffel, 2015). For instance, Howard Schultz observes that the Race Together campaign "is not some marketing or PR exercise. This is to do one thing: Use our national footprint and scale for good" (Chatterji & Toffel, 2015).

While corporate involvement in sociopolitical issues presents new challenges for organizations, it is also laden with opportunities for corporate executives to change their corporations and society for the better from the inside-out (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002). CEO activism may well signal a significant shift in corporate public relations and brand communications, since until relatively recently, most large companies have sought not to alienate large segments of potential customers and other stakeholders, by remaining relatively neutral on controversial issues (Chatterji & Toffel, 2016).

Despite the backlash to the Starbucks "Race Together" campaign, Chatterji and Toffel (2015) noted that CEO activism is a significant step forward for corporate involvement in the public sphere, as reflected by the phenomenon's ability to straddle the intersection between business and public policy. These scholars noticed the significant rise of CEO activism and its increasing influence, articulated the need to encourage it, and urged relevant stakeholders to help define its limits.

Thus, CEOs are especially using their wealth and the bully pulpit to make their voices lead to major changes in specific states, and nationally in America, with the trend pointing to an increased incidence of CEO activism globally (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018; Dodd, 2016). It is becoming apparent that men and women CEOs from other parts of the world have been embarking on diverse forms of activism, such as attempts to help address some of the developmental challenges and social injustices in Ghana. Yet, the bulk of current literature on CEO activism has focused on activist CEOs in Western (largely American) contexts.

Related to the Western cultural bias that currently plagues the scholarly field of CEO activism, there is a gender-blind spot. Save for Weber Shandwick's (2016) mention of the pioneering CEO activism of Marilyn Carlson, CEO of the global travel and hospitality firm Carlson Companies, who spoke against human trafficking, arguably all studies on CEO activism have not only focused on Western (United States) contexts, but also highlighted the activism of white, men who are CEOs.

This is a failure that reflects the general marginalization of the work of women CEOs in general, but especially those of activist women CEOs. Such an elision is regrettable, unfortunate, and problematic since substantial gender inequities still mark major economic sectors, and, gender-based differences cut deep. Women workers and executives continue to cope with work environments dominated by men, sexual harassment, and the routinization of discourses of the sexual division of labor, among many other inequities.

Besides the obvious Western domination of the field, studies on CEO activism also display an ideological and paradigmatic bias for modernist perspectives that

privilege consensus and the corporate and investor interests, to the exclusion of postmodern perspectives that privilege agonism and the interests of multiple stakeholders (Ciszek & Logan, 2018; Ciszek & Curtin, 2019).

The current study

This dissertation is an inquiry into the nascent phenomenon of CEO activism in Ghana. The mission is to rethink scholarship and the practice of CEO activism in various respects. It seeks to consider some ways in which scholarship and the practice of CEO activism could be advanced by changing some of the current perspectives that have dogged the field. This dissertation seeks to address the woeful dearth of scholarly work on CEO activism, by investigating how the phenomenon is evolving within the context of a developing society such as Ghana.

With the afore-stated considerations in mind, this dissertation is designed to investigate various themes in CEO activism in Ghana, by examining the social resistance actions inclusive of both men and women CEOs in a non-Western sociocultural context, using a postmodern lens. In seeking to explore how CEO activism is developing in Ghana, a purposive sample of 24 self-identified CEOs was selected for semi-structured interviews.

While admitting that scholarship on CEO activism is yet in its embryonic stage, it is unclear how corporate executives, traditionally preoccupied with serving the corporate interest now appear to be thinking beyond the primary pursuit of the financial profits for investors. What are the main junctures on the road of CEOs gaining and developing the activist stance? Thus, the overall mission of this dissertation is to explicate the intricate

processes involved in the development of the activist stance by CEOs. To address this overarching agenda, this dissertation revolves around addressing five main research questions, deemed important in explaining various facets of the development of CEO activism, perceived to contain gaps in the current literature.

These are:

RQ1: What are the motivations of CEOs in Ghana for engaging in CEO activism?

RQ2: What range of sociopolitical issues do CEO activists in Ghana focus on?

RQ3: What tactics do CEO activists in Ghana employ in their resistance actions?

RQ4: What effects have been produced by the resistance actions of CEO activists in Ghana?

RQ5: What safeguards do activist CEOs in Ghana employ to insulate themselves from the pushbacks they face because of their resistance actions?

Organization of the dissertation

The design, conceptualization, theoretical framework, operationalization, methods, findings, implications, and recommendations of this dissertation are reported through separate interlinked chapters and sections.

The chapters of this dissertation include:

Chapter One introduced the phenomenon of CEO activism as a field of scholarly inquiry as well as an emerging corporate practice. Relevant examples have been provided to reify the concept. This dissertation pulls together several theoretical perspectives as well as related literature in explaining various aspects of the phenomenon of CEO activism. The introductory chapter has provided an idea of several lacunae in the corpus of literature, and thus indicates some of the goals of this dissertation, and in effect, foreshadows some of its implications and contributions.

Chapter Two describes the sociopolitical, economic, legal, historical, and contemporary milieu of Ghana.

Chapter Three focuses on explaining the various theoretical perspectives that provide the lens for investigating the phenomenon of CEO activism in Ghana. In setting out these theoretical frameworks, an attempt is made to discuss not only their relevance to this dissertation but also how they shape the inquiry.

Chapter Four is a review of related studies, discussed in ways that lead up to a conceptual framework for this dissertation. The presentation of the literature in this section is also done in ways that suggest perceived gaps in knowledge that this dissertation is designed to address. The chapter culminates in the posing of the five (5) research questions that this dissertation is set up to respond to.

Chapter five presents the research methods and procedures of social investigation employed. The philosophical justification for the chosen research design is made. Other parts of this chapter provide some insights concerning the overall research design, including the phases of data collection, interview methods, sampling procedures, data handling, and data analysis.

Comprising the first of five specialized findings chapters in this dissertation, Chapter Six focuses on reporting and discussing the findings related to Research Question 1 on the motivations for CEO activism in Ghana. Chapter Seven reports and discusses the findings related to Research Question 2 on the range of issues that activist CEOs in Ghana advocate. Chapter Eight reports and discusses the findings related to Research Question 3 on the tactics that CEO activists in Ghana employ in their social resistance actions. Chapter Nine reports and discusses the findings related to Research Question 4 on the effects produced by the actions of CEO activists in Ghana. Chapter Ten, a penultimate chapter of this dissertation reports and discusses the findings related to Research Question 5 on the range of safeguards employed by CEO activists in Ghana in protecting themselves from undesirable consequences of engaging in CEO activism in the country.

The Conclusion (Chapter Eleven) of this dissertation highlights the major findings and discusses the results, drawing connections with the theory and the extant literature. While an overall conceptual framework is provided to help connect various elements in the development of CEO activism, separate models are also provided for various parts of the framework, based on the specialized findings. This chapter presents the implications of the various results for theory, and diverse policies in corporate governance, communication strategy, and business ethics. Based on the suggestions of the participants, some guidelines are provided for the practicing CEO activists.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND AND THE GHANAIAN CONTEXT

This chapter serves as a backdrop for this dissertation. It provides the socio-cultural, economic, political, and cognate context for the phenomenon of CEO activism in Ghana. It opens with a discussion of the politico-geographic mapping of Ghana, together with a recount of some highlights of the political history of the country. Other sections of this chapter explore some macroeconomic fundamentals of Ghana and some textures within the socio-cultural fabric of the nation. It also situates the dissertation within the vital context of some social problems facing Ghana and some corporate leaders who have emerged as activists in Ghana.

The West African Sub-region

West Africa is generally described as a part of Africa, south of the Sahara Desert (sub-Saharan continent). Overall, there are some 17 nation-states that call this westernmost section of the African continent home. However, in terms of its geopolitical constitution, there are 16 countries in this sub-region, since Mauritania is generally aligned with the North African bloc. Excluding Liberia, all the nation-states in West Africa were once colonies of European states, spanning the early 1600s till the 1980s, when all the colonized nations in the region attained political independence from their European colonial masters.

The people of West Africa share various customs, languages, and traditions, despite the rich diversity of the region's socio-cultural formations. While nations in West Africa are resource-rich, they also paint a sad and paradoxical picture of under-

development. Generally, some of the developmental challenges of West Africa include high mortality rates, corruption, low education rates, and food insecurity. Founded in 1975, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is the regional economic bloc. ECOWAS has the mission of promoting and deepening economic integration and regional prosperity.

<u>Old Ghana and the New Ghana</u>

The study is set in the present-day English-speaking West African country of Ghana.

Figure 1: Map of Ghana within Africa.
(Source: African Leadership Magazine, United Kingdom –
www.africanleadershipmagazine.co.uk)

Modern-day Ghana shares borders with Togo on its east, Cote d'Ivoire on the west, Burkina Faso on the north, and the Atlantic Ocean on the south (see Figures 1

above and 2 below). However, the present-day Ghana that is the context of this dissertation must not be confused with the Old Ghana Empire that thrived in West Africa between the sixth and 13th Century CE (Cartwright, 2019). However, The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook (2019) has it that the medieval Ghana Kingdom existed between 4th-13th Century, while the Encyclopedia Britannica (2019) states that unconfirmed sources place the advent of the Ghana Empire at the Fourth Century CE.
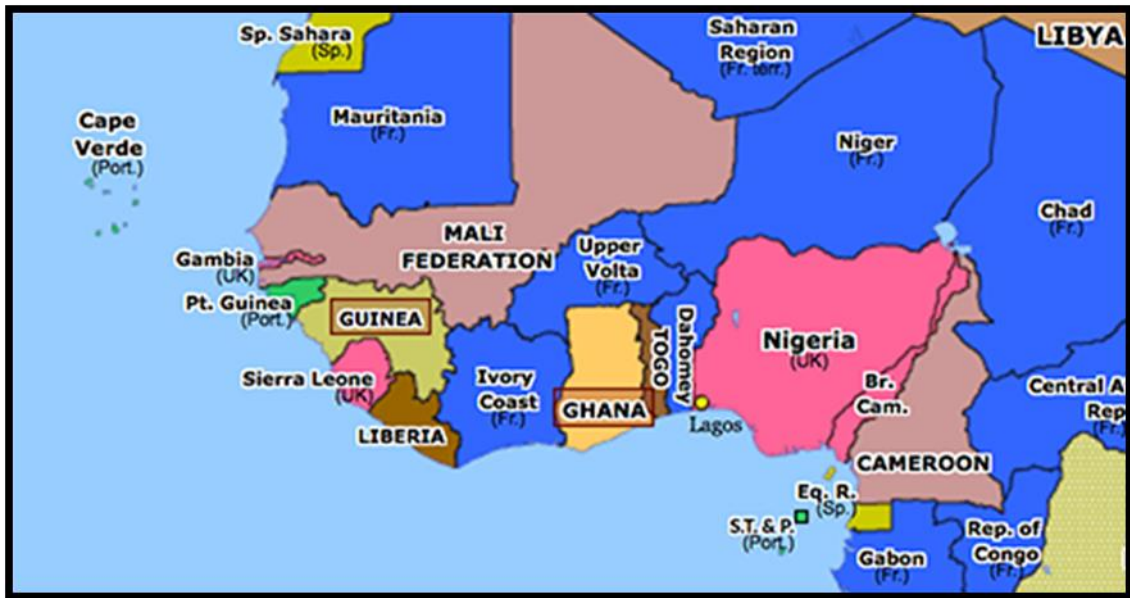
Figure 2: Political map of West African countries.
(Source: Omni Atlas – www.omniatlas.com)

The medieval Ghana Empire had no links to the present Republic of Ghana. The old empire was geographically located within the western Sudan region (closer to present-day Mauritania and Mali) and parched between the Sahara Desert to its northern parts, and the rainforests of present-day Senegal Guinea and Liberia to its south (see Figure 3 below). It was strategically located between the River Senegal and the River Niger.

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With its capital known as *Koumbi Saleh* (located some 200 miles north of Bamako, the capital city of modern-day Mali), the ancient Ghana Empire was famous as a trading post in such resources as iron, copper, and ivory (Cartwright, 2019; Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). Geographically, this empire was located approximately 500 miles (800 kilometers) north of present-day Ghana. Some historians suggest that the real name of the Empire was Ouagadougou *[Wagadugu]* and that the name "Ghana" was the title given to the kings of the Empire (CIA World Factbook, 2019; Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019).
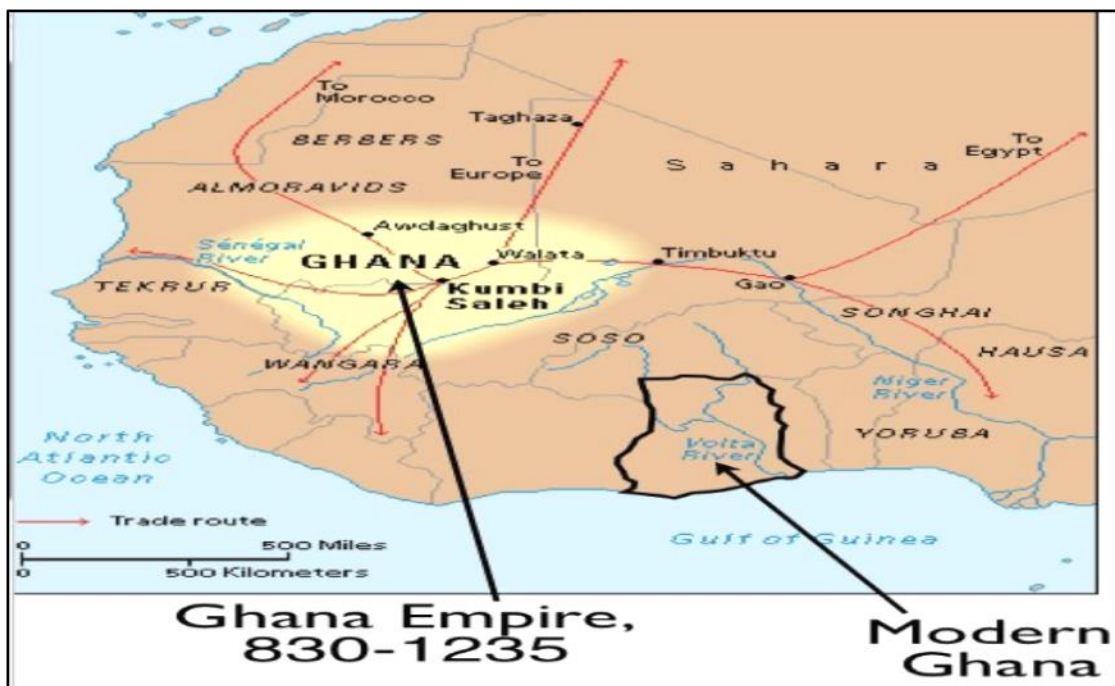
Figure 3: Map of the Old Ghana Empire in relation to modern Ghana.
(Source: Sun Seekers Tours Ghana Limited – www.sunseekers.com)

The decline of the Ghana Empire started in the 11th century, with the rise of the militant Muslim Almoravids who waged a holy war aimed at winning adherents (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). In 1240, what was left of the Ghana Empire became part of the rising Mali Empire. In 1240 AD, the medieval Ghana Empire was under the

control of a king known as Sundiata, and around 1235 AD, this ruler succeeded in uniting the numerous warring tribes to create the Mali empire.

The modern nation-state of the Republic of Ghana that is the context of this dissertation is named after the medieval Ghana Empire. The geographic coordinates of Ghana are 8 00N, 2 00W. It has a total land area of about 239,460 square kilometers, with water resources of 8,520 sq. km. Ghana's land boundaries add up to 2,094 km, comprising Burkina Faso (549km), Cote d'Ivoire (668km), Togo (877km), and a coastline of (539km). It also lays claim to a maritime territory of 12 nautical miles (CIA World Factbook, 2019.

Comparatively, the Republic of Ghana is slightly smaller than the state of Oregon (CIA World Factbook, 2019), and almost the same size as the United Kingdom (World Population Review, 2019). It is interesting to note that geographically, Ghana is the country that is closer than any other to the intersection of the equator and the Greenwich Meridian (World Population Review, 2019).

Until its independence, Ghana was known as the Gold Coast. The early Portuguese adventurers who were reported to have found so much gold between the rivers Ankobra and Volta that they nicknamed the place *Da Mina*, meaning "The Mine" when they arrived on its shores in the 1482 (CIA World Factbook, 2019). For many years, the Gold Coast attracted various European traders and administrations, including the Dutch (from 1598), the British (17th Century), Denmark, and Sweden. However, by the late 19th Century, only the Dutch and the British remained, with the Dutch leaving in 1874, making the Gold Coast a British protectorate (CIA World Factbook, 2019).

The Republic of Ghana was formed as a result of the merger of the British colony of the Gold Coast, the Empire of Ashanti, and the Togoland trust territory, following a plebiscite that was carried out under the aegis of the United Nations Organization (U.N.O.) (CIA World Factbook, 2019). Ghana became the first country south of the Sahara to gain its independence from colonial rule on March 6, 1957. Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah is generally regarded as the founder and first president of Ghana. He had the vision of a united Africa and was the first to promote pan-Africanism, a melding of the views of Marcus Garvey and Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois (CIA World Factbook, 2019).

Ghana's climate is tropical, and relatively warm and dry, especially along the southeast coast. It is hot and humid in the southwest and hot and dry in the northern parts of the country. Its terrain generally comprises low and flat rolling plains and plateaus in the south-central parts. The lowest elevations can be found in the south, close to the Atlantic Ocean, while the highest peak is Mount Afadjato (880m). The country's natural resources include gold, timber, industrial diamonds, bauxite, manganese, fish, rubber, hydropower, petroleum, silver, salt, and limestone (CIA World Factbook, 2019).

Notable natural disasters in Ghana include dry and dusty northeastern winds that occur between January and March; recurrent droughts in the northern regions that negatively impact agricultural productivity; deforestation; overgrazing; soil erosion; poaching and habitat destruction, threatening wildlife; water pollution; and inadequate supplies of potable water (CIA World Factbook, 2019).

Politic history, regional administration, and legal system

At independence in 1957, Ghana was politically organized as a parliamentary democracy. The first prime minister of Ghana was Dr. Kwame Nkrumah who was ousted in a coup in 1966. Since 1957, the country has seen four democratic experiments, with the last starting in 1993 (Morrison, 2004). Generally, all the democratic movements in Ghana have involved two traditional political party cleavages, but also a few relatively minor organizations. These two main parties that have endured until today are the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) and the Convention Peoples Party (CPP).

The UGCC was Ghana's first major political party, started in 1946, to achieve independence for Ghana in "the shortest possible time" (Morrison, 2004, p. 423). Other party bigwigs were Ernest Ako Adjei, Edward Akufo-Addo, Emmanuel Obetsebi Lamptey, William Ofori-Atta, and Joseph Boakye Danquah (Amankwa, n.d.). This party comprised the elite, including merchants, businessmen, and intellectuals. Its ideological stance was moderate, liberal, and western orientation. Since its principal leader at the outset was J.B. Danquah (LL. B and Ph.D., London) who was succeeded by sociologist Kofi Busia (D. Phil., Oxford), this party is generally known in Ghana as representing the Danquah-Busia tradition (Morrison, 2004).

The UGCC had engaged Dr. Kwame Nkrumah to help mobilize grassroots support for the party across Ghana (Amankwa, n.d.). However, disagreements over political strategy caused Dr. Nkrumah to part ways with the UGCC, and to form the CPP on June 12, 1949 (Amankwa, n.d.). Dr. Nkrumah was reported to have left the UGCC with a large corps of the UGCC's youthful support base.

The CPP, a left-wing party was led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, a professor educated in the United States and who was influenced by the thoughts of W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey. It represented Nkrumah's populist vision and the quest to achieve "independence now" for Ghana (Morrison, 2004, p. 423). Among others, it represented the socialist ideologies and interests of workers, women, servicemen, and school leavers.

Elections held in July 1956 were won by the CPP, with 57% of the valid votes cast. Thus, at independence, Ghana's political scene was dominated by the CPP. The other parties decided to merge, forming the United Party (U.P.). However, in 1957, the ruling CPP government passed the Avoidance of Discrimination Act that proscribed political organizations, based on ethnic or religious ties (Amankwa, n.d.). This effectively turned Ghana into a one-party state by 1960 (Ghanaweb.com).

Between 1966 and 1981, Ghana's political landscape was many military regimes, but also civilian governments (Morrison, 2004). Nkrumah's government was ousted on February 24, 1966, by elements from the Ghana Army and the Ghana Police Service. This coup saw the National Liberation Council (NLC), led by Lt. Gen. Joseph Arthur Ankrah coming into the office (Ghanaweb.com).

In April of 1966, a palace coup deposed Ankrah, and another military officer, Lt. Gen. Akwasi Amankwaa Afrifa became the leader of the NLC and Ghana. General elections held in 1969 saw the Progress Party winning. Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia became the Prime Minister, with Mr. Edward Akufo Addo serving as president (Ghanaweb.com).

It appears that military coups had become a part of the political climate in Ghana. On January 13, 1972, there was yet another coup, with Col. (later becoming a General) Ignatius Kutu Acheampong becoming the Head of State and Chairman of the National

Redemption Council (NRC). The NRC was rebranded as the Supreme Military Council (SMC). In July 1978, Gen. F.W.K. Akuffo staged a palace coup and took over the reins of power from Acheampong (Ghanaweb.com).

On June 4, 1979, an uprising by junior officers of the Ghana Armed Forces, led by Ft. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings took over power from Akuffo, and set up the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), with the avowed goal of restoring higher standards of moral responsibility, accountability, and probity in public office (Ghanaweb.com). As promised, on September 24, 1979, the AFRC organized multiparty elections, handing power democratically to Dr. Hilla Liman of the People's National Party (PNP), winner of the polls.

However, Ghana was soon caught in a downward spiral of economic and social hardships that culminated in the overthrow of the PNP government on December 31, 1981, by the Rawlings-led Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC). Some scholars have noted that, except for the first republic under Nkrumah, the civilian governments in Ghana during the second republic (1969-1972) and the third republic (1979-1981), the various republics in Ghana have not managed to exist beyond three years, without being interrupted by coup d'états (Abdulai & Quantson, 2008/2009).

Initially, Rawlings banned multiparty politics in the country. However, in 1990, nationwide forums revealed that Ghanaians yearned for multi-party democracy. A Consultative Assembly that was established reviewed the previous constitutions of 1957, 1969, and 1979. This led to the unanimous approval of the constitution for Ghana's Fourth Republic on April 28, 1992 (Ghanaweb.com).

The new constitution adopted in 1992 paved the way for the Fourth Republic.

Ghana's 1992 Constitution effectively separates the powers of the president, parliament,

cabinet, the Council of State, and the judiciary (CIA World Factbook, 2019). Elections

held on November 3, 1992, were won by Rawlings (58.8%) who stood on the ticket of

the NDC. The NPP garnered 30.4% of the valid votes cast. Other parties in these

elections were the Peoples National Convention (PNC), the National Independence Party

(NIP), and the Peoples Heritage Party (PHP). Thus, Ghana's Fourth Republic was

inaugurated on January 7, 1993, with Rawlings as the president. Rawlings won a second

term as president during the 1996 elections (Ghanaweb.com).

Ghana's political party scene has been dominated by these two traditions, namely

the liberal New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the populist National Democratic Congress

(NDC). The NDC emerged out of the Rawlings military rule in Ghana between 1981 and

1992. Ideologically, it is aligned more closely with the social-democratic tenets of

Nkrumahists (Morrison, 2004). However, it tends to depart from the socialist ideals of

Nkrumah by its tendency towards a free market system. On the other hand, the NPP

comprises people from business, as well as professionals and elites who subscribe to

liberalism and a free market economy. While the NDC appeals to the rural folks, the

NPP is more popular in the urban centers. These two parties have alternated terms in

office in Ghana, especially in the third and fourth republic elections.

Ghana's legal system is based on the English Common Law, customary

(traditional) law, and the 1992 constitution. The courts of Ghana are hierarchical. The

superior courts comprise the Supreme Court of Ghana as the highest court), the Court of

Appeal, and the High Court of Justice). The lower courts include district, traditional, and

local courts (CIA World Factbook, 2019). Ghana's courts have been relatively

independent since the country attained independent statehood. Outside the formal

judicial system are such institutions as the Commission on Human Rights and

Administrative Justice, the Office of the Chief Prosecutor, the Economic and Organized

Crimes Office, and the Financial Intelligence Center (FIC) of Ghana.

Since mid-1992, Ghana has been a relatively stable democracy, with a multi-

party-political system. This unbroken run follows about a decade's break from the

democratic experiment. The country has made some remarkable advancements in the

direction of democracy and a multi-party system, marked by an independent judiciary

that has gained some public trust (The World Bank, 2019).

Throughout its fourth republic, Ghana has followed a neoliberal ideology that

emphasizes the reduction of the state; deregulation and privatization; free trade; and the

promotion of foreign direct investment (Dartey-Baah, 2015). Ghana's 1992 constitution

further seeks to deepen a neoliberal context by providing for the creation and deepening

of a democratic country based on freedom, regional and gender balance, equality,

transparency, accountability, meritocracy, justice, probity, and competence (Dartey-Baah,

2015). The constitution seeks to eliminate the abuse of power and corrupt practices;

decentralization and devolution of national administration and financial management to

the regions and district levels; renewing, reforming and building strong institutions; and

achieving value-for-money in the provision of public services (Dartey-Baah, 2015).

The main parties in Ghana's Fourth Republic are the National Democratic

Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) that won the 2016 elections under

the leadership of H.E. President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. The NPP is a right-

wing party that pursues a center-right and liberal-conservative party that seeks to energize

Ghanaians for the achievement of a property-owning democracy, within the context of

the preservation of the right to life, freedom and justice, and the enrichment of the lives,

property, and liberty of the people (newpatrioticparty.org).

The National Democratic Congress (NDC) is currently the major opposition party

in Ghana. It is a social-democratic political party, founded by Jerry Rawlings. The party

seeks to develop a Ghanaian society that would effectively become a strong force in the

West African sub-region, and which provides economic and social opportunities for all

Ghanaians (officialndc.com).

The Convention People's Party (CPP) is the successor of Nkrumah's party,

bearing the same name (The CIA World Factbook, 2019). This is a

leftist, socialist political party, founded on the ideas of the first President of

Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, including Nkrumaism, African Socialism, and Pan-

Africanism. Other parties in Ghana's political party ecosystem include the People's

National Convention (PNC), the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the Democratic

People's Party (DPP), and the Progressive Peoples Party (PPP).

Ghana has consistently ranked among the top three African countries in terms of

freedom of speech and press freedom, with strong broadcast media (especially radio)

having the widest reach (UNESCO, 2012), factors that Ghana could leverage as solid

social capital (The World Bank, 2019).

Socio-demographic characteristics

As of September 30, 2019, Ghana's population size is estimated at 30.6 million, an increase from the official 2010 census number of 24.4 million (World Population Review, 2019). Given its landmass, Ghana has a current population density of 313 people per square mile (121 people per square kilometer) (World Population Review, 2019) (see Figure 4 below).
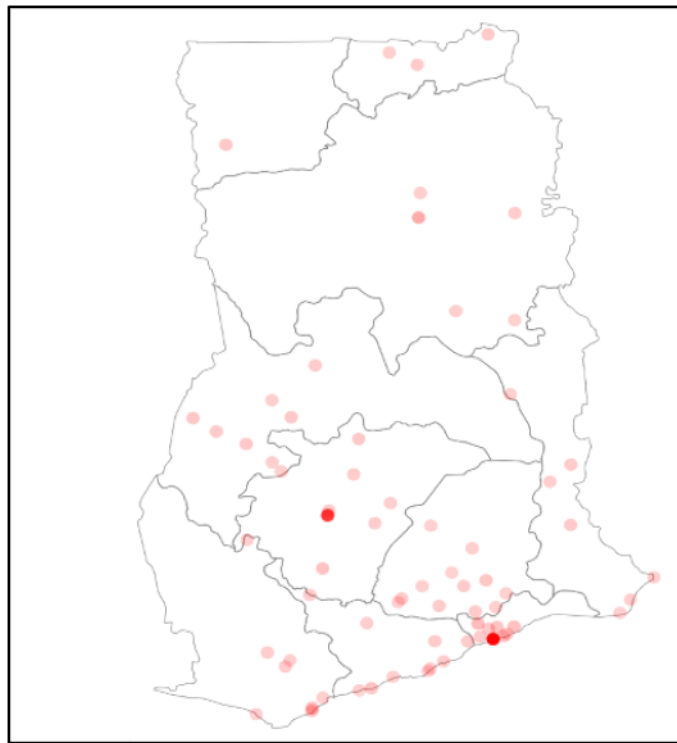
Figure 4: Ghana Population Density by Map.
(Source: World Population Review)

Ghana's largest city is Accra, with a population of 2.27 million inhabitants; Kumasi is the second largest, with 1.47 million residents, while Tamale is the third largest, with some 360,579 people (World Population Review, 2019). Regarding sex

distribution, 50.9% of the population are men, with the women population being estimated at 49.1% (World Population Review, 2019) (see Figure 5 below).
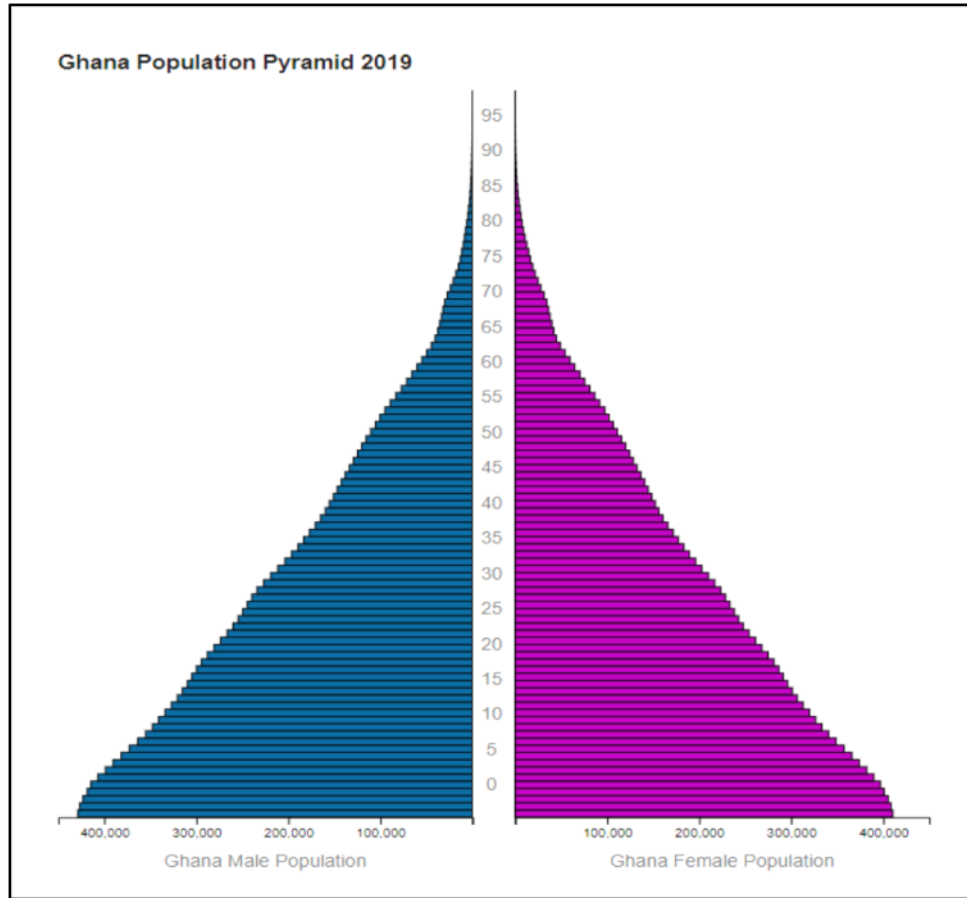
Figure 5: Ghana Population Pyramid (2019).
(Source: World Population Review)

The current fertility rate is 3.94 children per one rural-dwelling woman and 2.78 to every urban-based woman. As of 2014, Ghana's population is estimated to be growing at the rate of 2.2%, with a total number of annual live births pegged at about 586,361. It is estimated that there is one birth every 36 seconds in Ghana, one death every two minutes, and one migrant every 53 minutes. Thus, it is estimated that there is a net population gain of one person every 49 seconds (World Population Review, 2019) (see Figure 6 below).

The current population growth rate is not sustainable, and the Government of Ghana has been acting through various agencies to curb this rate of growth, mainly through public education, family planning initiatives, and deepening access to reproductive health services (World Population Review, 2019).
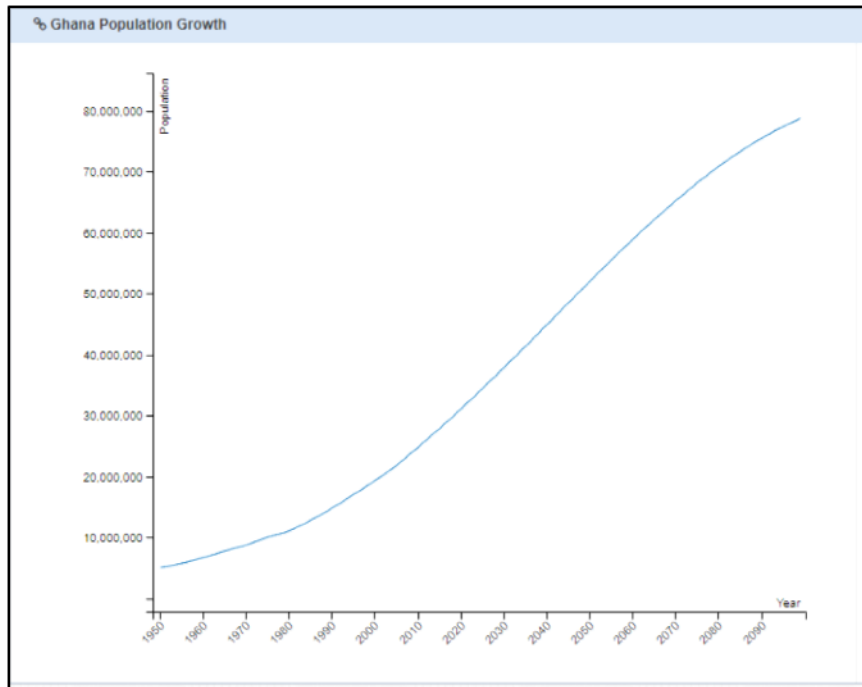
Figure 6: Ghana Population Growth.
(Source: World Population Review)

Some factors dynamics affecting the population in Ghana are mortality from HIV/AIDS and other chronic ailments such as cardiovascular diseases; vector-borne diseases, such as malaria and yellow fever; food and water-borne diseases such as bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever; water contact diseases such as schistosomiasis; and respiratory diseases such as meningococcal meningitis (CIA World Factbook, 2019).

While Ghana is an ethnic crucible, some 98% of its residents are Black Africans (World Population Review, 2019). The Akans are the largest ethnic group in Ghana (47.5%), Dagbani (17%), Ewe (14%), Ga-Adangbe (7%), Gurma (6%), Guan (4%), Gurunsi (2.5%), and Bissa (1%) (World Population Review, 2019). While English is the official language in Ghana, local dialects are used widely. The popular local languages include Asante (16%), Ewe (14%), Fante (11.6%), Boron (Brong) (4.9%), Dagomba (4.4%), Dangme (4.2%), Dagarte (Dagaba) (3.9%), Kokomba (3.5%), Akyem (3.2%), Ga (3.1%), and others at (31.2%). The nine languages that have the status of government sponsorship are Akan, Dagaare/Wale, Dagbani, Dangme, Ewe, Ga, Gonja, Kasem, and Nzema (CIA World Factbook, 2019). Although not generally considered an official language in Ghana, Hausa has gained the status of a lingua franca among the nation's Muslim population.

Although Ghana is open to diverse faiths, some 71% of Ghanaians are Christians, with 17% being Moslems (World Population Review, 2019). According to the 2000 Census in Ghana, adherents of Traditional African Belief make up 8.5% of the population, other (0.7%), and non (6.1%). The CIA World Factbook (2019) breaks down Christians in Ghana as comprising Pentecostal/Charismatic (24.1%), Protestant (18.6%), Catholic (15.1%), and others (11%).

Economic and financial characteristics

The Republic of Ghana is resource-rich, with about twice the per capita productivity of some other countries in West Africa (CIA World Factbook, 2019). However, the country is still heavily dependent on foreign aid. Ghana's economy is

essentially agrarian, although remittances from individuals, gold and oil exports also

account for significant portions of the country's foreign exchange earnings. With about

35% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) coming from agriculture, this sector employs

some 55% of Ghana's workforce (CIA World Factbook, 2019). The country went for

debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative in 2002 and is also

a beneficiary of the Multilateral Relief Initiative, effective 2006. Ghana also signed a

Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact in 2006, aimed at helping to

transform Ghana's agricultural sector, together with other critical sectors (CIA World

Factbook, 2019).

Ghana is currently implementing its Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy

(GPRS), a development program that serves as a framework for directing assistance from

the country's development partners (CIA World Factbook, 2019). This development

strategy seeks to ensure macroeconomic stability, the competitiveness of the private

sector, achieve human capital development, good governance, and deeper civic

responsibility.

On current form, Ghana's economic performance is one of the stellar stories

across Africa, playing second fiddle only to Ethiopia (The World Bank, 2019). In 2017,

Ghana's economy accelerated at 8%, pushed by such sectors as the mining, oil and gas,

gold, and cocoa exports (The World Bank, 2019). The country's economy expanded for

the third, successive quarter in March 2017, to 6.6% up from 4.4% in 2016. The

industrial sector recorded the highest growth of 11.5%, compared to 1.8% in 2016, with

significant contributions being by the mining and petroleum sub-sectors (The World

Bank, 2019). The agriculture sector grew modestly by 7.6%, up from 5% in 2016, fueled

by some growths in the crops, fisheries, and cocoa sub-sectors. However, growth in the services sector slowed to 3.7% from 6.6%, due to slower growth in information, communication, and finance. Non-oil growth slowed to 3.9% from 6.3% in the same period of 2016 (The World Bank, 2019).

The economy of Ghana continued to expand in 2018, although some deceleration was observed. In 2018, the nation recorded quarterly Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth at 5.4% in the first quarter; and 5.4% in the second quarter, ending the year with a rate of 5.6% (The World Bank, 2019).

The economic growth rate of Ghana for 2019 was targeted at 7.4%, with the industrial sector, comprising oil, gas, and mining expected to be the main drivers. The leading sector of growth was expected to be industry, with a targeted rate of 9.7%. Agriculture was expected to grow at 7.3%, based on planned growths in the crops sub-sector, while the service sector of the economy was expected to record a 6.1% (The World Bank, 2019).

Since end-December 2016, Ghana's fiscal performance has seen some general improvements. The fiscal deficit was reduced to 5.9%, from the 9.3% mark in 2016. Despite this improvement, public expenditure burdens still far outstrip revenue generation. Between January and September 2018, the country's fiscal deficit was reported to be 3% of GDP, a performance that was more than the budgeted 2.6% for the period (The World Bank, 2019). As at the end of September 2018, the primary balance stood at a surplus of 0.5% of GDP, relative to a budgeted surplus of 0.9%, with the end-December 2018 performance expected to represent a slightly slower public expenditure

because of lower revenues. Thus, the overall 2018 fiscal deficit is expected to be about 3.7% of Ghana's GDP (The World Bank, 2019).

Generally, Ghana has a better story to tell regarding inflation targeting and management. The rate of inflation has been stabilized within targets of 6-10% set by the Bank of Ghana. The headline inflation declined from about 20% in 2016 to 9.6% as of July 2018, due to reductions in pressures from both the food and the non-food factors, the relative stability of the Ghanaian Cedi (national currency), but also because of programmed fiscal consolidation measures (The World Bank, 2019).

The reduction and stabilization of the inflationary rate in Ghana have facilitated the easing of policy rates since 2015. The policy rates have seen cuts from 21.5 in January 2017 to 20% in September 2017. This policy rate cut has reduced the rates for money market instruments such as Treasury-bill rates over the same period. The money supply in the country has also expanded (Bank of Ghana, 2017). In January 2019, the policy rate stood at 16%, providing the impetus for banks and other financial institutions to provide slightly lower rates of lending to borrowers (The World Bank, 2019).

In terms of Ghana's current account performance, a slight deficit of 1.4% of GDP was recorded in September 2018, relative to 2% in September 2017. The external sector further improved as the national currency, the Cedi, continued to stabilize and the reserve buffer expanded. The June 2017 trade balance turned out a surplus of $1.43 billion, equivalent to 3.1% of GDP from a deficit of 3.3% the previous year, attributable to export earnings, especially from gold, cocoa, and oil (Bank of Ghana, 2017). Gross International Reserves (GIR) were $6.8 billion, representing about 3.9 months of import cover (The World Bank, 2019). Ghana was expected to persist in narrowing its current

account deficit, reaching a projected rate of 3.2% of GDP as at end-December 2018 (The

World Bank, 2019).

For 2019, GDP growth was targeted at 7.4%, due to significant contributions from

industry, manufacturing, and agricultural sectors (The World Bank, 2019). Between

2019 and 2022, GDP is expected to grow at a mean rate of 7.0%, as contributions from

oil tapers, and the influence and contributions from non-oil sectors become more strident

(The World Bank, 2019). It is anticipated that the central bank's inflation target rates of

6-10% would be maintained, although the fiscal deficit is earmarked to slip marginally

higher at the rate of 4.2% of GDP (The World Bank, 2019).

Despite some of the economic gains, significant challenges confront Ghana's

economy. These challenges include reining inflation in, strengthening the financial

sector, and lowering interest rates (The World Bank, 2018). According to analysts,

Ghana's economic management success would largely depend on the consolidation of

current fiscal efforts, domestic resource mobilization, expenditure control, more forward-

leaning expenditure planning, and successful economic stabilization, in the medium term

(The World Bank, 2018).

However, the World Bank notes that Ghana's fiscal consolidation can only be

sustained within the context of an expanding and highly diverse economic climate. One

of the major challenges facing Ghana's economy is the heavy reliance on primary

products, including cocoa, gold, and oil, which are all susceptible to wide volatility on

the international markets, a situation that creates some uncertainty in the control of

inflation, estimation of export receipts, and the targeting of domestic revenues. Ghana is

expected to also grapple with both domestic and international headwinds (African Development Bank (AfDB), 2019).

Domestically, the country must manage its public finance needs, estimated at being over 20% of GDP (AfDB, 2019). This difficult situation is further complicated by a high debt-to-GDP ratio that fell from 40.5% of GDP in 2017 to 38.6% in 2018. Locally, it is expected that private consumption would fall to about 4.9% of GDP in 2019, and further to about 3.5% in 2020. Externally, the huge dependence on the export of primary products leaves Ghana vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the international commodity markets (AfDB, 2019). Especially, possible declines in global oil prices could significantly curtail the country's export revenues. Other pressures include rising financing costs in its local and external markets, together with a weaker local currency, relative to the United States Dollar, and higher global bond yield rates (The World Bank, 2018).

Ghana's development paradox

Commentators have observed that Ghana's experience with neoliberalism over the past thirty years has been a mixed bag of fortune, comprising some sustained economic growth and reduced rates of poverty, but also marked by uneven regional distribution (Awanyo & Attua, 2016). This unequal distribution of development has tended to focus socioeconomic development in the historically favored parts of the country, located in the southern and the middle regions while leaving other parts of the country (located in the northern regions) in abject poverty.

Some scholars find this uneven pattern of development a paradox indicated in capitalism's tendency to focus development in the Greater Accra and the Ashanti Regions, while at the same time concentrating poverty in the northern regions of Ghana through the dispersal of capital investments and socioeconomic benefits, expressed in ways that deepen the existing unbalanced regional developments in Ghana (Awanyo & Attua, 2016).

The African Development Bank (AfDB, 2019) notes that although consistent bolstering of external demand for Ghana's primary products such as oil and cocoa could have some beneficial effects of boosting growth in the medium term. However, Ghana's history indicates that economic growth, based on revenues from the extractive industry, has failed to address growing inequality and job creation (AfDB, 2019). To help achieve a more balanced allocation of the nation's resources, six new administrative regions were added in February 2019, bringing the total number of regions in Ghana to 16 (see Figure 7 below).

Figure 7: New regional administration map of Ghana.
(Source: The Daily Graphic/Ghana Statistical Service)

Gender diversity in corporate Ghana

One of the development paradoxes in Ghana is the unequal representation and participation of women in management and the corporate sector in the country. This imbalance has been one of the contentions and advocations of the Executive Women Network (EWN), a coalition of some of the influential women corporate executives in the country.

The presence and participation of women in corporate and private leadership across Africa are rather limited, despite the men-to-women ratio across the Continent being 1:1 (The World Bank, 2016). Comprising over one-half of the nation's population, women play a significant role in economic activity in Ghana (IFC, 2018). Despite their significant demographic composition, most organizations in Ghana's formal sector and the boards of directors in the country lack gender balance, when it comes to women representation (Deloitte, 2015).

Since the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the centrality of gender diversity in the socio-economic transformation of Ghana has been in sharper focus. Attempts have been made in Ghana to mainstream gender equality in virtually all facets of national life. There have also been moves to better incorporate such notions into the country's legal framework, to guide attempts to address the perceived deeply rooted gender inequalities.

For instance, Article 17 of Ghana's 1992 constitution proscribes discrimination based on gender. Accordingly, the Affirmative Action Policy (AAP) of 1998 makes it imperative for a 40% quota of women's representation on all government and public boards.

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) was created by an Executive Instrument 1 (E.I. 1) in January 2013 as a successor to the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, with the primary responsibility for policy formulation, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation of gender, children and social protection issues within the context of the national development agenda (mogcsp.gov.gh). Some observers see such a specialized government ministry to be an important step in demonstrating the nation's resolve to promote, address, and achieve gender equity in every aspect of the nation (IFC, 2018).

The International Finance Corporation (IFC, 2018) found that although most corporations in Ghana's private and public sectors have some women representation, the proportion of women to men is still low, due largely to crippling professional challenges that women face, especially stemming directly from family responsibilities.

In 2015, the Government of Ghana launched a National Gender Policy (NGP) to help promote gender equality, and to "move the country towards, women's empowerment and livelihood, women's right and access to justice, women's leadership, and accountable government, among others" (IFC, 2018, p. 4). However, this policy was silent regarding the degree of gender diversity that corporate and private boards and management ought to achieve. At the organizational level, corporations have their policies and benchmarks for the extent of gender representation in executive management and on various boards of directors (IFC, 2018).

Notwithstanding this and other initiatives, the representation of women on the higher rungs of the corporate ladder in Ghana is rather stunted and shallow (Deloitte,

2015). In a recent baseline exploratory study into diversity in Ghanaian boardrooms that considered gender diversity – across sectors, ownership types, legal status, listing status, and several other organizational and board-level characteristics – to serve as empirical evidence to inform the framing of organizational and national policy, the IFC found that women are woefully underrepresented in the boards and C-suites in Ghana (IFC, 2018).

Even though the ideal is for organizations to have gender diversity, a majority (77.85%) of firms surveyed had no policies on gender whatsoever. A minuscule proportion of firms (5.7%) had such policies, with 16.46% not responding to these survey items. It emerged that despite the wide absence of gender policies in organizations in Ghana, some 72.15% of boards had some women representation, although the ratio of women to men was low, with diversity ranging between 20% and 30% (IFC, 2018).

The results indicate that about 86% of organizations in Ghana have no more than two women on their boards. Again, while only 6.33% had established some minimum thresholds for women on their boards, 75.95% did not have such minimum benchmarks, and 17.72% failed to provide valid responses to the survey items relating to such thresholds. It was found that just about 4.43% have a standard for women representation (IFC, 2018).

Gender diversity (operationalized as the proportion of women to the total board members) generally ranged from 7% and 25%. The number of women on boards ranged from one to six among firms sampled, with the highest frequency of the number of women on boards being one. The findings further revealed that 24.05% of the sampled boards are composed of only men (IFC, 2018). It also emerged that most women on

boards (49.37%) were non-executive directors and that only 6.49% of organizations have women as board chairpersons.

It was also learned that smaller firms were more likely to have higher gender diversity, relative to larger firms. Besides, younger firms were more likely to have high gender diversity than relatively older firms (IFC, 2018). Nongovernmental organizations and microfinance firms emerged as having higher gender diversity than other types of organizations in Ghana. Further, it appears that organizations in Ghana's financial services sector (banking, insurance, and pensions), except for the microfinance and the asset management industries, have relatively lower gender diversity (IFC, 2018).

Private/unlisted firms (firms not listed/traded on the Ghana Stock Exchange) showed higher gender diversity, compared with listed firms. Parastatal/State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) showed higher gender diversity, relative to other ownership types. Foreign firms did not score highly on gender diversity. Family-owned businesses showed higher gender diversity, compared with non-family businesses. Additional findings suggest that smaller boards have higher gender diversity than larger boards (IFC, 2018).

The study also indicated that organizations that do not combine CEO and board chair positions tended to have more women on their boards and that a greater proportion of independent boards tended to have less gender diversity. Businesses with women CEOs tended to have more women on their boards than businesses with men CEOs. Businesses with women board chairs also tended to have more women on their boards, compared with businesses with men board chairs (IFC, 2018).

How does the occupational gender inequality statistics in Ghana compare with evidence elsewhere in the world? Globally, women comprise a relatively smaller proportion in senior management positions, relative to their men counterparts (Cuberes & Teignier, 2015), with the ratio of women in senior positions ranging from 3% and 12%, while the percentage of men in senior management positions is relatively stable across regions (Ganguli et al. 2014; Jackson 2009). In Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, just one out of every twenty-six women can break the proverbial glass ceiling and make it to a senior management position, whereas one out of every six to nine men in the workforce gets to a senior management position (Jackson, 2009).

What is the influence of occupational gender diversity on firm performance? Recent studies have examined the influence that having women on corporate boards may have on the financial performance of companies, as a justification for boardroom gender policies. The evolving corpus of the empirical literature on the relationship between gender diversity and firm performance has yielded some mixed results (IFC, 2018).

Some studies have provided evidence of a positive relationship between gender diversity and firm performance (e.g. Christiansen 2016; Ganguli et al. 2014; Jackson, 2009). Fortune 500 companies have relatively more women on their boards of directors, a fact that has been correlated with better financial performance than companies with fewer than three women board directors (Jackson, 2009). Yet other researchers have found evidence, indicative of a negative relationship between gender diversity and firm performance (Boulouta, 2013; Hammad et al., 2012; Rodriguez-Dominguez et al., 2012), while some other scholars found no relationship at all between the two variables (Webber & Donahue, 2001).

Overall, the IFC's (2018) findings in Ghana suggest that there is a business case for having women on board because the cross-tabulations reveal that companies that perform better tend to have more gender-balanced boards. High-performing firms, based on return on assets (ROA), were associated with higher gender diversity than low-performing firms (IFC, 2018). However, for low-performing firms, based on return on equity (ROE), exhibited higher gender diversity than high-performing firms, but the difference was not significant.

Additionally, most of the high-performing firms exhibited gender diversity (IFC, 2018). In sales growth, high-performing firms were associated with higher gender diversity than low-performing firms. These findings provide support for the value-in-diversity or decision-making perspective that suggests a positive relationship between gender diversity and firm performance, taking into consideration the various factors that enhance decision making (IFC, 2018).

Cuberes and Teignier (2015) lament the negative impact of occupational gender inequality (or the lack of women representation in entrepreneurship and CEO positions), since when women suffer sexism, so does the entire economy. "Boards that are diverse in experience, skills, gender, age, and qualifications, have a positive effect on the quality of governance, and such boards often present a good indication of a well-run company" (IFC, 2018, p. v).

Social problems in Ghana and activist CEOs

Typical of most developing countries, Ghana faces several developmental and systemic challenges, socially, economically, politically, and environmentally. A recent

national socioeconomic and governance survey conducted by the public policy institute, the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) identified unemployment, poverty, unreliable energy, corruption (especially the political kind), poor education, poor infrastructure, and low income as the most crippling issues facing Ghanaians (ieagh.org). Other contemporary social problems include poor healthcare delivery, the low representation of women in the higher echelons of corporations, political militias and vigilantes, perceived economic mismanagement of the nation's resources, and illegal small-scale mining (popularly termed "Galamsey").

Within this context, a small corps of activist CEOs is emerging. Indications are that, since the dawn of the current democratic dispensation in Ghana in 1992, some CEOs in Ghana have taken public stances on diverse issues, including media freedom, corruption, social injustice, environmental degradation, corruption, and misguided political leadership.

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the Ghanaian context of the dissertation. It has painted a picture of the historical, political, socio-cultural, economic, and regulatory framework for corporate activism in Ghana. It also serves as a backdrop for the contemporary socio-economic, political, and environmental issues of the day that have been the focus of various activism campaigns of CEOs in the country. The next chapter discusses the various theories that provide the lens for approaching this dissertation.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical perspectives that undergird this dissertation. To build a foundation and set the stage for addressing the five formal research questions, this dissertation draws together several theoretical underpinnings. These theoretical research streams on which the investigation of the phenomenon of CEO activism in Ghana that this dissertation focuses on are: (i) notions of Caritas, Ubuntu philosophy and public relations; (ii) Africapitalism; (iii) postmodernism and selected postmodern values in public relations; and (iv) the concept of Corporate Social Advocacy (CSA).

Caritas, Ubuntu philosophy and Public Relations

Sometime in 2011, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) adopted what some scholars consider to be a "modern definition of public relations" when the apex association for the practice of public relations in America reimagined the definition of the practice as "a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics" (Corbett, 2012a; 2012b). According to some scholars, such a view of the discipline of public relations tended to stress the human social aspects and the imperative for an ethical bedrock for the practice of public relations (Tilson, 2009), since it highlights the community-preserving functions of the field for companies and institutions (PRSA, 2003).

The overall goal of public relations involves building and sustaining mutually beneficial relations between organizations and their key publics. While socially

responsible corporate behavior had traditionally been driven by strategic corporate self-interest, it is contended that it is essential for companies to "upgrade the quality of life in a community" (Tilson & Vance, 1985, p. 26). Other scholars have further suggested that while corporate social responsibility had usually been driven by the desire to uphold the social contract (Guth & Marsh, 2005), serving the greater social good does not have to be prompted or encouraged by the expectation of satisfying a corporate goal since good corporate citizenship could be an adequate reward in and of itself (Mescon & Tilson, 1987).

Caritas and Public Relations

Integral to this paradigm is the notion of Caritas, including such faith-inspired ideas as helpfulness, loving-kindness, charity, and benevolence that form part of the bedrock of many preferable socially responsible corporate social behaviors (Tilson, 2014). Caritas has also been described as including such attributes as "tolerance (respect for others, the practice of justice, reciprocity) and empathy including of its 'fruits' mercy or compassion, which is expressed in various corporal works (e.g. to tend to the sick, and feed the hungry)" (Tilson, 2014, p. 58).

Caritas is also regarded as an essential social commandment (Coe, 2004) and is considered a central element of virtue (Champion & Short, 2003). Thus, some leadership and communication studies have argued that acting according to Caritas (compassion) and nurturing the community and the environment was critical for engendering "trust, credibility and respect" (Oestreicher, 2011, p. 17).

"Caritas argues against notions of reciprocity and represents instead, a genuine commitment to the greater good with no obligation demanded from the recipient in return, contending that compassionate social behavior can simply be its own reward. As such Caritas, in and of itself represents a worldview beyond symmetrical/asymmetrical formulation, with its own set of defining presuppositions" (Tilson, 2014, p. 59).

Such notions have created some room for a covenantal model of strategic communications as a legitimate theoretical field of inquiry (Tilson, 2014), to serve authentic social ends deemed "desirable in its own right" such as "health, sanitation or justice" (Baker, 2002, pp. 197-199).

Tilson (2014) argues that the notion of Caritas serves as the basis for many efforts at relationship-building in many cultures across the globe, including traditional societies from the Mediterranean Crescent to Asia, the African subcontinent, and the Americas. Evidence abounds that in Africa and the Americas, traditional values of indigenous peoples show how philosophies that emanated from Caritas are employed in relationship and community-building, often with the active participation of ancestors, the environment, and traditional leaders, who are held to possess superhuman knowledge and blessings. Powerful people in such societies are positioned as representatives of the gods and are traditionally expected to attend to the welfare of the wider society.

Thus, Tilson (2014) suggests that such Caritas-inspired roots of social responsibility formed both early and contemporary strategic communication practices, "with forms of communication and relationship building that emphasize collective rather than individual interests, schools of thought that focus on good stewardship, and popular sentiment that defines public relations as essentially 'relating well with people'" (p. 64).

<u>Ubuntu philosophy and Public Relations</u>

Tilson (2014) argues that some early and traditional African cultures had shown

strong signs of social responsibility that predated when notions of social responsibility

became "… fashionable … in America and … Europe" (Buckle, 1999, p. 5). For

instance, such highly developed traditional philosophies of social responsibility made for

the common situation in Ghana where "there were no orphans or homeless people [and]

an elder [was] surrounded and cared for by a big family" (McKissack & McKissack,

1994, p. 37) and the Bantu people of East Africa having no pauper class because of an

effective mutual aid scheme (Huxley, 1933, as cited in Gunther, 1955).

Tilson (2014) further contends that similar values form the bedrock of the African

philosophy of *Ubuntuism*, as derived from the *isiZulu* term, Ubuntu, that literally means

"I am because of others," which underscore notions of community and social

collectivism (Blackenberg, 1999, as cited by Worthington, 2011, p. 611). Thus, de Beer

and Mersham (2004) argue that such philosophies of Ubuntu pervade every web and

tissue of "African forms of communication" that emphasize "community solidarity over

individualistic interests" (White, 2009, p. 220) and that in East African country of

Uganda where the Bantu people comprise the majority of the population size, "Public

Relations … is mostly understood … as 'relating well with people' … [and has] been in

existence from time immemorial as a cultural virtue" (Rensburg, as cited in Natifu &

Zikusooka, 2011, p. 215).

Other scholars have reported similar findings about several other African

societies, including the people of the Kingdom of Melle (present-day Mali), where the

kindness and fairness of the thirteenth-century ruler Sundiata Keita in dealing with elites

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and the poor alike has been on record (McKissack & Mckissack, 1994). Hammer (2006) has equally reported traditional notions of equity, diversity, inclusivity, and justice as some of the values advocated by Islamic societies, as seen in their efforts to promote women's rights and incorporate non-Muslims into largely Islamic societies.

The notion of Caritas and the Ubuntu philosophy serve as important lenses for examining the phenomenon of CEO activism because they comprise worldviews that value community and relationship building that privileges the authentic pursuit of the greater good. As observed by Tilson (2014), "the personal commitment of an individual in a position of authority can foster an organizational and a societal effort in favor of the general welfare regardless of cost or reward to the giver or institution" (Tilson, 2014, p. 69); especially when such motivations derive from spiritually grounded commitments to social justice "toward the common good, pro-social behavior is further encouraged and magnified" (p. 69).

As Haviland (1978) notes, such a compassion-based worldview is diametrically opposed to a self-centered, exclusively profit-oriented, and exploitative view of the world. Tilson (2014) suggests that such worldviews had the proclivity of challenging the traditional basis of defining members of an organization's strategic constituency mainly in terms of individuals and groups of living people only. Such notions favor multiple stakeholder perspectives, with the stretching of the idea of publics to include the welfare of the broader community, the physical as well as the non-material, and the environment, in ways that embraced "diversity in all its forms and effectively advocate for social responsibility around the world" (Tilson, 2014, p. 69).

Africapitalism and the CEO activism nexus

For decades, there have been strident discussions concerning the business-society relationship. Such efforts that have tended to reimagine the critical role of business in Africa's development have spawned the formulation of diverse concepts (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015). One such concept is Africapitalism, a notion that was coined by Nigerian businessman and economist Tony O. Elumelu (2012) to undergird the significant role of the private sector to the socio-economic development of the African continent.

According to Elumelu, the chairman of several corporations, including Heirs Holdings, the United Bank for Africa (UBA), Transcorp, and the Tony Elumelu Foundation, Africapitalism is an economic philosophy that highlights the leading role of Africa's private sector in the socio-economic development of the continent (Elumelu, 2012; Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF), 2019). This philosophy is a call for businesses to be innovative in getting involved in the business of social development by partnering governments, donors, and philanthropic organizations in the positive transformation of Africa (TEF, 2019).

It is expected that Africapitalism will "ultimately help businesses become more profitable as the communities they serve become well-off consumers, healthy and better-educated employees, and even entrepreneurs who go on to become suppliers and service providers" (TEF, 2019). Africapitalism is borne out of the enlightened self-interest of businesses since the success of business organizations in Africa is linked up with the progress and well-being of communities in which they operate (Elumelu, 2012).

It has been suggested that the significance of Africapitalism is accentuated by Africa's unfortunately long history of triggers of deep-seated underdevelopment, including colonialism, poor leadership and bad governance, crippling poverty, weak institutions, and distressed civil societies (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015). The centrality of Africapitalism is further heightened by Africa's developmental and governance challenges, and the view that the continent needs to employ a unique economic philosophy and business model for its own development.

This call rings truer, especially as efforts to kickstart Africa's development have been compounded by the multinational corporations, foreign governments, aid agencies, international non-governmental organizations, and international donors, many of whom have made Africa's development a booming business venture for their own gain (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015).

Especially, many multinational corporations in Africa have often found themselves implementing social intervention programs, as part of corporate social responsibility, most of which have failed to produce the desired currents of social development (see Idemudia, 2014). Thus, within the context of Africa's continued crisis of development in the face of the impotence of governments and the business sector to deliver much-needed social development (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015), some scholars have advocated for greater partnership among such actors as the state, business, and civil society (see Mirvins & Googins, 2018; Idemudia, 2014; Richey & Ponte, 2014).

Some have suggested that Africapitalism is reflective of African values of *Ubuntu* that hold that the ultimate purpose of corporations and their management is not to benefit only one group of people, nor is it for the gain of diverse collectivities of people (as

posited by stakeholder theory, for instance) (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015). Ubuntu philosophy asserts that the ultimate purpose of business is the benefit of the community and the greater good (Lutz, 2009; Norren, 2014).

Generally, Ubuntu values include (i) respect for the dignity of others, (ii) group solidarity, (iii) participation, (iv) sharing, (v) the spirit of harmony, and (vi) interdependency (Mbigi, 2007). Thus, Amaeshi & Idemudia (2015) suggest that Africapitalism is built on at least four Ubuntu values and senses regarding how the world ought to work, namely (i) a sense of progress and prosperity, (ii) a sense of parity, (iii) a sense of peace and harmony, and (iv) a sense of place and belongingness.

In reflecting Ubuntu (African traditional humanism) values, "Africapitalism implies the restoration of African-ness in capitalism, reflecting the economic and social practices implicit in African culture and tradition" (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015, p. 215). While not completely against self-prosperity and self-interest, Ubuntu places a burden on the rich to show communal relevance by helping to elevate others and the entire community (Littrell et al., 2013; Lutz, 2009; Karsten & Illa, 2005).

In Ubuntu philosophy, an individual's identity is inexorably linked up with the matrix of his/her society (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015), and that one's personal, economic and social value is directly proportional to one's ability to empower and liberate others (Mbigi, 2007). Thus, just like Caritas, the notion of Ubuntu-derived Africapitalism provides a backdrop for a corporate culture that conditions corporations to pursue sustainability by seeking their profitability, while also advancing social and environmental ideals (Lutz, 2009).

Africapitalism pursues a sense of progress and prosperity by focusing on achieving financial profitability together with social wealth, in ways that transcend material accumulation and includes the psychological and social welfare of all stakeholders (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015). This orientation seeks to promote the creation of both financial and social wealth. Thus, progress and prosperity are not conceptualized as the absence of poverty. Rather, they are seen holistically as referring to the creation and maintenance of a matrix of conditions for a fulfilling life for all in society, including good quality and accessible health, education, social capital, and strong and democratic institutions (Brundtland, 1994).

Secondly, Africapitalism involves a sense of parity, referring to the imperative of seeking social equity, inclusivity, and diversity, and ensuring that wealth accumulation and its distribution are equitable and fair to all parties (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015). In Africa, inequity has been described as "the new poverty," the absence of liberalism, and "the entrenchment of crony capitalism and corruption" (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015, p. 216). Africapitalism provides a ray of hope in curing these roots of poverty by promoting social inclusivity and equity and in advocating for corporations that seek to adopt a multiple stakeholder orientation.

Third, in seeking a sense of peace and harmony, it has been suggested that Africapitalism can help address the influence of the Schumpeterian drive for creative destruction, self-interest, and the never-ending bouts of struggles, competition, and contestations between places and spaces, generations, regimes, and in other spheres that have marked present-day capitalism (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015). This orientation advocates for the negation of contestations, conflicts, and struggles that characterize

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capitalism (Amaeshi, 2018). Africapitalism is in sync with the pursuit of the values of balance and harmony and drives for holistic human development. Africapitalism advocates for the creation of private wealth, but with due consideration of the production of social capital for all in a harmonious and balanced manner.

Finally, Africapitalism departs from the ideals of global capitalism, by embracing a sense of place and belongingness. Global capitalism takes place for granted, prioritizes cost, and encourages outsourcing and capital flight in the direction of cost minimization (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015); thus, "place is consumed" (p. 217). On the contrary, Africapitalism heightens a sense of rootedness and promotes a sense of *topophilia* (Tuan, 1977; 1974) by its linkage of people and place (Duncan & Duncan, 2001). This consciousness may be expressed in economic patriotism (seeking the development of one's community or homeland) (Clift & Woll, 2012) and the pursuit of national development (Audi, 2009).

Africapitalism actively advocates for the eager consideration of the African context in prescribing solutions to the continent's developmental challenges (Amaeshi, 2018). Thus, Africapitalism is also a reflection of corporate patriotism in which corporate behavior is oriented towards contributing to the welfare of citizens and the community while garnering support from stakeholders such as customers, the media, and others (Puncheva-Michelotti et al., 2014).

In tandem with tenets of postmodernism that reject meta-narratives, Amaeshi and Idemudia (2015) argue that Africapitalism is a linguistic project that questions conventional wisdom "and repositions the development of Africa in the world firmly as an indigenous project in which Africans will play significant, active roles" (p. 218); it is

"Capitalism by Africa-oriented entrepreneurs for Africa" (p. 219). These scholars see Africapitalism as a force for Africa's sustainable development that stresses the role of the emotions, sentiments, and actions of rational economic actors, including the entrepreneurs and corporate executives of Africa.

By entailing "doing good to do well" (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015, p. 218), Africapitalism is consistent with ideas such as corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship, the bottom of the pyramid, and the triple bottom line. Amaeshi and Idemudia (2015) however argue that Africapitalism is distinctive in that these cognate concepts seek to tackle some challenges of firm profit maximization but falling short of getting to the very heart of the problem, which other scholars have traced to the issue of individualism (Lutz, 2009).

Africapitalism addresses this issue head-on by casting the corporation as representing a community that evokes a sense of belonging in its members and other stakeholders, an attribute that concepts like Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) ignore (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015). Africapitalism's highlighting of the instrumentality of place and emotion in capitalism also position it as providing a transformative agenda for the role of corporations in Africa's development, and a clarion call for all people who share an emotional attachment with Africa. It is a "deceptively simple notion, but a powerful one that has the potential to remake a continent, and put Africa on an equal economic footing with the rest of the world … embodies a private-sector-led approach to solving some of Africa's most intractable development problems" (Amaeshi, 2018).

In my considered view, the phenomenon of CEO activism is an important expression of Africapitalism and post-modernism. CEO activism underlines

Africapitalistic calls on Africa's private sector to play active roles in the continent's socio-economic development. This trend is in keeping with Ubuntu values that enjoin the more powerful and successful people in society to care about and to work to empower the weaker segments of the community.

In Ghana, both men and women CEO activists engage in various forms of activism. CEOs have taken public stances on an increasing array of contentious issues within the contemporary Ghanaian society. Such issues have included the planned introduction of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in the elementary, junior high, and senior high schools in 2019, financial and economic crimes, political vigilantism, media freedom, public finance and economic mismanagement, educational reforms, among other issues.

While some CEOs in the country have engaged in solo activism campaigns, others have done so as a group. Present-day activists in Ghana include Charles Wereko-Brobbey (media freedom and plurality; national economic management); Kenneth Thompson (economic mismanagement of the national resources); David Ampofo (social injustice and political reforms), Emmanuel Awumee (youth empowerment); Dr. Kwesi Nduom (poverty alleviation, wealth creation, and jobs); and Kenneth Ashigbey (environmental protection). Kofi Bentil is CEO of law and business advisory firm, Lex Praxis. Bentil has been advocating for various civil rights issues, including the Right to Information Bill, better economic management, governmental transparency and accountability, and environmental conservation. Senyo Hosi, CEO of the Ghana Chamber of Bulk Oil Distributors (GCBOD) has been taking public stances on economic and social development matters in Ghana.

Some women have broken the glass ceiling and now serve as CEOs of diverse organizations in Ghana (IFC, 2018), and are playing activist roles as CEOs by mobilizing as individuals, but also as groups to challenge and change their socioeconomic and political situations (Badri & Tripp, 2017). These have included Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante (political party vigilantes and election-related violence).

Others are some leading members of diverse professional women's groupings, including the Executive Women Network (EWN), Women in Media (Ghana), Women in Broadcasting (WIB), and Women in Public Relations (Ghana). These professional women include Edith Dankwa (Group CEO of the Business & Financial Times Group), Lucy Quist (former CEO of telecommunications company Airtel Ghana, and founder and current CEO of business advisory firm Quist Blue Diamond), Patience Akyianu (former Managing Director of Barclays Bank Ghana, and currently the Group CEO of insurance group Hollard Ghana), Dzigbordi Dossoo (CEO of beauty and wellness group Allure Ghana).

Others are Yvette Atekpe (Regional Managing Director of Internet Solutions Ghana), Esther Cobbah (CEO of communications advisory firm StratCom Africa), Maidie Arkutu (Chairman & Managing Director, Unilever Francophone Africa), Pearl Esua-Mensah (CEO of the Ghana Deposit Protection Corporation, and President of Ashesi University Ghana), Dr. Joyce Aryee (former CEO of the Ghana Chamber of Mines), Fredua Duplan (former CEO of Nestle Ghana, and current CEO of Nestle Pakistan), and Sheila Minkah-Premo (Managing Consultant at Apex Lawconsult Ghana).

Oheneyere Gifty Anti, CEO of GDA Concepts, a media production company has been advocating for improved social protection and inclusivity in Ghana. For well over a

decade now, she has been producing and transmitting a television program called "The Stand-Point" that has become an advocacy platform for the vulnerable in the Ghanaian society.

These women are driven to empower women in Ghana to increase their influence and participation in Ghana, but also internationally. They work to influence and drive policy changes that increase the representation of women in senior leadership positions in Ghana while promoting women's rights in support of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal Five (5) on gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls.

Generally, these CEOs have seen the need to publicly speak up about diverse sociopolitical matters while seeking to drive change from their high perches atop the C-suite. Even when such activist CEOs in Ghana such as Kenneth Thompson weigh in on economic issues facing the nation, it appears that the objective is not only to help engender a more business-friendly economic system in Ghana but to see the government pursuing sound economic policies that would spur economic growth and produce better life chances and improved quality of life for the generality of Ghanaians.

These activist CEOs are motivated to seek the greater good. As the incidence of CEO activism may be new in most non-Western parts of the globe (Chatterji & Toffel, 2016), one can argue that the phenomenon may not be so new in Ghana since it may well be a modern re-expression of age-old elements of the Ghanaian/African cultural values. Could an effort to reminisce about such ancient African cultural traits effectively navigate us in the direction of a glorious future for CEO activism?

Postmodern values in strategic communications

Arguably, postmodernism provides an effective lens for describing, explaining, and predicting aspects of CEO activism. A postmodern view of corporate communications holds that corporate communication practitioners and other high-powered corporate executives will act as organizational and social activists (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002).

According to this perspective, corporate executives would exhibit some postmodern behavior that translates into one form of organizational activism or the other, including local and situational ethical decision making, a desire for change, the use of biopower to resist dominant power, a concern for the representation of the marginalized sections of society, and the practice of dissensus (Holzthausen & Voto, 2002; Holtzhausen, 2000).

Holtzhausen (2000) sounded a clarion call for a heightened involvement of public relations practitioners and members of the upper echelons of corporations in wider community activism. She argues that public relations practice – a field whose luster appears to be growing dim in some circles because of its perceived association with propaganda, manipulation, spin-doctoring, and outright lying – could become more ethical if practitioners and corporate executives could take activist stances inside and outside their organizations. Particularly, Holtzhausen (2000) equates the role of the postmodern philosopher with that of the public relations practitioner, in stressing the agency of communication practitioners to serve as change agents, articulate and give force to the conscience of their organization, and empower the marginalized in society.

Some scholars have expressed the view that postmodernism has sparked significant social changes in different forms of culture, state, politics, work organization, science, and technology (Boyne & Rottansi, 1990; Crook, Pakulski, & Waters, 1992; Featherstone, 1991; Lyotard, 1989). CEO activism may well be indicative of changes from the modernist view to the postmodern in how CEOs deal with some of the biggest and most contentious issues of the day.

To illustrate such shifts in the internal and external operating contexts of organizations, it would be apt to briefly recapitulate some philosophical differences between the *modern* and the *postmodern*, especially as they relate to corporate sociopolitical involvement. In general, the modernist approach to corporations prioritizes a management discourse by emphasizing corporate goals and objectives as given, legitimate, and the primary driver of every ebb and flow of corporate actions (Deetz, 2001).

Under the modernist view, every organizational action and function is gauged according to economic indices such as profitability, return on investment, contribution to shareholder value, and other "rational economic goals" (Deetz, 2001, p. 19). The mission of the modernist approach is also the creation and establishment of "an orderly, well-integrated world, with compliant members and regulated conflicts, (which) has accepted without examination organizational goals and member positions" (Deetz, 2001, p. 19).

The modernist view stresses the importance of the strategic management function, consensus-building, networks, power, strategic message development, systems approaches, functionalism, and total quality management (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002). This modernist view is the dominant paradigm in media and communication, strategic

management, public relations, and brand management. It is the mainstream approach to organizational studies in North America and most Western countries (Deetz, 2001; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Hatch, 1997; Miller, 2012), and seeks universal explanations, approaching "the status of natural laws" (Hatch, 1997, p. 44).

In response to the modernist focus on single dominant perspectives and metanarratives (Lyotard, 1988), postmodernism emphasizes that there is no central postmodern theory (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002). Postmodernism thrives in diversity, multiplicity, pastiches, assemblages, and bricolages by even critiquing its very own theoretical perspectives. To Lyotard, "Theories themselves are concealed narratives (and) we should not be taken by their claim to be valid for all times" (Lyotard, 1988, p. 126). Postmodernism is a unique discourse that highlights such issues as the nexus between knowledge and power, dissensus rather than consensus, and "micropolitical processes and the joined nature of power and resistance" (Deetz, 2001, p. 31).

Postmodern philosophy arose in France, especially from philosophers such as Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault, Baudrillard, Deleuze and Guattari, and Laclau and Mouffe. These philosophers provide an alternative lens through which society in general (Holtzhausen, 2000), and for the purposes of this dissertation, CEO activism could be analyzed. Such fresh perspectives would not only provide a different interpretation of the experiences of activist CEOs in Ghana but may well serve to contest some of the extant modernist accounts of CEO activism.

One of the areas in which postmodernism is impacting corporate communications is in the area of activism (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002), and Dozier and Lauzen (2000) believe that the action of corporate activists is generating fundamental changes in society

through "deconstruction and reconstruction of the social order" (p. 14) since corporate

activists are loyal to a cause, rather than to a particular organization. Holtzhausen (2000)

calls on corporate executives, particularly public relations practitioners to take activist

stances within their organizations (but also outside them), and "serve as the conscience of

the organization, and give voice to those without power" (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002, p.

60).

The poor image of some corporations can, in part, be attributable to modernist

expectations of corporations and top echelon behavior that runs counter to the realities of

the postmodern society (Banerjee, 2008; Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002). To Duggar (1989)

(as cited by Banerjee, 2008, p. 51) for instance: "In the corporate economies of the

contemporary West, the market is a passive institution. The active institution is the

corporation … and inherently narrow and shortsighted organization …. The corporation

has evolved to serve the interests of whoever controls it, at the expense of who[m]ever

does not." Thus, by serving the narrow interests of investors/shareholders, corporations,

their brands, and executives have been cited for greed, poor ethics, and diverse dubious

practices (Banerjee, 2008).

A postmodern lens would likely help to provide a different understanding of the

evolving role of CEOs in organizations as activists. Such perspectives would aid the

understanding of evolving social roles of organizations, and how CEOs are serving the

wider social interests as activists. Influenced by Holtzhausen (2000) and Holtzhausen and

Voto (2002), I argue that several postmodernist theoretical threads apply to this

dissertation. These are the notions of (i) organizational politics, (ii) micropolitics and

alliances, (iii) postmodern biopower, (iv) dissensus and dissymmetry, and (v) the

concepts of local and situational ethics and decision-making. The next sections discuss these postmodern concepts, including their perceived applicability to the phenomenon of CEO activism.

Organizational politics

According to Spicer (1997), when an organization is conceived of as a political system, power then becomes a critical resource. The concept of organizations as political actors focuses on strategic organizational relationships and linkages, strategic constituents, and alliances, as shaped by conflict, power, and resistance to or desire for change (Lyotard, 1992; Deetz, 1992).

Power perspectives in corporate communications highlight the need for corporate executives to seek to become part of the dominant coalition (Dozier et al., 1995). However, postmodern perspectives on corporate communication tend not to necessarily see corporate executives as aligning themselves with the interests of the dominant power centers in the organization (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002), such as shareholders, and boards of directors.

Members of the top echelons of organizations, working as activists, will thus tend to "resist authoritative, organizational power structures even when they themselves are part of the dominant coalition" (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002, p. 61). They will use other sources of power, such as personal characteristics, expertise, and opportunity to obtain power and drive for positive change (Williams, 1998). While the normal direction of authoritative power in organizations is downwards, postmodern power is multidirectional

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(Hatch, 1997; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006), including serving the needs of multiple stakeholders (Ofori-Parku, 2015).

<u>Micropolitics and alliances</u>

Power at the macro-level is fed only by power networks at the micro-level that work in ways to support micropolitics (Foucault, 1980; Best & Kellner, 1991;). Thus, political actors who strive for power for positive change must seek to first build their power bases by forming alliances at the micro-level (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002; Baudrillard, 1975).

The postmodern view that micropolitics is built on the pillars of micro-political power bases could be instrumental to our understanding of CEO activism. Modernist power permeates every web and tissue of society and micropolitical power, including the family, educational institutions, religious systems, business, and state organizations (Althusser, 1971; Foucault, 1980; Deleuze & Guattari, 1983).

To give some fighting chances for their advocacy campaigns, corporate executives must first seek out and identify zones of micro-political power within their organizations, form alliances and coalitions with like-minded people and groups who can assist them in their activism campaigns, and thus be influential within their organizations, but also externally (Spicer, 1997).

Chatterji and Toffel (2018) suggest that activist CEOs should consult their executive teams, including chief communication officers. Such a "kitchen cabinet" should help decide on what matters to them and why, reflect on when to weigh in, agree on campaign tactics, perform vulnerability audits, decide on messaging strategy, and

debriefing. Forming alliances with external coalitions, but also internally with other

organizational functions such as research and development, finance and accounting,

human resources, and strategic planning (Hatch, 1997; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006) could be

a typical postmodern CEO activist behavior.

Postmodern biopower

Organizational power play depends on the inner power, or biopower, of the

individual to feel empowered to resist subjugation and social injustice (Holtzhausen &

Voto, 2002), based on the conception of the individual as a conscious participant, imbued

with the power to oppose micropower (Foucault, 1988a, 1988b; Lyotard, 1993a). In

postmodernism, power is innately regarded as being for positive ends, but such power

must be biopower that is employed to resist the dominating genres of power (Holtzhausen

& Voto, 2002).

The centrality of the purpose of power in organizations to be employed to resist

marginalization of sections of society emanates from the postmodern philosophy that

domination is perpetuated when people come to accept as routine their subjugation and

domination by power (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002).

Resistance to the marginalizing tendencies of the society by activist CEOs, I

believe, could explain this postmodern behavior of CEOs. Such postmodern CEO

activists could well be working to get their organizations and the dominant/modernist

power centers within them to become activists by resisting the deleterious exercise of

power in society in general.

> Organizations that take on government policies that harm the environment or take
> a stand on behalf of marginalized social groups will be a typical example of such

activism. Perhaps, the best-known example is the international Benetton Group with its outspoken stance on issues such as the death penalty (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002, p. 63).

Dissensus and dissymmetry

Dissensus and dissymmetry have been cited as significant sources and drivers of change that can generate innovative ideas and creative solutions to social problems (Docherty, 1993; Lyotard, 1992, 1993a). Consensus yields diverse forms of social injustice since it is bourgeoise that determines the outcomes of consensus (Lyotard, 1988). By working for the status quo and consensus, corporate executives who choose not to engage in corporate activism would only be working to reaffirm the position of the powerful (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002).

Innovativeness and creativity are the fruits of dissensus (Lyotard, 1992), generated through "tensors" (Lyotard, 1993b, p. 54), events that entail dissenting voices. Thus, the postmodern communications and other corporate executives would exercise dissensus by identifying tensors/points of discord or dissonance between their organizations (mission, vision, values, and related world views) and the internal and external strategic stakeholders (Holtzhausen, 2000). This way, corporate executives could engender the creation and promotion of "situations in which new meaning is produced through difference and opposition" (p. 107).

Local and situational ethics and decision-making

Their modus operandi is for postmodernists to oppose philosophical and theoretical metanarratives (Lyotard, 1992) while pushing for instant action for a new social order (Foucault, 1980; Eribon, 1991; Williams, 1998). Postmodernists oppose

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metanarratives and "foundations" (Deetz, 2001, p.34) because it is the ideology and hegemony of dominant power structures, that serve to entrench, routinize, and legitimize bourgeoise privileged positions of the that are unjust to those living on the margins of society such as women and ethnic minorities (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002).

By immediate action, Foucault (1980) and Lyotard (1984) serve to indicate that the local situation determines the best and most humane course of action. Both Foucault and Lyotard advocate for immediate individual anti-establishment action, in favor of ethically responsible moves (Küng, 1992). Postmodernist ethical decision making is sympathetic to "particularism", based on the complexities and contingencies of specific situations, rather than on the "universalism" and the standard of social norms of right and wrong (Alder, 1997, p. 59). This is because social norms are usually unjust and only privilege the powerful in society.

Towards a postmodern communicology of CEO activism

Against this theoretical background, this dissertation is aiming to extend the postmodern organizational activist perspectives of Holtzhausen (2000) and Holtzhausen and Voto (2002) in helping profile the postmodern CEO as a distinctive organizational archetype.

This study examines whether activist CEOs are serving as the conscience of their organizations (as well as of their personal brands) by resisting dominant power structures (especially when such structures are unjust and do not promote diversity and social inclusivity), and preferences employees and external stakeholders' discourses over that of their organizations and investors.

Activist CEOs could be expected to make the most humane decisions regarding their advocacies, given the specifics of the situation, and they would promote new ways of thinking and solving problems through overt dissensus and conflict, while contributing to a culture of free and frank communication, liberation and emancipation inside and outside of their organizations.

Corporate Social Advocacy (CSA)

Activism entails efforts by social actors and institutions to promote, impede or direct sociopolitical, economic, and environmental reforms or stasis, to improve society (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017). Activism is essentially the process of exerting political pressure to change policies (Smith, 2013), and campaigning for change regarding sociopolitical issues (Council of Europe, 2017). Activism involves various tactics, including letters to politicians and the media, political campaigns, rallies, marches, strikes, sit-ins, and even economic boycotts, etc. (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017).

Wettstein and Baur (2016) note that etymologically, advocacy is based on the past participle of the Latin verb *advocare*, referring to a call on others for help. They further note that it is "also contained in the term is the Latin word for voice (vox)" (p. 200). In effect, *advocacy* involves an act of promoting and voicing support for an individual, organization, or idea, and working to persuade others to embrace such individuals, organizations, or ideas (Edgett, 2002). Thus, by extension, corporate political advocacy entails a corporation voicing and making explicit public support for an individual, organization, or idea, to persuade others to do the same (Wettstein & Baur, 2016).

In their effort to capture the evolving nature of corporate activism, Dodd and Supa (2014) took a sociological path, apparently to reflect socio-cultural hues and flavors of present-day corporate activism. Dodd and Supa (2014; 2015) conceptualize corporate social advocacy (see Figure 8 below) as organizational stances on sociopolitical issues. Brands such as Ford, Microsoft, Starbucks, Barilla, and Chick-fil-A have engaged in corporate social advocacy (Dodd & Supa, 2014). For instance, companies and their leaders have taken public stances on such issues as gay marriage, healthcare reform, and emergency contraception.
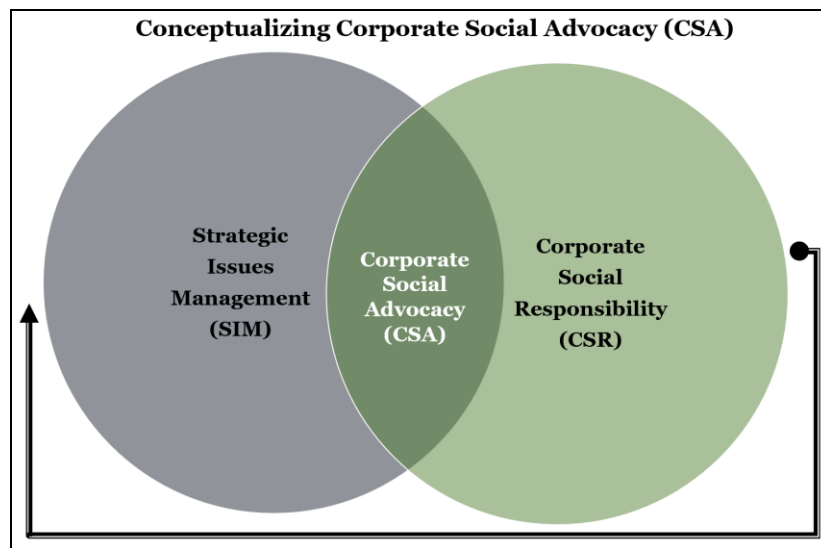
Figure 8: Dodd and Supa's (2014) conceptualization of
Corporate Social Advocacy.

Strategic Issues Management (SIM) is described as an agglomeration of diverse organizational roles and functions and a culture of social responsibility, including management and leadership roles such as strategic business planning, monitoring of strategic risk issues, high-end corporate responsibility, and two-way corporate communications that converge to produce and maintain an organizational context in

which trust, care, support and commitment between an organization and stakeholders could be affected by the organization's activities (Heath & Palenchar, 2009).

Strategic Issues Management is driven by the notion of organizational legitimacy that entails standards for considering whether the actions of an entity are acceptable or in tune with social values and norms (Suchman, 1995). Thus, Strategic Issues Management serves to ensure that organizational behaviors are perceived by stakeholders to be legitimate or acceptable, within the context of social norms, expectations, and values (Dodd & Supa, 2014).

In broad strokes, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) concerns an organization "incurring responsibilities to society beyond profit maximization" (Pava & Krausz, 1995, p. 1), including "the voluntary actions that a corporation implements as it pursues its mission and fulfills its perceived obligations to stakeholders, including employees, communities, the environment, and society as a whole" (Coombs & Holladay, 2012, p. 8).

Some scholars have conceptualized Corporate Social Advocacy (CSA) as falling within Strategic Issues Management (SIM) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (see Figure 8 above) because the issues are directly unrelated to the financial bottom line and that such corporate engagements are controversial and polarizing while attracting other social activists (Dodd & Supa, 2014). Whether such stances are planned as part of corporate communications, or not (as in when a CEO speaks off-the-cuff in a media interview), the outcome is the public perception that the corporation is linked in some way to the issue in question (Dodd, 2016; Park & Berger, 2004).

It stands to reason that corporate social advocacy may be spearheaded by several corporate actors, including corporations as such (corporate activism), CEOs (CEO activism), shareholders (shareholder/investor activism), brands (brand activism), and other corporate executives (see Figure 9 below). Thus, the literature on corporate activism/advocacy contains at least these notable labels/classifications.

Taxonomy of Agency-Defined Corporate Activism/Advocacy
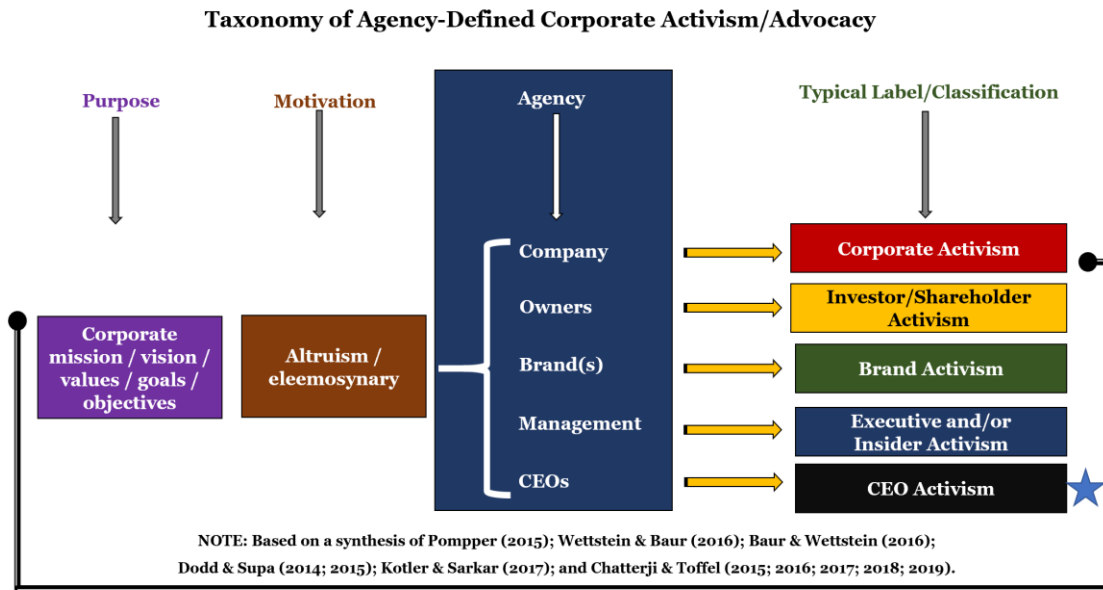
Figure 9: Taxonomy of agency-defined Corporate Activism.

Dodd and Supa (2014) make a case for corporate social advocacy as a legitimate field of scholarly inquiry within strategic communications generally, but specifically within issues management and corporate social responsibility in several ways. They argue for instance that the sociopolitical issues addressed by organizations are divorced from issues of relevance to the organization's operations and direct financial performance. They also note that engagement in such sociopolitical issues is controversial and serves to potentially isolate stakeholders, while simultaneously attracting activist groups.

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Finally, it is noted that there is an emphasis on financial outcomes for the organization. Just like corporate social responsibility, corporate social advocacy could produce tangible organizational outcomes (Dodd & Supa, 2014; 2015), and have profound impacts on public policy and consumer behaviors (Dodd, 2016). Thus, it is important to investigate the impact on company financial performances, of engaging in corporate social advocacy (Dodd & Supa, 2014).

In mapping out a possible future research agenda within the field of corporate social advocacy, Dodd and Supa (2014) note that various research methods – including the case study method, surveys, and experimental methods – could be employed in the analysis of pathways in which various stakeholders are impacted by such public organizational stances, based on diverse variables. This dissertation responds to this call by these scholars in seeking to make an important scholarly contribution by examining the wide-ranging effects of CEO activism on various stakeholders.

Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the four main theoretical perspectives that serve as the pillars for this dissertation on CEO activism. These theoretical streams are (i) the notions of Caritas, Ubuntu philosophy, and public relations practice; (ii) Africapitalism and CEO activism; (iii) perspectives on postmodern values in public relations; and (iv) corporate social advocacy. The next chapter presents a review of related studies. It ends with a presentation of a conceptual framework on CEO activism development, and a formal statement of the research questions of this dissertation.

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature on corporate social advocacy. This includes discussions of several concepts that are related to corporate social advocacy. Important similarities and distinctions among the several concepts are examined, noting especially why the differences should matter to both scholars and practitioners. Some of the cognate concepts discussed are Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Political Corporate Social Responsibility (PCSR), Corporate Political Activity (CPA), Brand Responsibility (BR), and Brand Activism (BA), and CEO activism. The main thrust of this chapter however is a presentation of relevant studies on CEO activism. The chapter ends with a presentation of the conceptual framework - in the form of a process model - for CEO activist development, and the formal statement of the research questions that undergird this dissertation.

Corporate sociopolitical involvement

Historically, corporations and their brands have sought to gain competitive advantage and market dominance based purely on brand performance and the ability to exceed customer expectations (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017). However, owing to the fierce competitive clime in most markets, brand performance is no longer enough to assure a competitive advantage (Sarkar, 2019).

Traditional brand positioning strategies have become increasingly ineffective, due to several present-day market imperatives and factors, including higher concerns and expectations of significant market segments, such as Millennials and members of

Generation Z. These sections of the population have strongly held concerns and worries

regarding the world's biggest and most pressing problems, such as pollution, social

inequality, climate change, and social injustice (Sarkar, 2019).

Indications are that present-day consumers are displaying a higher expectation of

corporations (Cronin, 2018). While expecting corporations to deliver good products and

services on the way to recording profits, consumers also now expect corporations to do

much more than make consistent profits and returns for investors (Weber Shandwick,

2016; 2017). There is a greater realization among corporations, governments, states, the

civil society, and market segments of the need for corporations to maintain a careful

balance between the profit maximization maxim with optimization of returns for people

and the planet, as expressed in notions of the Triple Bottom Line (Savitz, 2013). Linked

to these are concerns for sustainable business practices, the need for corporations to

achieve and maintain societal consent and legitimacy (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017).

Besides, in many societies the world over, there is a growing gap between the

promises of governments and their ability to deliver much needed social services (Cronin,

2018). Most consumers expect corporations, their brands, and leaders to step up to the

plate and fill this democratic gap/deficit, by taking up issue with some of the most

important social, political and environmental issues of the day (Cronin, 2018). Thus,

customer segments such as Millennials are protesting online, and through street marches

about many social issues (Valencia & Jones, 2018).

In the past, corporations could select which CSR programs to undertake.

Nowadays, companies cannot afford to stand aloof or have the exclusive right to decide

what social matters to stand for (Sarkar, 2019). The polarized political environment is

creating opportunities for others besides politicians, pressure groups, civil society organizations, and advocacy groups to fill the democratic gap, by showing leadership on the big issues of the day (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017).

Corporate sociopolitical involvement presents itself in various hues and flavors. One of the least studied forms of corporate social advocacy is CEO activism. While CEO activism is mainly confined to the United States, it is expected to go global (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018). Weber Shandwick (2016) noted that more CEOs were taking public stances on societal issues that were not overtly tied to the financial bottom lines of their corporations.

A sizeable section of Americans (47%) believe that CEOs have a duty and a responsibility to speak out on contentious issues, despite the risks (and in view of the rewards) of weighing in on such issues (Weber Shandwick, 2017). Nearly 60% of Millennials think that business leaders have a greater responsibility to speak now than in years past regarding issues of wider social significance (Weber Shandwick, 2017).

Some examples of CEO activists are Lloyd Blankfein of Goldman Sachs, Jim Rogers of Duke Energy, and Eric Schmidt of Google (Chatterji & Toffel, 2015). Others have included Angie's List's CEO William Oesterle, and Dan T. Cathy of Chick-fil-A (Chatterji & Toffel, 2016). These CEOs and several others have become exemplars of corporate chieftains who have taken public stands on hot button social and environmental issues (Weber Shandwick, 2016; Chatterji & Toffel 2016).

Americans are overwhelmingly supportive of corporate political involvement, with 88% of respondents agreeing that corporations have the power and responsibility to

influence social change, and 78% agreeing that companies should act to address important issues facing society (Global Strategy Group, 2016).

<u>Corporate sociopolitical issues</u>

Nalick et al. (2016) conceptualized sociopolitical issues as "… salient unresolved matters on which societal and institutional opinion is split, thus potentially engendering acrimonious debate across groups" (Nalick et al., 2016, p. 386). Such sociopolitical issues are characterized by several elements. Usually, there is the lack of societal consensus because such issues border on "contentious unsettled social matters on which opinions are split between 'for' and 'against' camps" (Nalick et al., 2016, p. 386).

Thus, sociopolitical matters are some of the most controversial issues and sensitive topics of the day that threaten the social, religious, economic, ethnic, partisan, or some historical sociocultural or geopolitical order (Haidar-Markel & Meier, 1996). Secondly, sociopolitical issues are characterized by low information rationality, as information asymmetry and low information structures tend to curtail credible information and reasoning about the positionalities of the contesting camps, relative to the issue (Nalick et al., 2016). Finally, sociopolitical issues are marked by evolving viewpoints and issue salience.

Some scholars have conceptualized corporations, their executives, and the brands in the corporate stable as having the capacity for engaging in activism (Hillman et al., 2004). Thus, there is a slowly increasing corps of scholarly work that focuses on profit-seeking corporations now seeking to serve multiple stakeholder interests, by engaging in one form of activism or another (Nalick et al., 2016) on political issues (Wettstein &

Baur, 2016; Baur & Wettstein, 2016), social issues (Dodd & Supa, 2014; 2015; Dodd, 2016), and environmental issues (Moscato, 2016; Ofori-Parku, 2015). For instance, Ben and Jerry's took a public stance on the issue of gay marriage, based on its core brand purpose and belief in social justice. There have been similar trends in the environmental realm, where corporations have been proactive and vociferous in campaigning regarding damming (Moscato, 2016), climate change (Moscato, 2018), and oil production (Ofori-Parku, 2015).

Thus, the field of corporate sociopolitical involvement is fast emerging as a legitimate field of scholarly inquiry, spawning several conceptualizations (Wettstein & Baur, 2016). Sections of the management, business ethics, and public relations literature have been seeking to conceptualize corporate sociopolitical involvement. Wettstein and Baur (2016), for instance, distinguished between corporate political activity and corporate political advocacy, based on three criteria: (i) whether the issue involves corporate strategic self-interest or eleemosynary/altruism; (ii) the nature of the outcome or consequence of the issue championed by the corporations; and (iii) the nature of profiling by the corporation, relative to the issue. Although corporate political activity and corporate political advocacy may not always be present in their conceptually pure states, however, for scholarly analysis, Wettstein & Baur (2016) treated them in their conceptually sacrosanct states, to be able to highlight their similarities and differences.

The notion of corporate political activity is said to have emerged in the management literature in the 1980s, focusing on corporate strategies to shape and influence government and/state policies, solely to help advance the realization of corporate goals (Keim & Zethaml, 1986; Hillman et al., 2004). Corporate political

activity involves diverse strategies such as constituency building, targeted campaign

contributions, advocacy ads, lobbying, and coalition building (Keim & Zethaml, 1986).

Thus, corporate political activity is generally characterized by corporations taking a

stand, based on strategic/enlightened self-interest (Wettstein & Baur, 2016). The goal

remains the creation, maintenance, and extension of private corporate value, rather than

achieving public value for society.

The idea of corporate political activity entails forms of lobbying, including

classical lobbying, ethical lobbying, and lobbying for social good (Wettstein & Baur,

2016). Classical lobbying entails attempts by corporations to influence government

policy and regulations, in ways that could favor their business operations (Baur &

Wettstein, 2016). Such classical lobbying may be pursued irrespective of, or even against,

the public interest.

The primary driver is the imperative of the corporation's economic self-interest,

thereby establishing firm links between the subject-matter of lobbying and the

corporation's core business (Scherer et al., 2013). Even when classical lobbying leads to

win-win results for diverse stakeholders, the basic driver tends to be the pursuit of

corporate private value. Again, lobbying occurs behind closed doors and lacks the public

voice, action, and advocacy element (Wettstein & Baur, 2016, Ciszek & Logan, 2018).

Classical lobbying is reminiscent of lobbying to win by any means possible. Thus,

classical lobbying is generally associated with the abuse of power by corporations,

especially when corporations adopt any means to achieve the goals of lobbying

(Wettstein & Baur, 2016). Thus, sometimes, ethical lobbying is sometimes advocated for,

in terms of the promotion of morally sound methods and principles, including such notions as good faith, truth, honesty, integrity, respect, and transparency (Stark, 2010).

"Lobbying for good" aims to extend the morally sound principles and approaches of ethical lobbying, by focusing on the very underlying purposes and goals of lobbying (Peterson & Pfitzer, 2009). Lobbying for good rejects pure corporate self-interest by pushing for the promotion of causes that also serve the wider social good and the rights of multiple stakeholders (Wettstein & Baur, 2016). Still, lobbying for good is held to be undertaken, not exclusively for social good, but also for the corporate strategic interest. Thus, lobbying in all its manifestations – whether classical, ethical, or *for good* – is fundamentally always tinged with the pursuit of corporate private value (Wettstein & Baur, 2016).

In conceptualizing corporate political advocacy, Wettstein & Baur (2016) and Baur and Wettstein (2016) suggest that it is a distinctive form of corporate political involvement that differs from corporate political activity and political corporate social responsibility (PCSR). Corporate political advocacy is unique because it is a voluntary and proactive corporate behavior that is focused on and driven by corporate values/purpose and relies on overt public advocacy (not the classical lobbying tactics that occur privately behind closed doors).

The corporation in corporate political advocacy promotes causes and issues that are not directly linked to its economic interests. The causes promoted by the corporation are for their inherent or intrinsic value, such as social justice. Again, corporate political advocacy occurs outside the formal political channels, and rather in the media and public

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domain. Owing to its distinctiveness, corporate political advocacy presents conceptual, normative, and practical challenges.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) involves organizations assuming some level of responsibility for society, in ways that extend beyond their narrow profit maximization maxim (Pava & Krausz, 1995). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has undergone some ambiguity and ambivalence in the academic and professional literature (Dahlsrud, 2008). Despite the various semantic shifts, CSR is generally linked to the confluence of social and environmental responsibility within business operations and economic models (Moscato, 2016).

Davis (1973) conceptualized CSR in terms of an organization's consideration of, and response to, issues that extend beyond the limited economic, technical, and legal requirements of the firm, designed to enable the corporation to obtain social and environmental dividends, alongside their commitment to the usual economic profits that corporations seek in their operations. Thus, CSR entails corporate commitment to contribute to economic development, while improving the quality of life of employees, the environment, and society (Pompper, 2015).

Some scholars conceive of CSR as arising partly because of corporations whose success is directly linked to the health and well-being of communities and the environments within the immediate catchment areas of their operations, such as mining and oil companies (Moscato, 2016). Thus, such companies seek to implement diverse

CSR programs, including good-paying jobs for locals, infrastructure, educational and recreational amenities, while committing to long-term sustainability.

While remaining an enduring business activity, formal articulations of business responsibility to multiple stakeholders are relatively new (Carroll, 1999). Increased public awareness of CSR activity is positively correlated to increased purchase intentions and a favorable corporate reputation (Wigley, 2008). Owing to its centrality to many organizational outcomes, CSR is sometimes seen as a route for a greater management role for public relations and corporate communications practitioners (Coombs & Holladay, 2009; 2012).

Social responsibility describes strategies and tactics aimed at ensuring that an organization (i) recognizes that it has linkages with multiple stakeholders, (ii) becomes aware of the economic, social, and environmental impacts of its operations and activities on members of its strategic constituency, (iii) manages the wider impacts of organizations on society and the environment, with the view to serving the greater good (beyond the limited interests of owners and investors) (Pompper, 2015).

The terms "social responsibility" and "sustainability" have become core concepts in the lexicon of modern strategic communication because of the realization that organizations have multiple stakeholders, who have interests that may run counter to those of owners, investors, or shareholders (Coombs & Holladay, 2009; Ofori-Parku, 2015). Corporations are therefore required to operate according to higher demands than economic and legal requirements (Carroll, 1999).

In effect, social responsibility considers an organization's duty to help address such concerns as poverty eradication, climate change, promotion of human rights,

employee health, and safety concerns (Coombs & Holladay, 2009). Social responsibility

has been described as "the management of actions designed to affect an organization's

impacts on society" (Coombs & Holladay, 2009, p. 94). Corporate social responsibility

denotes the worldview that an organization has strategic linkages with a host of

stakeholders who are affected by, and whose actions can also impact on the

organization's ability to realize its objectives. Thus, beyond the economic responsibilities

and obligations that an organization has towards its owners regarding financial

performance, corporations must also recognize their duties to the environment and

society at large (Coombs & Holladay, 2009).

Generally, there are two main classes of motivations for corporations to engage in

CSR (Pompper, 2015). The first class of motivation involves strategic drivers, linked

directly to corporate objectives and private self-interests/enlightened self-interests. These

include the cultivation of loyal employees, improved market shares, profitability, etc. The

second motivation for engaging in CSR is altruism and related purpose-driven factors that

are linked to catering to the greater social good.

Debates over CSR have been polarizing (Moscato, 2016; 2018). Friedman (1970)

argues that the social responsibility of corporations is profit, and to increase corporate

profitability (Friedman, 2007). Kolstad (2007) also argues that social responsibility falls

outside the profitability equation. Proponents of CSR point to some good business cases

and links between CSR and the financial motives and incentives of corporations

(Pompper, 2015).

Some scholars conceptualize CSR as a pyramid, with economic responsibility to

investors as the base and the business imperative, serving as the imperative foundation of

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the corporation, before other goals (Carroll, 1999). Thus, despite the oft-cited social good of altruistic CSR, financial performance tends to be the ultimate criterion for evaluation and effectiveness (Dodd & Supa, 2014).

Related to "social responsibility" is the notion of "sustainability." Sustainability extends the idea of social responsibility in demanding that organizations secure their long-term viability by balancing the need to maximize profit for investors, with the need to positively impact employees, society, and the environment (Savitz, 2013).

The concept of sustainability thus seeks to align the competing interests of the plurality of members of an organization's strategic constituency. The goal is not to prioritize the profit-maximizing orientation, to the neglect of social and environmental interests (Savitz, 2013). To be sustainable, organizations must be externally focused in terms of securing the environment by creating environmental prosperity, promoting the welfare of people by creating social prosperity while remaining internally focused by way of securing its longevity and financial performance by creating economic prosperity for its owners (Savitz, 2013).

Sustainability focuses on ensuring prosperity for the organization, the environment, and the society at large. It differs from corporate philanthropy in requiring organizations to be profitable while supporting prosperity for society and the environment (Savitz, 2013). The belief is that pursuing environmental and social prosperity can fuel an organization's financial viability, hence the notion of the Triple Bottom Line (Savitz, 2013, p. 45). The goal is to identify a "sweet spot," the strategic overlap between a firm's business interests and its social and environmental interests (Savitz, 2013).

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Some scholars suggest that CSR has fallen below wider social expectations in positively impacting society and the environment since it is primarily employed as a tool for the preservation of private firm value for investors (Sarkar, 2018). CSR is partly influenced by notions of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) the sustainability framework envisioned by John Elkington (Elkington, 1999). Elkington had argued that rather than pursuing a single financial bottom line that privileges investors/owners, corporations should pursue three different bottom lines for (i) people (society/societal responsibility), (ii) planet (environmental sustainability), and (iii) profits (financial performance). Thus, Elkington's TBL measures the overall responsibility and sustainability of an organization's operations over a period.

Elkington's TBL was originally positioned as a triple helix of positive change for corporations and capitalism, through the production of meaningfully desirable outcomes for people (society), the planet (environment), and profit. Elkington recently "recalled" or disowned his own Triple Bottom Line framework in utter disappointment (Elkington, 2018), as CSR is often diluted by wider corporate self-interests and private profit priorities, without due concern for people and the planet (Sarkar, 2018).

Thus, CSR is not without its critics (Moscato, 2016). Some scholars challenge the plausibility of the argument that rises in industrial productivity (even with sustainable methods) can reduce current and future ecological externalities and negative social impacts (Foster, 2000). Again, CSR tends to preempt and circumvent democratic pressures for the environmental regulation and public scrutiny of corporations, while fostering environmental degradation (Enoch, 2007).

Besides, CSR faces several marketing-oriented strictures, linked to perceptions that CSR is merely a corporate veneer and strategy for deception and corporate hypocrisy, designed to mask organizational self-interest (Pompper, 2015). One of these criticisms is termed *"greenwashing,"* referring to the tendency to promotional overhype of corporate environmental commitments and credentials (Sheehan & Atkinson, 2012). There is another critique of CSR as *"pinkwashing,"* a marketing strategy that describes corporations and charities claiming to care about women's health issues such as breast cancer, even when those corporations and brands may, in fact, be directly associated with the causation of these diseases (McVeigh, 2012).

Others see CSR only as *"bluewashing,"* the corporate proclivity to tout real or perceived partnerships with the United Nations Organization or any of its agencies or a brand's resolve to abide by the UN Global Compact, and profiting from such an image for promotional and economic gain by presenting a humanitarian image (Pompper, 2015). Still, some trend-watchers continue to identify and write about ever-evolving forms of inauthentic shows of corporate responsibility, contrived public relations stunts, and shady marketing-oriented brand associations.

While increasing numbers of consumers expect companies to genuinely help address societal and environmental issues, it has also been found that there is growing skepticism among customers about the social/environmental credentials of companies (Sheehan, 2019). Especially, customers are suspicious of the partnerships of some companies and brands with social movements, aimed at addressing issues concerning vulnerable groups in society, accusing such companies of an inauthentic form of public relations and brand communication termed *"wokewashing"* (Sheehan, 2019).

Wokewashing could be described as situations when a corporation, institution, or individual inauthentically promotes a cause by saying or doing something that signals its advocacy for a marginalized cause, just for show, publicity value, or some other hidden capitalistic rationale (Sheehan, 2019). Some analysts have cited instances where some companies and brands could only be seeking to catch a piece of a cultural moment, or even causing harm to the very vulnerable communities they purport to be supporting in their communications or advocacy (Adams, 2019).

Political Corporate Social Responsibility (PCSR) conceptualizes corporations as veritable political actors while stressing the role and responsibility of organizations in alternative forms of governments within the para-constitutional domain, such as public-policy networks and multi-stakeholder initiatives (Baur, 2011). Thus, it stands to reason that political CSR is more focused and narrower than corporate political activity. Although PCSR may completely occur within "lobbying for good," it is implemented in the constitutional and para-constitutional sphere (Wettstein & Baur, 2016). The main similarity between PCSR and corporate political activity is still the primary motive of serving the corporate private good, with the greater social good being an incidental add-on.

Brand Activism and Brand Responsibility

Moscato (2016) suggests that the lines between CSR and brand activism are blurring, as exemplified by the *DamNation* campaign of the adventure brand Patagonia. However, Kotler and Sarkar (2017) disagree, pointing instead to a shift from CSR to brand activism.

Kotler and Sarkar (2017) place the evolution of brand activism on a continuum, arguing that brand activism developed out of: (i) market-driven goals (cause-related marketing, and corporate social marketing); (ii) corporate-driven (CSR/sustainability and PCSR); and (iii) values/ corporate purpose-driven (brand activism, often occasioned by social, political, economic, legal, environmental, and business concerns) (see Figure 10 below).

Evolution of Brand Activism

Marketing Driven — Cause Promotion, Cause-related marketing, Corporate Social Marketing

Corporate Driven — Corporate Philanthropy, Workforce Volunteering, Socially Responsible Business Practices

Values Driven — Brand Activism (Social, Business, Political, Legal, Economic, Environmental)
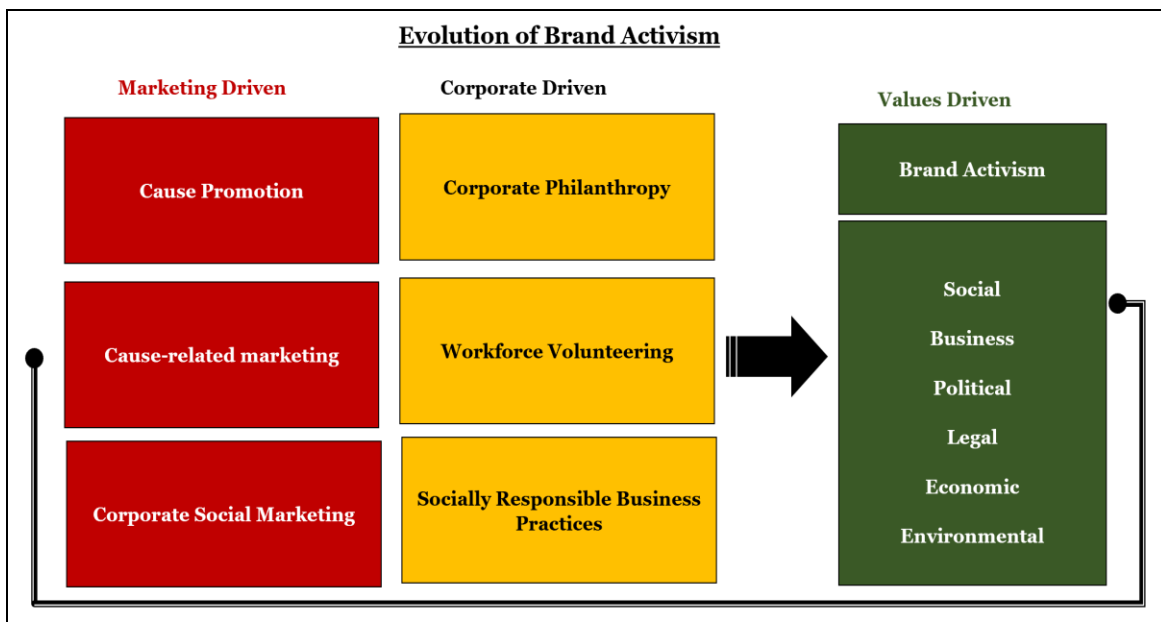
Figure 10: Kotler and Sarkar's (2017) model,
depicting the evolution of Brand Activism.

These scholars also observe that brand activism is reflective of rising environmental, social, and governance (ESG) concerns (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017). It has further been suggested that the rise in brand activism stems from widespread disappointment in CSR (Kotler & Sarkar, 2019), as illustrated by the afore-stated marketing and cognate censures of CSR. Brand activism runs counter to the profit-maximization philosophy of corporations for investors and embraces a values-driven

multi-stakeholder agenda for brands' concerns for society's future, the planet's

sustainability, and justice for all (Lirtsman, 2017). Brand activism is unique in being

driven by corporations' concerns for the biggest and most pressing problems that remain

unresolved by CSR (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017; 2018a; 2018b).

In their typology, Kotler and Sarkar (2017; 2018b) identified six broad categories

of issues/causes in brand activism (see Figure 11 below). These include (i) social brand

activism (including brand concerns regarding equality, LGBTQ, race, age, gender,

education, etc.); (ii) political brand activism (including brand concerns for lobbying,

campaign financing, etc.); and (iii) legal brand activism (including brand concerns for

taxation issues and employment laws, etc.).
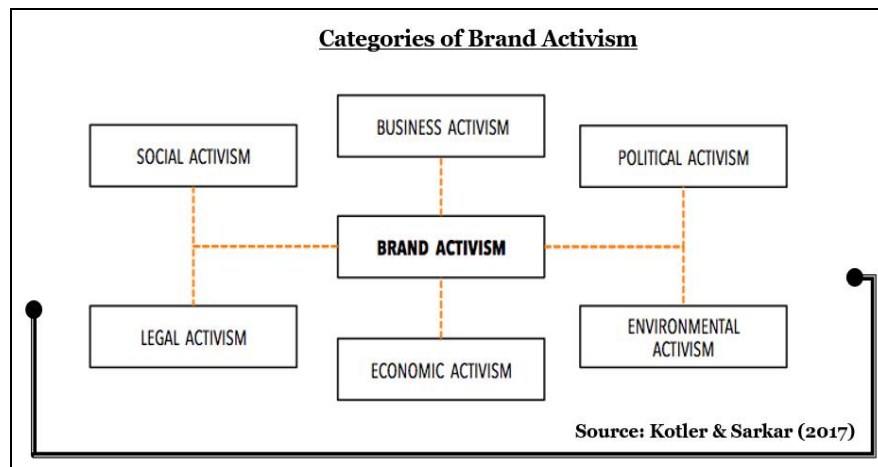
Figure 11. Kotler and Sarkar's (2017) typology of categories of Brand Activism.

The rest comprise (iv) economic brand activism (including brand concerns for

minimum wage and related tax policies); (v) workplace activism (including corporate

governance and corporate organization, CEO pay, worker compensation, labor and union

relations, supply chain management, governance, etc.); and (vi) environmental brand

activism (including brand concerns for climate change, land use, air quality,

conservations, etc.).

Brand activism may be conceptualized as a continuum, with the sort of activism that brands engage in spanning from "progressive," through "neutral," to "regressive," relative to the classes of sociopolitical issues (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017; 2018a; 2018b) (see Figure 12 below).

A framework of how brand activism works

CONSUMER CONSCIENCE

REVOLT ◄------- -------► RECOMMEND

BRAND SHAMING   **BRAND EVANGELIZING**

REGRESSIVE ◄------- BRAND ACTIVISM -------► PROGRESSIVE

NEUTRAL

ACTIVELY PURSUES POLICIES THAT   DOES NO HARM   ACTIVELY PURSUES POLICIES THAT
HURT THE COMMON GOOD   HELP THE COMMON GOOD

POLARIZATION ◄------- COMMON GOOD -------► INCLUSION

COMMON GOOD: "what is shared and beneficial for all or most members of a given community, or alternatively, what is achieved by citizenship, collective action, and active participation in the realm of politics and public service." *Wikipedia*

Source: Kotler & Sarkar (2018a)

Figure 12: Kotler and Sarkar's (2018a) framework of how brand activism works.

Progressive brand activism involves brands working to make the world a better place. For instance, The Body Shop does not only sell top-notch cosmetics. The brand has a record of accomplishment for engaging in fair trade and environmental protection (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017). Ben & Jerry's says that its brand is all about peace, love, and social justice, but also sells ice cream (Sarkar, 2019). Patagonia is a staunch advocate for recycling, reusing, and protecting the environment (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017).

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On the other hand, regressive brand activism involves brands working to turn back the hands of social and environmental progress, by pursuing policies that hurt the greater social good, engaging in deception and unsustainable practices (Kotler & Sarkar, 2018b). Generally, tobacco companies (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017) are deemed to be regressive, in engaging in business operations seen to be injurious to the health of populations.

A recent survey on regressive brands, shortlisted some popular global brands, among many others (Kotler & Sarkar, 2018b). These included *Bayer* (for seeking to further monopolize the seed and chemical industry by merging with Monsanto, threatening to force even more small and family farms out of business globally), and *Beretta* (for making money from the manufacture of weapons; for appropriating the profits from arms sales to bankroll the National Rifle Association (NRA); and for resisting the gun safety movement).

ExxonMobil was cited for its long-standing public deception regarding climate change, and for seeking to intimidate cities and states working to hold the company accountable. The *GEO Group*, for making it its business to make money from the mass incarceration of people of color and immigrants at its private prisons while investing millions on lobbying and elections to protect its perceived unethical profiteering. *Goldman Sachs*, for its blatant exploitation of Puerto Ricans, through predatory loans (Kotler & Sarkar, 2018b).

Nestle, for its cheap exploitation of Michigan's groundwater just down the highway from Flint, where residents pay some of the highest rates in the country for poisoned water. Tobacco giant, *Phillip Morris International*, for starting a huge

foundation to health wash its image, and for its moves to derail the implementation of the global tobacco treaty. *Shell* came up for mention, for its role in the violent suppression of the Ogoni people in Nigeria's Delta Region, and its continued blockade of a global compact on the climate. *Veolia* was mentioned for its hand in the lead crises in Pittsburgh and Flint, which have endangered thousands of people, particularly people of color and low-income communities (Kotler & Sarkar, 2018b).

With increasing political polarization and rising concerns about the serious issues in the world, customers expect brands to be progressive, rather than being regressive (Romani et al., 2015). The position a brand takes in its activism can have some consequences from its stakeholders. Generally, progressive brand activism is associated with "brand evangelizing" or recommendation by stakeholders, while regressive brand activism is associated with "brand shamming" and revolt by stakeholders (Kotler & Sarkar, 2018a). For example, Abercrombie & Fitch was bashed by the public when its CEO made insensitive comments about plus-size customers. Burberry was also criticized when it emerged that it had used hazardous chemicals in its products (Romani et al., 2015).

While this is the expectation, it is generally better for a brand to take a stand, rather not at all, since corporate neutrality can be a risky strategy that stems from the perception that the corporation is insensitive and actually part of the world's problems (Kotler & Sarkar, 2018a).

Brand responsibility is closely related to brand activism. Brand responsibility is described as a progressive-leaning brand stance that demonstrates a brand's commitment to a crucial social mission or purpose, stemming from the very core of the brand DNA

(not as an add-on or a contrived veneer-like activity or program) (Kim, 2018). Brand responsibility is a brand's resolve to contribute meaningfully to the creation of a better world by helping to solve some of the biggest global problems.

Responsible brands take leading roles in conscious conversations in the public sphere that border on such issues as social justice, inclusivity, diversity, and environmental protection (Lirtsman, 2017). Such social causes cannot be contrived but must be reflective of a genuine link between the brand's purpose and the locally relevant issues of the times. To engage in brand responsibility and brand activism, brands must be authentic in fitting the sociopolitical and environmental causes to the brand values and the brand origin (stories), while also embedding activism in the business strategy (Sarkar, 2019). Brands must also be courageous in taking public stances, creating activism campaigns, aligning with social movements, evangelizing, and even sacrificing the profit potential. Also, brands must have a consistent and unflinching resolve to serve the greater social good (Sarkar, 2019).

Brand activism is one expression of brand responsibility, and a corporation's response to the market's expectation of brands to stand for something, even if it means sacrificing some other market segments in order to resonate with core segments (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). Brand responsibility is different from CSR because brand responsibility is not perceived as an add-on, but an authentic brand behavior that emanates from *continuity* (the brand's history), *credibility* (a track record of being results-driven and the ability to achieve social targets), *integrity* (inclination towards morally-based actions), and *symbolism* (meaningfully touching the lives of multiple stakeholders). For example, Jet Blue cut its airfares to encourage people to leave the Florida area before the

hurricanes hit, while others increased their fares instead. Patagonia worked against the capitalist logic in advertising to encourage customers to buy less during the traditional Black Friday sales.

Brand responsibility and brand activism are regarded as shaking things up in business. Against the backdrop of CSR's growing perceived failure to deliver meaningful social impact, brand activism and brand responsibility are a set of disrupting strategies for the betterment of the world and meaningful breakthroughs (Kotler & Sarkar, 2018b). Brand activism compels corporations, their brands, and leaders to have little choice in the matter, by putting the power in the hands of society and truly embedding brand responsibility in the core of the brand DNA (Sarkar, 2018). Thus, brand responsibility is conceptualized as different from CSR. While brand responsibility is regarded as purpose-driven, and stemming from the core of the brand's purpose, CSR is widely regarded as inauthentic, contrived and a veneer-like add-on, aimed at corporate hypocrisy and realizing corporate private value (Kim, 2018).

Customers exhibit anti-brand activism when brands are regressive or fall short of public expectation (Iyer & Muncy, 2009). Such anti-brand activism may include sales boycotts, brand shamming, online activism, and diverse other forms of brand resistance. Customers may also engage in brand-focused activism, which involves the targeting of iconic brands such as Nike, Coca-Cola, and Nestle, with the view to getting such brands to reform their regressive practices (Dauvergne, 2017). It is noteworthy that unlike anti-brand activism, brand-focused activism campaigns do not seek to destroy brands through such goals as sales boycotts. Brand-focused activism seeks constructive engagement with

regressive brands, to get them to cooperate with activists to achieve reformations in their regressive practices and policies (Dauvergne, 2017).

Corporate Social Advocacy/CEO Activism

Dodd and Supa (2014) observed that "public stances regarding controversial social-political issues by executive leaders of major organizations (termed corporate social advocacy…) seem to be increasingly commonplace" (p. 1), situating the phenomenon at the intersection of two important areas of scholarship and practice, namely strategic issues management and corporate social responsibility.

Heath and Palenchar (2009) saw strategic issues management as:

"The amalgamation of organizational functions and responsive culture that blends strategic business planning, issue monitoring, best-practice standards of corporate responsibility, and dialogic communication needed to foster a supportive climate between each organization and those who can affect its success and who are affected by its operations" (pp. 8-9).

At the heart of the concept of strategic issues management is the notion of organizational legitimacy, which (Suchman, 1995) saw in terms of a wide range of perceptions and assumptions that stakeholders have concerning an entity that those actions are the desirable, proper, and appropriate, as seen within the context of some shared systems of norms, values, belief, and definitions. Thus, strategic issues management permits for behaviors exhibited by organizations to be "legitimized by stakeholder perceptions of how that behavior fits societal and/or stakeholder group beliefs about the ways in which the organization should behave" (Dodd & Supa, 2014; p. 3).

As an emerging phenomenon, scholars are yet to agree on one label for the concept (Livonen, 2018). While some refer to the essentially the same phenomenon as Corporate Social Advocacy (see Dodd & Supa, 2014; 2015; Dodd, 2016), others label it CEO Sociopolitical Activism (see Hambrick & Wowak, 2019), some term it Corporate Political Advocacy (see Wettstein & Baur, 2016; Baur & Wettstein, 2016). Still, others call it CEO activism (see Chatterji & Toffel, 2015; 2016; 2018; 2019; Livonen, 2018). Despite the various labels employed, I am inclined to agree with those who employ the name "CEO activism" for the concept.

CEO activism involves CEOs publicly speaking up on sociopolitical and environmental issues that are not directly related to corporate profitability, including such issues as climate change, same-sex marriage, social injustice and inequality, gun control, etc. (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018). CEO activism is spurred by such notions as serving the triple bottom line, CSR, brand activism, brand responsibility, and multi-stakeholder perspectives.

While CEO activism is essentially prevalent in the United States, it is expected to spread to other parts of the world (Chatter & Toffel, 2017). CEO activism shares with corporate political activity the idea of corporations seeking to influence politics. However, corporate political activity is different from CEO activism. The concept of corporate political activity entails lobbying to advance corporate self-interest or firm value (Hillman et al., 2004). However, CEO activism involves issues not directly related to the core business, and thus not salient to corporate objectives (Nalick et al., 2016; Chatterji & Toffel, 2018). Corporate political activity (lobbying of various forms) is

private, taking place behind closed doors, while CEO activism is public advocacy (Livonen, 2018).

CEO activism is akin to Political CSR (PCSR) in assuming it is not limited to the self-interest of corporations, but is also concerned with the greater social good. However, CEO activism and PCSR are different. While PCSR activities are externally driven but internally focused on the corporation's CSR policies and practices, CEO activism has an external focus, with corporate leaders seeking to instigate social change outside their corporations (Livonen, 2018; Nalick et al., 2016). CEO activism is also different from CSR by being involved in culture wars that are quite different from the non-controversial activities in CSR (Scherer, 2013).

CEO activism is a relatively unique nonmarket strategy and a new form of corporate political activity, yet to be fully conceptualized and operationalized (Baur & Wettstein, 2016) that presents new complications to the understanding of corporate nonmarket strategies and corporate social advocacy (Livonen, 2018). CEO activism is different from other forms of corporate sociopolitical involvement. The few scholars who have investigated CEO activism have coined different labels for it. While Dodd and Supa (2014; 2015) call it "Corporate Social Advocacy," Livonen (2018) and Chatterji and Toffel (2015; 2016; 2017; 2018) consistently refer to it as "CEO activism," and Hambrick and Wowak (2019) term it "CEO sociopolitical activism."

While the extant concepts of corporate sociopolitical involvement focus on the corporation and/the brand as the archetype, CEOs are, by definition, not incorporated. Again, although CEOs may spearhead other corporate and brand activism, this may not always be the case as CEOs may find themselves engaging in activisms, purely out of

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their personal conviction/passion for a cause. They may not have had the approval of their corporations for the public statements they issue as part of their activism. Besides, as observed by Kotler and Sarkar (2018b), corporate activism may find expression in various domains (beyond the social and the political). Thus, a more specific and heuristic label is required for the phenomenon.

Yet, the extant perspectives of brand activism, corporate social responsibility, corporate social advocacy, and corporate political advocacy all assume the "corporate" imperative, while others continue to split hairs by labeling such involvements as "sociopolitical" (Hambrick & Wowak, 2019; Nalick et al., 2016), "political" (Wettstein & Baur, 2016; Baur & Wettstein, 2016), and "social" (Dodd & Supa, 2014, 2015), among others. I am persuaded to concur with Chatterji and Toffel (2015; 2016; 2017; 2018) and Livonen (2018) in referring to the phenomenon as "CEO activism." This labeling is not only direct and punchy but also more specific in describing this unique form of corporate sociopolitical engagement in the public sphere.

Although there is some history of corporate activism and of corporations seeking to wield some influence on public policy through corporate political activities such as lobbying, CEO activism is "newer and less understood" because there has been little, if any, research on it (Chatterji & Toffel, 2016). A review of the literature on corporate sociopolitical involvement reveals some ambiguity and ambivalence regarding a clear delineation of relevant concepts. For instance, there appears to be some conflation of some units of analysis in corporate activism, with the blurring of the diverse activism of corporations, their brands, and CEOs (Livonen, 2018). Both Dodd and Supa (2014) and

Chatterji and Toffel (2017) examined the effects of "corporate social advocacy" and "CEO activism" respectively on selected organizational outcomes.

I am persuaded to side with the approach adopted by Livonen (2018), Chatterji (2016), and Chatterji and Toffel (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018) in labeling the sort of corporate involvement that *de facto* takes place through (or is spearheaded by) the CEO as CEO activism. For instance, in its study of corporate reactions to the US travel ban on citizens of selected nations, Weber Shandwick (2017) found that for 84% of the companies that made public pronouncements on the matter, such corporate articulations were directly made by the CEOs, using their names.

This situation creates conceptual, epistemic, normative, and practical problems (Wettsten & Baur, 2016). Thus, for the avoidance of doubt, I believe a unique label must be consistently applied to the unique phenomenon that subsists when CEOs weigh in on wider social, economic, political, legal, and environmental issues that are directly not related to the profitability or operations of the corporations they lead. That concept must be labeled "CEO Activism," to help distinguish it from other forms of corporate sociopolitical activism.

Motivations for CEO activism

Generally, the motivation for activist CEOs is the desire for some social change in such areas as race relations and gender equality; areas of social life that are unrelated to the core businesses of corporations (Chatterji, 2016; Chatterji & Toffel, 2016). For instance, it is believed that after public pressure from the CEOs of Intel, Salesforce.com, and Unilever, Governor Nathan Deal of Georgia, a Republican, announced his intention

to veto a "religious liberty" bill that would "allow faith-based businesses and nonprofit groups to discriminate against same-sex couples (Chatterji & Toffel, 2016). Similarly, Apple CEO Tim Cook publicly opposed a similar bill in Indiana, at the end of which Governor Mike Pence, a Republican, signed a revised version of the law that specified that it would not allow discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

In the week following Independence Day in America in 2016, conversations were rife about race relations, following the fatal police shootings of African American men in Louisiana and Minnesota and the murder of some five police and pursuit officers in Dallas by an African American army veteran (Chatterji, 2016). This led to some protests and heated debates during the 2016 Presidential campaign in America. In such times, political leaders have traditionally been expected to comment on the matter. Corporate leaders have not traditionally commented on such controversial social issues as race relations. However, this traditional order of things was turned on its head, as some CEOs weighed in on the thorny matter (Chatterji, 2016).

Dropbox's Drew Houston, Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, and Apple's Tim Cook took to social media, tweeting out statements expressing solidarity with sections of the population angered by the police shootings (Chatterji, 2016). Companies such as Twitter, Pandora, and Square used the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter to support the movement. Also, Marc Benioff of Salesforce.com led the charge in the movement towards pay equality, by using his keynote address at Dreamforce, the company's annual gathering in San Francisco to highlight the issue (Chatterji, 2016).

Several more specific motivations have been identified for CEOs becoming activists. Companies are finding it hard to remain apolitical in the bid to personalize their

brands to build stronger links to customers in an increasingly polarized political climate (Chatterji, 2016). Besides, most corporate leaders are having genuinely strong convictions about contemporary social issues, partly due to a new wave of business education that stresses social responsibility and sustainability, and the general need for corporate leaders to think beyond maximizing shareholder value while serving multiple stakeholder perspectives (Pompper, 2015).

For some CEO activists, speaking up is driven by their personal conviction such as religious beliefs, pandering to the wishes and aspirations of Millennials, whether they are employees or customers, standing with and for the masses, and showing courage and sincerity (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018). Thus, there is a new breed of younger business leaders emerging who are favorably predisposed to social liberalism. More business leaders are aligned to the left side of the political divide and tend to identify with social and cultural issues, as opposed to economic issues only (Chatterji, 2016).

Some activist CEOs point to their corporate values to justify their advocacy (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018), while others suggest that they and their companies should have a higher purpose beyond maximizing shareholder value (Gaines-Ross, 2017; Chatterji & Toffel, 2018). To Marc Benioff, "Today, CEOs need to stand up not just for their shareholders, but their employees, their customers, their partners, the community, the environment, schools, everybody" (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018).

The increased penetration of social media has also changed the landscape of activism in fundamental ways. Social media has been compared to a microphone that is always on and making corporate silence ever more conspicuous whenever battle lines form regarding controversial matters (Chatterji, 2016). In such situations, corporate

silence is often seen as implicit support/acquiescence for whatever positions sections of the public do not agree with. Consequently, the hyper-partisan and hyper-plugged in society has tended to fuel the rise of CEO activism.

Nalick et al. (2016) argue that there are three main classes of motivations for corporations to become involved in sociopolitical issues, including (i) betting on future stakeholder benefits, (ii) responding to current stakeholder pressures, and (iii) pursuing ideological inclinations. A host of conditions and factors within the institutional context serve to determine the extent to which a corporation would become involved in sociopolitical issues, including general political mechanisms, stakeholder participation levels, and related mechanisms, treatment of firms by external entities, ownership structure, executive prominence, availability and the quality of message outlets, and managerial mechanisms.

Livonen (2018) sought to extend the views of Nalick et al. (2016) by proposing a taxonomy of additional factors that may determine the engagement in or reception of CEO activism. These factors relate to (i) the characteristics of the CEO, (ii) the features of the organization and industry, and (iii) the characteristics of the focal issue and the social movement. According to Livonen (2018), CEO characteristics that may influence participation in and reception of CEO activism include personality factors, celebrity status, social engagement, and personal background. Firm and industry characteristics include the social responsibility of the firm, the identity of industry, firm and/or industry reputation, and financial performance. Relevant characteristics of the issue/movement include the movement/issue phase, movement/issue content, and the movement/issue audience and type of approach.

Some scholars have tabled some criticisms to corporate sociopolitical involvement. In doing so, Baur and Wettstein (2016) and Wettstein and Baur (2016), for instance, distinguished between "corporate political activity" and "corporate political advocacy," positioning the latter within the domain of corporate political involvement, and normatively as part of corporate social responsibility. These scholars observe that corporate political activity is akin to diverse forms of lobbying and is motivated by the pursuance of corporate self-interest and enlightened self-interest (Wettstein & Baur, 2016). However, corporate political advocacy is driven by the pursuit of wider social and environmental goals and ideals not directly related to the financial bottom line and the operations of the corporation.

Wettstein and Baur (2016) discuss some common objections to corporate political advocacy, namely: (i) concerns regarding the deeper underlying corporate motivations and the covert business case for corporate political advocacy; (ii) the issue of potential alienation of certain members of a corporation's strategic constituency (such as employees, suppliers, or customers) due to the polarizing nature of sociopolitical issues; (iii) the infusion and intrusion of corporate ideology in the consumption realm; and (iv) debates regarding which values offer legitimate grounds for corporate political advocacy.

With the surge of corporations engaging in one form of corporate political advocacy or another, Wettstein and Baur (2016) discuss some practical challenges for managers and other decision-makers. "We suggest that there are three basic conditions to a legitimate advocacy campaign, which managers should assess thoroughly and sincerely before deciding to throw the weight of the company behind a specific cause. They are consistency, plausibility, and authenticity" (Wettstein & Baur, 2016, p. 221).

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<u>Tactics of CEO activism</u>

Casadesus-Masanelli and Ricart (2010) suggest that although on the face of it, the notions of business models, strategies, and tactics appear similar, there are important distinctions among these concepts. In a conceptual framework to highlight some of the distinctions among these oft-confused terms, these scholars state that "… business model refers to the logic of the firm, the way it operates and how it creates value for its stakeholders. Strategy refers to the choice of the business model through which the firm will compete in the marketplace. Tactics refer to the residual choices open to a firm by virtue of the business model that it employs" (p. 196).

This framework presents an acceptable hierarchy of the relationships among the three concepts. While strategies set up the business model, strategy refers to a higher-order of choices, designed to create a distinctive and value-laded position, through a set of tactical activities (Casadesus-Masanelli & Ricart, 2010). Strategy entails the overall plan or broad range of goals. It comprises a series of plans, methods, and activities, aimed at producing or achieving a given objective. Tactics are the specific actions that are taken as part of the broader strategy/game plan to achieve the overall plan or strategy. Thus, while strategy involves forward-looking and long-term plans, designed to achieve set corporate objectives, tactics are the lower order of actions taken on the road to achieving the strategic ends.

Nalick et al. (2016) distinguish between market or corporate strategy and nonmarket strategy. Generally, while market or corporate strategy focuses on how a company strategically relates to its direct business-defining stakeholders such as suppliers, customers, the labor market, and competitors, nonmarket strategies are

concerned with interacting and relating to a wide range of non-commercial stakeholders, such as employees, activists, lawmakers, government agencies, the law courts, and the mass media.

Market strategies are concerned with ensuring that companies play to win in the marketplace, while nonmarket strategies focus on creating and managing relationships with nonmarket stakeholders. The general approach in the management literature is the adoption of the modernist view that focuses on the role of business in nonmarket issues with the presumption of some economic gains or some competitive advantages for the firm (Hillman et al., 204), with such strategies as corporate political activity, corporate social responsibility, and corporate sociopolitical involvement (Nalick et al., 2016).

CEO activism is deemed to be "a fairly unique" (Baur & Wettstein, 2016, p. 171) nonmarket strategy (Nalick et al., 2018; Livonen, 2018) that employs several social movement tactics. It has been suggested that social movements usually employ a rich tactical repertoire (King & Pearce, 2010) to achieve the goals of their campaigns and to deliver the changes desired in society (Livonen, 2018). Such social media tactics include boycotts, letter-writing, demonstrations, marches, sit-ins, and strikes.

The tactics employed by social movements have been described as "culturally inscribed and socially communicated" (Livonen, 2018, p. 9), with new activists being capable of adopting and adapting from the tactical toolkits of existing social movements (Tarrow, 2011; Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004). Thus, it has been suggested that CEO activists could effectively employ existing tried and tested social movement tactics (Livonen, 2018). Livonen (2018) presented a taxonomy of CEO activist tactics, especially directed at three stakeholder groups, namely the government, employees, and

the cause and the social movement, following a strategic review of the social movement literature, but also based on an analysis of some contemporary actions of CEOs.

Livonen (2018) however notes that although most of the tactics in CEO activism were culturally borrowed from the standard tactical repertoire of social movements, owing to the higher social statuses of CEOs, relative to the usual social movement actors, but also concerning their stakeholder groups, some of the tactics employed appeared significantly transformed in terms of both reach and impact. Thus, some of the tactics employed by and/or available to CEO activists are not available to the usual social movement actors.

Livonen (2018) presents a framework of the actions taken by CEO activists through their effects on selected organizational stakeholder groups, to the consequences of selected stakeholder reactions for CEOs and their firms, as well as for the focal cause and social movements. In her model, she notes that social movement activism tactics include boycotts, letter-writing, demonstrations, marches, sit-ins, and strikes. Generally, activism campaign tactics have included carnivalesque demonstrations and occupations of buildings to influence public opinion and to garner earned media coverage (Weaver, 2010), and to expose negative environmental impacts of corporations (Murphy & Dee, 1992).

Other activists have employed extreme action to build identity inside the group's constituency (Derville, 2005), and to share information among people who are informed about planned events (Jahng et al., 2014). Some activists also use the Internet and social media (especially Facebook and Twitter (Rodriquez, 2016), media coverage (Saffer et al., 2013), and websites and microsites (Valencia & Jones, 2018).

Chatterji and Toffel (2018) suggest that CEO activists generally employed two distinct classes of tactics in their toolkit. These are (i) *raising awareness*, and (ii) *leveraging economic power*. The tactic of *raising awareness* entails the employment of communication strategies and tactics designed to raise awareness, garner support for social movements and brand activism, and help drive change in the desired direction. An example of this tactical deployment is Lloyd Blankfein, CEO of Goldman Sachs, and Biogen's former CEO George Scangos publicly pitching in on government policies that affect the LGBTQ rights of individuals. On the social conservative side, Dan Cathy of Chick-fil-A publicly denounced gay marriage (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018).

The tactic of *leveraging economic power* revolves around the activist CEO tactic of putting economic pressure on states to either reject or overturn specific legislation, by threatening some economic or investment repercussions. These authors suggest that some of the most defining examples of CEO activism have involved activist CEOs mounting economic pressure on governments and states to reject or repeal some laws. For instance, Bill Oesterle, CEO of Angie's List canceled his company's planned expansion in Indianapolis, while Benioff threatened to halt Salesforce's employee travel to the state (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018).

The tactic of *leveraging economic power* could be undertaken as a solo effort, or in concert with other CEO activists. Companies and their CEOs could thus exercise their economic power by donating to civil society organizations or some social movement groups that favored the interests or causes of the companies and their leaders.

In a related classificatory scheme of CEO activists' tactical repertoire, Livonen (2018) outlined two main classes of tactics, namely (i) *persuasive tactics* and (ii)

disruptive /coercive tactics. Persuasive tactics are generally directed at a specific target

audience to get the audience to alter its behavior or practices. Such tactics may also be

directed at some other stakeholders, to disseminate specific messages about the need to

change the target's unacceptable behavior, relative to a wider audience, to engender

public support, and press the target into changing behavior in a given direction (King &

Pearce, 2010).

 Disruptive tactics, on the other hand, are aimed at a target, with the view to

neutralizing the target's capacity to achieve its goals, while imposing significant costs on

it, if possible (King & Pearce, 2010). These two forms of tactics reinforce each other,

with disrupting tactics tending to generate media publicity, while persuasive tactics seek

to zoom in on the unpalatable facets of the target, such as inflicting reputational damage

(King & Pearce, 2010). Livonen (2018) also identified (iii) *Supportive* tactics, seen as

tactics employed by "elite allies" (p. 9), including issuing pro-movement

statements/solidarity messages, providing financial support to activists, and giving face

and name to the cause (Hutchison, 2015; King, 2011).

 Livonen (2018) notes that CEO activists could employ both persuasive and

disruptive tactics in targeting governments. She identifies persuasive tactics as including

making personal appeals to the target government, with sub-tactics including private

appeals such as letters, phone calls, and meetings; public personal appeals (such as open

letters), and public appeals such as social media posts, and ads. CEO activists also join

collective appeals to the target government, in which case sub-tactics could include letter-

writing campaigns, and advocacy ads.

Livonen (2018) identified four main forms of disruptive tactics that CEO activism could use in targeting governments, with each main tactic spawning several sub-tactics. These disruptive/protest tactics include (i) supporting legal actions against the government (sub-tactics including joining or filing amicus briefs; and testifying at public hearings); (ii) boycotting the target government (sub-tactics as canceling events, canceling/withholding investments, withdrawing business activities, and withdrawing services); (iii) attending demonstrations against the target government (sub-tactics including joining demonstrations and joining employee-led demonstrations); and (iv) broadcasting disapproval of the target government (sub-tactics including giving statements through the traditional media; and sending messages via social media).

The main tactics targeted at employees are *persuasion* and *support* (rather than *disruption*). These typically find expression in encouraging and supporting employee activism. Here, Livonen (2018) asserts that sub-tactics included encouraging donations, providing paid time off for activism, offering material support for activism, and supporting demonstrations by employees.

The main tactic that CEO activists could target at social movements is one of support (Livonen, 2018). This could include demonstrating support for social movements or the issue (sub-tactics including making donations, attending marches, broadcasting support for movement or the issue through the media, and giving a name to the cause). Supporting social movements could also entail offering support for the oppressed or the affected (sub-tactics including providing material aid, continuing existing practices/disregarding the target's decisions).

CEO activism and organizational outcomes

Chatterji and Toffel (2018) argue that CEO activism could produce both risks and rewards for corporate leaders and their companies. The risks include criticisms against the CEO activist, and negative consequences for companies. For instance, shortly after President Donald Trump became president, Under Armor CEO Kevin Plank was widely criticized for praising the president. This culminated in a Twitter hashtag #BoycottUnderArmor. Following this avalanche of criticism and threats of a boycott of the brand, although the company placed a full-page ad to clarify what its CEO had said, it still had undesirable effects on the company's stocks. Other risks of CEO activism include charges of hypocrisy, double standards, and bad press (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018).

Despite the risks, there could also be rewards for CEO activism (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018), with some scholars suggesting that there might be a business case for CEOs speaking up on social issues. Weber Shandwick (2017) found that Millennials' buying decisions are influenced by CEO activism, with 51% of this section of the American population indicating that they will buy a brand whose CEO speaks up on an issue they agree with.

Initial research suggests that CEO activism can sway public opinion and increase customers' interest in buying a company's brands (Chatterji & Toffel, 2016). While it may not be the motivation of CEO activists, consumers appear to respond favorably to a company's products when they agree with the public stances taken by CEO activists.

Dodd and Supa (2014) adopted a bi-focal approach in seeking to better understand organizational stances on sociopolitical issues (which they termed corporate social advocacy or CSA) but also interrogating its effect on consumer purchase intention.

Corporate social advocacy is conceptualized within public relations, based on how the phenomenon spans the boundaries between strategic issues management and corporate social responsibility.

Drawing on the theory of planned behavior, Dodd and Supa's (2014) online survey experiment sought to explore the impact of organizational stances on sociopolitical issues - particularly the issues of gay marriage, health care reform, and emergency contraception – on organizational financial goals. It was found that organizational engagement in social advocacy has the potential of having tangible outcomes for organizations. Dodd and Supa (2014) observed that greater public congruency/agreement with the corporate stance results in greater intentions to purchase, while lesser congruency/agreement by the public with a stance results in lesser intention to purchase.

In their field experiment, Chatterji and Toffel (2017) sought to examine whether CEO activists make a difference in the corporate bottom line, based on evidence from a field experiment. It was found that CEO activism is associated with some impacts on public opinion and some consumer attitudes. Involving a field experiment to examine the impact of Apple CEO Tim Cook's public statements opposing a pending religious freedom law that critics warned could allow discrimination against same-sex couples, Chatterji and Toffel (2017) found confirmation for the influence of issue framing on public opinion, potentially to the same extent as politicians. Besides, it emerged that Cook's activism led to increased consumer intentions to buy Apple products, particularly among the consumer segment of proponents of same-sex marriage.

It has also been suggested that CEO activism has some influence on employee retention and the retention of top talent. Forty-four percent (44%) of Millennials indicate that their loyalty to organizations if its CEO took a position on a hot-button issue, especially when such advocacy campaign aligned with those of Millennials (Weber Shandwick, 2017). Public perceptions of not engaging in activism include criticism from media (30%), customers (26%), employees (21%), and government (9%).

CEO activism safeguards

Based on a study that saw the interview of CEO activists in America, Chatterji and Toffel (2019) postulated what could be regarded as some safeguards to guide CEOs who want to engage in activism. These scholars noted that while CEO activism was associated with some achievements or positive consequences, it also came with its baggage of some potential pitfalls that included negative consequences from customers who may not see eye to eye with the activist CEO. The observed that other undesirable consequences of CEO activism could include online protests, boycotts, viral social media posts, and CEO removals.

Thus, given the high-stakes, Chatterji and Toffel (2019) advised that CEO activism be carefully considered and tactfully executed, with some safeguards in mind. Based on their interviews with CEO activists, they proffered some measures that the CEO should consider in engaging in CEO activism to stave off some of the negative consequences outlined.

Chatterji and Toffel (2019) offered two broad classes of what could be seen as communication-specific safeguards, each with three specific pointers for considerations.

The two classes of safeguards for CEO activism were: (i) When should you speak, and (ii) how to speak effectively. In speaking out, CEOs are advised to gauge the level of support from their employees; speak in ways that reflect their corporate values; and to speak as close to when the issue is live as possible. It is noteworthy that some tensions exist between these corporatist prescriptions and the postmodern orientation of this dissertation.

These scholars also advocate for having the support of a rapid response team – a kitchen cabinet; anticipate and plan for any backlash, and work with professional communicators. Chatterji and Toffel (2018) suggest additional safeguards, including the careful selection of issues; ensuring that the CEO's voice is seen by the public as appropriate for the chosen issue/cause; and undertaking joint actions with other activists, rather than solo campaigns.

Conceptual framework

Recently, some scholars called for a deeper consideration of process studies in organization and management, focusing on the importance of "temporality, activity, and flow" in addressing "questions about how managerial and organizational phenomena emerge, change, and unfold over time" (Langley et al., 2013, p. 1). These scholars characterize the uniqueness of "process studies" as concerning the explication of the emergence, development, growth, and the termination of issues, phenomena, and questions. According to some scholars, such a focus is described as distinct from those studies that address such issues as *co-variability* or dependency among variables (Langley, et al., 2009).

Taking an evolutionary stance, process research intentionally adopts traces of the "temporal progressions of activities as elements of explanation and understanding" (Langley et al., 2013, p. 1). By privileging the importance and ubiquity of time in human and organizational processes, Langley and colleagues argue that process conceptualizations could "offer an essential contribution to organizational and management knowledge that is not available from most variance-based generalizations" (p. 4) which tend to currently dominate the field. Essentially, variance-focused research orientation has the propinquity to completely ignore the influence of time, reduce its effect to one of lagging consequences, meld the influence of time with other variables, or generally fail to assign the right level of significance to time (Langley et al., 2013).

However, process research is based on the philosophy that of significant importance in organizational life is the element of temporality, with process questions having both academic and practical utility (Langley et al., 2013). These scholars conclude that "if variance theorizing generates *know-that* type of knowledge, process theorizing produces *know-how* knowledge" (Langley et al., 2013, p. 4).

This dissertation adopts a process ontology in conceptualizing the phenomenon of CEO activism as:

> a form of practice continually constituted and adapted through ongoing 'values work' enacted by organization members … context is not something that is held constant and outside the changes being analyzed but is itself continually reconstructed within and by the process of interaction over time … generating unexpected and largely uncontrollable chain of activity and events in which actors, environments, and organizations are all in constant and mutually interacting flux (Langley et al., 2013, p. 5).

At the heart of this dissertation is a conceptual framework dubbed the "CEO Activism Development Model" (see Figure 13 below for its basic form).

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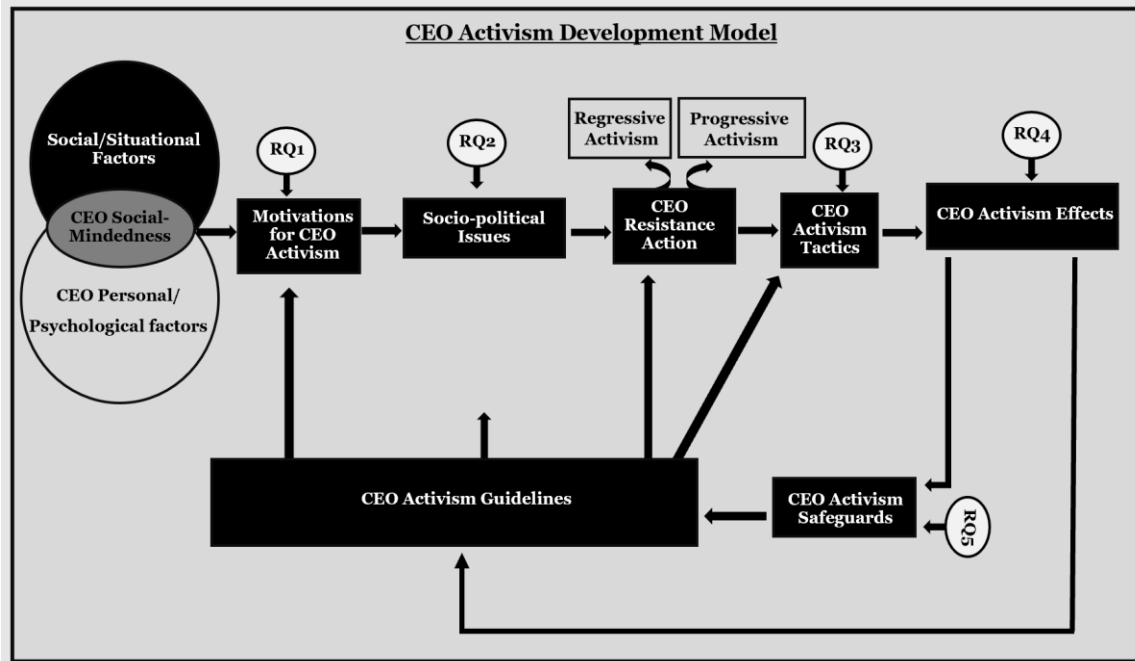
Figure 13: CEO Activism Development Model (Basic working model)

Serving as an organizing principle and the road map for the dissertation, it lays out the researcher's conception of the interrelationships among several concepts in the development of CEO activism, based on the process ontology (Langley et al., 2013). In taking this point of departure, this "CEO Activism Development Model" seeks to explain the temporal process of how and why CEOs develop the activist stance.

This conceptual framework focuses on CEO activism as a distinct form of corporate sociopolitical involvement and highlights the major junctures working together to occasion the development of CEO sociopolitical activism, including factors undergirding the generation of the desire for activism, delimitation of issues and causes, deployment of tactics, but also the difference made by the activities of CEO activists.

Based on the review of the current literature on CEO activism and cognate fields, but also my reflection of the field, it is my considered view that the main epochs in the development of CEO activism include (i) motivations for CEO activism, (ii) selection of

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issues/causes by activist CEOs, (iii) deployment of tactics of activist campaigns, (iv)

production of effects or outcomes of campaigns, and based on the nature of such effects,

(v) the adoption of safeguards to insulate CEO activists from undesirable ramifications

occasioned by their actions.

Based on this expectation of the flow of factors, this dissertation is designed to

focus on the generation of empirical data on five clusters within these complex linkages,

namely (i) motivations for CEO activism (RQ1), (ii) taxonomy of sociopolitical issues

(RQ2), (iii) tactics of CEO activism (RQ3), (iv) effects of CEO activism (RQ4), and (v)

safeguards for CEO activists (RQ5).

Arguably, the literature suggests that the genesis of CEO activism occurs within

the context of the production of a certain level of social mindedness within the CEO, as a

complex web of social and situational factors interact with some personal and

psychological factors within the CEO. While typically, CEOs have not been concerned

with wider social issues that do not impact on the profitability of companies, the resultant

social mindedness serves to condition some CEOs to start thinking in a wider socio-

cultural fashion, by considering non-corporate issues and the needs of multiple

stakeholders besides investors/shareholders.

When this wider social mindedness is strong enough, it leads to the development

of some appetite or motivation for engaging in CEO activism. While some segments of

the literature on CEO activism have suggested what some motivations, there is no

existing typology of factors that could be regarded as motivating CEO activists generally,

but especially within developing countries. Thus, RQ1 focuses on addressing this

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scholarly lacuna by gathering and presenting data on the motivations of CEOs for becoming/engaging in CEO activism in Ghana.

Once motivated to undertake CEO activism, the literature on CEO activism suggests that the next step would be for CEOs to select a range of sociopolitical issues that would serve as the fulcrum for their activism. Kotler and Sarkar (2017; 2018b) posit that there are six broad classes of such issues that a brand could advocate. In their brand activism typology, these scholars identified political issues, social issues, economic issues, legal issues, environmental issues, and business/workplace issues. Such a typology of the classes of brand activism could be adapted and extended to CEO activism. Thus, the focus of RQ3 is to examine the extent to which the range of issues that activist CEOs selected for this study in Ghana could fit these brand activism categories/clusters postulated by Kotler and Sarkar (2017; 2018b).

Once a CEO has identified an issue or a range of issues on which to pivot his/her activism, the main thrust of the CEO's resistance posture/action is generated. As explained earlier in the literature review, brand activism could be regressive or progressive, depending on how such an action is perceived as working to promote the interests of society. Progressive activism entails those actions that are perceived to be contributing to the improvement of society, while regressive activism are those actions deemed to set back society's advancement.

However, the implementation of a CEO resistance action follows some tactics. While Chatterji and Toffel (2018) discussed tactics relating to raising awareness and leveraging economic power, Livonen (2018) isolated the three classes of approaches as persuasive tactics, disruptive/coercive tactics, and support tactics. Thus, the focus of RQ3

is to examine the range of tactics employed by activist CEOs in Ghana who were selected for inclusion in this study.

The next web of factors in this model concern the effects of engaging in CEO activism. What outcomes are produced by the works of CEO activists? What difference is made by activist CEOs? What are the consequences of engaging in CEO activism for the society, companies, and the activist CEO? Based on fieldwork, some scholars have identified some outcomes produced by CEO activism. However, these have all been within Western (American) contexts. What are the achievements and consequences of CEO activism in Ghana? The object of RQ4 is to investigate the effects, positive and negative consequences of CEO activism for the Ghanaian society, but also on companies and activist CEOs in Ghana.

Within this conceptual framework, CEO activism is conceived as producing two distinct classes of outcomes – negative and positive. Negative outcomes are those undesirable consequences, while positive outcomes are relatively desirable results of CEO activism. It is argued that owing to their undesirable impact, CEO activists would employ a range of safeguards to insulate themselves and their companies from the effects of being CEO activists. The focus of RQ5 thus is to investigate the various types of safeguards employed by activist CEOs in Ghana.

The final point in this conceptual framework relates to guidelines for engaging in CEO activism. Positive effects for CEO activism are conceived as directly informing guidelines for CEO activism, while negative effects/consequences are first filtered through safeguards, on the way to informing guidelines for future actions. The nature of

the guidelines then determines future motivations for engaging in CEO activism, the choice of future issues/causes, the nature of future actions, and future tactics employed.

The next section poses the five research questions undergirding this study and justifies the stated research questions.

Research Questions

Most studies on CEO activism have been focused on activist CEOs in the United States. Thus, the goal of the research is to undertake an interpretive examination of CEO activism in Ghana, focusing on the activism and lived experiences of activist CEOs in the country. The research questions focus on unearthing the meaning and lived experiences of being an activist CEO in Ghana, including characteristics, motivations, activities, and significant differences between men and women activist CEOs in Ghana.

While companies are increasingly serving as advocates on a wide range of issues that may not be directly related to the profitability of companies, it has been noted that CEOs are becoming one of the popular agents for the expression of such corporate social advocacy (Dodd & Supa, 2014; 2015; Chatterji & Toffel, 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; Wettstein & Baur, 2016; Baur & Wettstein, 2016). Although some reasons have been proffered for CEO activism, most of these supposed motives have been postulations, not backed by empirical sayings or assertions of CEO activists.

Again, the literature is currently non-existent regarding the motivations for CEO activists in the Global South. Do the same motives that have been suggested for CEO activists in America serve as the drivers for CEO activists in a developing country such as Ghana? Are there some deeper philosophical, personal, and values-based drivers for

engaging in CEO activism in Ghana? What new perspectives could the explication for the motivations for CEO activism inform our understanding of CEO activism generally? To what extent could such notions as Caritas, postmodernism, Ubuntu philosophy, and Africapitalism be regarded as serving as motivations for CEO activism in Ghana? These considerations inform the first research question:

RQ1: What are the motivations of CEOs in Ghana for engaging in CEO activism?

While some current studies on the emerging phenomenon of corporate sociopolitical involvement have somewhat deepened our understanding of aspects of the issue, there is still a whole lot more to learn about CEO activism (Livonen, 2018; Dodd & Supa, 2014; Nalick et al., 2016; Chatterji & Toffel, 2018). There is no clear typology for talking about the classes of issues that CEO activists generally concern themselves with. To what extent can the brand activism typology of Kotler and Sarkar (2018) apply to CEO activism? Do activist CEOs in Africa advocate for the same issues/causes as CEOs in Western societies? The focus of RQ2 is to address some perceived gaps in knowledge regarding the range or nature of issues for CEO activists in Ghana.

RQ2: What range of sociopolitical issues do CEO activists in Ghana focus on?

Some scholars, notably Livonen (2018) and Chatterji and Toffel (2018) have suggested some approaches (strategies and tactics) employed by CEO activists in their social resistance actions, based mainly on their observations of the works of CEO

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activists. Research Question 3 concentrates on providing an empirical outlining of the tactics employed by CEO activists, presented from the "inside-out" perspective of activist CEOs in Ghana. To what extent do the CEO activism tactics fit into the extant postulations, such as those of Chatterj and Toffel (2018) and Livonen (2018)? Given that these postulations were derived from the Western sociocultural context, I strongly believe that they would not exactly describe the tactical repertoire of a non-Western society such as Ghana. What tactics are adopted by the informants in this study? Such concerns inform Research Question 3:

RQ3: What tactics do CEO activists in Ghana employ in their resistance actions?

The current literature on CEO activism reports on some effects of the phenomenon. Taking a principally modernist view that privileges investors and the corporate interests, the focus has been on the effects of CEO activism on some organizational outcomes, including customers' purchase intents (Dodd & Supa, 2014; Weber Shandwick, 2017), public opinion, and employee loyalty and employee resonance (Chatterji & Toffel, 2016; 2017).

Currently, there has been no clear research findings on the role of social or community-wide effects of CEO activism generally, especially within emerging market contexts of Africa. Applying a postmodern perspective that stands open to dissensus and multiple stakeholder perspectives, this dissertation explores the views of CEO activists regarding the perceived effects of their social resistance actions on diverse stakeholders. From the perspective of CEO activists, what could be said to be the effect of CEO

activism on society? Are there any consequences –positive or negative – of engaging in CEO activism for CEO activists? Does CEO activism lead to separate consequences for men and women CEOs in Ghana? While sections of the extant CSR literature looks at the consequences of engaging in CSR, I expect that the effects of CEO activism would be quite different from what we now know. This is so, not only because of some peculiarities of engaging in CEO activism generally but also because of the situational dynamics and the context of Ghana. Such considerations undergird the fourth research question of this dissertation:

RQ4: What effects have been produced by the resistance actions of CEO activists in Ghana?

Some scholars have contemplated some of the consequences of CEO activism on CEOs who choose to serve as social activists. Some of these consequences have been described as not desirable for CEOs. While CEO activism is expected to become a global phenomenon, there is currently a gap in knowledge about how the phenomenon is shaping up in the developing world. Given the possible impact on businesses and CEO activists, what range of measures are taken by CEO activists to protect themselves?

Based on qualitative interviews, Chatterji and Toffel (2019) suggest that CEOs activists could minimize some of the negative effects of their actions by paying heed to *when* they communicate, and *how* they communicate. Are communication-related safeguards the only avenues open to CEO activists? Are the negative consequences of CEO activism only occasioned by communication challenges? What other safeguard options could be open to CEO activists? How does the socio-cultural milieu in Ghana

inform the safeguards employed by CEO activists in the country? These are some of the considerations that shaped the final research question in this study:

RQ5: What safeguards do activist CEOs in Ghana employ to insulate themselves from the pushbacks they face because of their resistance actions?

Summary

Overall, the five (5) research questions for this dissertation have been presented, bearing in mind the specific socio-cultural, economic, legal, and political context of Ghana, as presented in Chapter Two, the theoretical perspectives outlined in Chapter Three, and the literature review and conceptual framework set out in Chapter Four.

The five research questions set within significant links in the conceptual framework of CEO activism development are as follows:

RQ1: What are the motivations of CEOs in Ghana for engaging in CEO activism?

RQ2:   What range of sociopolitical issues do CEO activists in Ghana focus on?

RQ3:   What tactics do CEO activists in Ghana employ in their resistance actions?

RQ4:   What effects have been produced by the resistance actions of CEO activists in Ghana?

RQ5:   What safeguards do activist CEOs in Ghana employ to insulate themselves from the pushbacks they face because of their resistance actions?

This chapter has presented a review of the literature on CEO activism and how it differs from related concepts such as corporate social responsibility, political corporate

social responsibility, corporate political activity, corporate social advocacy, brand responsibility, and brand activism. A conceptual framework that explains the development of CEO activism has also been presented, as well as the five research questions that this dissertation is designed to respond to and their justifications. The next chapter lays out the methods for data collection, data handling, and data analysis employed in this dissertation.

CHAPTER V

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter focuses on explaining and justifying the various philosophies and methods of data collection, data handling, and data analysis. As explained in the preceding chapters, this dissertation focuses on exploring selected themes related to the nascent phenomenon of CEO activism as it is developing within the Ghanaian context. While the phenomenon of CEO activism is still new, the bulk of scholarly research on it has been within Western (mainly American) contexts.

Almost all reports on the phenomenon in the trade, specialist, and popular media have likewise adopted a Western focus. Scholars are still trying to fully conceptualize and operationalize various aspects of the concept of CEO activism. There have been attempts to shed some light on some aspects of CEO activism. However, many dimensions of the phenomenon remain unexplored.

Although still an emerging phenomenon, CEO activism is expected to become a global social fact (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018) and a more mainstream aspect of leadership and strategic communications (Weber Shandwick, 2017). Aiming to address some lacunae in the current scholarly literature on CEO activism, it is hoped that this dissertation would contribute some empirical data and findings from the Global South while helping to address the prevailing inadequacy of theories on the phenomenon.

Researching lived experiences

Given the perceived gaps in knowledge regarding the phenomenon of CEO activism and the research questions, I decided to undertake this study from a qualitative

standpoint, rather than a quantitative or positivist one. The qualitative research approach focuses on contributing to the generation of theories and examining how human social actors interpret and make sense of society (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Interpretivism argues that social actors are dynamically interacting with their environments in ways that constantly constructed and shaped meaning (Babbie, 2010). The preference for human science (van Manen, 2016; 1997) or qualitative methods, rather than quantitative approaches for this research project was thus based on the desire to gain insights and non-numerical-type data regarding CEO activism. The objective was not to test hypotheses nor to generalize findings from samples to whole populations.

It is worth mentioning however that the argument is not based on any foibles of quantitative research per se, but rather that positivism was deemed inadequate or suitable in fully exploring, describing, and explaining the wide dynamism and ramifications of that slice of human social phenomena that some scholars call CEO activism.

This research focuses on an interpretive understanding of CEO activism by providing empirical data from emerging markets on various factors that could define the expressions of the genre of CEO activism that is evolving in an African society such as Ghana. This research adopts an empirical human science approach (van Manen, 2016; 1997) by gathering relevant data and analyzing insights from the lived experiences of a purposively selected group of 24 activist CEOs in Ghana.

Such an approach merits a hermeneutic stance to form a deeply interpretive discernment of insights relating to the slices of the lifeworld experiences of CEO activists in Ghana, rather than the pursuit of generalizable numerical data or the testing of hypotheses. As a nascent phenomenon, CEO activism has many unknown facets, and

such an approach to uncovering some of the identified parts of the phenomenon is deemed necessary because it "is discovery-oriented. It wants to find out what a certain phenomenon means and how it is experienced" (van Manen, 1997, p. 29).

With the above intent and background of the study, but also based on the country-specific context of Ghana, the theoretical framework, literature, and conceptual framework, this study is primed to address the research questions presented in Chapter Four relating to specific facets of what it means to be a CEO activist in Ghana.

The initial immersion

The researcher first became aware of the concept of CEO activism during the winter term of 2018, while taking a course on Brand Responsibility at the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication with Professor Kim Sheehan. The initial interest generated by the innovativeness of this unusual behavior by leaders of companies in being concerned with issues that had to do with "the greater good" (Quelch & Jocz, 2008) conditioned the researcher to undertake an initial deep-dive into the viability of the phenomenon of CEO activism as a matter of scholarly concern.

It was not long before this initial immersion indicated that CEO activism was an emergent phenomenon, with scholars such as Chatterji and Toffel beginning to broach the subject in 2016, following the reaction of some CEOs to President Donald Trump's travel bans on nationals from some countries (Chatterji & Toffel, 2016). The dearth of scholarly literature on the phenomenon became glaring to me, as most of the publications about CEO activism were white-paper style works in trade publications and such journals as the Harvard Business Review. The initial immersion also revealed that CEO activism had not

entered the discourse ecosystem in the developing world, with virtually all the initial reports on the phenomenon having a Western (American) focus.

Once the likelihood of undertaking fieldwork in Ghana became a possibility, more steps were taken to ascertain the feasibility of the study. For instance, other efforts to gauge the viability at this stage involved discussions with some scholars and researchers in the area of management, marketing, brand responsibility, sustainability, critical public relations, development communication, and corporate social responsibility. These discussions helped to finetune the scope of this dissertation, following the initial literature search that CEO activism was indeed an emerging phenomenon, with scholars yet to fully conceptualize and operationalize it. This perception was corroborated by Livonen (2018).

An even more detailed literature search indicated that besides the Western orientation, initial publications on CEO activism had focused on white, men CEOs and that the works of women CEOs had been relatively elided. The relatively modernist view of the phenomenon also became apparent, with the focus on connections between CEO activism and corporate outcomes such as purchase intent, public opinion, and employee loyalty (see Chatterji & Toffel 2018; Dodd & Supa, 2014; 2015). Discussions with some of the African scholars and the literature search offered an indication of some activist CEOs in Ghana who could be contacted, should a decision be made to proceed with the study in Ghana.

Having undertaken this initial immersion, the decision was made to test the viability of the overall concept of the research project by undertaking a pilot study during the summer of 2018. However, ethical clearance for such a human subject study needed to be obtained beforehand. Approval was obtained from the University of Oregon Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Research Compliance Services (RCS) at the University of

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Oregon. The interview guides for this dissertation are provided as appendices (Appendix A and Appendix C).

The research site

As discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation, the research was conducted in the West African country of Ghana. A major factor in this decision was the realization that despite its nascence, the bulk of the literature on CEO activism had been based on empirical work in Western (mainly American) contexts. In fact, as at the time of planning for this research, the researcher did not come across a single published research report on CEO activism, based on studies conducted in the Global South, despite an extensive multi-tiered literature search.

Among the factors that influenced the choice of Ghana was the desire to augment the current scant literature on CEO activism with data from a non-Western context. I fancied my chances of successfully accessing activist CEOs in Ghana than elsewhere due to my strong contacts and connections within the Ghanaian society and the country's corporate sector, having had a significant portion of my professional life as a communication professional in that country.

I was convinced that a study on CEO activism that was based on the Ghanaian context would provide empirical data on how such notions as the African philosophy of Ubuntu, and related notions of Caritas, and Africapitalism could find expression in the brand of CEO activism that was taking place in Ghana. Besides, the pilot study provided some reason to expect that some postmodern values in public relations could be motivations for CEO activism in Ghana. Thus, the prospect of introducing studies on

CEO activism, based on the lived experiences of activist CEOs in an emerging market provided an added impetus for choosing to conduct the study in Ghana. Details of the Ghanaian context of the study are provided in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

Data collection

A phased approach was adopted in the conduct of this research. The first phase entailed a pilot study that saw the researcher undertaking preliminary fieldwork in Ghana during the summer of 2018. The second phase involved the main data-gathering phase that took place in the fall of 2019.

<u>The pilot study</u>

The pilot study was essentially designed to be a feasibility study, aimed at ascertaining the extent to which the phenomenon of CEO activism was observable in Ghana. The focus here was the identification and collection of preliminary data on the phenomenon from an identified group of both men and women activist CEOs in the country. Another objective was to elicit from the informants during this pilot study contact information from a snowball sample of other CEO activists who could be interviewed during the main data collection phase in 2019.

The pilot study was undertaken between August and December of the year 2018. While all other participants were interviewed in-person in their own offices in Accra-Ghana between August and September 2018, Lucy Quist's interview was conducted over *Skype* in December 2018, while the researcher was on the premises of the University of Oregon in Eugene. The informant did not disclose her location during this interview. She

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only indicated that she was in her home. It was however not clear the location of this residence.

The preliminary literature review informed data collection during the pilot study. For instance, it focused the inquiry on mapping out the scope of CEO activism, as undertaken by the participants. It also informed the development of the interview guide that was used during this phase of the research (see Appendix A).

In keeping with the approved IRB protocol, the subjects for this study were purposively selected. There were seven participants during the pilot study. These comprised four (4) men CEO activists and three (3) women CEO activists. These collaborators/participants/informants/co-investigators were Oheneyere Gifty Anti, Dr. Edith Dankwa, Lucy Quist, David Ampofo, Kenneth Thompson, Kenneth Ashigbey, and Emmanuel Awumee. The mini-profiles of the CEOs who participated in the pilot study are presented as an appendix to this dissertation (See Appendix B).

Invitation letters were sent to them via email. This Invitation Letter (a sample is provided as Appendix E) summarized the research, outlined the attendant risks and rewards, and the informants' right to decline participation and/or completely withdraw from the study at any point in the study. These points were highlighted again at the beginning of each interview. At the start of each interview, I also sought permission to digitally record the conversations as well as obtained the permission to attribute quotations and ideas to respective informants. The informants were then told that participating in the interview amounted to their informed consent. All participants agreed to have their sayings and ideas attributed to them in this dissertation, but also in all other publications that would emerge as a result of the fieldwork.

The interviews during this pilot phase ranged between 45 minutes and 60 minutes. These were digitally recorded. The researcher also maintained a journal in which he entered significant details, observations, and reflections of each interview context. He also logged some planning details for various aspects of this study. The audio recordings from the interviews during the pilot study were each transcribed and prepared for preliminary data analysis. However, a decision was made to analyze data from the pilot study in greater detail with the data from the main fieldwork.

Main data collection phase

The second phase of this research was the main data collection stage that saw the participation of more CEO activists in Ghana, using a more focused interview guide (see Appendix C) that was designed to collect insights to help address clearly defined research questions.

In a bid to address the goals of the research and the research questions, a qualitative research design was adopted, involving in-depth interviews with knowledgeable informants/collaborators/participants. This interviewing philosophy was greatly influenced by what van Manen (1997) described as "conversational interviewing" (p. 66). This was because of its dyadic value in helping to (i) investigate and collect experiential narrative for enriching the development and understanding of human phenomena, and (ii) serving as a means for developing and building relationships between research collaborators about what their experiences regarding a given phenomenon meant.

The dissertation was also conducted in the postmodern tradition, or what has been described as the "dialogic" tradition of research, which stresses micropolitical processes, resistance to power, the one-sidedness of reality, dissensus production, the local nature of understanding (Deetz, 2001, p. 31) and "covenantal ethics" (May, 1980, p. 327) that sets a stage for greater equity in positionality and fairness among collaborators in the research enterprise as co-creators.

Data collection entailed long conversational interviews with purposely selected activist CEOs in Ghana, designed to uncover some unknowns relating to their lived experiences as CEO activists in Ghana. Although a purposive sampling method was employed, the snowball sampling technique was also adopted to improve avenues for other CEO activists who may not have emerged from the initial search process to also be included in the study.

<u>The qualitative interview method adopted</u>

An interview is a verbal exchange (whether face-to-face or mediated) in which a person (the interviewer) attempts to elicit information or expressions of opinions or beliefs from another person (the interviewee) (Maccoby & Maccoby, 1954). A major approach in qualitative research, interviews are vital in exploring informant perspectives and perceptions (Daymon & Holloway, 2002).

The qualitative interview is a purpose-driven conversation in which the researcher and the informant are brought together as partners in a structured exchange (Bingham & Moore, 1959; Englander, 2012). It is a carefully driven conversation with a special purpose (Rubin & Rubin, 1995), involving an individual seeking to create a cultural

logic, with the researcher conceiving and structuring the conversation in a way to realize the goals of the research (Lindloff & Taylor, 2011).

Although diverse forms of interviews exist, such as telephones (Shuy, 2002), and on the Internet (James & Busher, 2012), some scholars have suggested that the face-to-face form of the interview remains the most popular form (Brinkman, 2018). In an interview, the interviewer asks questions and the interviewee (positioned as an expert on a facet of life) provides the answers (Brinkman, 2018).

The interview has become a popular method for producing knowledge because of its great flexibility and the advantage it affords as a dialogic approach (Brinkman, 2018). Interviews have thus become naturalized in the human and social sciences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018) and have become an integral part of modern life (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003).

Although neither a totally structured nor wholly unstructured interview is possible, Brinkman (2018) discusses some three more or less structured types of interviews. These are the relatively structured interview; the relatively unstructured interview; and the semi-structured interview. Relatively structured interviews are essentially structured interviews akin to those used in surveys and based on the research logic in questionnaires. Thus, they involve standardized questions, designed to elicit responses that are comparable across a pool of respondents. This type of interview suffers the disadvantage of not seeking to exploit the dialogic potentials of conversations. They tend to be cold, passive, and impersonal recordings of people's opinions and attitudes (Brinkman, 2018).

Relatively unstructured interviews include the life story interview approach. These focus on highlighting the significant influences, experiences, issues, and themes of individuals (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Atkinson, 2002). Such insights emerge after the interviewer has spent a considerable amount of time with the interviewee while remaining relatively passive during the interaction (Brinkman, 2018). Despite its power in social inquiry, interviews may be time-consuming. Besides, there may be wide gaps between what informants claim and what they do (Brinkman, 2018).

The interview design adopted in this study was influenced by the schema outlined by Englander (2012), as outlined as follows:

Type of interview and contexts

The type of interview employed in this study was the semi-structured mode of interviews with selected activist CEOs in Ghana. The semi-structured interview is seen as the mainstay of qualitative research (Warren, 2002). These capitalize on the knowledge and sense-making potentials of dialogs by allowing for more probing and reflexivity on the part of the interviewer (Brinkman, 2018). These types of interviews have also been described as affording the interviewer varied positionalities in directing and focusing the conversations according to the goals of the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Semi-structured interviews serve to help describe the lifeworld/lived experiences of the interviewee, to help interpret the meaning and essence of the phenomenon under investigation (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015).

The choice of this type of interview was thus informed by the goals of the study that relate to eliciting aspects of participants' lived experiences. The goal of this research was to gain an interpretive understanding of the lived experiences of selected CEOs in

Ghana who serve/have served as activists and to obtain insights that would enable the researcher to address the research questions.

Several interview contexts were observed during both the pilot phase and the main data collection. Most of the interviews took place within the face-to-face/one-on-one context, except for one (the interview with Lucy Quist), which occurred online over the *Skype* platform during the pilot phase of data collection. Most of the interviews took place in the corporate offices of the CEOs who served as informants in this study in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. Two face-to-face interviews took place outside of the informants' offices. These were the interview with Eunice Biritwum that took place at the poolside of the Oak Plaza Hotel on the Spintex Road of Accra, and that of Brigitte Dzogbenuku, which was held at the poolside of the Golden Tulip Hotel in Accra.

Sampling method / Selection of participants

Englander (2012) suggests that the sampling method should be systematic, methodical, general, and critical. The procedure employed for this dissertation commenced with an initial search to help identify a pool of CEO activists in Ghana. This was done through Internet searches/monitoring, but also by consulting relevant personal contacts in corporate Ghana.

The selection/inclusion criteria were that participants should be (i) men and women CEOs who are leading/have led companies that operate in Ghana (be they Ghanaian nationals or not), and (ii) who have embarked on some form of CEO activism in Ghana within the past five years (2014-2019). Thus, a purposive sampling method was employed to select participants who met the selection criteria.

Although a five-year CEO activism aging limit was originally set, it emerged that some of the participants identified had a more enduring record of accomplishment as activist CEOs in Ghana. For instance, Dr. Charles Wereko-Brobbey was found to have played various roles as a CEO activist in Ghana since the early 1990s. Thus, the initial five-year experience of informants was quickly relaxed, and respondents such as Charles Wereko-Brobbey, Ken Thompson, David Ampofo, Kofi Bentil, Charles Mensah, Dr. Edith Dankwa, Oheneyere Gifty Anti, and Lucy Quist who had more than the initial five-year criterion consequently included in this study.

Purposive sampling helped to identify an initial pool of 10 CEO activists during the pilot study phase in the summer of 2018. Once identified, these prospective informants were contacted through several means, including emails and phone calls. Some who the researcher had a stronger connection to were approached through their respective social media accounts, such as *Facebook Messenger, LinkedIn,* and *WhatsApp*.

The main thrust of this initial contact was to introduce the researcher and the purpose of the research. Once their interests were ignited to participate in this study, formal invitation letters were emailed to them, before the researcher's trip to Ghana during August and September. Once their commitments for participation were secured, the interview sessions were scheduled with each participant, based on several factors, including their availability, and at locations deemed to be most convenient to them.

It is noteworthy that a few of the participants declined participation during the pilot phase, citing non-availability because of their plans to travel abroad. For instance, although Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante was originally approached during the pilot phase, she could not participate at the time because she had made prior travel arrangements

outside Ghana. However, the researcher's persistence paid off, as she agreed to participate during the main data collection phase. There was atrophy of prospective participants, who later said they were not available to participate in this study.

The snowball sampling method was employed to help supplement the numbers of informants who were primarily selected purposively for the study, by asking informants at the end of their interviews to recommend other activist CEOs they knew in Ghana whose names may not have emerged during the initial search. Most of these collaborators gladly introduced the researcher to some of these potential collaborators. It is worth mentioning that all these recommendations were converted into participants.

Sample size / Number of participants

From the outset, the plan was to interview 10 participants, comprising an equal number of five men and five women CEO activists. However, practical considerations permitting, it was decided that more informants would be recruited, until an information saturation point was reached. Thus, the combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques resulted in the participation of a total of 24 collaborators in this study, comprising 12 men and 12 women.

Instrumentation considerations: The interviewer and the questions

All interviews were conducted in English by the researcher, with no involvement by field research assistants. As stated already, a semi-structured interview guide was employed to keep the discussions focused on the research goals and the collection of data that would address the research questions.

Based on the knowledge of the phenomenon at diverse stages of the study, various interview guides were used during the pilot phase and the main data collection phases. Thus, the interview guides for each stage of data collection were designed to explore carefully selected themes at each phase of the study. In each interview guide, provision was made for the discussion of the major themes, together with ample room to contain prompts for follow-up questions and probing. The respective interview guides used during the pilot study and the main data collection phase are provided as appendices to this dissertation.

Data collection in the main study comprised some 17 CEO activists in Ghana, conducted between October and December 2019 in the nation's capital of Accra. The informants during this phase comprised nine women and eight men. All interviews were conducted within face-to-face contexts during the fall of 2019. Each interview during the pilot phase and the main data collection phase was scheduled to last no more than one and a half hours (Daymon & Holloway, 2002). While most of the interviews kept to this duration of between 60 minutes and 90 minutes, naturally, there were some deviations.

These interviews were also recorded on two high fidelity digital sound recorders, to assure data security and insurance. These recordings were complemented by journals kept by the researcher for recording his observations and for separating quotes from his reflections, reactions, comments, and other field notes and observations, such as logging details about each interview, including the informant, his/her designation, date, time, and location of each interview.

This phase of data collection spanned October 14 and December 12, 2019. This definite cut-off date of December 12 was established for completing data collection

(Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). This was because data saturation point had been reached for most of the themes of the study.

Definitions and examples of CEO activism

One of the lessons learned from the pilot study was that some of the participants were unfamiliar with the concept of CEO activism. Thus, during the pilot phase, some time was spent, explaining the phenomenon to some participants, before they could identify with it. A decision was made to avoid or minimize such a situation during the main data collection.

Thus, to set the conversations underway, but also to establish a common frame of reference during the 2019 data collection, a set of definitions of the concept of CEO activism was presented to the informants. These included selected formal definitions of CEO activism, as defined by Hambrick and Wowak (2019) and Chatterji and Toffel (2016). Some concrete examples of the concept of CEO activism were also provided, including not only those from the United States of America but also examples from across Africa and Ghana.

The American examples of CEO activism included five illustrations, comprising the 2012 activity of Dan Cathy, CEO of the restaurant chain Chick-fil-A, who announced his opposition to same-sex marriage on a radio show; the 2015 action of Apple CEO Tim Cook, who took a column in the *Washington Post* to register his alarm about "religious freedom" laws he deemed as legitimizing discrimination; the 2016 instance that saw some 100 CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, signing a public letter in opposition of

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proposed legislation in North Carolina that would have limited transgender individuals' access to public restrooms.

Also included in the American exemplars was the 2017 instance where, on the eve of President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord, 30 CEOs took out a full-page ad in the Wall Street Journal, urging him not to do so; and the 2017 action by Kenneth Frazier, CEO of Merck, who publicly resigned from President Donald Trump's Manufacturing Council, after Trump's equivocation about white nationalists' violence in Charlottesville, Virginia.

The African and Ghanaian examples included Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante's 2019 action that saw her speaking out against electoral violence and the prevalence of political vigilantes in Ghana; Kenneth Ashigbey's 2018 action of speaking out against *"Galamsey,"* illegal small-scale gold mining in Ghana; the 2019 action of Senyo Hosi, who spoke out against falling standards of education in Ghana and called for educational reforms amongst Ghana's tertiary institutions; Kenneth Thompson's long-standing public stance since 2013 against bad economic management policies and performances in Ghana while advocating for better economic management of the country; and Ashim Morton's 2019 activity against plastic waste pollution and poor environmental management in Ghana.

Others included Tony Elumelu's campaign since 2012, advocating for the adoption of Africapitalism as a philosophy for ensuring greater participation of Africa's private sector in the continent's socio-economic development; and the actions by the Executive Women Network (EWN), advocating for increased gender diversity within

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corporations in Ghana. Also included were diverse activities by Kofi Bentil and Dr. Charles Wereko-Brobbey.

The sample definitions and examples proved beneficial. They served as useful ice-breakers, and in diverse cases, provided opportunities for clarifying the notion of CEO activism to participants, introduced warm discussions regarding why they were selected for the study, and generally revealed useful insights about various facets of the lived experiences of the informants. While some of the insights that emerged even at this embryonic phase of interviews were germane to the facts sought in this dissertation, others widely fell outside its purview.

Interestingly, these definitions and examples evoked some initial reactions from some participants, including aspects of their motivations for becoming CEO activists, indicating some of the issues that had concerned them, and their tactics employed.

Data analysis

The interviews from both the pilot study and the main data gathering phases were transcribed verbatim, with notes included reflecting some marked reactions of both the interviewer and the interviewees, such as sighs, laughter, significant and meaningful pauses. The transcription process was manually done by the researcher. This averaged 10 man-hours per recorded interview. Thus, overall, the transcription was done over about one calendar month. Rendered in the serif font Georgia at font size 10 and single-spaced, the transcripts ranged between 13 pages and 30 pages. In all, 426 pages of interview transcripts were produced, with an arithmetic mean of 18 pages per transcript.

In keeping with the co-creative philosophy of this research project and according to its covenantal ethical underpinnings, the transcript of each interview was shared with the respective collaborator, for their review and comments. A one-week turnaround period was agreed with each informant. All the interviewees reverted with their comments and suggestions to their transcripts. For instance, David Ampofo, John Awuah, Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante, and Emmanuel Awumee returned their transcripts, tracking changes they had made. All the other collaborators indicated their no-objection to the records of their interviews, as captured in their transcripts.

The interviews produced recorded narratives. A deliberate decision was made not to employ any computer-based qualitative data analysis application packages. This decision was to give the researcher full control of the process of greater intimacy and involvement in discovering the thematic meanings contained in the transcripts, through personal reflection and interpretation.

Data analysis generally followed a hermeneutic phenomenological thematic method (van Manen, 2016; 1997), designed to organize the voices of informants, highlight specific lines of inquiry, to rhetorically examine and interrogate their perspectives, and to provide insights to the research goals and research questions. In effect, the mission of the data analysis was to examine the data, reduce it, sort it into categories and codes, and interpreting those codes that suggested essential themes in the research questions such as motivations for engaging in CEO activism; issues and causes advocated for/against; strategies and tactics employed in resistance actions; effects/outcomes/consequences of engaging in CEO activism; and safeguard measures employed.

Data analysis was also influenced by the strategies advocated by Lincoln and Guba (1985) who outlined a four-step process including the comparative assignment of incidents to provisional categories; the elaboration and refinement of categories; the search for relationships, themes, patterns, and the establishment of meaningful connections. Codes were thus developed for the core lines of inquiry, setting the stage for insights from interviewees to be isolated, together with relevant quotes and reflections of the researcher. An open-ended coding system was adopted (Corbin & Strauss, 1990), involving an interpretive process of analyzing the data. This provided the analyst with new insights by deconstructing standard ways of interpreting phenomena reflected in the data.

The open coding system advocated by Corbin and Strauss (1990) involved a systematic way of comparing the similarities and differences in patterns of social action, as captured by the field data. Thus, similar events, actions, and interactions were compared and grouped into categories and sub-categories, allowing for these to be further fleshed out into their unique properties, dimensions, and indicators (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Comparison served to enhance specificity and aided the development of categories while improving the rigor and precision of the study. Discussion of findings was based on data reduction, categorization, and interpretation (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Researcher's Positionality and Reflexivity

The researcher entered Ghana's strategic communications sector at the turn of the year 2000. After 15 years in that sector, with more than one-half of that period spent in the C-Suite of various organizations, I decided to leave the industry to pursue doctoral studies

at the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication. The researcher's professional experience in Ghana's media and communications sector saw him developing strong relationships with some top and middle-level corporate executives in the country. His varied roles also saw him having some first-hand experience in senior management. These experiences and management exposures placed him in good stead to understand some of the mindset and behaviors of CEOs in Ghana, besides his close affinity with the Ghanaian context.

During his studies at the University of Oregon in such courses as brand responsibility, corporate social responsibility/sustainability, research methods, and media theory have all enriched his research and analytical toolkit, enabling him to see issues relating to CEO activism from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders. A part of the significance of this study besides its unusual sociocultural context for the phenomenon is the fact that it seeks to examine several pieces that could go into the development of theories on CEO activism.

The participants in this study were regarded as collaborators (van Manen, 1997, 2016), co-investigators, informants, and co-creators, rather than subjects. As the primary investigator, this posture afforded the researcher the ability to be reflective and sensitive to the lived experiences of the informants, as related in their recollections. It also gave the researcher the chance of being constantly open to gaining insights and discovering the experiences of what it meant to be a CEO activist in Ghana.

Being an insider did not always amount to a rosy story. On the downside, the researcher's familiarity with some of the collaborators tended to negatively affect the

length of some of the discussions, as too much time was spent "catching up" before settling down into the business at hand.

Summary

A qualitative research design was adopted that entailed long interviews with 24 purposively selected CEO activists in Ghana to collect data on the motivations for engaging in CEO activism; the issues advocated for/against; the strategies and tactics employed in CEO activism; the effects/outcomes of CEO activism; and the safeguards employed by activist CEOs in Ghana. There were two main phases of data gathering. These comprised a pilot phase in 2018 and a main data-collection phase in 2019. Non-probability sampling techniques were employed, comprising purposive sampling and snowball sampling.

The next five chapters (Chapter Six through Chapter Ten) present and discuss the findings concerning the five research questions driving this study. Chapter Six presents the findings on Research Question 1 on the motivations for engaging in CEO activism in Ghana. This is followed by Chapter Seven, where the findings relating to Research Question 2 on the range of sociopolitical issues that CEO activists in Ghana concern themselves with.

Chapter Eight reports the findings on Research Question 3 on the strategies and tactics employed by CEO activists in Ghana in their resistance actions. In Chapter Nine, the findings on Research Question 4 on the effects of the resistance actions of the CEO activists in Ghana who participated in this study are laid out and discussed. Finally, Chapter Ten contains the findings on Research Question 5 on the safeguards employed

by CEO activists in Ghana to insulate themselves from the undesirable effects of engaging in CEO activism in the country.

The discussion sections present the forward and backward linkages among the main concepts underlying each research question while drawing connections with theory and sections of the extant literature.

CHAPTER VI

MOTIVATIONS FOR CEO ACTIVISM

This chapter presents the results of the in-depth interviews from both the pilot study and the main phase of data collection, relating to Research Question 1: What are the motivations of CEOs in Ghana for engaging in CEO activism?

As explained in Chapter Five (Research Methods), the interview transcripts were manually analyzed, using the phenomenological theme-based method, designed to highlight specific lines of inquiry and provide insights to the research questions (van Manen, 2016; 1997). The voices and perspectives of the informants were rhetorically examined and interrogated, based on the research questions. The findings presented in this chapter involve the main themes regarding participants' motivations for developing the activist stance, and/or for continuing to engage in CEO activism in Ghana.

Motivated by Caritas and Ubuntu philosophy

It was found that CEO activism in Ghana was strongly motivated by a complex network of factors relating to Caritas and the indigenous African moral philosophy of Ubuntu. Many of the CEOs who participated in this study indicated that their activist stances had been spurred by predispositions to be helpful, loving, caring, charitable, and benevolent that derived from faith-based or religious doctrines. For most participants, CEO activism was motivated by a strong commitment to place struggles for the common social good above the quest for private interests and financial profits only for companies and their owners. Such socially-oriented motivations tended to privilege relationship-building above the pursuit of individual interests, via acting in ways that promoted

justice, mercy, equity, and fairness in the society, because these were God-given expectations for the strong and powerful in society.

Many other participants disclosed some Ubuntu-inspired motivations for engaging in CEO activism. In doing so, some of the informants displayed some worldviews that went against some ideas of the Western capitalist logic that favors stiff competition and personal capital accumulation, at the expense of standing for the vulnerable in society; relating well with others; seeking multiple stakeholder interests; and promoting social diversity, equity, inclusivity, and justice.

Faith or belief in God and caring for others because it is a divine instruction were strong themes that emerged as the bases for the actions of most of the CEO activists who participated in this study. Despite their gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, or indeed, other social identities, many informants in this study indicated that their activism was grounded in the personal belief in God or a supreme being, and the belief in working for the welfare of the society. For instance, Brigitte Dzogbenuku stated that her activism was driven by her belief in God, faith that grants her the courage to stand up for whatever she believed in:

> We must believe in God and be fearless in fighting for just causes. You must seek to make a positive impact; a great difference in the lives of people.

Senyo Hosi also drew some pearls of wisdom from the Holy Bible that enjoined all people to love and be each other's keeper. For him, this belief brought out the need to have an inter-generational mentality in sharper focus, where notions of prudent resource utilization, a stewardship mentality, and sustainability rang true:

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Matthew 7:12 of the Holy Bible says that whatsoever you would like others to do unto you, do it even so unto them. So, whenever others can, I would wish that they would be able to build and keep a world that would make me thrive. When I can, I would do the same for others. We owe it to generations yet to come, to leave behind for them a society that is in a more viable shape than we found it.

For Odelia Ntiamoah-Boampong, her activism was driven by the personal belief in having a Godly assignment to fulfill:

My activism is firmly grounded in some deeply held personal beliefs … that we are in this world on assignment. While some have come to help others climb, others are here to support others, and still, others have come to lead the way. I believe that, if I can support or lead the way for others to follow, it is a good thing for me.

Several informants disclosed that their activities were grounded in their value system that related to compassion and empathy for their fellow human beings. For those participants, such as Regina Honu, their empathetic traits had a strong influence in conditioning them to always put themselves in the shoes of some of the most vulnerable in the Ghanaian society, and to speak for the underprivileged:

I have great empathy and I believe in walking in someone else's shoes. We live in a developing world, and there're many problems, so I feel I must make a difference because I care for others.

It was found that such feelings of compassion and empathy were connected to some community-focused worldviews about progress and prosperity. Many participants described notions that limited progress and prosperity to material accumulation as fundamentally flawed.

It emerged that the notion of progress and prosperity related to a basket of indicators that reflected the quality of life of the community. Thus, the prevalent view

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was that progress was not limited to economic massification, where individual prosperity

meant a fatter personal bank account, a bigger and more fanciful house, a flashy marque,

owning airplanes, or similar Western capitalist concepts of prosperity. Many informants

defined progress and prosperity in society in terms of one's ability to positively impact

the community. Thus, for Eunice Biritwum, progress and prosperity meant more than

doing well only for oneself and one's nuclear family:

> Progress and prosperity would be that you would not only be able to raise your
> nuclear family, but you would also be able to support the extended family and
> bear up the community.

Several participants conceptualized progress and prosperity similarly in terms of a

socioeconomic situation of comfort for all. Charles Mensah saw the concepts of progress

and prosperity as touching on situations where the social system and safety nets had been

so strengthened as to ensure that everyone in the society was well catered for and made

comfortable to a reasonable extent:

> Progress and prosperity … where your neighbor is as equally comfortable as you
> are and is not too dependent on you. It is not just about you amassing wealth for
> yourself, but that your neighbors are also as comfortable as you are.

For many collaborators in this study, progress and prosperity referred to a

situation where all citizens enjoyed acceptable levels of comfort, because of the existence

of greater equity and fairness. Regina Honu observed that progress and prosperity had to

be linked up with drastic narrowing of gaps between the rich and the poor, meeting the

basic needs of everyone, and the elimination of abject poverty in society, especially

where women and girls were concerned:

> … progress entails equity … specifically, women and girls having equal
> opportunities in society; a drastic narrowing of the gap between the haves and the

have-nots; when hunger, famine … and unfortunate life events of the poor are non-existent; and where everybody lives in a dignified way.

Ergo, it was learned that the pursuit of progress for the community was such an important motivation for CEO activism that most participants saw such a community-focused orientation to prosperity as distinguishing genuine CEO activists from those CEOs with selfish motives for engaging in activism. As explained by Charles Wereko-Brobbey, this was because at the heart of understanding progress and prosperity was the realization that success in Africa ought to lead to improvements in the collective well-being:

> … it involves improvements in human wellbeing; … one thing that distinguishes a genuine activist from parasitic activists, as I'll call them. A genuine activist understands that it's not enough to be successful as an individual.

Some participants noted that such a focus on caring for the common good should be maintained, even when one's social resistance actions ruffled the feathers of some elements within the society. A section of informants spoke of their desire for Ghana to become a "Good Society," where every citizen had the basics required to live a decent life, including good health, an acceptable quality of education, and an adequate standard of social services and public infrastructure, where the worst forms of poverty were prevented because there was a good and effective social safety net, and where egalitarian policies were in effect. Kofi Bentil saw the need to strive for a society that assured welfare for all:

> I believe in the Good Society, where every citizen has the basics for a decent life, including good health, good education, an adequate standard of infrastructure, and minimal poverty because there is a good social safety net. Fighting for this drives me to be an activist CEO.

The pursuit of the welfare of the general good was found to include focusing on

some social resistance action towards achieving women's empowerment, agency, and the

protection of gender rights. For some of the CEO activists in this study, this part of the

prism entailed an intricate mix of success factors, including pursuing decent livelihoods

for women in ways that empowered them and made women and girls more independent

in Ghana. Brigitte Dzogbenuku saw her fight for progress and prosperity in Ghana as

focusing on the emancipation and economic empowerment of rural women:

> I remember *Daa Rosa* ... before, she had no money because she couldn't sell her palm oil. Now, progress is that she can send me 15 25-liter gallons a week to sell. She's emancipated and empowered now because she makes good money. She recently asked me not to send her sales revenue through her husband's phone since she now owned a smartphone. That's progress that is felt in the lives of the ordinary person.

Owing to the various views shared about progress and prosperity, many

informants indicated that private companies, brands, and CEOs had important roles to

play in promoting progress and prosperity across Africa. Most of the CEOs in this study

were unanimous in their calls for the private sector to speak out beyond those issues that

concerned the operations and the profitability of companies. Participants felt the private

sector owed it a duty to serve as social activists in fighting for the creation and

maintenance of conditions that would promote faster and greater rates of socio-economic

development in Ghana and across Africa. Kofi Bentil shared some of his views about this

more engaged and active form of corporate citizenship in Ghana:

> The private sector – companies, brands, and corporate executives - must be strong activists and get their voices heard on the big issues of the day, for the good of all.

In Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante's opinion, the private sector's role in Africa's development extended beyond the provision of employment and the payment of livable wages for employees. For her, the weightier roles of Africa's private sector included pushing for positive changes in the society by engaging in activism and undertaking public-private partnerships with governments and social entrepreneurship in delivering targeted solutions for the people:

> I am confident that the private sector and small businesses develop a country. African businesspeople must understand that it is private money that is going to turn things around for us for the better.

Some informants felt that a major role that the continent's private sector could play in driving the forward march of Africa's development included bringing effective pressure to bear on the political establishment to put in place the right policy initiatives that would support the developmental goals of Africa, for the welfare of the people.

Many participants in this study described how they typically felt about learning of the problems faced by the vulnerable in society. It emerged that when many of the informants found themselves in situations where they realized that the vulnerable in society had issues beyond their control, a common feeling was one of empathy that served to ignite in the activist CEO the desire to personally assist in bringing about a solution to the perceived problem(s). It was found that some CEOs in this study felt a sense of duty to advocate on behalf of the less powerful in society, whenever necessary. As disclosed by Charles Mensah, the need to speak on issues that confronted the vulnerable sections of the Ghanaian society had driven him to seek media opportunities for this purpose:

Whenever I notice such situations, I feel I owe it a duty to speak out on behalf of the less privileged and the less powerful in society. Usually, I would arrange a media briefing to enable me to speak to the issues at hand.

Many of the participants revealed that their activism was driven by their personal beliefs in the shared wellbeing of Ghanaians. Thus, some participants said they engaged in CEO activism because of the desire to ensure the security and viability of the entire society. It emerged that such sentiments were driven in part by the passion for Ghana and a *we-mentality* that drove the belief that whatever happened in Ghana could have the probability of affecting everyone else.

For Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante, it was such a realization that made it especially difficult to focus on business as usual and not be concerned with happenings in the country. Describing herself as an "Africanist" and a "Globalist," she spoke of her activism as grounded in her personal belief in the human spirit and the need to be socially responsible. According to her, the purpose of her business was only to serve as a tool for driving social change:

> These external things [protest actions] are internal. I am an Africanist and a Globalist, and I believe that society can be better. I am here for a purpose, which I am trying to achieve through my business and social causes. Being a CEO, you have to stand up and fight for others. It is a calling.

It emerged that the values of truth, integrity, honesty, fairness, justice, and doing things right were some of the personal convictions and belief systems that underpinned their actions as CEOs. The informants pointed to their early socialization within the family system, within Ghana's school system, and the church, as strong forces in helping them deeply embed these values as part of their moral compasses. For Brigitte Dzogbenuku, the value of upholding the truth and doing things right had been part of her

upbringing and had effectively guided her actions in the direction of upholding equity, fairness, good and justice:

> I was brought up like that. The motto for Wesley Girls High School says, *"Live Pure, Speak True, Right Wrong, Follow the King."* These values always make me want to stand for justice and fairness for everyone.

She urged Ghana's elite to believe in God and be courageous in the fight for the common good, even to the point of death:

> We must believe in God and be fearless in fighting for just causes. We must not fear to lay down our lives for the good of society.

Some participants believed that it was every Ghanaian's national duty to be involved in building a country that was worth living in. Some saw this as a divine duty, which sometimes meant rejecting opportunities to migrate or hold citizenships of other nations. In this regard, Kofi Bentil observed that:

> This is where God in His Wisdom decided to place me. I have never dreamt of being a citizen of another country. I have had many opportunities to do that, but I have never taken them. This is the reason why I need to make this country better.

Motivated by Africapitalism

It was found that CEO activism in Ghana was not only motivated by the desire to uphold some notions of Africapitalism, but that CEO activism in the country was an expression of Africapitalism. Many of the participants shared views that were consistent with some postulates of Africapitalism such as unique understandings of such ideas as a sense of progress and prosperity, a sense of parity, a sense of harmony, and a sense of place and belonging.

Many participants shared the belief that the private sector in Africa had a renewed role to play in the continent's development, by taking a more central place in catalyzing Africa's development by partnering with the public sector, civil society organizations, donors, and the development community in driving positive change in Africa.

A sense of progress and prosperity

Some saw the role of Ghana's private sector as becoming more socially responsible and partnering with the government, local communities, and civil society organizations in delivering the needed level of progress and prosperity for the common good. As articulated by Eunice Biritwum, the time for companies in Ghana to step up their social responsibilities and close ranks with various stakeholders was long overdue:

> Companies can do more in driving progress and prosperity by seeing the welfare of society as part of their responsibility. It's not just about the corporate bottom line but having the responsibility to bring the community along.

For some participants, a strong pathway by which Africa's private sector could help share the fruits of progress and prosperity for the greater good related to the role of companies in building traditional authority structures. Here, some informants believed that companies could develop the capacities of traditional chief and leaders in Africa to better support the socio-economic development agenda of Africa. Charles Mensah believed that, besides their roles in providing tax revenues and employment opportunities, private companies could upgrade the knowledge of traditional leaders in Africa to play more potent roles in educating the citizens at the local and community levels:

A profitable company can support traditional leaders. The traditional leaders and our traditional institutions should be strengthened to play more effective roles in social change and socioeconomic development.

Some felt that more attention needed to be focused on lifting Africa's subsistence sector, even as efforts were being made to rapidly transform the continent. However, a few of the participants believed that a major factor militating against the realization of progress and prosperity across Africa was the inconsistency with which governments across the continent had been seeking to drive the developmental agenda. Some participants expressed the idea that to share the burden of promoting progress and prosperity through consistent pushes across the continent, the private sector must partner governments and civil society organizations.

A sense of parity

Many of the participants believed that the private sector in Africa had an important role to play in ensuring that the fruits of progress and prosperity were shared equitably and for the common good. They described important roles that could be played by the private sector in contributing to the creation of shared value in ways that promoted equity, diversity, and inclusivity.

Many informants noted that the achievement of social inclusivity ought to be regarded as a prerequisite for Africa's private capitalists to be able to freely enjoy the fruits of their capital. As articulated by Senyo Hosi, a deeper sense of equity, justice, diversity and social inclusivity should precede the private businessperson's ability to contemplate an open enjoyment of his/her progress and prosperity:

Equity, inclusivity, and fairness are prerequisites for you as a businessperson to fully enjoy the fruits of your capital. When there is fairness and equity, you can cruise about in your top-spec automobile, without looking over your shoulders. If the society lacks equity for all, you risk having the poor masses pouncing on you.

In reechoing similar sentiments, Albert Ocran observed the need for African countries to seek greater inclusivity and parity, especially in terms of granting the youth real opportunities to enhance and realize their dreams:

If we don't create avenues for young people to feel that there're ample opportunities for them, they will probably take missiles and other weapons and attack those of us parading about in nice cars and living in nice homes.

Several participants thus called for egalitarian measures to address the needs of the marginalized in the society. Patience Akyianu called for policies that promoted inclusivity, and urged companies to implement more social responsibility programs that addressed the wide divisions in society, highlighting the centrality of education in such a process:

Education is a factor that can help to bridge the gap. The education gap needs to be closed and more investments made in infrastructure and critical areas to support access to education.

Some participants advocated for more media publicity for the role of CEO activists in Ghana, seeing modest contributions of some companies in Ghana to promote greater equity, diversity, and social inclusivity as largely unnoticed. Some of them were of the view that the private sector had more to do in terms of scaling up investments, supporting other institutions working to promote social inclusivity, and speaking truth to power. For Regina Honu, achieving a critical mass of private companies working for the realization of greater equity, diversity, and social inclusivity was essential in this effort:

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The private sector must be bold in speaking truth to power. Ghana's private sector should be brave to call out leaders and other public office holders found not to be doing the right thing.

Many of the CEOs saw endemic corruption in Ghana as a strong force that had negated efforts to promote parity and shared value for the people. Indicating what she saw as part of the reason for its existence, Brigitte Dzogbenuku described corruption as the present-day "scourge" that was holding back the hands of Africa's progress:

Corruption is a scourge because everyone thinks they should have a large part of the national cake. We must find ways of fighting corruption. People must understand that they won't die of hunger.

Some informants believed that creating social wealth for all stakeholders required a special focus on improving the life chances of all Ghanaians. For Ace Ankomah, such moves must be genuine and should not exclude any social stratum:

It requires a special focus on creating and improving the life chances of all, including the youth who live in the remotest villages. In the early 1950s, my father was able to enter Mfantsipim School (one of the top senior high schools) straight from my humble village of Akyiase. Not so today. This must be addressed.

A sense of harmony

Some of the informants advocated for sustainable development in Ghana and the pursuit of the Triple Bottom Line, where the entire society would have the mindset that corporate profits should be pursued, but with due consideration of present and future generations and with adequate regard for the protection of the planet.

A good number of participants noted that achieving the needed depth of harmony called for the increased realization that an overriding purpose of humans was the creation,

nurturing, and maintenance of relationships and experiences. In this regard, it was shared

that a big part of living on the planet Earth was for relationship-building, loving one

another, and community-building, as articulated by Brigitte Dzogbenuku:

> We're here for relationships and experiences … to love one another. We're not
> here to serve mammon. We're here to feel the grace-creation in which we find
> ourselves and to experience love and relationships.

Sharing more insights on how creating and sharing valuable social relationships

and experiences would promote a greater sense of harmony, several participants

advocated for a return to the age-old African social value of reciprocity that served to

preserve many traditional African societies.

The participants in this research were quite unanimous in indicating that good

leadership across all strata of society had a pivotal role to play in moving the society in

the direction of having more balance between economic prosperity, social wealth, and

environmental safeguards. They also expressed the view that corporate advocacy was

essential in promoting sustainable development, as shared by Alex Mould:

> Strong advocacy should come from corporate citizens, making sure that it is
> working with the government to understand and help them in areas where they
> need to be spending the money. We cannot leave the government alone to do that.

Some participants intimated that Africans needed to reexamine the blind copying

of destructive competitive tendencies of Western capitalism since most of such

tendencies undermined harmony on the continent. For those that shared such views, the

survival of the fittest competitive philosophy inherent in neoliberal capitalism was

antithetical to traditional African notions of peace and harmony.

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Charles Mensah advocated for a rejection of destructive discordant competitive tendencies of Western capitalism, and a return to traditional African philosophies that tended towards conciliation and cooperation, rather than competition:

> Africa should look more at cooperation rather than competition … that is our culture as Africans. We need to rediscover our values. We are traditionally people who seek and work toward the welfare of the entire society.

A sense of place and belonging

It turned out that the strong identity felt as Ghanaians/Africans comingled with the need to see Ghana develop, served as a strong driver of the work of many of the activist CEOs who participated in this study. For instance, Charles Mensah indicated that his work as a CEO activist was largely influenced by his strong desire to see Ghana join the comity of developed nations of the world:

> I am a CEO activist because I want my business to thrive, even when I am no more. So, I am pushing for the advancement of society, not for my own sake, but the sake of future generations. You cannot belong to any other place but Africa, where you were born … where you belong … where your umbilical cord is buried …, so you'd wish that your Motherland would also prosper and have a high level of progress, prosperity, and development. That's why we do what we do as CEO activists.

For Kofi Bentil, Ghana was his only Motherland and was the only country he belonged to. Owing to this tera-bonding, he found it necessary to do whatever he could to make the country a better home for all Ghanaians:

> All those migrants who have been dying on the Sahara Desert or drowning in the Mediterranean Sea in their bid to leave Africa for perceived greener pastures in Europe wouldn't be dying if we all tried to make Africa a better place for us all. Ghana is the only place I can call "home," so that I don't have to ever leave it to go anywhere else.

For several other participants, this feeling was expressed in terms of some deep pride in identifying as Ghanaian. Using some experiences surrounding the birth of his second daughter, John Awuah spoke about his pride in being a Ghanaian:

> I like to say I am a proud Ghanaian. When my wife was pregnant with my second daughter, she was in the UK with her sister. My mother-in-law wanted my wife to give birth in the UK, but I insisted that I wanted my daughter to be born in Ghana.

Thus, several participants disclosed that Ghana was the only place they could call home and that all of its citizens were duty-bound to address developmental challenges facing the nation. In the words of Albert Ocran, CEO activism in Africa ought to be distinct from the expressions of the phenomenon elsewhere. The object of CEO activism in Africa related to leapfrogging Africa's developmental agenda:

> CEO activism is more relevant in Africa than anywhere else because we're left behind in development. Others may engage in CEO activism out of altruism, but in Africa, we must do so out of urgency and necessity to leapfrog our development, while ensuring social justice.

Many participants said that their love for Africa was the reason why they became CEO activists. Senyo Hosi explained that Africa was the only continent for Africans and Africanists and that no matter how much Africans tried to belong elsewhere, those other places would never be their true homes. It was therefore essential for the current generation of Africans to ensure the continent's preservation and sustainable development:

> My love for Africa is the reason why I am a CEO activist. I am African and this is where I belong … I owe it to the generations that have graced me the opportunity and more the responsibility to be African and to be on this land to account for my time and ensure that the land that they've leased to me, will be handed over in much better shape than we found it.

For Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante, it was her love for Ghana and her pride in being an African that sparked her desire to be a CEO activist. She explained that it was her consciousness of being an African, and the confidence in her ability to help make some positive contributions to Africa's social transformation that kept her activist spirit alive. She expressed her belief in staying relevant by helping to find home-grown solutions to Africa's developmental problems. She noted that she was born in Africa to be an important part of solving the biggest problems facing Africa:

> My belief in Ghana and the love and pride I have in being Africa has everything to do with my activism as a CEO. I think the whole African consciousness; being a Black person; taking great pride in being who I am; and the fact that I know I can make an impact in my community …

Motivated by postmodern values

It emerged also that some extant post-modernism values served as motivations for some of the participants in becoming and/or engaging in CEO activism. The motivating postmodernism values included notions of organizational politics; micropolitics and alliances; postmodern biopower; dissensus and dissymmetry; and local and situated ethics and decision making.

Postmodern biopower and CEO activism

The informants generally felt empowered to undertake the kind of activism they wished to engage in, and to the extent, they wished for. Many of the CEOs disclosed that they had the inner power to conceptualize and rollout activist campaigns, designed to resist patterns within the Ghanaian social system that worked against the interests of the vulnerable in the society and/or retarded social development.

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Many of the participants displayed a keen awareness as conscious participants who wielded the power to resist dominant centers of power in Ghana, such as the Government of Ghana and sometimes the interests of owners of businesses and other sections of the business community in the country.

Several informants expressed the view that they had the capacity and ability to leverage their statuses and roles as CEOs in Ghana to serve as social activists, working to drive society in a positive direction. In recognizing their power to effect positive social change, most of them perceived their roles as activists to include standing up to dominant power centers in Ghana, especially the government.

In discussing their sense of personal power, many of the participants felt they were doing much more than they could have hoped for. Indeed, for this group of participants, there was no limit to their ability to envision and implement any form of social resistance activity.

Ace Ankomah emerged as an exemplar for those who believed that their power to engage in any form of activism was not unlimited, even though working as a CEO activist was a part-time activity. However, he felt that not all activists in Ghana felt empowered in their roles and called for more effective pressure groups to join the struggle for the common good. He called for more citizens of Ghana to see the need to be active in-between elections:

> I am doing more than enough, as a spare time activity. Every Ghanaian ought to occupy their space and speak up against things they don't like. If we have more people speaking up and constructively engaging the government intellectually on critical issues, Ghana would work better for all.

It was found that the perception of personal power to engage in CEO activism emanated from several sources, factors, personal characteristics, and social situations. For instance, the power to be active was derived from their executive management positions. Charles Wereko-Brobbey's high profile status was a strong influence on his perception of power to engage in activism. He added that this had had such an enduring influence on others' perceptions of his capability that, even in his retirement, he felt that he wielded a strong influence in Ghana:

> I have the power to push for the sort of change that must happen in Ghana. My public profile has been helpful in my activism. People would listen to you because of who you are … they would go along with you, follow the positions you espouse, and accept your recommendations.

Although generally, there was a feeling of having the power to engage in activism as desired, some participants felt that they could not undertake their activities to the extent desired. For these informants, there were some limitations, due to factors such as time and the complexity of managing or aligning discordant stakeholder interests and loyalties. Senyo Hosi was one informant who shared some feelings having to sometimes act against the interests of the members of the petroleum chamber he headed:

> No, I don't feel that I have enough power to do the kind of activism I would like to do, to the extent that I wished for. I feel limited by time … constrained by the need to manage all related interests, which may be conflicted.

Micropolitics, alliances and CEO activism

Many of the informants in this study were conscious of the potency of enhancing their power and influence as CEO activists by forming all manner of alliances. Although most participants had a conscious appreciation of their abilities to take actions, some felt

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that there was only so much an individual could do by way of solo actions. Those who

felt this way wished they had the support of other CEOs.

Patience Akyianu shared some pessimism regarding the growth of CEO activism

in Ghana, partly because of the lack of support from others for the activist CEO. To her,

many benefits could be derived from the critical mass and group dynamics of joint

actions by CEOs:

> As an individual, I can only do so much in my small corner, sharing my thoughts
> about issues that matter to me. I think as a collective, we have more power. A lot
> of the time, I have found that power in the collective. People hesitate to voice out
> when others do not stand in solidarity with them.

It was found while several participants undertook their actions as solo enterprises,

an overwhelming number of them tended to identify various layers of micropolitical

power, both within and outside of their organizations. Such strategic alliances were found

to be with likeminded individuals and groups that could assist the work of the activist

CEO in one way or the other.

For instance, some internal alliances were found to be with boards of directors,

individual directors, members of management, and selected employees. For instance, it

emerged that Kenneth Thompson's work as a CEO activist was greatly enabled by the

support he enjoyed from the Board of Directors of Dalex Finance, but also the

instrumentality of one of the directors of the company, Joe Jackson.

Most of the informants indicated that they felt that they had significant abilities to

undertake their actions partly because of the support they received from various quarters

or allies, including board members, other CEOs (be they activists or not), and other

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members of the C-suite. Charles Mensah indicated that his sense of empowerment

emanated from the active roles played by his employees in his campaigns:

> My employees are a part of my advocacy campaigns. My employees assist me in
> my campaigns … helping with my presentations and publicity materials together,
> my speaking points, and in anticipating questions and rebuttals. I feel empowered
> and emboldened because I have the total support of my team.

Other participants spoke of the instrumentality of the "Kitchen Cabinet,"

comprising selected members of staff, management, and directors, who played various

roles in supporting the work of some of the CEO activists in this study, ranging from

helping to identify issues, defining messaging strategies, serving as researchers and a

listening post, critiquing and preparing CEOs to speak effectively, and participating in

postmortems and debriefing sessions.

It was found that some participants had sought to build power bases for their

actions, by forming external alliances with other like-minded individuals, for various

reasons. For instance, participants such as Edith Dankwa, Eunice Biritwum, Patience

Akyianu, Dedo Kofi, Lucy Quist, and Pearl Esua-Mensah had seen the need to belong to

the EWN, to promote the interests of the corporate woman in Ghana, while standing with

the vulnerable in the society.

Organizational politics and CEO activism

Generally, participants' responses supported postmodern notions of companies as

political systems, where power was regarded as an important resource that could be

employed for positive social and organizational outcomes. In playing the corporate

political terrain to their advantage, it emerged that although they were part of the power

centers within their organizations, the participants in this study saw the need to sometimes refuse to align with the power bases not only within the organizations, such as boards of directors and management teams but also powerful power centers within the country, such as the government of Ghana.

Local and situational ethics and decision-making

As CEO, although participants belonged to the dominant classes within their organizations and the wider Ghanaian society, they were prepared to go against the grain in sometimes opposing interests of powerful sections of society, such as the government, investors, and the corporate interest. For instance, it was most participants' significant rejection of certain norms and the privileges of dominant power structures in the society that motivated most of them to stand with marginalized groups within Ghana, such as the poor, the vulnerable, minorities, and marginalized groups.

It turned out that their actions as CEO activists were driven by the need to take actions, based on the requirements of particular situations, and in ways that convinced them that such decisions were most ethical and human, under the circumstance. It was learned, for instance, that most of the informants were positively predisposed to ideas of diversity, equity, and inclusivity. Such orientations were found to produce responses that emboldened most of them to resist influences in power within the Ghanaian society that excluded the voices of marginalized people within the society.

For an overwhelming majority of the participants, the motivation for CEO activism was a strong desire to consider the interests and views of multiple stakeholders in their decisions. In fact, for most informants, it was the need to represent the interests of

multiple stakeholders – rather than the strategic corporate interests of financial profits for investors – that kept motivating them to become activists.

It turned out that, for the most part, the CEOs who participated in this study considered the interests of others, besides the interests of investors, in their situational decision-making processes. A common theme that emerged was that, for some of the participants in this study, while interests of the owners of businesses in making money or profit remained the primary determinant of business decisions, there was also the realization of the need to make a bigger impact in society by considering the needs of other stakeholders. For these informants, this goal made it imperative for private businesses in Ghana to become more open-minded in considering the interests and needs of many other stakeholders.

Generally, all participants in this study displayed a tendency to embrace diversity, equity, and social inclusivity. While traditionally, ethnicity had been viewed as one of the bases for social stratification in Ghana, all the informants in this study noted that they did not subscribe to social distinctions based on ethnicity. In affirming their support for social equity and inclusivity, some of the informants spoke of the importance of diversity in progressive organizational and social processes. As Charles Mensah observed, diversity was necessary for providing suitable levels of multiple perspectives needed for social and organizational advancement. He thus indicated a culture within his organization that embraced social diversity and inclusivity:

> If your position is that everyone must think like you and do things like you, then we are not going anywhere as a society. We need diversity and social inclusivity to advance society. Traditional Ghanaian philosophy says that "All the fingers of the hand are not the same." This underscores the need for difference and diversity in society.

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Several reasons emerged as accounting for this pattern of ethnic blindness. For most of the CEOs in this study, the recognition that their diverse ethnic backgrounds and those of virtually every Ghanaian had a role to play helped explain this openness to diversity. For instance, Ace Ankomah referred to his "impure" ethnic, international, and racial lineage that made him refer to his children as the "United Nations:"

> I am one of those ethnically impure people you can find, coming from a mixture of about five or six ethnic groups in Ghana. I am part-Akyem, Fante, Asante, Larteh, Malian, Portuguese, etc. So, which of these am I going to identify with, and look down on which? I call my children 'United Nations' because of their mixed lineage. I recently traced my Portuguese ancestry and realized that I could get a Portuguese passport.

Gender diversity was likewise valued. For Ace Ankomah, being raised in a home that involved living and relating with more women than men influenced his openness to gender diversity and overall positive attitudes to women, despite being a powerful man in a patriarchal Ghanaian society:

> I have no negative attitudes towards women. My parents had me and five sisters. My dad passed on at a relatively young age, so I was raised by my mum and my sisters. I have a wife and two daughters, my wife has only sisters, and I have only one son. A person's social identity does not influence me per se.

Some participants in this study displayed a Biblical turn of mind in expressing their support for diversity and social inclusivity. In this regard, some spoke about the need to avoid discrimination since all humans were children of God. Eunice Biritwum remarked that:

> We are all human beings and children of God, so I want to accept them for who they are, where they are coming from, however they choose to identify themselves, and when we have to work together, I see how best we can do that, without worrying too much about the labels.

In expressing their tolerance for people from diverse backgrounds, several

participants alluded to the fact that it was not their place to judge others. According to

Regina Honu, although many things pointed to the fact that many sections of the

Ghanaian society were not tolerant of diversity, her open-mindedness and a keen sense of

curiosity have tended to favorably predispose her to notions of diversity, equity, and

social inclusivity in Ghana:

> I'm very opened-minded and I'm generally curious to understand how they live
> their lives because I need curious individuals. This openness and curiosity
> influence my activism because it enables me to tailor my messages to the
> audience.

Many of the participants in this study were of the view that embracing equity,

diversity and social inclusivity was important in harnessing the total human capital

potential of Ghana for rapid national development. These CEO activists thus expressed

the view that no matter their social identity, everyone had an important social function,

and should, therefore, be brought on board and given the chance to contribute to society,

based on their merit and capability. Alex Mould spoke against patterns of discrimination

and in favor of social justice for all in Ghana:

> I think everybody has a place in society. Everybody should be given a chance.
> The fact that you are disabled doesn't mean that you are incapable. The fact that
> you are a woman doesn't mean you shouldn't be given the same advantages that
> men are given. I was brought up in a culture where you are emancipated; liberated
> and empowered so that you can talk, and your voice should be heard; you should
> reason and learn from your actions as well. I believe in equity, giving people the
> opportunity, and empowering people to speak out and be heard. However, people
> should be responsible for expressing freedom of speech.

Although many of the CEOs who served as informants in this study said they

were unopposed to sexual minorities in Ghana, such as members of the LGBTQ+

community, they would like their embrace of sexual minorities to remain at the personal level. None of them agreed to the suggestion of engaging in activism for the promotion of same-sex marriage in Ghana, citing cultural barriers. For instance, John Awuah revealed that he did not personally endorse LGBTQ+ rights in Ghana and would not make same-sex rights the focus of any of his campaigns, although he foresaw a CEO in Ghana publicly declaring so, quite soon in Ghana:

> I don't have a hard feeling against it, but I don't think it is a culture that we should introduce formally into our setting. It is not an agenda I would like to pursue, as in making a public statement about. I see a time when a business leader in Ghana would come out to declare that he is gay.

Odelia Ntiamoah-Boampong's stance, relative to the LGBTQ was one of intolerance. For her, it was an aberration for one to be sexually attracted to people of the same sex. For her, issues concerning same-sex relationships and marriages were non-issues within Ghana, and were of less priority to Ghana's developmental needs:

> It is something that shouldn't come to this part of our world because we have bigger problems that need to be solved. LGBTQ is like when you solve all your problems and there is nothing more to do. A teacher is walking 12 hours just to be able to teach, don't talk to me about LGBTQ; it doesn't even cross my mind.

Dissensus and dissymmetry and CEO activism

The CEOs who participated in this study displayed a strong willingness to embrace conflict and tension, whenever necessary, in their efforts to effect changes in society. In doing so, most of them showed the ability to seek out issues within the society they disagreed with and to oppose all manner of individuals and organizations in Ghana.

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It emerged that many of the participants in this study saw conflict as integral to their role as CEO activists. As indicated by Kofi Bentil, there would be no need for their agitation if CEO activists agreed with everything in the system:

> You're like a professional quarrelsome person. You are always arguing about something. Conflict comes with the territory – if we agreed, then there would be no need to agitate. However, you come to it with humility. The drive for engaging in CEO activism was the existence of social injustices in Ghana that disagreed with the expectations of most participants regarding what the social order in Ghana ought to be. Many participants felt that conflict, in the form of CEO activism, was necessary for addressing perceived social injustices.

Motivated by a bright outlook on CEO activism

In revealing their plans, it emerged that most of the CEOs who took part in this study were motivated by their perception of an outlook on CEO activism in Ghana. For some of the informants, such motivations related to their belief in the power of CEO activism and its increased relevance in addressing some of the challenges facing Ghana.

Despite the many physical attacks, business disadvantages, and the diverse forms of pushbacks they suffered, most of the CEOs in this study believed that Ghana was worth fighting for. For some of the participants in this study, such as Ace Ankomah, it was important to keep engaging in CEO activism because there were always new issues emerging that needed to be addressed, including public sector corruption and public sector reforms in Ghana:

> We have to keep fighting because the problems are not over. We are still going to carry on our fight against public sector corruption in Ghana and see how best we can influence the discourse where that is concerned and push for positive changes in our public sector.

Several participants revealed a resolute posture to keep driving socio-economic changes within Ghana. For instance, describing himself as "a man on a mission," Senyo

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Hosi saw himself only continuing with his work of being a voice that drove positive socio-economic, business, political, and cultural changes in Ghana:

> I'm a man with a mission. I'm a driver of socio-economic change, and I don't see what can stop this mission. I try to drive positive social change from any angle possible. I am always on the move. Although I struggle sometimes, I always try to survive so that I can help realize the vision of driving social change.

In the same vein, others articulated the idea that nothing had changed for them. Several participants expressed the desire to engage in even more activism. Others expressed similar sentiments about stepping up their level of activism, especially agitating for greater reforms in Ghana's public sector. For such CEOs, the urge to do more was linked with aging and the desire to accelerate the rate of positive changes in Ghana. For instance, Alex Mould saw himself engaging in more activism concerning the public sector and the area of youth empowerment:

> I want to do more in the public sector. I think we have to give more back and fight for the improvement of society. I am now close to 60 years. I'd like to focus on the public sector mainly because I want to improve that sector. I will like to see a strong public sector which will drive a strong private sector in the country.

Motivated by the desire for social change

Many of the participants disclosed that their appetite for becoming and engaging in CEO activism in Ghana was borne out of the strong dissatisfaction with the continued under-development of Ghana, despite the immense human and natural resources of the country. It was found that, for most of the collaborators in this study, a significant motivation for engaging in CEO activism was a strong desire to see an effective transformation of the Ghanaian society into a state judged desirable. Thus, generally,

most of the participants spoke about desiring to find themselves in the camp of the positive social forces that were working to transform Ghana for the better.

For instance, Emmanuel Awumee's motivation was the desire to champion a cause for the greater good, in which a whole new generation of entrepreneurs would emerge in Ghana. His goal for resistance activities was not for making money as a businessman, but rather for contributing to the general good of the society through creating independent-minded young people who would be bold to pursue lives as business owners:

> I have been doing this since 2013. Money has never been the goal of my campaigns. My focus is on empowering the youth to think of business and entrepreneurship within the informal sector.

It was a deep sense of public-spiritedness to work and fight towards social development that served as the motivation for some participants. As indicated by Kofi Bentil, the hunger for activism was the general desire to speak up about social problems and issues he deemed unacceptably wrong:

> When you find something going wrong, I like to take action or pushing it to whoever needs to take care of it. I have done all kinds of things on the way to the national level to help maintain some decency and a certain normal level of life for the members of the society.

Many CEOs in this study believed that business leaders had important parts to play in making or driving the change they wanted to see in Ghana. Thus, an important motivation for engaging in CEO activism was the need to become more socially responsible as a business leader and to lead in driving change in the society, including being the voice of the voiceless in society. Lucy Quist stated the need for businesses to

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look beyond the profit motive and their strategic interests only. According to her, businesses had an increasing role to play in the wider society:

> … as businesspeople, we have a role to play to improve society and help society make progress. We can drive positive changes in society with our know-how, our high caliber human capital, our proven business models, and so on. It is about using business to push forward the agenda of progress in Africa.

Motivated by personal and calculated business decisions

It was learned that some participants' roles as CEO activism were either motivated by a calculated business decision or occasioned by enlightened self-interest. Some of the participants expressed the view that there could be minimal business factors, in motivating their activism. However, those that shared this view saw the enlightened self-interest in the general growth and wellbeing of the entire country as the overwhelming driver. According to Senyo Hosi, whose views typified those that shared the idea of a limited business motive for activism, it made much sense to have a remote business motive in a brighter and prosperous Ghana:

> If any, there's very little of a calculated business decision concerning my activism. A brighter and a better Ghana will also help my business. However, I don't think about that – it is not even a primary driver for me. It is an obligation that comes with your social standing.

Pearl Esua-Mensah described some personal motives and gratifications for engaging in CEO activism. These personal rewards for engaging in activism included the camaraderie she enjoyed through her close relationship with the main promoters of the EWN; the networking and business dividends, among several other motivations:

> Please don't get me wrong. I get a lot out of activism myself. Especially, the six founders of the EWN are my "sisters" and we stand by each other. Off the top of my head, I have the CEO of Airtel Ghana, the CEOs of Vodafone Ghana,

Barclays Bank Ghana, Standard Chartered Bank Ghana, and UBA Ghana, etc. – all of them are powerful leaders of important organizations in Ghana. Since they are part of my network, I can just make a phone call and things would happen for me.

It emerged that for some CEOs who participated in this study, CEO activism was a part of an overtly calculated business strategy. Those participants who affirmed an avowed business motive for engaging in CEO activism indicated several business advantages that could be derived from the social resistance activities of the CEO. Such business ends were diverse, ranging from the need for competitive advantages; driving greater profitability; building strong corporate brands, reputations, and brand positionings; and earning free or cheap media publicity and social profiling for the activist and the company.

Others saw CEO activism as comprising a core to the business strategy. Kenneth Thompson spoke about the deliberate decision at Dalex Finance and Leasing to embed CEO activism within its corporate strategy. He disclosed, for instance, that his company had derived immense competitive advantages from his role as an activist CEO, achieved through the company's ability to mobilize investible funds from the marketplace, at rates significantly lower than the company's competitors. Specifically, he revealed that by being a significantly socially responsible and a thought leader in working for the common good because of his activism, his company was able to record markedly greater levels of profits, by courtesy of the wider spread between its cost of funds and the interests it charged on the loans it granted to its customers:

It has a direct relationship with our profitability. As a financial institution, we trade in money. My economic activism builds the business's brand and enables us to mobilize funds at least two percent below the market rate. So, if you take it that our profit is US$ 2 million, that translates straight into the bottom line.

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Ken Thompson's genre of CEO activism was deemed to be for purposes of achieving some strategic objectives for his company, Dalex Finance. He indicated that, from the outset, the company sought to derive some competitive and brand equity dividends from CEO activism. Kenneth Thompson indicated that for him and his team, it was a win-win activity, as CEO activism produced some corporate and branding benefits while allowing them to fulfill their personal and social responsibilities.

Motivated by personal characteristics, values, and convictions

The interviews showed that a range of personal characteristics motivated some of the participants to engage in CEO activism. These characteristics included their family traits and conditions, education, a background of adversity, and past roles as student activists. Several of the participants indicated that the activist stance had always been a part of their backgrounds. Typically, being a student leader played a major role in predisposing participants to their current role as CEO activists. Some explained that youth or student activism placed them in a situation where they had to seek diverse mechanisms for effecting positive social changes, as related by Senyo Hosi:

> My activism started in my student days as a student leader. I'm quite a curious person … I like to question issues and to probe deeper for better solutions to the problems facing society. You are looking at mechanisms to constructive change.

For Brigitte Dzogbenuku, the development of her activist voice as part of her growth and development as an individual. However, she believed that factors such as her family and upbringing, as well as her early education together enabled her to develop her

activist stance. She particularly mentioned her family orientation that underscored the

need to uphold truth and integrity as influencing her activism:

> I was born into a home where truth and honesty were paramount. At school, things were done in a certain way; the right and the truthful way.

For several informants, the motivation for becoming activists was a matter of

living up to some perceived family tradition. Here, some informants told stories about

how their parents (especially fathers) and grandparents (grandpas) were activists during

Ghana's colonial or pre-colonial eras. Kofi Bentil's appetite for activism was a family

trait. He recounted some activities of his grandfather, who always sought to be upright

and fought for social justice:

> It is in my genes … a family trait. My grandfather had the reputation of being extremely prim and proper. My father always believed in playing your part. He had an anti-establishment and an activist streak in him that I find in my life too. So, growing up, through school, work, and all that, this pattern has always been a part of me. I feel that it is what we need to do to build our nation into one worth living in.

Still, some participants offered some deeply personal motivations that had to do

with the inner desire to have a positive social impact. Charles Mensah's motivation

derived from the need to look out for the interests of others and ensure that the average

Ghanaian made the right decisions in financial and investment matters. He had a spiritual

view of his motivation when he noted that there was an afterlife and that there was going

to be a day of reckoning when everyone's impact on Earth would be accounted for, based

on how much they supported others:

> My motivation is very personal. When I sleep, I say to myself that when people leave this earth, I don't think we will be measured by the material property you had, but by the impact we made on peoples' lives. I am driven more by the need to look out for the interest of others.

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Others expressed the idea of speaking out for the vulnerable in somewhat philosophical terms. According to those who shared such a worldview, it was not good enough for the few members of the society who managed to emancipate themselves socioeconomically to remain unconcerned about the plight of most Ghanaians who continued to fall through the cracks. David Ampofo captured his views about working for the well-being of the entire society:

> I believe that you cannot be a rich man in a poor country. It is this conviction that drives me to engage in all these activities for the common good of our society. You know, Bob Marley rightly stated in one of his songs, "When the rain falls, it doesn't fall on one man's house." I have great satisfaction from seeing myself involved in things that are enhancing the welfare of the collective.

Discussion

This chapter has presented the major motivations emerging from in-depth interviews with the 24 CEO activists purposively selected for this study. It was found that numerous factors served as motivations for the informants to become CEO activists and to continue working as activist CEOs, including some personal values; calculated business decisions; postmodernist notions such as organizational politics, micropolitics and alliances, biopower, dissensus and dissymmetry, and local and situational ethics and decision making; a bullish outlook on CEO activism; and notions of Africapitalism, Africonsciousness, Caritas, and the Ubuntu philosophy.

The main themes that revealed the motivations that the 24 selected activist CEOs had for becoming and/or for engaging in the phenomenon related to deeply personal values; some calculated business decisions; the expressions of selected postmodern values; the influence of notions of Africapitalism, Africonsciousness, Caritas and the

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Ubuntu philosophy; and their bullish outlooks on the phenomenon of CEO activism itself.

Some of the findings are consistent with extant motivations for CEO activism, such as those of Chatterji and Toffel (2018) and Chatterji (2016) regarding the desire for social change; the influence of personal conviction; the need to serve the interests of multiple stakeholders; and the influence of corporate values. Some of the findings in this study also mirror aspects of the views of Nalick et al. (2016), particularly the argument that CEOs were motivated by the optimisms for future stakeholder benefits, responding to current stakeholder pressures, and pursuing some ideological inclinations.

However, some of the findings in this study extend our understanding of the motivations for CEO activists in new directions. Besides providing fresh (hitherto non-existent) evidence from the emerging markets context of Africa to the literature on CEO activism, the research also makes some significant basic contributions. The findings introduce the notions of Caritas, Ubuntu philosophy, and Africapitalism as motivations for CEO activism. The extant literature on CEO activism was devoid of such concepts as serving to motivate CEOs to become social activists. These concepts and values open opportunities for the deeper examination of more specific pathways through which they could serve as motivational factors in CEO activism.

Chatterji (2016) and Chatterji and Toffel (2018) suggested that the leanings of some CEOs to the left side of political ideology could be a motivation for CEO activism. However, these scholars failed to provide empirical support for such an assertation. Again, the extant literature on CEO activism have tended to adopt a right-wing and a modernist perspective that has sought to argue that among the major motivations for CEO

activism has been the impact on organizational outcomes of CEO activism (see Chatterji & Toffel, 2018; Dodd & Supa, 2014; 2015, etc.).

The findings in this study, perhaps for the first time, establish a strong connection between postmodernism and CEO activism. Particularly, it has made the case for the influence of selected postmodern values in public relations (Holtzhausen, 2000; and Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002), serving possible motivations for CEO activism.

An area of theoretical contribution is the provision of some nuances in how the pursuit of strategic personal and calculated business goals could serve as motivations for CEO activism. In this, the findings point to varying degrees of corporate motives, personal motives, and the pursuit of enlightened self-interest. Yet, the findings suggest the addition of CEOs' optimistic outlook on the pursuit of CEO activism as a motivation factor for CEO activism.

These findings aid the explication and development of the CEO Activism Development Model. Besides affirming the significance of motivations for CEO activism, it develops the working model by providing a range of specific motives that the CEOs in Ghana who participated in this study articulated. The impact of these findings is depicted in Evolution One of the working CEO Activism Development Model, as shown in Figure 14 (below).

Within the context of the working model for this dissertation, the findings for RQ1 (motivations for CEO activism) follows the generation of social mindedness of CEOs, following the interaction of personal factors with social factors. Such motivations for CEO activism are deemed to then lead to the selection of sociopolitical issues/causes that CEO activists advocate.

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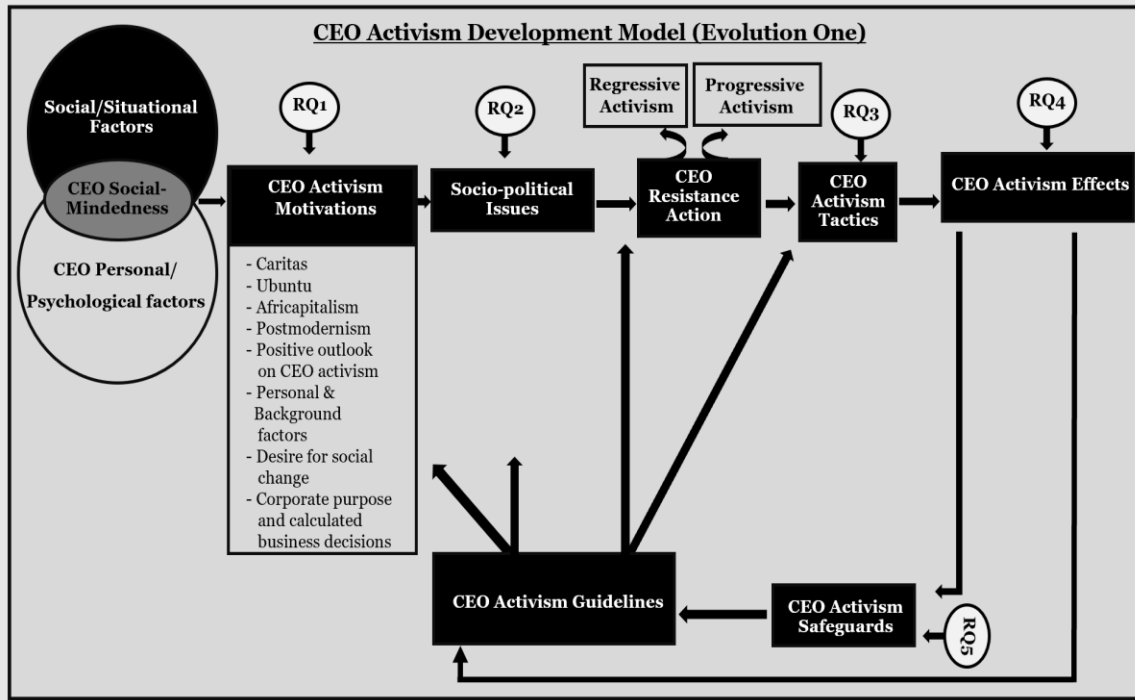
Figure 14: Evolution One of the CEO Activism Development Model (indicating the range of motivations for CEO activism).

The next chapter of this dissertation switches attention to the presentation of findings for RQ 2 (the range of issues/causes) that CEO activists in Ghana pursue.

CHAPTER VII

CEO ACTIVISM ISSUES IN GHANA

This chapter focuses on presenting findings on the range of sociopolitical issues that the activist CEOs in Ghana who served as the informants in this study have found it necessary to advocate. This chapter's development thus responds to Research Question 2: "What range of sociopolitical issues do CEO activists in Ghana focus on?" This research question was addressed by analyzing relevant themes that emerged out of the interviews of all 24 CEOs who participated in this study.

The brand activism typology postulated by Kotler and Sarkar (2017; 2018b), was invoked to help organize the range of issues that informants in this study disclosed. In their hexagonal typology, Kotler and Sarkar (2017) argue that the main domains of brand activism include: (i) social brand activism (including brand concerns regarding equality, LGBTQ, race, age, gender, education, etc.); (ii) political brand activism (including brand concerns for lobbying, campaign financing, etc.); and (iii) legal brand activism (including brand concerns for taxation issues and employment laws, etc.).

The rest of the categories comprise (iv) economic brand activism (including brand concerns for minimum wage and related tax policies); (v) business/workplace activism (including corporate governance and corporate organization, CEO pay, worker compensation, labor and union relations, supply chain management, governance, etc.); and (vi) environmental brand activism (including brand concerns for climate change, land use, air quality, conservations, etc.).

A multiplicity of issues

Generally, it was found that rarely did the participants in this research focus on single issues. Many of the informants said they had advocated for or against multiple issues, such as gender diversity in Ghana, women's empowerment, national economic management policy and issues, African leadership concerns, corruption, and the environment. For instance, Edith Dankwa described the breadth of issues that have engaged the attention of some of the activist CEO in Ghana:

> Most CEOs talk about gender diversity, women's empowerment, gender rights, economy, corruption, leadership in Africa, and environmental challenges. We haven't been too vocal on climate change, it is just the issue of illegal mining, water pollution, filth, and sanitation.

Some of the activist CEOs in this study had seen the need to create or belong to permanent special purpose vehicles through which they undertook their resistance actions. For Senyo Hosi, such a formal special-purpose resistance organization was the One Ghana Movement (OGM), which he said he co-founded. Using the OGM as a pressure group, he revealed the broad range of issues or causes for/against which he had advocated, including demanding for greater public accountability, the prioritization of Ghana's national interest over personal and party-political ones, and the promotion of civic responsibility:

> I have also taken stances for or against many issues. The One Ghana Movement stands for good citizenship; public policy accountability, prioritization of the national interest over partisan interest, and citizens' responsibility.

It became evident that activist CEOs such as Ace Ankomah had spoken on a myriad of issues in Ghana. He disclosed that since January 2016, he had publicly pursued well over 77 issues or causes in Ghana:

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> I was doing a count about two days ago, because some people have tried to attack us, saying we are currently not as active as we used to be during the previous National Democratic Congress (NDC) government. I am not done yet with counting, but between January 2016 and now [mid-November 2019], we have tackled 77 issues, ranging from relatively simple matters to more complicated ones.

Indeed, many participants in this study discussed some of the specific sociopolitical and environmental issues they had advocated for or against. While generally, most of the CEOs in this study tended to pursue a cocktail of causes, some specific issues emerged as illustrating the causes that the participants in this study had advocated for/against. Although some of the issues identified were cross-cutting and defied neat compartmentalization, they were placed in the six clusters postulated by Kotler and Sarkar (2017; 2018b).

Environmental activism

Several types of issues were identified that involved environmental activism undertaken by the CEOs in this study. A handful of participants had made environmental causes the mainstay of their work as activist CEOs.

Within the broad field of environmental concerns in Ghana, CEO causes include climate change, sanitation, and pollution. One of the chief environmental concerns that some of the informants in this study had been working hard to tackle was the issue of *Galamsey*, a term in Ghana for illegal small-scale (typically gold) mining operations that occurred in all manner of mineral-rich locations across the country (sadly, even within forest reserves).

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It had been an open secret that, due to the unregulated processes and procedures

employed, such illegal mining activities had been responsible for environmental

degradation in Ghana, including the pollution of rivers and water bodies.

Kenneth Ashigbey testified that he had spearheaded consistent fights against

Galamsey in Ghana. For him, such a fight had a broader and wider significance than

those of being a business leader, asserting that pursuing such a cause was more about

being a responsible elder of an African community:

> I took on issues to do with the environment and causes to transform society.
> These have included working against illegal mining activities and the adverse
> impact of such irresponsible operations on the environment. I consider myself an
> elder. I can't look on when things go wrong in society. That'd be irresponsible of
> me.

Ashigbey had been working with various partners such as the Occupy Ghana

Movement and the Media Coalition Against Galamsey, to press against the continued

operations of *Galamsey* activities in Ghana, as seen in his February 20, 2020, Facebook

post (see Figure 15 below).

Figure 15: Facebook post on the 2020 State of the Nation (SOTN)
statement by Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo.

John Awuah also reported working in the area of the environment and sanitation matters:

> I've spoken against poor waste management culture, poor sanitation in Ghana, and bad plastic waste disposal practices in Ghana. I'm an advocate for a cleaner environment and society … seeking to mainstream a national discussion on plastic littering … advocating for banning single-use plastics in Ghana while promoting a culture of recycling and sustainable manufacturing and consumption practices.

Business/workplace activism

Several issues that could be considered as business/workplace activism engaged the attention of some of the participants in this study. A consistent issue that had been of concern for virtually all the women CEO activists who took part in this study generally was the woeful under-representation of women in management positions and on the boards of most Ghanaian companies. Thus, the issue of breaking the proverbial ceiling ran through the activities of many of the women CEOs in Ghana.

Several of the women CEOs, especially those promoters and members of the Executive Women Network (EWN) who participated in this study indicated that providing effective avenues for more women to climb the corporate ladder in Ghana served not only as an impetus for the establishment of the EWN, but that it was a major fulcrum for their resistance activities. Noting that many institutional barriers worked against the progress of women across many fields in Ghana, Edith Dankwa indicated that helping more women in Ghana to break the glass ceiling had been a major issue for her:

> Here, few women rise the corporate world … we're poorly represented in management and on the boards. I thought it was important that having gone through that process and risen to the top, it was essential to help others to also get them up there. The EWN is focused on addressing this.

One of the causes that had engaged the attention of some activist CEOs in Ghana was the need to promote a more vibrant and robust service culture in Ghana. For Kofi Bentil, Ghana needed to focus on enhancing its service sector because that sector provided some of the glowing opportunities for the country to leapfrog in its developmental aspirations. He noted that Ghana's service sector held the keys to rapid socio-economic development:

> I advocated very strongly that the government should prioritize the service sector because it presented brilliant prospects for Ghana. People didn't see my point and criticized because most they were thinking of industrialization, while I was looking at the service sector.

It turned out that Odelia Ntiamoah Boampong had also been keen to promote a higher standard of customer service in Ghana. She expressed the belief that Ghana could enjoy competitive advantages if it improved the overall service culture while earning more foreign exchange through the promotion of tourism:

> I spoke about customer service in Ghana. Although we are a hospitable people, many tourists don't leave with that impression. If we say we want to be a destination of hospitality and history, it must transcend every fabric of our tourism. Service excellence is important to achieve that.

Socio-cultural activism

In a predominantly patriarchal society such as Ghana, a sticking issue for most of the activist CEOs who participated in this study involved diverse forms of gender-based injustices. Several participants indicated that they had been taking steps to promote the empowerment of women. The main thrust of Oheneyere Gifty Anti's resistance actions had included some attention to a plethora of cultural and institutional barriers in Ghana, militating against the advancement of women and children. These have included tackling

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issues related to sexual harassment, employment conditions of working women, and the

representation and work of women in Ghana's party-political spaces:

> I speak on issues that concern women and children. My purpose is to empower
> women holistically, while I speak truth to power; I advocate and make noise; I
> agitate, and I push for the right policies to be developed and implemented in
> Ghana that would advance the rights and position of women and children. Yes,
> my target is always the woman – the Ghanaian woman and her emancipation,
> empowerment, and advancement.

Relatedly, it emerged that Pearl Esua-Mensah had been promoting women's

empowerment. Her advocacy in this regard had been based on the belief that empowering

women was strongly linked with building a nation:

> If you empower the woman, you are building a nation. I created the Akoma
> platform in 2014 to encourage like-minded women to aspire to greatness, provide
> useful information to each other and help them network and share ideas that
> would make them more impactful and successful in society.

Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante's activism started around 2007 and had revolved

around a range of issues connected with the empowerment of girls and women in Ghana,

including economic empowerment through livelihood support, prevention of teenage

pregnancy by educating young girls about teenage pregnancy.

In her interview for this study, Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante reacted to what Nana

Akufo-Addo, the President of Ghana had said at an international women's conference

held in Canada in June 2019 about Ghanaian women not availing themselves of

opportunities to serve in decision-making positions. She indicated that the hydra-headed

issues facing Ghanaian women meant that women could not be active enough and hoped

that her activism would empower more women in Ghana to put their voices to the various

issues facing the country:

You may remember our president spoke at a women's conference in Canada and created the impression that women in Ghana were not active or amplified enough. Well, there are still a lot of issues in contemporary Ghana that women could stand up against or put a voice to. I hope my activities would encourage more women to come out and speak.

While being active within the area of the empowerment of women and girls in Ghana, Regina Honu had been focusing on boosting the involvement of women and girls in coding and the creation of technology. She disclosed that serving as an advocate for the economic empowerment of women and girls in Ghana would unlock numerous social outcomes for women and girls in the country, including greater levels of respectability, independence, and recognition:

> I've been speaking about getting more women and girls to create technology … creating opportunities for bridging the digital gender gap. I've been an advocate for getting more women and girls to create technology, and for them to cease from being only consumers of technologies. I've also been a very big advocate of economic empowerment for women and girls.

In January 2018, the Births and Deaths Registry in Ghana announced that it was planning to forbid the registration of certain names in Ghana it claimed were "title names." Under the proposed policy, people wishing to register indigenous Ghanaian names such as *Nana, Naa, Junior, Torgbui*, *Nii*, and *Maame* among others had been stopped by the Registry because it deemed such names as titles, rather than name-names.

Citing the law governing its operations (Act 301 of 1965), the Births and Deaths Registry claimed that it had the power to do so. However, Ace Ankomah disagreed and saw the need to confront the Births and Deaths Registry on behalf of many Ghanaians who perceived the proposed policy as an attack against their desire to adopt such indigenous names. Seeing the proposed policy not only as backward but also lacking

legal basis, Ace Ankomah's action involved writing to the Attorney-General's office,

threatening to sue the Births and Deaths Registry of Ghana, if it went ahead to implement

such an action:

> You might remember that the Births and Deaths Registry of Ghana decided that they were not going to register some popular and generic Ghanaian names such as "Naa," "Nii," and "Nana," etc. I realized there was no legal basis, so, we wrote to the Attorney-General, praying that office to instruct the Births and Deaths Registry to withdraw this or face legal action. Within two days, not only was this baseless action withdrawn, but the official who has sought to implement this was removed from that office.

It was learned that the actions of many CEOs who took part in this study also

revolved around issues of empowering the youth of Ghana into becoming more

entrepreneurial. As some of the informants in this study indicated, too many of Ghana's

youth had closed their minds to opportunities existing outside of the formal employment

sphere in Ghana. Emmanuel Awumee was one of the participants who had made youth

empowerment the pivot of his activism.

He disclosed that it was time for the youth of Ghana to take their destinies into

their own hands in focusing on being business owners and employers, rather than limiting

their options to becoming employees within the country's formal system:

> My activism comprises a mindset transformation for the African youth to go into entrepreneurship since Africa faces a high rate of youth unemployment. This is not because we lack the abilities, but more because I believe we have the wrong educational orientation that seeks to leverage us on training us to more of academicians, rather than performers or doers.

Again, on the theme of youth empowerment - not only in Ghana - but across West

Africa, it emerged that Albert Ocran had been focusing on youth investment and personal

development, entrepreneurship, and talent development. He indicated that he had been

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targeting Millennials since 2007, with an annual roadshow series and a weekly television

program:

> What I've done is to engage 18 to 35-year-olds over 12 years so far, principally with a roadshow that travels nationwide … a radio broadcast every Sunday evening, on diverse developmental themes, including personal development, career development, grooming, character formation, ethics, and values, and laying the foundations that will produce out of emerging leaders, people who are ethical, and who are also very purpose-driven.

For a few participants in this study, the issue of concern was the dearth of

financial literacy among huge sections of the Ghanaian population. Some of the

informants in this study identified this lack of competence of commonsense financial

issues as a huge problem that had led to untold hardship, bad investments, and financial

choices, and wrong life decisions among the population.

According to Charles Mensah, one of the major problems he had seen in Ghana,

which he had been acting on, was the prevalence of ignorance among Ghanaians

regarding everyday financial matters. He disclosed that since 2008, he had been leading

the charge to ensure that the average Ghanaian became more competent in such life skills

that involved personal financial management:

> I have been involved in such activism for over 10 years now, since 2008 … promoting financial literacy in Ghana. I have a radio program that seeks to deepen financial literacy among the population of Ghana.

For some of the informants, an important issue that engaged their attention was

the need to confront the culture of silence in Ghana that had been a part of the society

since the 1980s. Some analysts believe that starting from the 1979 military takeover by

Jerry Rawlings, most Ghanaians feared to speak out. For Charles Wereko-Brobbey, the

culture of silence in Ghana was anathema to the new republican constitution of the

country.

He revealed that he had noticed some differences between the level of free speech

and the democratic culture that he saw during his student days in the United Kingdom,

and what pertained in Ghana. He disclosed that he had a hypothesis for building a sound

democratic culture in Ghana at the very beginning of Ghana's fourth republic in 1992:

> I hypothesized that unless you had a free and vibrant media, democracy would not thrive. I looked at the fact that we have had about three very short-lived republican constitutions in Ghana: The first lasted about six years; the second, about two years; and the third also lasted about two years. I could see this same danger on the fourth republic, where there was a very clear expression that you can establish a private media organization without licensing, yet any time anybody tried to apply that the bureaucracy would kick in say that we're reviewing your application and we would get back to you, but they never did so.

Thus, this threat signaled the very genesis of Charles Wereko-Brobbey's life as an

activist, which saw him taking the view that the extant law must be enforced. He

contended that Ghana's constitution was very unequivocal in promoting media pluralism

and free speech in the country:

> I took the view that the constitutional intent was very clear, so let's set it up and have a public fight … to force the government to allow plural broadcasting …. So, I set up a pirate radio station, called Radio Eye. It was a lot about educating the public and bringing them along that the government eventually was forced to say they were also for media pluralism …. The point is that you don't need a license to operate a radio station in Ghana. This is guaranteed in the Constitution of Ghana in Chapter 12, Article 1263 which says there shall be no need for a license.

Falling on his vast lifelong and experience as an activist with some knowledge

about how to engage in public campaigns based on agitation and propaganda (Agitprop)

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tactics, he said he knew exactly what to do to force the hands of the relevant authorities in

Ghana to act in ways that would help his cause and to free the media landscape in Ghana:

> You had all this background which says if you had just set up a radio station and
> just sat back and watched and the government would just send in the goons to
> come and shut it down. In this case, we set up a radio station, and just over a
> couple of weeks, it was heard all over metropolitan Accra and national security
> raided it. But the interesting thing was that this was the beginning of the
> campaign; it was raided on a Sunday and Monday, we went to court and argued
> that by the Constitution of Ghana you are not allowed to do what you have done.

Kofi Bentil disclosed that his activities had included fighting the government to

provide essential services for Ghanaians. He revealed that this struggle had led to the One

Ghana-led #OccupyFlagstaffHouse protests in 2016:

> We had the *Occupy Flagstaff House*, a march organized to stage a protest to the
> seat of Ghana's presidency. Generally, too many things were not going well in the
> country; *Dumsor* was at its peak, and we believed the standard of governance was
> just too low. This was why we decided to keep the pressure on the government to
> improve things in the country. These were why I called some of my friends and I
> formed Occupy Ghana.

Thus, he revealed that the main impetus for the formation of Occupy Ghana was

the myriad of dysfunctions and failures in the country, in the run-up to the 2016

presidential and parliamentary polls. What had become popularly known as *Dumsor,* a

Twi/Akan term for *'power frequently coming on, but then going off,'* a reference to the

erratic electric power situation in Ghana at the time, was the chief trigger for the

formation of Occupy Ghana and its various protest actions. Besides, the group was also

dissatisfied with the general standard of governance in Ghana. Kofi Bentil explained

what Occupy Ghana did to help end *Dumsor*, and the circumstances surrounding his

decision to part company with this activist group:

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One of the biggest demonstrations ever held in Ghana has been the *"Dumsor Must Stop,"* held in May 2015 to press the then NDC government to take steps to end the power crisis that had plagued the country. We thought the government needed to address the situation, as a matter of priority. *Dumsor Must Stop* kicked the government into the overdrive action that culminated in the resolution of the power crisis facing the Ghanaian society.

It was found that some activist CEOs in Ghana had been instrumental in the passage of Ghana's Right to Information Bill into law in the middle of 2019. Kofi Bentil talked about how this bill was kept on the back burner for well over a decade. However, through the mounting of consistently stronger resistance action, the hand of the NPP administration of President Addo-Dankwa and the current Parliament of Ghana had no option but to take the bold action to pass the bill into law:

The most is the Right to Information Law, passed in the middle of 2019. We had the Right to Information Bill for well over 10 years. We kept pressing and blowing the matter open. We now have the Right to Information passed into law partly because of our activism.

Political activism

Among the range of measures that some activist CEOs in Ghana had advocating for in their bid to fight endemic corruption in Ghana was the need to promote greater transparency by compelling politicians and public office holders in the country to declare their assets. Some informants revealed that under the laws of the Republic of Ghana, the Auditor-General was mandated to ensure that all public institutions complied with the provisions of Article 286 of the Constitution and Public Office Holders (Declaration of Assets and Disqualification) Act,1998 (Act 550).

According to Ace Ankomah, as at the time of his interview for this study in the middle of November 2019, no public office holder had complied with this legal

provision, neither had the Auditor-General of Ghana nor the Attorney-General actively

enforced the law. He revealed that he was working with his colleagues at Occupy Ghana

to right this perceived wrong:

> Occupy Ghana is working on compelling asset declaration in Ghana because currently, nobody is complying with the law that requires public officers to declare their assets. Tomorrow (November 15, 2019), we will write to the Attorney-General of Ghana, drawing attention to this blatant contravention of the laws of the land. We are going to invite the Attorney-General to agree with us that there is this contravention of the laws and that the Attorney-General's Department would take urgent steps to enforce this law on the declaration of assets, failing which we are going to drag the Attorney-General to court.

It was found that a CEO had engaged in a resistance action, designed to raise the

awareness of the Ghanaian public to the emergence of militia-style political vigilantes

who have been meting out various forms of violence against perceived political enemies,

particularly during various elections in Ghana. An instance of the activities of political

vigilantes occurred on January 31, 2019, during a parliamentary by-election at Accra's

Ayawaso West Wuogon constituency to elect a new member of parliament, following the

demise of the NPP's Emmanuel Agyarko.

Despite having candidates from other political parties in the race, pollsters saw

the election as a direct contest between Lydia Alhassan (one of the late MP's widows)

and the NDC's Delali Kwesi Brempong. In the lead to the Ayawaso bye-elections of

January 2019, it was an open secret that the two main political parties had organized and

funded the operations of various vigilantes, with the *Invincible Forces* and *Delta Force*

associated with the NPP, while their counterparts at the NDC included *The Hawks* and

The Azorka Boys.

Within hours of the opening of the polls, media reports had it that masked men, dressed in National Security-branded uniforms besieged the home of the opposition NDC's candidate in the elections, located around the La Bawaleshie polling center, shooting and wounding some 18 civilians. Finger-pointing and accusations abound, following the incident. The opposition NDC accused the ruling NPP of masterminding the attack.

Media reports had it that many persons were injured, with some suffering gunshot wounds. In a Facebook post, Sam George, the Member of Parliament for Ningo-Prampram, reported that he had been assaulted by some macho men he described as members of the NPP's Invincible Forces:

> "I have just been assaulted by several members of the NPP Invincible Forces attired in National Security Council shirts and vests. They fired several rounds of ammunition at me simply because I was doing my legal job of monitoring the Ayawaso West Wuogon by-election."

Based on her experience with the Liberian civil war, Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante revealed that she became concerned about the growing pattern of electoral violence in Ghana that was generally attributed to political vigilantes. She decided to embark on a protest march #WHYIWALK FOR GHANA on February 26, 2019. In a petition presented to the leadership of parliament in Ghana, Juliet Asante gave the Government of Ghana one month within which all political vigilantes should be disbanded in the country, failing which she threatened to keep protesting:

> The violence was at the Ayawaso West Wuogon by-election in 2019 … In my statement, I said we would keep protesting until things changed. I could not imagine living at peace within myself, with that explosive situation that such political vigilantes and electoral violence could bring to Ghana. If I don't act and something happens, can I live with myself? Can I look at my children in the face, knowing I could have taken steps to neutralize the situation?

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Across Africa, elections are considered among the most contentious events on the calendar of many nations. The declaration of results of virtually every presidential and parliamentary election has been met with bitter protests from losing camps, with charges of the rigging of the election. Ghana has had its unfair share of such disputed election results. The declaration by the National Electoral Commission of the NPP's Nana Akufo-Addo as President of Ghana after the December 2016 polls in Ghana generated a heated protest in Ghana by the losing NDC, whose incumbent President John Dramani Mahama had lost the presidency. This culminated in a long-drawn election petition process that involved some eight months of disputations in the law courts of Ghana.

The Electoral Commission of Ghana had indicated that it was no longer going to supply political parties in the country the pink sheets, which were receipts from the various polling stations about what exactly happened at each station during the elections. This was because the Electoral Commission of Ghana had perceived these pink sheets as the main cause of electoral disputes in Ghana in the past. This development did not agree with the activist mindset of Kofi Bentil who saw the need to take some actions to help reform Ghana's electoral system:

> It was clear that it was wrong. I decided to rally around some lawyers for us to challenge this in the courts before any new election was held in Ghana. Lawyer Akoto Ampaw led us to go to court. The Supreme Court was surprised, and it was surprising to me that they were surprised because they had not noticed the anomaly. The Supreme Court ruled in our favor, stating that the Electoral Commissioner should provide all parties with the pink sheets from every polling station to the political parties. Looking at Ghana's electoral history, I think that was a significant development.

According to Kofi Bentil, this landmark achievement concerning the pink sheets was not an isolated event. He described several factors that led to the culmination of this

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development, which was activist in nature. For instance, he saw himself as one of the first people who stood against the call for the country to compile a new electoral register. He explained that he felt the need to kick against this new electoral roll because doing so was going to entail too much financial outlay for a struggling economy like Ghana's.

Kofi Bentil asserted that his opposition to the planned program to have a new electoral roll called for him to speak at many forums. He added that this move on his part had attracted many attacks against him:

> I was heckled, and there were instances of personal attacks and people insulting me, but I stuck to my position because I believed I was right. It is difficult to fight against the tide.

Legal activism

Through legal activism, a few of the CEOs in this study reported resistance to the pattern of state capture that had taken hold in Ghana. These participants were disheartened to note that individuals who had a significant influence - including those in government and others in policymaking positions – used such connections and privileges to change the rules of engagement, for the benefit of private individuals, very much against the state interest.

Alex Mould observed that resisting state capture had been the main thrust of his activism. For him, everything must be done to preserve the interest of the country, over those of private persons:

> Resisting state capture in Ghana is my advocacy now. My advocacy is that the state is paramount and that the state needs to benefit the most from any transaction we do, rather players - players, either in government or sitting in government, or players sitting outside of government, influencing players sitting in government to change the rules so that the private sector can benefit against the state. Whether it is a procurement bid; whether it is road projects; whether it is an oil transaction; whatever it is, they are always trying to influence the process to

their advantage, rather than Ghana's. That is my Number One project in activism right now.

Kofi Bentil and some close friends decided to form Occupy Ghana to serve as a pressure group to highlight some of the failures of the John Mahama-led government, and to hold the government to account by speaking truth to power, through diverse resistance activities. One of the chief activities of Occupy Ghana had become a test case in legal activism in Ghana, involving a case the group brought against the state to compel the Auditor-General of Ghana to crack the whip in the direction of checking endemic corruption in Ghana. Kofi Bentil offered some insights into the nature of Occupy Ghana's anti-corruption drive:

> We sued the Auditor-General in the Supreme Court, asking for an order to compel him to do his job well. His job was to surcharge and disallow it when people have corruptly or improperly used government funds. The current Auditor General (Dominic Domelevo) is using that law, … last week (early October 2019), he surcharged the Senior Minister (Hon. Osafo Marfo) for some expenditure that the Auditor-General disallowed. That was historic in Ghana. That was a big win and I am happy that I was a part of that pressure.

Shedding more light on his role in this matter, Ace Ankomah described it in terms of seeking to protect the public purse by activating sections of Ghana's 1992 Constitution that empowered the Auditor-General to work to recover funds that the nation lost through negligence or the misconduct of individuals, groups, companies and other institutions:

> Our greatest issue has been the Auditor-General issue. We went to the Supreme Court of Ghana at a great expense to us, for a determination of the matter. The Supreme Court wondered why an existing law was not being enforced and instructed the Auditor-General to enforce the law.

Another action to probe and question the propriety of bilateral and related state agreements was the 2018 deal between the Government of Ghana and Haitian ICT firm

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Kelni-GVG. The agreement was aimed at developing and implementing a common platform for the monitoring of mobile phone traffic and the revenues accruing to the state thereof. Some described this as a controversial multimillion-dollar agreement in which Imani Africa, accused the Ministry of Communication of Ghana, acting in concert with its technical agency, the National Communications Authority (NCA), to award a 10-year contract worth nearly US $180 million to Kelni GVG, describing the contract as a 'rape' of Ghana.

In June of the same year, a principal of Imani, Kofi Bentil, acting as a public interest lawyer, commenced multiple lawsuits, on behalf of one Maximus Amertogoh and one Sara Asafu-Adjaye against the Ministry of Communications on grounds of financial maladministration and privacy threats. The lawsuits brought by Kofi Bentil met significant delays, subterfuge, and resistance by the Ministry of Communications, making it clear that a legal course of action was not the best way out. Recalling this saga and the roles that he and Imani had played, Kofi Bentil had this to say:

> Take the Kelni-GVG scandal in 2018 that exposed the controversial US$ 89 million deal, signed between the Government of Ghana and the Haitian firm, Kelni-GVG. We saw so many irregularities and decided to take the State to court, to compel them to account to the people of Ghana.

Economic Activism

It turned out that several CEOs who participated in this study had been focusing on issues concerning better economic management in Ghana. Some of them such as John Awuah had been pressing the government for more effective management of the Ghanaian currency, the Cedi that had for many years become used to a pattern of huge

depreciation against some of the major trading currencies across the globe, such as the US Dollar, the Euro, the British Pound Sterling, and the Japanese Yen.

Since the year 2013, Kenneth Thompson appears to have taken on the persona of an unofficial shadow finance minister of Ghana, speaking up and questioning the soundness of some of the economic policies of the Government of Ghana under both the Mahama-led NDC administration and the Akufo Addo-led NPP. While observing that he had been concerned with the proper economic and financial management of the resources of Ghana, he also revealed that activism had been embedded in the corporate strategy of his company, Dalex Leasing and Finance, with the view to achieving some corporate ends, including branding, marketing, and reputational goals:

> I've been speaking on economic issues since 2013. I have been talking about economic and financial management issues in Ghana, breaking them out and highlighting the failures in some of our national economic matters in ways that the ordinary Ghanaian would understand.

According to Ken Thompson, he had been deliberate in highlighting a range of economic and financial matters, including the weak competitiveness of Ghanaian companies, high rates of unemployment in Ghana, huge import bills facing Ghana. He indicated that his activism had been propelled by his desire to ensure a business-friendly operating environment while exercising his social responsibility:

> I've spoken on generally on economic issues in Ghana; things that have got to do with the economy and their impact; I've spoken about Ghanaian companies not being productive enough; why companies in Ghana are not competitive, and the reasons why that is the case. One of my pet peeves has been about the Ghanaian currency, the Cedi.

For Charles Mensah, the specific issue of concern had been uncontrolled government expenditures by governments in Ghana and across Africa. He disclosed that

he had lately taken up issue with the huge amounts that governments in Africa had been incurring for attending various bilateral summits of African countries and some of their partners, including the United States of America, the United Kingdom, India, and Russia.

Describing such expenditures as not going in the interest of Africa, Charles Mensah disclosed that he had been advocating for such summits to be held in Africa on a rotational basis among the countries on the continent, rather than the current order that amounted to huge sums being drained out of Africa. He also noted that attending such summits in Africa, would afford Africa's development partners the chance to have a first-hand experience of the issues they were seeking to address in Africa through such meetings:

> I took a public stance not too long ago about Africa's leaders' tendency to frequently travel for various summits. We have the US-Africa Summit; the UK-Africa Summit; the India-Africa Summit; Russia-Africa Summit, etc. Whenever it is time for any of these summits, you find every African leader and his/her team traveling to the venue, usually outside of Africa. This creates so much touristic value and benefits for these foreign host countries of these conferences, but nothing for Africa.

It became evident that those economy-focused CEO activists had also been interested in pursuing related causes such as selected programs and policies of the government of Ghana, such as the 1D1F, and cognate issues including food and hunger. John Awuah, who was one of the participants who appeared to focus on economic matters described the issues that had engaged his attention:

> I have spoken out about economic management in Ghana, currency management, or the depreciation of the Ghana Cedi, and I have spoken for the 1D1F. I have advocated for ending world hunger and feeding the needy all over the world. I have also spoken out against the poor waste management culture or poor sanitation in Ghana, the bad plastic waste disposal practices in Ghana.

Activist CEOs in Ghana have been engaged in intellectual debates with the Government of Ghana on diverse public procurement deals and agreements with some international institutions. Such public debates have been based on the perception that these public procurements and agreements did not meet the value-for-money criterion and did not serve the best interest of the generality of Ghanaians.

One of these agreements was the STX Housing agreement. In 2009, a 12-member delegation of the Government of Ghana, led by Alban Bagbin, the-then Minister of Works and Housing signed a housing project deal with STX Corporation of South Korea. The project would have seen the construction of 200,000 houses in Ghana for over five years, at an estimated project cost of $10 billion.

In August 2010, Ghana's Parliament approved an initial off-take agreement for 30,000 housing units for the security agencies at a $1.5 billion, amid protests from the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) and several pressure groups and civil society organizations that were dissatisfied with some aspects of this agreement. However, on December 30, 2011, Ghanaians received news that the Professor John Evans Atta Mills-led National Democratic Congress (NDC) government had decided to abrogate the controversial multi-billion housing deal.

Some observers also attributed the project's collapse to the ineffective and haphazard manner in which the Ghanaian government handled the agreement, including some murkiness surrounding the sovereign guarantee issued by the Ghana Government to STX to enable the joint venture to source for funding in the world's financial markets for the project. Kofi Bentil also pointed an accusing finger at Minister Bagbin who

disregarded all the objections raised by various stakeholders. He provided some details

about his role in the protests:

> Intellectually, we have debated a project such as the $10 billion 200,000-unit
> housing project with South Korea's STX Corporation. We evaluated the project
> closely and realized that it was not going to work out well for the country. We
> agitated for well over one year, but the Government did not want to listen to us.
> Ultimately, this project crushed, right in their faces. If they had listened to us, they
> would have avoided a lot of the consequences of this failed deal.

The Komenda Sugar Factory is another flawed government project that had

engaged the attention of Kofi Bentil. According to him, this project had also failed

because the government did not appreciate the intellectual activism that he and Imani

Africa done to warn the government about why the project would not succeed as planned.

The failure of such a huge project, he disclosed had led to significant financial losses to

the country:

> I expressed the view that the Komenda Sugar Factory was going to produce more
> propaganda than sugar! We broke it down and explained it in very simple terms.
> The Government of Ghana did not listen to us, and at the end of the day, more
> than US $36 million of Ghana's money is down the drain, with totally nothing to
> show for all that investment. Everything we had said had come true.

One of the issues that had been the subject of Kofi Bentil's actions has been a

proposed 40-year development plan for Ghana. Without much attention to detail, the

Government of Ghana tabled this long-term plan of development for the country. A group

of activists and CEO activists in Ghana, including Kofi Bentil saw this move by the

government as yet another ploy to pay lip service to the developmental challenges facing

the country.

While failing to address some of the most pressing immediate needs and

challenges facing the populace, the government was planning for a 40-year timescale.

Noting that this supposed program of development was not only ill-conceived but would

also entail some serious financial losses to the country, activists such as Kofi Bentil

engaged to protest the proposed development plan:

> We interrogated a proposed 40-year development plan for Ghana … a very ill-
> thought-through plan. It was just nice and sexy for people to think that we were
> going to have a plan to deal with the development of the nation over the next 40
> years. However, there was nothing to show that the Government of Ghana really
> knew what they were talking about. There were more immediate development
> challenges confronting us, such as water, health, energy, and education, about
> which nothing had been done. Yet, they were purporting to be planning for the
> next 40 years. Ghana was going to spend over US$ 2.5 million on education and
> sensitization. They had planned to spend Ghs 1 million (about US$ 250,000) for
> each of the 16 regions in Ghana to try to get people's views or reactions to the
> proposed plan. We objected to the approach, saying it was not the right thing to
> do.

Discussion

This chapter has presented the various types of issues and causes that the 24

activist CEOs who were interviewed for this research project disclosed that they had been

advocating for or against. While many of the participants typically took on a plethora of

issues and causes, it was possible to organize the various issues discussed, based on the

six clusters of brand activism postulated by Kotler and Sarkar (2017; 2018b).

Thus, although Kotler and Sarkar's typology of brand activism clusters--

comprising environmental activism, social(cultural) activism, legal activism, economic

activism, business/workplace activism, and political activism—was developed

specifically for brand activism, they were largely applicable to CEO activism.

Interviews showed that the wide diversity of issues advocated for or against by the activist CEOs in Ghana could be placed under Kotler and Sarkar's (2017; 2018b) typology. Again, for this study, cultural issues needed to be melded with issues social. The findings are significant for the literature on CEOs, activism generally, and CEO activism.

The findings make a useful addition to the literature, by introducing specific examples of issues advocated by CEOs within an African society. The literature on CEOs, activism, and CEO activism had so far lacked insights regarding the general and specific forms of issues and causes that CEOs within the emerging markets context of Ghana and Africa.

The findings could set the stage for studies that could compare CEO activism issues in Africa, with those that have elsewhere, such as American CEOs. These findings also provide some indications for future research in the area of the pathways through which gender dynamics shape CEO cause selection, as well as differences in issues chosen by men CEO activists in Africa, relative to those selected by women CEO activists.

These findings further aid the transformation of the CEO Activism Development Model with the incorporation of the major clusters of issues that the participants in this study revealed. In Evolution Two of the working model, as depicted in Figure 16 (below), I show the areas of sociopolitical issues/causes that participants advocate:
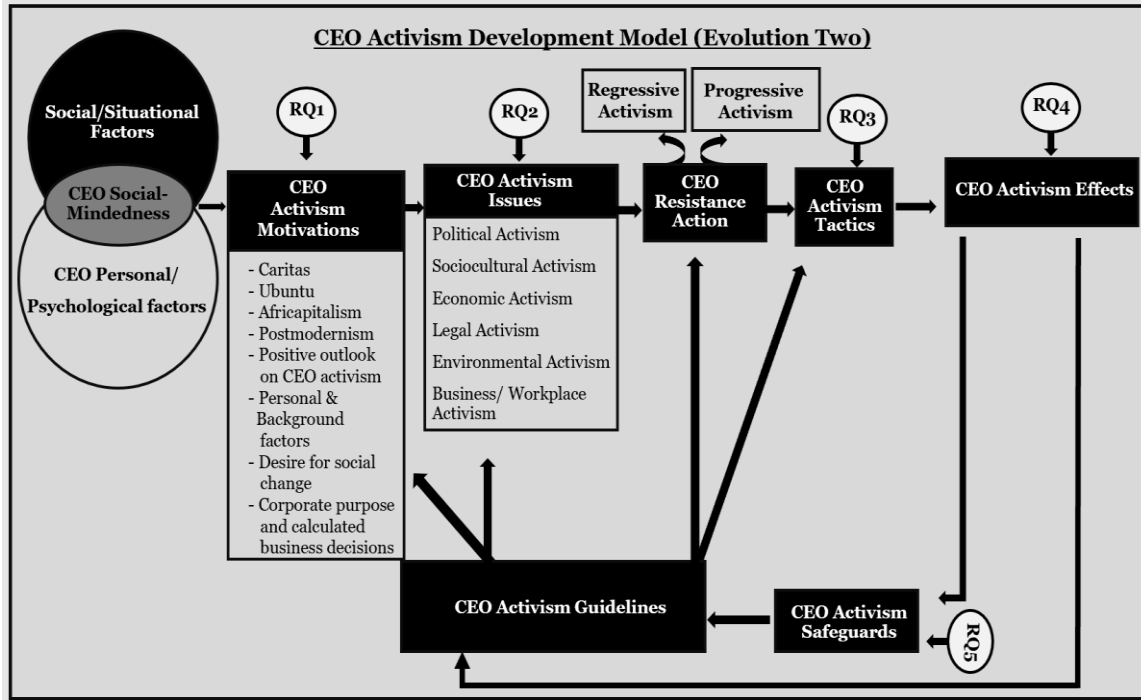
Figure 16: Evolution Two of the CEO Activism Development Model (indicating the range of motivations and clusters of issues/causes for CEO activism).

Within the context of the working model for this dissertation, it is suggested that issue selection is made after CEOs have become motivated to become activists. The range of issues however determines the sort of actions the CEO activists take. Based on whether the actions are deemed to be pro-development or not, such resistance actions are termed as either progressive activism or regressive activism (Kotler & Sarkar, 2018).

In implementing or giving force to their resistance actions, a range of tactics are deployed. The next chapter presents the research findings regarding the wide variety of tactics employed by the participants in this study, as part of their social resistance actions.

CHAPTER VIII

CEO ACTIVISM TACTICS IN GHANA

Although the terms strategies and tactics are often used interchangeably, the two terms are distinct. While strategies refer to overall long-term plans employed to achieve a broad range of goals, tactics relate to the specific actionable steps taken to operationalize a strategy. CEO activism is a nonmarket strategy of companies.

Within the specific context of CEO activism, at least, two classificatory schemes have been suggested for the range of tactics employed by CEOs. While Livonen (2018) postulates (i) persuasion tactics; (ii) disruptive/protest tactics; and (iii) support tactics, Chatterji and Toffel (2018) distinguish awareness creation tactics from tactics of leveraging economic power.

This chapter presents the results of the in-depth interviews conducted as part of this dissertation. The findings presented herewith are in response to Research Question 3: What tactics do CEO activists in Ghana employ in their resistance actions?" The analysis presented in this chapter seeks to combine both afore-stated taxonomies.

Thus, an attempt would be made to analyze the findings under the following extant tactics: (i) leveraging economic power; (ii) awareness creation and persuasion tactics; (iii) support tactics; and (iv) disruptive and protest tactics.

Leveraging economic power

Given certain situational factors in Ghana, most of the CEOs who participated in this study did not feel empowered to leverage their economic power. However, some themes emerged concerning how CEOs felt the tactic of leveraging economic power was manifesting itself in the practice of CEO activism in Ghana.

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The views of Patience Akyianu were reflective of the general sentiment of the participants in this study in pursuing a path of awareness creation in their activities, rather than one of flexing their economic muscles, with threats of withdrawing their investments. She explained that most CEOs in Ghana did not feel that it was prudent to leverage their economic power as a tactic in CEO activism for several reasons.

Where the government was the target, there was usually the fear that such a course of action would result in some antipathy of the governments towards the CEOs and their organizations. She also believed that there was power dissymmetry, weighing in favor of the government in such cases. Thus, CEOs and their organizations in Ghana generally felt less powerful, relative to the Government of Ghana:

> Everything I've done is more of awareness, lobbying, and influencing rather than exercising economic power. I don't see CEO activists in Ghana leveraging economic power during their activism campaigns.

Owing to such factors, Patience Akyianu expressed the feeling that she and other CEO activists in Ghana would rather tread cautiously when engaging in activism by avoiding the tactic of leveraging economic power. She took her time to illustrate her point by using a recent situation in which the Ghana Association of Bankers (GAB) found itself having to confront the Government of Ghana concerning negotiations to settle huge long-standing energy sector debts that the state-owned Volta River Authority owed to several banks in Ghana. Patience Akyianu noted that that matter, the members of the Ghana Association of Bankers felt powerless and hardly contemplated taking any adversarial actions:

> A lot of us feel we can't afford to be in the government's bad books since that could harm our businesses. Companies in Ghana are not too powerful as to be able to force the government to take certain actions by threatening some economic

actions. We aren't yet in a position of power where the private sector or CEOs can start calling shots and using their economic power to force the hand of policymakers to do the right thing.

She observed that the tactic of leveraging economic power, investment protest, or economic protest ought not to be seen only in terms of threats to withdraw investments. According to Patience Akyianu, such an approach could have a flip side where CEOs and companies could show the government how with more cooperation from the state, the relationship with the private sector could work to benefit the country as a whole:

> Leveraging of economic power should not only entail threatening to withdraw your investments but also showing the government how much more you can help by investing more in the system if they cooperated with you.

Regina Honu revealed her way of leveraging economic power, as a CEO activist in Ghana. She indicated that rather than threatening the government or some state institution, she had been leveraging her economic power by making targeted investments that would lead to the production of some of the changes she desired in the Ghanaian society of the future. She suggested that she had mainly been employing strategies of awareness creation, although she sometimes leveraged whatever economic power she could muster:

> With the economic power side, I do it differently by empowering certain groups … and putting my investment in a certain space that I would bring some change in especially the women and girls … where I figure would create a domino effect that would affect a greater number of people.

Unlike what some scholars had suggested regarding some activist CEOs in America leveraging their economic power during their activism, it emerged that activist

CEOs in Ghana did not feel so empowered, so far, to use or threaten the flexing of their

economic muscles in their activism.

While accepting that companies in Ghana may not have the financial wherewithal

to leverage their economic power in their resistance actions, some participants believed

that a group of companies could join forces in employing such a tactic to great effect. On

the same issue, some participants were of the view that some companies in Ghana may

have employed such tactics, albeit covertly. Kenneth Ashigbey shared the belief in CEOs

coming together to apply economic pressure in Ghana:

> We can do that through a coalition of fair-minded, big thinking, and big-picture
> kind of leaders where we decide to withdraw our monies or investments from
> some part of the system if we don't see the change we desire. We could threaten
> to abort a project or investment we had planned to do if some change or some
> action is not effected on the part of the government.

Although he saw more prospects for coalitions of CEOs and companies coming

together to leverage economic power, he noted that Vodafone Ghana had done so as a

singlehandedly, by promising to match investments by the Government of Ghana in

empowering the youth of the country with skills in coding, artificial intelligence, and

machine learning:

> Vodafone Ghana launched a coding program, promising to invest in it if the
> government also invests in it. The idea is that corporations and brands are
> wielding both the carrot and the stick. Vodafone is in effect adopting the carrot
> approach, telling the government that it if invests in a specific program, the
> company would match the government's stake in it. This is positive activism; it is
> saying that the company wants this action done by the government and that if it is
> done, the company would support it with a given amount of private investment.

While being cognizant of the possibility or viability of employing tactics related

to leveraging economic power, the study showed that some CEO activists found

themselves caught up in a Catch-22 situation. While some genuinely felt a lack of

economic strength to take on the government by threatening some economic sanctions,

others felt that doing so could end up turning back the very clock of social progress they

had been seeking to advance.

Awareness-creation and persuasion tactics

Several awareness-creation and persuasion tactics were reported by the

participants in this study.

Media Advocacy

It was found that CEO activists in Ghana had found a rich vein of the most

popular traditional media houses in Ghana. Knowing the strong command they wielded

over many media houses, the activist CEOs who participated in this study were very

aware that the media in Ghana listened attentively to them as credible sources of news.

This was not only because of the celebrity statuses they occupied as CEOs but also

because of the economic influences of their companies over the media organizations who

depended on the companies ran by the CEO activists for advertising billings and related

promotional purposes.

Some activist CEOs in Ghana employ the powers of various channels of mass

communication in their activism. This approach entailed making public pronouncements

on diverse issues on radio, television, print news media, and other media vehicles.

According to Kofi Bentil, the use of relevant media platforms was vital in his activism

because of the high levels of illiteracy in Ghana. He explained that employing

strategically selected media vehicles in Ghana was not only a powerful way of reaching

relevant sections of the public but was a significant way of countervailing the dominant

metanarratives of politicians in Ghana. He revealed how he used media advocacy as part

of his intellectual activism:

> Radio program producers would invite the ministers and government appointees, and we would debate them vigorously, and the public would see who was making the soundest arguments. That's intellectual activism – confronting the leaders on-air, based on deep policy analysis and the objective dissection of policy alternatives.

For Charles Wereko-Brobbey's media activism included weekly columns in up to

five newspapers in Ghana at some point, especially at the start of Ghana's current Fourth

Republican era. He stressed that the focus of his media commentary had always been on

national developmental issues.

It came up strongly that one of the most enduring platforms in Ghana for women

to discuss issues concerning women and their development and empowerment was a

television program created, hosted, and produced by Oheneyere Gifty Anti. Called "The

Standpoint," this television program had been running for well over a decade on some of

the television channels with the most coverage in Ghana, including widest-reaching

Ghana Television (GTV). Oheneyere Gifty Anti spent some time to explain the

philosophy of the program as an advocacy and activist tactic in the fight against

patriarchal institutional structures in Ghana:

> In Ghana, women have been kept down by unfair social processes and institutions. There're many spaces where women are denied opportunities. The program is a voice for the voiceless … for women's voices; a platform for women to share their experiences … to tell their stories, both exciting and sad news. A safe space for women to know despite the challenges they can still get somewhere great in life. For our 10th anniversary, our theme is, 'The Woman on the Move' …

a clarion call for women of Ghana to always be on the move and strive to be the very best they can be.

Other CEO activists indicated their preference for radio, the medium with the widest penetration across Ghana. Charles Mensah's medium of choice in his financial literacy advocacy campaigns since 2008 had been a popular purposely designed radio program. However, radio only served as the lead medium in his arsenal:

> I have created a radio program to articulate my views; I speak at special events, such as at churches; and I am quite active on social media, especially on Facebook. I partner with like-minded groups; I speak at programs by other activists, and I volunteer for others. I offer technical support behind the scenes. I take advantage of TV programs. Whenever the opportunity presents itself, I speak out; I say it, I write it, I do it, and do it convincingly.

Kenneth Thompson's eclectic use of media vehicles was found to include press articles and features, media publicity, staging special events, and appearing on various news analysis and media discussion programs:

> Since we started in 2013, we've used the print media … done print news stories; press articles and features; the media has covered our programs; … whenever there's a controversial economic or financial matter I speak. We've done print, radio, and we have started to get active in the digital space and on social media. I use a lot of advocacy, but I'm beginning to think about using some economic power, but I like to say that in a very humble manner because I'm not wealthy.

Alex Mould indicated his belief that his role was partly that of a watchdog, shinning the light on the actions of the Government of Ghana, speaking truth to power, and ensuring that the public office holders in the country were constantly kept on their toes. He explained his through-the-line media approach of mixing social media, print media, radio, and television in calling out corrupt and ineffective leaders, and in proposing alternative solutions to some of the country's challenges:

I've been vocal on social media … the newspapers on many issues, including the bad oil contracts that Ghana is signing with oil exploration and oil production companies for the exploitation of our new-found oil resources. I've been exposing some of the ills in our society and speaking truth to power on radio … talking about what we can do better. Mine is more awareness but also trying to make people in the state do the right things, by holding them to account.

As part of his youth empowerment campaigns, Albert Ocran disclosed that he employed a bouquet of tactics to reach the youth of Ghana and West Africa, including the Springboard Roadshow series, school clubs, curricula development for tertiary educational institutions, online mentoring programs, bulk SMSs, and radio show called the Springboard Virtual University:

> We have Springboard Clubs that meet weekly in universities to follow a 52-chapter curriculum on career development, leadership, excellence, public speaking, etc. … online mentoring programs … daily bulk SMS messages … social media posts … over these past 12 years, our Springboard Roadshows have produced 200,000 alumni … that means 200,000 virtual graduates.

Some of the participants reported leveraging some of their core competencies in their approaches to activism. For instance, besides employing digital and social media, and building a coalition of like-minded activists, Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante leveraged her skills as a filmmaker in shining the light on issues that mattered to her. In a feature movie *Silverain* that she produced, she had highlighted aspects of women empowerment in Ghana, focusing on the plights of *Kayayei* (women head porters who operate in the open markets in Ghana):

> As a filmmaker, the film medium is one of my biggest tools. For instance, I did a film that focused on women empowerment in the market and *Kayaye* five years ago. We did a campaign for two years on this. Most of the issues we advocated for have since received some action by various institutions, including a provision in the 2020 national budget to build quarters for *Kayayei.*

Some of the CEOs who participated in this study invested in the production of various advocacy videos as a tactic for getting their word out. Such videos were of various durations and placed on televisions stations and various social media platforms. Oheneyere Gifty Anti revealed that she had recently used such a video in getting the President of Ghana to act decisively in a recent child molestation case:

> I released an advocacy video, calling on the President to speak for the girl-child and to save the girl-child. A four-year-old girl had been abused, but nobody taking any action. That video clip went viral and the President was compelled to act, ordering the Inspector General of Police to bring the offender to book. The molester has since been jailed.

Despite the general employment of all forms of media channels, some of the activist CEOs indicated a preference for new media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp. A wide array of social and digital media vehicles featured in the various promotional mixes. The social media tools *LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook*, and *WhatsApp* featured prominently in this regard. These were sometimes used as support media to amplify protest marches, leading to greater national and global publicity of such events. Kofi Bentil shared some thoughts on how *Twitter* and *Facebook* were particularly instrumental in the *Occupy Flagstaff House* march:

> Social media is the most impactful. I employ all manner of social media platforms, especially *Twitter, WhatsApp,* and *Facebook*. When we did Occupy Flagstaff House, the number of people on the street was between 500 and 1000, but we reached so many more people on social media because the protesters were mostly professionals who all had smartphones and were tweeting and posting about the demonstration. The event became a global phenomenon.

During the conceptualization and planning of protest marches and well before the staging of such events, social media messages were used to engage protesters and to whip up public support for up-coming marches. Kofi Bentil explained the extent to which

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Facebook and *Twitter* were employed in the planning and concept phases of the *Occupy Flagstaff House* protest march to engage protesters:

> During the planning of the event, I had posted about it on Facebook, reaching well over 30,000 primary followers of mine on that platform. It went far, and most of my social media friends and followers were present on the day, to join the action. *Twitter* and *Facebook* have been most effective for my activities.

Unlike, most people who employed their social media handles to share posts about themselves, Lucy Quist said she decided to take a diametrically different route to the use to which she put social media:

> My social media is not about me. I make it more about weightier matters. I don't tell stories about what a wonderful day I had. It's always relevant to a story. I realized that social media is such a wonderful tool to actively reach a large number of young people.

Thus, the focus of using social media for some of the participants was to express their stances on their chosen causes and get more members of the audience to adopt the positions advocated by these CEO activists.

<u>Special events and high-powered meetings</u>

Some participants indicated that following the pronouncements of Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo during the June 2019 conference of Women Deliver in Canada, they had taken some steps to engage the president on some of his assertions. At this widely publicized event, Nana Akufo-Addo had said that women in Ghana were not active enough and they were not amplified in making themselves available for selection when it came to big-ticket positions at tables of power and decision-making.

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The membership of the EWN held a closed-door meeting with the first gentleman

of Ghana to present their reaction to what he had said in Canada. Dedo Kofi spoke of her

significant role in this encounter with the Ghanaian president:

> What I wrote on the EWN platform about the president's speech lead to a closed-door meeting with the president and some of his women ministers and about 10 members of the EWN. We presented what I wrote and the President. We said he could have said it better. Women are not standing up for politics for many reasons. We explained the social and cultural barriers facing women in Ghana.

Some of the activist CEOs in this study reported using special events in their

campaigns. Using the hashtag #AConversationWithKen, Kenneth Thompson organized a

special event in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Marketing (Ghana) on the

theme of "Ghana's Economy in 2018." This had been part of his perennial actions to

expose ill-advised national economic management policies in Ghana. In a Facebook post,

Kenneth Thompson had written:

> I'm honoured to be speaking on 'Ghana's Economy in 2018' in partnership with the CIMG, this Tuesday, the 27th of March at the Alisa Swiss Spirit Hotel. Join me on Facebook live, visit @DalexSWIFT for more details. #AConversationWithKen

During this special event, Kenneth Thompson spoke candidly about many failures

in the economic management of the country that were making the cost of living harder

for Ghanaians. Contrary to statements by the Ministry of Finance that the country's

economy was doing well, at the event, Kenneth Thompson declared that the country was

broke and was "heading for a disaster" because of over-borrowing and bad economic and

financial policies. He urged the managers of the economy to "face up to the realities,"

and to take bold measures to set the economy right. The event was transmitted live on

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several digital media channels, including Facebook and YouTube, and widely reported across various media platforms.

Other informants reported undertaking direct stakeholder engagements, using such special events as town hall meetings and durbars (i.e., gatherings of chiefs and other leaders). For instance, Eunice Biritwum described a special durbar, organized by the Women in Energy group to help showcase some of the advancements that involving more women in Ghana's energy sector had produced. For her, such a special event was participatory in serving to include community-level queens and other women traditional leaders, who were usually excluded to the table:

> Women's role in energy not being visible enough. We had a program where we had four powerful women in the sector … helping women to see how the benefit of Ghana's natural resources. Women are usually not called to the table. It is the chiefs and men elders who are at the decision-making table for communities, even though from a hierarchical standpoint, the men elders are beneath the traditional queens. We had a room of about 70 people. After the meeting, they all wanted to be part of the Women in Energy. They were interested because they realized that it was feasible.

Some of the CEOs said they employed several types of special events and speaking engagements to get their word out. These included local and international events such as TedX Talks, hosting media receptions, and making publicized presentations. For instance, Lucy Quist revealed that in 2016, she was approached by TedxEuston to speak at one of their events. She saw this as an opportunity of a lifetime to lay out her ideas on ethical leadership, STEM, and the development of Africa in general:

> I was approached by TedxEuston to speak. It was as though I was always prepared for that … I called it "The New Normal." That's how the idea of the *Bold New Normal* was born, in which I laid out how to create the Africa where everyone prospers.

However, it became obvious that some of these special events and speaking opportunities served as the spark for some of the campaigns, as videos and publicity materials from the events usually became the content for several digital media platforms such as videos on YouTube.

Books

Some disclosed that they had undertaken book projects as a means of crystallizing and promoting their views. Lucy Quist expressed the belief in her ideas of creating and promoting her vision of a bold new normal for Africa that challenged and changed the paradigm of successful developmental outcomes for the continent.

Titled *The Bold New Normal,* Lucy Quist disclosed that her 2019 book presented ideas about how to transform Africa at various levels into a place where its citizens had real options in exploiting genuine opportunities to prosper, rather than merely subsisting. She indicated that her ideas for Africa's transformation were based on some proven approaches:

> The first mass tool I used to share the message was social media, but the second mass tool that I'm using is a book on the subject of The Bold New Normal. I believe in it and I'm passionate about it. I want them to have the ideas in the book in their hands.

Disruptive tactics

The participants in this study described some tactics that could be described as disruptive in seeking to neutralize the ability of the target of the activities of CEOs to achieve its goals, operate. Such tactics also tended to court negative publicity for the perceived target.

One such tactic was what Charles Wereko-Brobbey described as "Agitation and Provocation." At the start of the current Fourth Republic in Ghana in 1992, Charles Wereko-Brobbey disclosed that he was dissatisfied with the prevalence of a culture of silence in the country, made worse by limitations placed on the media landscape. While free speech and a vibrant media were enshrined in Ghana's constitution, strong barriers were placed in the citizens' bid to exercise those rights.

Based on more than two decades of personal experience in activism in Europe, Charles Wereko-Brobbey said he decided to take some action to help lift barriers to free speech in Ghana. He chose to establish a pirate radio station in Accra, to force the political establishment into a legal determination of the constitutional provisions regarding a free media landscape. Some 25 years since his actions, Ghana now boasts a relatively buoyant media landscape:

> I took the view that the constitutional intent, so I decided to do some agitation and provocation. I decided to set it [Radio Eye] up and have a public fight – even including the international system - to force the government to allow plural broadcasting, which is precisely what happened. But it wasn't the radio station that brought media pluralism; it was the agitation after the station had been established, getting public support and international involvement into the issue of democracy and the role of the free media.

Some of the informants in this study revealed that sometimes what was required for effective activism was the mobilization of mass public action to engage in street protests. Kofi Bentil, however, explained that intellectual activism was sometimes inadequate on its own to drive the needed change, especially when it was necessary to put significant pressure on politicians in Ghana. He explained how protest marches could be impactful:

We realized that intellectual activism was not enough, which was why we escalated our activities to now include street demonstrations, several of which I convened and led. When you go on marches in the streets, you put pressure on the politicians.

One of the issues that caused Kofi Bentil to engage in some resistance actions was a popular public procurement nightmare that confronted the John Dramani Mahama-led NDC administration. This involved the award of a contract to Smartty's Management and Production Limited for the branding of a fleet of public transit buses belonging to the state-owned Metro Mass Transit (MMT) Limited. Some described this contract as not only dubious and corrupt but also involving many infractions of Ghana's public procurement laws. It emerged that Kofi Bentil was one of the key actors that exposed the deal:

There was this very corrupt deal that caused public outrage, involving the branding of some buses of the Metro Mass Transit. It ended up costing the nation hundreds of times what should have been reasonably charged. We found that Smarttys was awarded and signed even before the commencement of the formal procurement process, a blatant violation of Ghana's public procurement laws. I led an action to demand information to expose this act of corruption.

For some CEOs, engaging in activism also involved some mass media shouting matches with politicians and public office holders in Ghana. According to some of the informants in this study, such shouting matches usually took place on live radio or during television discussions programs. For instance, in discussing details of his action against the planned rollout of a new policy for the registration of all cellular SIM cards in Ghana in 2010, Ace Ankomah revealed that he had to engage the Director of Ghana's National Security in a not-so-merry war of words on one of the most popular radio stations in

Ghana, although it may not have been a safe thing to do because of the risks it exposed

him to:

> At the time, I was younger and probably more reckless. I had a shouting match on
> live radio with the then Head of National Security. It must have been on Peace
> FM or Joy FM. This action may have been probably ill-advised.

Quite unlike the typical Ghanaian approach of ambivalence, diplomacy, tact, and

circumlocution, some of the participants, including Senyo Hosi, had the propensity to opt

for a pathway of activism that involved being forthright and straightforward. According

to Senyo Hosi, "I do my things straightforward. I would stand in front of you and tell you

my mind and walk away. I'm a straight shooter."

Similarly, describing his approach as one of an army general, Kenneth Ashigbey

disclosed that he also had a direct and front approach to his social resistance actions. He

described this aggressive approach as involving the manner of speaking with authority,

being bold and courageous, and being forthright, when necessary:

> Mine is a frontal type of activism … I don't shy away from taking an issue head-
> on if that's what's needed to neutralize the opponent. Most people who know me
> describe me as *"The General"* because of my combatant style.

Even for those activist CEOs who expressed a preference for a direct, adversarial,

and confrontational approach to activism, campaign and communication effectiveness

remained the primary goal. Given that, they observed the need to vary approaches

according to various target audiences. In doing so, Kenneth Ashigbey expressed the

importance of being emotionally and culturally intelligent in varying methods according

to different cultural situations and communication contexts.

The interviews showed that some situational factors facing CEO activists in Ghana have led to variations in strategies and tactical approaches adopted. For instance, the bloodiness and fatalities of the *Kumepreko* protests that took place in the mid-1990s, and the violent responses of elements within the Ghana Police Service and the Ghana Army to some more recent protest marches had led CEO activists such as Ace Ankomah and activist groups such as Occupy Ghana to rethink their tactics.

As part of his tactical repertoire, Ace Ankomah appeared to favor a brand of intellectual activism he described *as* "A battle of minds," designed to set the tone for issues, shape the media agenda, forcefully raise the issues and drive the debate, stopping the opponents in their tracks, while offering effective protection against brutalities by the nation's security services:

> We realized that if we went marching in the streets, we wouldn't win any argument. If feet-on-street all the time, they have the police and the army to deal ruthlessly with us. We decided to have a different kind of protest movement - a battle of minds. Let's have a fight where you won't meet me physically to assault me, but we would be "assaulting" you where the mind is concerned. We would be forcing you to respond to the issues we hold dear.

Besides safety concerns, it turned out that such intellectual activism was also driven by practical, logistical, and cost management factors. Ace Ankomah provided more explanations and justifications for choosing his "Battle of the mind" approach to activism as including significant financial outlays involved in organizing media coverage, venue rental, equipment hire, and other logistics in event management. Thus, some of the tools employed in his "battle of the mind" approach include press statements, position statements, and legal action:

Our arsenal includes press statements, private and open letters, and position statements to the government. If we push long and hard enough, without achieving any results, we take legal action.

Thus, beyond the virtual fights or battle of ideas in the public sphere that Ace Ankomah described, others believed in a tactic that went beyond the court of public opinion and into the courts of law in Ghana. Here, Kofi Bentil described his actions as entailing a mixture of intellectual activism and legal activism, where Ghana's legal system engaged. He described his brand of intellectual activism as involving incisive research and the analysis of relevant issues, with the view to unpacking the various ingredients in ways that help to shed light on otherwise complicated public policy issues.

Kofi Bentil indicated that he also employed a good deal of legal activism that involved the courage of taking on and fighting various governmental bodies in Ghana in various courts of competent jurisdiction, intending to obtain court rulings that would serve the general public's interest. Kofi commented on his brand of intellectual and legal activism:

> My approach is a mixture of intellectual activism - calling things out and advocating on them - and legal activism. That is part of the distinctiveness of my activism. My activism is not only about raising awareness about issues. I like to use all legal means, including resorting to the use of the courts to push for legal reforms that would help make our society better. I am a lawyer, so I find that I can go to the courts to ensure that justice is served the good people of Ghana. The law is my forte, so I try to use it to great effect.

Several participants also spoke of the inadequacy of awareness creation strategies in producing the desired levels of social change sought. For Kenneth Ashigbey, what was sometimes required was an approach that involved calling out and ridiculing government officials them for their inactions and lack of accountability to the people of Ghana. He

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revealed that such naming and shaming approaches could include efforts at influencing

voter behavior against those non-performing politicians:

> I think I have gone beyond awareness creation because I have realized that it is not enough. It is now about exposing those who are doing wrong. Naming and shaming is the name of the game. Politicians and public officeholders in Ghana do not react to your awareness creation; they only react to voting behaviors. So, as an activist, you need to find ways of influencing the voting behaviors of the public towards erring politicians by naming and shaming public officers.

CEO activism was not entirely for altruistic reasons. Interviews revealed that at

least three of the participants in this study worked for one form of a trade association or

the other. For instance, while Kenneth Ashigbey led the Ghana Chamber of

Telecommunications, Senyo Hosi worked for the Ghana Chamber Bulk Oil Distributors,

while Odelia Ntiamoah-Boampong served the tourism interest group. It is noteworthy

that while he was the CEO of Channel Two Communications at the time of his interview,

David Ampofo in March 2020 accepted an offer to serve as the CEO of the Ghana

Upstream Petroleum Chamber.

Naturally, these are all industry advocacy roles for the CEOs who are serving in

those positions. While most of their actions were directed at altruistic common-good

ends, there was reason to believe also that some of their actions were aimed at achieving

the interests of the companies that made up the membership of the respective chambers

headed by some of these CEOs in the study.

For instance, it was found that Kenneth Ashigbey had engaged in at least one

activist campaign to sway public opinion and pressure the government to rescind a

decision to implement a proposed communication services tax policy, which policy

would have made telephony services offered by the companies who make up the

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membership of the chamber headed by Ashigbey more expensive to Ghanaians. He

expressed his views regarding the instrumentality of CEO activism in shaping public

opinion and ensuring that some policies of the Government of Ghana aligned better with

the expectations of sections of industry and the society:

> We learned that the government was planning to slap taxes on mobile money transactions. I was on air and kicked against the planned policy. The government heard us, and the proposed tax policy was withdrawn.

Support tactics

The participants reported employing some support tactics in Ghana, including

serving as elite allies and having mentoring programs and workshops, aimed at

supporting specific populations and other social movements.

One of the major issues that had engaged some of the informants in this study was

the deep-rooted culture of patriarchy in Ghana. It was the view of some participants that

for the country to leapfrog on the path of rapid socio-economic development, the

patriarchal system that some saw as crippling most women and girls in the society ought

to be toppled. Thus, it was found that some of the resistance and tactics employed by

some of the participants in this study targeted some of the pillars that supported

patriarchy in Ghana.

For instance, as part of her resistance activities, Brigitte Dzogbenuku had seen the

need to run various mentoring and workshops aimed at liberating women in Ghana from

the shackles placed on them by the culture of patriarchy in the country. It emerged that

Brigitte Dzogbenuku's nonprofit Mentoring Women Ghana had been running an

intensive four-day workshop series called "Imagine" that focused on chipping away at the

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hold that patriarchy placed on Ghanaian women, by empowering women to become vocal

through mechanisms such as positive modeling and sensitization:

> I have supported some women to be vocal. Through my activism, my mentoring programs, and my non-profit activities, I run different workshops in empowerment … to help build women's agency and self-esteem. I empower them to do what they want or desire.

A similar supportive approach was adopted by the EWN. However, the approach

adopted by this organization entailed what Patience Akyianu described as "direct

community engagement." In explaining this approach in action at the severely

underprivileged Chorkor fishing community (a suburb of Ghana's capital city of Accra),

Patience Akyianu noted that the fulcrum of the strategy was the "Family Strengthening

Program," which was undertaken by the EWN, in partnership with the SOS Children's

Village in Ghana. According to Edith Dankwa, these included special events such as

media publicized talk series and conferences that featured local and international

speakers:

> If there is an issue with women, we take a position. But the main thing is to empower professional women through mentoring sessions, coaching sessions, and our monthly talk series. The approach is getting people who have made it to come in there and talk to the gathering. It is a powerful modeling opportunity that shows members that if others have made it, then they can also succeed.

Other CEO activists had been undertaking diverse fundraising drives, designed to

support various groups in Ghana who had been affected by disasters. Ace Ankomah

described some of his roles in such initiatives within Ghana and the West African

subregion:

> There are many other things we do on the quiet. Whenever there is a disaster, somewhere in Ghana, we lead a fundraising drive to mobilize donations for the victims. We have even undertaken such efforts outside the shores of Ghana.

Pearl Esua-Mensah disclosed that she had the *Pink Ball* fundraiser, to raise money for breast cancer awareness and care, including providing mobile clinics, investments in public education and sensitization, and free breast examinations. The goal of her campaign was to ensure the early detection and treatment of breast cancer cases for both men and women:

> One of the first causes was a breast cancer campaign. I set the Pledge Pink to raise funds for breast cancer awareness and treatment. We had a partnership with Korle Bu Teaching Hospital to pay for their treatment.

Discussion

This chapter presented the findings from the interviews of the 24 CEO activists who participated in this study, relating to the strategies and tactics employed as part of their various social resistance campaigns in Ghana. Interviews revealed that the strategies and tactics for CEO activism in Ghana were influenced by some situational tonic and toxic factors. Although a few CEO activists in Ghana employed the tactic of leveraging economic power, most strategies tended to entail awareness creation. CEO activists in Ghana also employed various media strategies and tactics in their resistance actions.

The findings suggested that neither the taxonomy of CEO activist tactics suggested by Chatterji and Toffel (2018) nor Livonen's (2018) postulations was adequate to categorize the tactical repertoire of CEO activists in Ghana. While Chatterji and Toffel's (2018) schema lacked the category of support tactics and disruptive tactics, Livonen's (2018) lacked the essential character of tactics of leveraging economic power.

It is necessary to meld the two systems of categorization in order to adequately capture the rich variety of tactics deployed in Ghana. In this regard, the findings of this study make the case for an eclectic taxonomy of strategies and tactics, including (i) leveraging economic power; (ii) awareness creation and persuasion tactics; (iii) disruption and protest tactics; and (iv) support tactics.

The findings suggest that, based on the intended goals, there could be other classes of tactics, that have so far not been reflected in scholarship on the phenomenon, including "activism by living by example," "activism by industry group representatives," "naming and shaming," "legal activism," and marked extensions of the notion of leveraging economic power that added to the meaning posited by Chatterji and Toffel (2018), such as the positive use of economic power in which CEO activists undertake to match government investments.

These findings facilitate the further development of the working model for this dissertation. In Evolution Three of the CEO Activism Development Model (see Figure 17 below), I incorporate the findings regarding the tactical repertoire of participants in this study. Within the framework of the working model for this dissertation, the tactics employed in a CEO activist campaign are expected to some effects, outcomes, and consequences. The next chapter lays out the findings concerning the effects of engaging in CEO activism in Ghana, as described by the participants in this study.
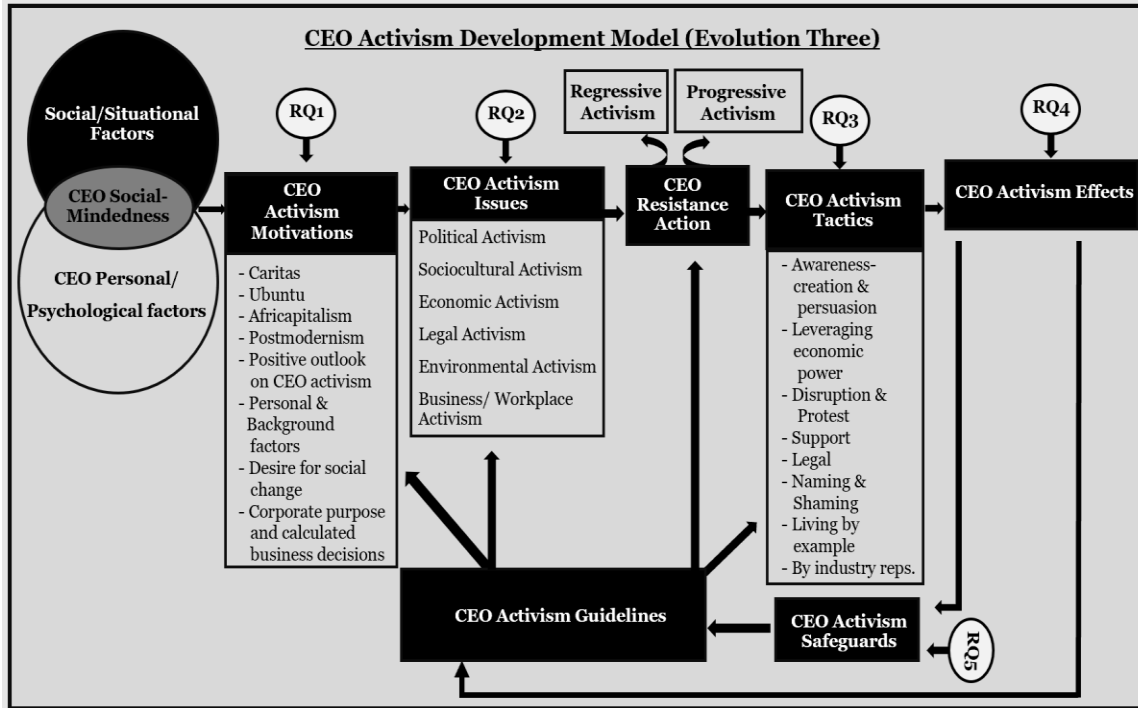
Figure 17: Evolution Three of the CEO Activism Development Model (indicating the range of motivations, clusters of issues/causes, and the tactics of CEO activism).

CHAPTER IX

CEO ACTIVISM EFFECTS IN GHANA

This chapter presents the findings regarding Research Question 4: "What effects have been produced by the resistance actions of CEO activists in Ghana?"

The findings presented in this chapter are based on the analysis of the in-depth interviews with all the 24 CEO informants in this study. Generally, the participants described the effects of their actions in terms of some outcomes produced, including specific achievements realized, but also what they described as positive consequences and some negative consequences suffered. As much as possible, direct quotes of some informants are presented, to illustrate the emerging themes on effects of CEO activism on the society, but also the positive and negative consequences for businesses and the activist CEOs.

Effects of CEO activism on the Ghanaian society

The participants in this study described various effects of their resistance actions as CEOs in terms of some achievements produced within the Ghanaian society. It was found that the perceived social improvements produced by CEO activists in Ghana included advancing the gender agenda, environmental stewardship, democracy, legal and policy reforms, citizens' empowerment, economic and public financial management, and shaping public opinion.

<u>Advancing the gender agenda</u>

Many of the CEOs who participated in this study indicated that their resistance actions had positively impacted efforts to empower women in Ghana. According to some of the participants, their actions had helped more women to find their voices in a predominantly patriarchal Ghanaian society. Brigitte Dzogbenuku described some ways in which her actions had enabled more women to believe more in themselves and to become more liberated:

> I've influenced women to be vocal. As part of my activism, I run workshops to help build women's self-esteem and agency. My "Imagine" workshops empower women to create the lives that they want, rather than being dictated to by the culture.

Some participants were concerned about the lack of gender diversity among companies in Ghana. Especially, they were dissatisfied with the under-representation of women in senior management positions and on the various boards of directors of companies operating in Ghana. Although many of the CEOs in this study saw more room for improvement, they spoke of some victories in this regard.

For instance, Patience Akyianu believed that her stellar performance as the Managing Director of Barclays Bank Ghana had increased confidence in the ability of women to manage some of the biggest organizations in the country. Describing herself as a trailblazer, she observed that she opened the way for more women to appointed as heads of several blue-chip companies in Ghana:

> For gender diversity, although there's more to do, there's been some success. Before I became the managing director for Barclays Bank Ghana, no Ghanaian woman had led a bank in Ghana. I was the only women managing director for a long time. Since I left that role, I have seen a few women being appointed to the helm, so there's progress. My performance and the work of the EWN have

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encouraged more women to believe in themselves. You can say I broke the glass ceiling in Ghana's banking sector.

It was found that improvements in gender diversity in Ghana were not limited to the banking sector. For instance, Eunice Biritwum also described some of her achievements as helping to mainstream the notion of gender parity within the country's energy sector, with the roles of such interest groups as Women in Energy, agitating and pushing for women's advancement within the men-dominated oil and gas sectors in Ghana.

Similarly, Regina Honu saw her achievements as including the increased participation of women and girls in coding and the digital spaces, noting that since 2012, her actions have helped promote the broader participation of women and girls in software engineering and cognate digital spaces in Ghana:

> I started advocating for women and girls in technology and coding very since 2012. This was even when the world movement was hardly underway. I can say that, now, everybody is talking about women and girls coding and computer science.

It emerged that Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante's efforts at mainstreaming the housing challenges facing *Kayayei* (women head porters in the open markets of Ghana) had led to some provisions in Ghana's 2020 national budget, for the construction of some quarters at selected markets across the country:

> I produced a film *Silverain* that focused on women empowerment and *Kayayei* and did a campaign on the issue. Many of the issues I highlighted have been addressed. There is a scene where someone said the government should provide housing for the *Kayayei*. In the 2020 budget, the government announced some provision for housing them. That brought me a lot of satisfaction.

<u>Environmental stewardship</u>

It was found that the actions by some of the activists in this study had produced some effects in the fight against illegal small-scale gold mining in Ghana. For instance, Kenneth Ashigbey expressed the belief that his consistent resistance actions since 2013 against illegal small-scale mining in Ghana, popularly called *Galamsey,* had galvanized the current president of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo to clamp down on such deleterious mining operations in the country.

He explained that in March 2017, the government announced a six-month ban on *Galamsey,* and set up the multi-sectoral group called Operation Vanguard to enforce the ban. The ban saw the seizure of excavators and mining equipment. As explained by Kenneth Ashigbey, his actions created public awareness about the environmental effects of *Galamsey*:

> The work of the Media Coalition against Galamsey gave the President the platform to show political courage regarding illegal mining operations in Ghana and to call the bluff of political blackmailers in saying that, even without their votes, he was going to stop Galamsey. The President formed Operation Vanguard to enforce the ban on such mining operations.

<u>Democracy</u>

Some of the collaborators in this study indicated that their actions have led to improvements in Ghana's democratic culture. For instance, the works of some CEO activists had led to the measures being taken to address disputed national elections in Ghana. Hitherto, most presidential and parliamentary election results had sparked disputes and posed significant threats to the peace and security of Ghana. This has been because of the lack of transparency in some facets of the electoral processes in the country.

It was found that through legal activism, activist CEOs such as Kofi Bentil had been able to win landmark legal judgments against the Electoral Commission of Ghana that had required the Electoral Commission to provide greater transparency over the conduct of elections in Ghana. For instance, such legal reforms now required the Electoral Commission of Ghana to be more transparent in providing pink sheets to the various political parties, as evidence of the pattern of voting at various polling stations during elections in Ghana. These pink sheets serve as audit trails and vouchers provided to the various political parties, to enable them to have parallel collations and tabulations of polls. As explained by Kofi Bentil, his legal activism produced some victories for democracy in Ghana:

> The Supreme Court ruled in our favor, stating that the Electoral Commissioner should provide all parties with the pink sheets from every polling station, to the extent that as soon as an election was over, it was possible for each political party to independently determine the results, even before the declaration by the Electoral Commission.

Juliet Asante disclosed that following her #WHYIWALKFORGHANA protest had created more awareness about the danger that political vigilantes posed to Ghana's stability and democracy. She revealed that her protest had led to some commitments being made by the government to address the issue:

> When I did my walk, I themed it *The Power of One: Why I Walk for Ghana*. From feedback, I know it was discussed in powerful political quarters. At least, some promise has been made that my concerns are being resolved.

It was found that Juliet Asante's protests produced more than promises from the political establishment in Ghana. A special commission of inquiry was established by the President of Ghana to probe the Ayawaso West Wuogon by-elections that triggered the

latest violence. After an incisive investigation, this three-member commission presented

its report to the President of Ghana. On April 12, 2019, President Nana Akufo-Addo

announced the placement of a bill before Parliament, to help disband political vigilante

groups in Ghana. In July 2019, the Vigilantism and Related Offenses Bill of 2019 was

passed, proscribing political militias and vigilantism in Ghana.

Some participants traced the unfortunately high spate of corruption in the country

to state capture and crony capitalism resulting from the prevailing system of political

party financing and the so-called winner-takes-all culture of politicking in Ghana.

According to several informants, the cloaked sources of electoral financing left Ghana

worse off, as politicians pillaged the nation's resources in the bid to reward their

campaign financiers.

Thus, the resistance actions of some of the informants had focused on pushing for

reforms to political party financing in Ghana. Some participants indicated that their

protests were bearing fruit, as the Electoral Commission of Ghana was requiring political

parties to submit their financial statements, together with notes revealing the sources of

their funding and the flows of such funds. Kofi Bentil shed some light on his work in this

regard:

> We believe that political party financing and the present "winner takes all"
> imperative is the source of corruption in Ghana. The courts ruled in our favor,
> instructing the Electoral Commission to demand the political parties to submit
> their financial statements, with notes of the sources of their funding. The
> Commission is to make these submissions public for us to see.

Another area in which CEO activists in this study said they had positively

impacted Ghana's democracy was related to a proposal for political parties to participate

in district and municipal-level elections in Ghana. During his interview on November 15, 2019, Senyo Hosi indicated that he and the One Ghana Movement were planning a campaign to push for a "No Vote" or even a cancellation of the referendum by the Electoral Commission of Ghana for the Ghanaian public to agree for the district and local-level elections to be held along political party lines:

> The Electoral Commission has scheduled December 17, 2019, to conduct a referendum to approve a bill to amend Ghana's 1992 Constitution. The One Ghana Movement's position is that the proposal wouldn't work in the nation's interest, so we are promoting a "No vote," or a cancellation of the referendum. The climate in Ghana is too politically polarized and we believe that this proposal, politicizing local-level elections in Ghana would worsen things. We must put Ghana first, rather than parochial political party considerations.

The protests against the planned referendum worked. At a national briefing on December 1, 2019, Ghana's President Akufo-Addo announced the cancelation of the referendum, to decide on an amendment of Clause 3 Article 55 (3) of the Constitution that would enable political parties to sponsor candidates during local level elections. The President cited the absence of national consensus on the matter and directed Hajia Alima Mahama, Ghana's Local Government and Rural Development Minister to withdraw the Bills seeking to amend Articles 55 (3) and 243 (1).

Legal and public policy reforms

Several participants described their social achievements in terms of some legal reforms and changes in public policy. After remaining as a bill for over a decade before Parliament without being considered, various activists pressured for the Right to Information Bill to be passed into law. In March 2018 the Right to Information Bill was

approved by the Parliament of Ghana. On May 21, 2018, Ghana's President Akufo-Addo

signed the bill into law. Ghana's Right to Information Law provides for the actualization

and operationalization of the constitutional right to information from key public and

selected private institutions, subject to exemptions consistent with the safeguarding of the

public interest. Kofi Bentil saw himself as contributing to this achievement:

> We have successfully got the passage of the Right to Information Law in Ghana. Now, anyone can demand any kind of information from any government agency in Ghana.

Other participants described their achievements in terms of improvements in

getting the political establishment to listen to dissenting voices on public policy matters.

For instance, during the planned implementation of cellular SIM card registration in

Ghana at the start of 2010, citing threats to the privacy of citizens, Ace Ankomah

revealed that he had become a one-man army, kicking against the planned policy. He

spoke of having to engage the then Director of Ghana's National Security in a shouting

match on live radio. He disclosed that this was a quiet victory that emboldened his

activist voice:

> Whenever you've stared long and hard enough at politicians, they'd blinked first. They called me for a quiet meeting one night and requested the law I was referring to … I drafted the law and sent it to them. In Parliament, they amended the law to say that the equipment they were acquiring would not be used to monitor conversations. It was a quiet victor that emboldened me to find my voice. We would put stuff out there, but the initial reaction of the government was to ignore us. But as we kept mounting pressure, we started achieving some results.

Some participants described community outcomes such as improvements in

Ghana's economy, changes in government policies, reforms in defense and internal

security, and better sanitation and environmental conservation. Senyo Hosi's testimony during his interview at the end of November 2019 was instructive:

> My actions have led to changes in government policies. The outcomes have been on different fronts, including economic improvements for Ghana, changes to unbudgeted subsidies, and their implication on the economy... We are currently pursuing reforms in the security sector because of some credible torture allegations we have received.

Citizens' empowerment

Several themes emerged that indicated a pattern of community achievements in the area of the empowerment of the generality of Ghanaians. For instance, it emerged that Charles Mensah referred to his decade-long campaign to promote a financially literate population:

> My actions on financial literacy have shaped individual income levels and promoted economic empowerment. My advocacy on multiple streams of income has led many Ghanaians to consider several other things they could do to supplement their primary income sources.

Among the effects of the actions of CEOs was the empowerment and building of the agency of members of Ghana's middle class. During the late 1970s and the 1980s, there had been what many have described as a 'culture of silence' in Ghana, which had been characterized by the disempowerment of the middle class and the generality of Ghanaians, especially during the Rawlings era between 1979 and 1992.

However, with the liberalization of the media landscape in Ghana, the promotion of democracy, increased roles of civil society groups, and the works of activists, political actors, and public office holders were beginning to be held accountable. Politicians were said to be especially becoming increasingly aware of the power of the middle class to

demand greater transparency and accountability. Kofi Bentil described this sense of

awakening:

> The idea that today, Ghanaian politicians know that the middle class would not
> sit aloof and watch them mismanage this country is important. Now, everybody in
> public office knows that if it gets beyond a point, they're going to get the Kofi
> Bentils in town confronting them and mobilizing people against them. Our actions
> make public office holders in Ghana more accountable and uncomfortable in
> knowing that their actions would be scrutinized. It's important if we're to develop
> that they don't see themselves as the be-all and end-all.

Juliet Asante observed that her #WHYIWALKFORGHANA and other campaigns

continued to encourage and embolden Ghanaians from all walks of life, who continued to

express their ability to now speak out on issues that mattered to them:

> People reach out to me every day, speaking about being emboldened by my
> actions … that I've encouraged them to find their voices. I get these messages
> from all manner of people, telling me about what huge impacts I am having on
> their empowerment.

Those CEO activists who focused on youth empowerment saw their achievements

largely in terms of developing a corps of ethically-minded future leaders for Ghana. For

instance, Albert Ocran spoke about the futility of social development, devoid of an

ethical base for the youth:

> I keep emphasizing ethics because achievement without ethics can build a
> problematic society. The biggest achievement is not just building entrepreneurs
> and people who're rising the corporate ladder, but people who're trying to do so
> ethically.

Economic and public financial management

It was learned that some CEO activists have worked to produce overall improvements in Ghana's economy and enhancements in the quality of public financial management. For example, it was found some of their actions, aimed at getting the Auditor-General of Ghana to flex its muscles for the first time during Ghana's fourth republican constitution regarding surcharging individuals, groups, companies and other institutions had led to the recovery of huge sums of money by the state.

As recalled by Ace Ankomah, legal activism by himself and the pressure group Occupy Ghana got the Supreme Court to instruct the Auditor-General impose some surcharges:

> The Supreme Court agreed with our position and ordered the Auditor-General to exercise constitutional power. The current Auditor-General (Daniel Yao Domelovo) for the first time saved Ghana Ghs 5.4 billion (about US$ 1 billion, at a current exchange rate of GHs 5.4 to US$ 1). Some people had plotted to take that amount from the Government of Ghana and the Auditor-General was asked to vet the transaction. As we speak (November 30, 2019), the Auditor-General has recovered GHs 67 million (about US$ 12.4 million) from people who had taken the nation's money and were forced to refund the same because of the judgments Ghana had got in court. If I am unable to achieve any other thing for Ghana, I would still be satisfied.

Some participants expressed some of their achievements in terms of contributing to better economic and public financial management in Ghana. Here, few informants said they had contributed to some changes in the implementation of a new regime of Tax Identification Numbers (TIN). For Charles Mensah, seeing that his recommendations for refining the original plans for TIN in Ghana had been a welcomed development:

> I wrote about the implementation of Tax Identification Numbers (TIN). I advocated for the promotion of the benefits of having a TIN, rather than

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threatening people. I was happy when I realized the Ghana Revenue Authority and the Ministry of Information did just that.

Other participants said their pressures against the government and other state actors involved in negotiations of some petroleum deals between some oil exploration companies and Ghana had led to changes in some of those contract terms. Alex Mould had been agitating against what he saw as an unfair petroleum contract between Ghana and Aker Energy. During his interview, he expressed some joy in noting that this contract was being revised, so that the interests of Ghana would be better served in the deal that had granted a lucrative oil concession to Aker Energy:

> Aker Energy had brought a plan to develop the oilfield. My advocacy has changed that. They've taken back their plan of development that they presented to the minster, and they are going to revise it … because of the holes I had punched in the initial plan. Their actions would have kicked against our local content laws until I spoke up and exposed their actions.

Shaping public opinion

Many of the CEO activists in this study said they felt that their actions shaped public opinion in Ghana. Most of the activist CEOs who participated in this study believed that the impact they had on public opinion had galvanized the generality of Ghanaians who hitherto had felt helpless and fatalistic.

Through increased public engagement generated by their actions, some participants observed that many Ghanaians now felt some sense of enablement that had led to increased active citizenship. In Kofi Bentil's words:

> When we started these actions, going on the streets, we attracted so many people who came out to support our actions. The effect on the general populace is that now there is a resurgence in active citizenship. People feel that if something goes

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wrong, they have a potent voice. The citizens feel they have a voice, and that when they speak, something will happen.

Some participants observed that speaking out on some issues had helped to place the limelight on those issues. In the specific case of the One District One Factory (1D1F) program, John Awuah believed that his actions helped to publicize and legitimize this government program:

> I think it [1D1F] received a lot more visibility because banks came behind it to give it legitimacy. Because I spoke and other banks came out visibly to support in words and by financial investments, it gave the program a high level of legitimacy.

As indicated by Regina Honu, her activism in seeking to effect changes within the Ghanaian social structure that kept women and girls out of the computer software and digital professions had required her to make her actions impactful in shaping public opinion. She observed that among happenings that convinced her about the influence of her actions on affecting public opinion had included basic changes concerning the place of women and girls in the digital spaces, to the extent that more parents had become positively predisposed to their daughters pursuing such professions:

> Previously, parents didn't believe in their daughters' education. Fathers were cynical about educating daughters, saying, *"She has to be in the house; she belongs to the kitchen."* Now, we're seeing a change in attitudes and more women and girls enrolling in technology programs. Husbands are enrolling their wives, and men are leading in getting more women and girls in these programs. Husbands joining in the action, and we have more positive men voices supporting our cause. That's a positive shift that's happening now.

Some of the informants had called for some changes in the educational sector in Ghana. Among those participants who had expressed dismay at the perceived sinking standards of Ghana's educational system, especially at the tertiary level, had been Senyo Hosi. While attending an event to mark the 70th anniversary, Senyo Hosi could not bottle up his frustration at the failures of Ghana's educational sector:

> I attended the 70th anniversary of the University of Ghana. I took frankly drew the attention to their mediocrity. I challenged them to start thinking more creatively in producing people with relevant and employable skills … I called for a transformation of the school ….

He revealed that he was quite impressed with the public reaction to his calls. Although the public reaction was mixed, he was pleased to see more support for his position.

It is however noteworthy that while some of these CEO activists may have contributed to some positive changes in the Ghanaian society, some big problems persist. For instance, *Galamsey* is still prevalent, and more remains to be done in terms of the gender agenda.

Effects of CEO activism on companies

Not all achievements or effects of CEO activism in Ghana pertained to the environment or the wider Ghanaian society. It was found that the practice of CEO activism in Ghana had produced some distinctive outcomes for the companies led by the respective activist CEOs that participated in this study. It emerged that these effects of CEO activism included both positive and negative consequences for the companies.

<u>Positive consequences on companies</u>

Several participants noted CEO activism had the potential of producing some business advantages for the CEO's company. For instance, John Awuah recalled that when he started expressing open support for the government's 1D1F program in 2017, although the Board of Directors of the UMB Bank was apprehensive because of possible business disadvantages and reputational dents because of the polarized political clime in Ghana, his activism rather proved fortuitous for the bank:

> We're a financial institution and this is a political issue … the board was probably concerned about potential business losses it may bring. Since this happened in 2017, I can say with all facts on the ground that the business of the bank was rather aided by my pronouncements … it propelled the business. Our image was improved, and other CEOs recognized that it was good, leading to four other bank CEOs joining us to sign an M.O.U. with the government.

The Government of Ghana, under the presidency of H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo, envisioned an ambitious industrialization program throughout Ghana. Under the One District, One Factory (1D1F) program, the government aims to build at least one factory in each of the country's administrative districts. Since its launch in 2016, this policy has been polarizing in Ghana, depending on which side of the political divide one belonged to.

While supporters of the ruling NPP saw it as a positive policy, members of the opposition saw it in a largely negative light. It is the perception of the divisive nature of the subject matter, coupled with the fact that it had become a hot-button issue in Ghana that may have made the members of the board of directors of the UMB apprehensive to find John Awuah (the bank's managing director at the time), publicly expressing his support for the policy.

David Ampofo, who was the CEO of Channel Two Public Relations at the time of his interview in 2018. In March 2020 he became the new CEO of the Ghana Upstream Petroleum Chamber. David Ampofo saw some positive consequences of CEO activism in Ghana and across Africa in terms of business opportunities for strategic communication firms. He observed that the nascence of CEO activism presented opportunities for his public relations firm to create a corporate practice to advice current activist CEOs and future CEO activists about effectively engaging in such resistance actions:

> There's an opportunity to position a communication firm along these lines. We're considering a practice to advise CEOs who want to become activists. Because we understand business, public policy, political action, and advocacy, we can guide them on this journey.

Some participants drew more direct correlations between CEO activism and the financial performance of their companies. Kenneth Thompson described how his role as an activist CEO had enabled his wealth management and leasing company to mobilize cheaper-than-average funds from the marketplace. He explained that this was a development that had a strong, direct, and positive impact on the company's profitability:

> On the organizational level, it [CEO activism] has a direct relationship with our profitability. As a financial institution, we trade in money. My actions make people have confidence in the brand, and we borrow money at least two percent less than the market. If you take our profit of US$ 2 million, that translates straight into the bottom line.

Others described some benefits for companies in terms of improved corporate images. Kenneth Ashigbey indicated that his actions against *Galamsey* and transparent elections in Ghana in 2016 had led to an improved corporate reputation for the Graphic Communications Group, the biggest newspaper group in Ghana:

There have been positive outcomes for the organizations I have led. At the Graphic, my actions on *Galamsey* and free and fair elections have strengthened the brand equity to the position where people realized and have accepted that the newspapers within the Graphic Group are the national mouthpiece and that they say the things that are important to Ghanaians; they set the national agenda and communicate facts about things that we hold dear as a people.

Indeed, most of the participants described some of the reputational dividends of CEO activism as emanating from the generally positive media reportage and good publicity enjoyed whenever the CEO made pronouncements that were carried and discussed in the mass media. Some saw the corporate profiling benefits as emanating from being seen in good company, such as when John Awuah recalled being invited by the President of Ghana to the commissioning of one of the flagship projects under the 1D1F program:

It wasn't by accident that when the President was cutting the sod for the Ekumfi Fruits and Juice Factory, UMB Bank was the only bank that was invited and given prominence during the event and in media reports. Those are some of the positive linkages you get - the acceptance and the positive light in which you are viewed as being part of the progressive forces in society.

Although other participants such as Kenneth Ashigbey did not initially envision some of the positive consequences of their work as CEO activists, they indicated that it was not long before such positive outcomes became glaring to them, especially in terms of corporate benefits such as better employee loyalty, driving customer brand preference, and as a means of gaining some competitive advantages:

I realized that it is one of the best ways of branding yourself, without paying for it. Immediately, you stand out as a unique CEO. I go to places, and people spontaneously identify me as "The Galamsey Man." It helps a company's competitive positioning. CEO activism could be a point of differentiation for your customers. If it's well-aligned with your team, then they would believe that you would take a bullet for them so they would also take one for you.

Indeed, some of the informants disclosed that some of the positive consequences of CEO activism were felt internally within the companies. Such positive effects were said to include a feeling of pride and respect felt by employees. As recounted by Edith Dankwa, her activities had boosted the morale of her employees:

> My people feel more respected because the notion is that you're fighting for the rights of women in organizations. I wouldn't limit this feeling of respect to only my women employees. I think it applies to the men and women employees alike because they know you are fighting for the general good. Your social actions as a CEO make your people more committed and engaged.

Negative consequences for companies

A recurrent theme of the consequence of engaging in CEO activism in Ghana was some perceived negative effect on business opportunities. It emerged that the business disadvantages arising out of CEO activism in Ghana were multifaceted. For some participants, there was a general loss of business opportunity, such as when contracts or business deals eluded the activist CEO's firm because of his/her resistance actions. Kofi Bentil described a general pattern of business disadvantages he had suffered because of a feeling of being conflicted as a result of his public pronouncements on various issues:

> There's a downside to doing CEO activism. I'm aware that sometimes, the business hasn't come in simply because of my public stances. Often, a matter or client comes up that I can't accept because I have publicly said something, and there're times when I see that I am conflicted in a matter because of my activist stance. Activism entails great sacrifices and losses for my business.

Several CEOs in this study felt scared to weigh in on what they perceived as contentious matters of a political nature in Ghana. Emmanuel Awumee disclosed that his trepidation about speaking on political issues stemmed from the fear of jeopardizing the fortunes of their businesses:

Although we seem to have freedom of speech, you are restrained because it is scary in Ghana if you have to say something that does not go down well with a political party. It's scary because your business can easily be victimized. You could lose a business contract, and as an entrepreneur, you find yourself not wanting to contribute to political issues.

For Juliet Asante, although her activism caused some business deals that were under negotiation to disappear, she was not concerned about such losses because they were smaller prices to pay, compared to the risk of political instability in Ghana:

People had their reservations about working with me or my businesses, just because of my activism. Some pushbacks I experienced included losing business deals. A few talks that were on the table went away because I'd brought unnecessary attention to myself. If you're going to take away your business because of this, be my guest. If I have to weigh the outcome of me not being able to live with myself vis-a-vis losing some businesses or money, I think it was a risk I was willing to take.

It was not only prospective contracts that could be undermined by CEO activism. Alex Mould revealed that businesses in Ghana risked having contracts that had already been signed, sealed, and delivered to be revoked if the activism of their CEO was not seen favorably by political officeholders. He noted that while some companies had suffered such misfortunes because of CEO activism, he believed that some of the companies had been able to push back and enforced the sanctity of their contracts:

Tenders have been canceled, and some lost things that were already signed. However, some of these companies also tend to have some political strength, so they can push back somehow.

Oheneyere Gifty Anti, whose media production company depended on corporate sponsorship, disclosed that such support for her television productions and special events had been hard hit because of her activist stance against patriarchal forces in Ghana. She revealed that most men CEOs in Ghana viewed her work in liberating women and

strengthening the forces in the direction of shattering the proverbial corporate glass

ceiling with a disdain:

> The negative aspect is that we struggle for sponsorship. I do it out of passion and conviction, and not for money, so I decided that I wouldn't accept a sponsor or brand that is harmful to women. Such a decision limits sponsorship options for the company. The few avenues left for me are companies … led by men who don't agree with my fight against patriarchy in Ghana and are reluctant to approve sponsorship packages ... for my company's projects.

According to John Awuah, historically there had been a strong "gagging

mechanism" in Ghana, where eminent businesspeople such as B.A. Mensah, Appiah-

Menkah, and Kwabena Darko had been victimized by past military rulers for speaking

about some of the big issues during their days. David Ampofo observed that within the

Ghanaian context, CEO activists tended to encounter many difficulties, including being

treated as a pariah:

> It [CEO activism] is a difficult thing to do, especially in our sociocultural setting here in Ghana. Although they may not openly admit it, some companies may blacklist you and choose not to have any business to do with your company because they consider you to be some sort of risk.

According to Kofi Bentil, his role as an activist CEO had made other CEOs who

could have given his firm some business deals become fearful of openly associating with

him and his business because of his public stances, usually against the political

establishment in Ghana:

> I've had situations where even people who would've done some business with me have told me they're afraid of doing so because of my activism. They're apprehensive because they don't want to be associated with my activist stances. That's why a business associate asked me to give up activism and focus on being a businessman.

Some participants revealed that engaging in CEO activism took too much time, effort, and precious resources from the core business. Albert Ocran counted the cost of his perennial CEO activism to his company:

> The negative consequences of CEO activism included getting caught up and getting carried away; For me, it was the sacrifice of time and time and time. Especially, when you are away during the critical first quarter of the year, the cost to me was the sacrifice of time, resources, effort, and the adverse effects of these on my business.

It emerged that an activist CEO who negatively spoke publicly against the Government of Ghana ended up not only being personally targeted but also having his or her business become the focus of numerous attacks. A few informants in this study revealed that although such negative profiling and targeting took various forms, generally legitimate business compliance requirements and certifications by diverse government departments and requirements served as the basis of harassment.

In commenting and describing such political name-calling, harassment, and attacks, Brigitte Dzogbenuku said that such scrutiny tended to keep the CEO activist and their company on top of their game:

> They will go and look to see whether you have paid your taxes. You must ensure that you comply with all rules and regulations, including certification by the Food and Drug Board, the Ghana Revenue Authority, etc. When you choose to be an activist in Ghana, you must expect a lot of harassment from the powers-that-be who can ruin the business.

She described other reactions of various government agencies and departments to her comments about the exclusion of budgetary allocations for the construction of roads in the Volta Region in Ghana's 2020 national budget as including orchestrated attempts to incite her out-growers to not supply her raw materials.

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Effects of CEO activism on individual Activist CEOs

Besides some strategic corporate dividends, almost all participants in this study described some personal rewards for engaging in CEO activism. It was found that CEO activism had some positive and negative consequences for the CEO activists.

Positive consequences on individual activist CEOs

Generally, such benefits were in terms of stronger personal brands and public recognition. However, for others, the perks of engaging in CEO activism extended beyond building a public profile.

All the CEOs who participated in this study observed that they derived some personal satisfaction from engaging in CEO activism. It emerged that personal reactions arising out of CEO activism included various reactions that related to the enjoyment of a beneficial state of mind for the activist CEOs. These reactions were expressed in several terms. Kofi Bentil spoke of having some peace of mind, a better quality of sleep, and the confidence of knowing that he had lived a good life because of his work to transform society positively:

> I sleep better at night. If I die now, I'd have lived a good life. For me, that's what counts the most – the internal satisfaction in knowing that you've done the right thing in fighting for the society.

For other participants in this study, when the actions of the CEO received positive media publicity, there was a sense of pride and a generally good feeling that the CEO

experienced. According to Emmanuel Awumee, such feelings tended to be so strong that they were also felt by employees and other corporate stakeholders:

> There's a feel-good factor when you and your organization are in the news for the right reasons. You don't have much control over the nature of media reportage about you and your organization, but if you're in the news for a cause about which you have spoken, that places you in a positive light and you've got a deep sense of pride.

It was learned that engaging in CEO activism tended to positively profile the personas of some of the activist CEOs who participated in this study, as observed by Kofi Bentil:

> I have not benefitted financially or materially from my activism. I have made more sacrifices than I have benefitted, but the benefit shouldn't just be in money terms. There are lawyers in Ghana who are richer than me, just as there're richer consultants. But I think I am viewed publicly more favorably than most. A strong personal brand is one of the benefits of my activism.

Some participants disclosed that their current social recognition was more attributable to their work as CEO activists than to their core business operations. In describing the positive impact of engaging in CEO activism on his persona, Albert Ocran intimated that he owed a greater proportion of his social standing to his social advocacy, although CEO activism incidentally provided some unintended business development spinoffs too:

> Without a doubt, my standing in Ghana has been impacted significantly not by my work as a business leader, but more by my role as a social activist. For four years now, I've been voted in the top one hundred of the most influential individuals in Ghana. I've won several awards and I've been cited in several publications. These were because of my profit-making activities, but mainly the result of my social activities. Funnily, that translates into business opportunities. People like people who do good. CEO activism tends to have a favorable impact on my business prospecting activities because people see you as somebody has given all you have for the greater good.

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For Oheneyere Gifty Anti, some of the positive consequences of engaging in CEO activism included being accorded great respect and recognition from various sections of the Ghanaian society:

> The positives include recognition and respect. You an authority, so if there's anything concerning women and children, people will be pointing at you looking up to you in great expectation.

Several CEOs in this study indicated that engaging in CEO activism had brightened their profiles and offered them some career benefits. For instance, while Kenneth Ashigbey expressed the belief that his new role as the CEO of the Ghana Chamber of Telecommunications may have stemmed from his long-standing track record as an activist CEO, Geraldine Gina Abaidoo indicated that she had been offered a board position because of her activism:

> I know for sure that, after we went to speak at a session at Joy FM, somebody said I had to sit on their board. Right away, my name came up and I am now a board member of that company.

Thus, most of the CEOs in this study regarded the stature and overall public profile of the CEO both as an important determinant and outcome of CEO activism. Many of the participants shared the view that activism built them up as CEOs, just as their perceived public profile or stardom as CEOs had a way of determining the success or otherwise of their actions. For John Awuah, this status-conferral ability of his activities could never be in doubt or downplayed:

> The stature and public profile of the activist CEO is a strong factor. Activism builds me up as a CEO. There is an unintended benefit that you derive as a CEO activist. Your social profile or personal brand is elevated. This enhanced public recognition also feeds into my activism, as it enables me to command more attention from the public.

Several of the participants mentioned some enhancements in their social

consciousness since embarking on the activist journey. For John Awuah, since speaking

out in support of the government's 1D1F program, he had started thinking more about

what else he could add his voice to within the society. He noted that becoming a CEO

activist had broadened his outlook on life in ways that had seen him thinking less about

himself, but more about others. Thus, he described a heightened sense of social

mindedness as an effect that CEO activism had had on his psyche:

> Once you start engaging in activism, you are boxed into a certain kind of thinking
> beyond just yourself and thinking less about bread and butter issues, but more
> about others, the society, and what else you can do to support the empowerment
> and development of others.

Some CEOs in this study shared the view that their actions had generated positive

reactions from their families. For John Awuah, the feedback from his wife and her close

associates had been all plaudits:

> Where my family is concerned, I think it has been more on the positive side. My
> wife, for instance, kept telling me that her friends kept praising me and telling her
> that I am doing very well in the various activities I have been engaged in. Because
> of the positive feedback, she was getting, she encouraged me to do more in
> supporting that kind of initiative.

Negative consequences for Individual Activist CEOs

It emerged that although CEO activism in Ghana may be associated with some

desirable consequences for the activist CEO, this is not always the case. For many of the

informants who participated in this study, CEO activism also came with a baggage of

negative ramifications.

Physical, verbal, and media attacks

Many informants mentioned some specific dangers of a physical nature they had

faced for engaging in CEO activism. Such physical attacks or dangers included assaults,

robberies, and various acts of arson. Brigitte Dzogbenuku described some of these

physical attacks:

> There are physical dangers or attacks. People have been robbed and their phones,
> laptops and personal possessions taken away. Your home gets broken into and
> you get robbed and basically to put some fear in you, and to prevent you from
> speaking. Others had their car tires deflated and vehicle brakes tampered with.
> Another had parked somewhere, and when he next moved his car, his tires were
> coming off because the lugs had been loosened by arsonists.

For Ace Ankomah, such attacks came in battalions that he termed "concerted,"

including rapid fires of name-calling as hypocrites; smear campaigns and defamation

across various media; cyberbullying on Facebook; arson attacks such as tampering with

the car tires of CEO activists; and fabricated stories in sections of the media:

> There have been concerted attacks directed at me and Occupy Ghana. Despite all
> that we've done to hold the current NPP government to account, some people still
> attack us and call us hypocrites because they claim we are not speaking up against
> the ruling government. My reaction is that I can point to some 77 issues we have
> raised in less than 3 years that the current government has been in office.

It was found that such attacks could come from shocking sources, including one's

kinsfolk. Kenneth Ashigbey recounted his experience of being attacked on social media

by a relative who felt disappointed in him. He also described a physical attack against

him, where an assailant had tried to run him over:

> There have been backlashes, especially for the organizations I have led. They
> would rain insults, threats, and attacks on you and call you names. People have
> tried to bully me and attacked me on social media over this *galamsey* matter.
> Somebody tried running me off the street some time ago during my early morning
> walks. A cousin of mine attacked me on social media ….

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Indeed, some participants indicated that physical attacks were becoming more prevalent. During her #WHYIWALKFORGHANA protest, Juliet Asante had to face the reality of physical attacks. The scary prospect of risking her safety meant that she had to undertake her protest match with police retinue:

> What I did had its security concerns in many ways. So, it was a bit scary for me, my family and friends, for me to put a voice to such a high-tension issue and exposing oneself on the street of Accra. Attacks can come in many ways - physical, social, etc. The police were concerned, and I ended up walking with more than 30 policemen and policewomen following me. It was like a police march.

It was found that powerful women were especially targeted in such attacks. Edith Dankwa shared several accounts of unpleasant attacks on several social media platforms. She found it shocking that as an eminent member of the Ghanaian society, she could be attacked and called bad names on social media. She described such name-calling as part of bad attacks against powerful women in Ghana:

> I have been attacked and called all manner of terrible names, especially on social media. Yes, even me, an empowered, moving, and shaking corporate executive faces net bullying … because of my activism.

According to some informants, mores of Ghanaian culture where people of relatively higher social statuses such as CEOs were exempted from verbal attacks did not extend to CEO activists. Thus, engaging in CEO activism exposed some participants in this study to insults and attacks, despite their eminence in the Ghanaian society. Besides being a CEO, Oheneyere Gifty Anti is married to a powerful traditional chief in Ghana. However, she disclosed that she had not been spared:

> I have been called a witch and so many unprintable names, just because of my pronouncements. If you are an independent and strong woman in Ghana, you are

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hated and called all manner of names. I have my fair share of innuendos and insinuations.

It turned out that it is not only the women CEO activists who suffered such attacks. Some men CEOs who participated in this study recounted experiences of being bashed on social media and in traditional media. Ace Ankomah shared his testimony about suffering smear campaigns and bad press:

> There are smear campaigns. I have been defamed. I sued this guy, sitting in New York, who decided to insult me regarding issues that completely have nothing to do with me. Yesterday, a friend of mine set us up to be insulted on his Facebook wall.

While both men and women CEOs in Ghana suffered unpleasant attacks, some participants suggested that such name-calling and card-stacking were especially institutionalized and set heavily against women. Some of the women CEOs in this study spoke of several negative terms, labels, and tags used in Ghana against outspoken women. For Edith Dankwa, many cultural and social institutional structures and systems existed in Ghana for demonizing, scandalizing, and vilifying women in general, but especially very liberated women. She expressed her suspicion that the Ghanaian society had something against womenfolk, including being called "too known:"

> Ghanaian society also has something against women who are activist CEOs. Vocal women are branded in a way; they term you as "too known."

According to Regina Honu, seeking to advocate for improved rights for women and girls in the technology space had caused her to encounter a great deal of resistance and accusations, including those that alleged that empowering women would make

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women disrespectful of men, feelings that women would overtake men, and a general feeling of insecurity and discomfort among many men in Ghana:

> I face a lot of resistance. Some say that now men will be disadvantaged, or women are getting too many special privileges … that these gender agenda would be a license for women to be disrespectful of men. Many men feel some intimidation and fear that women will take over. Also, men feel that they must protect their position, so they are uncomfortable when women are arising, and when women are asserting themselves.

A distinct form of verbal attacks against CEO activists in Ghana related to fabrication and false accusations. For Pearl Esua-Mensah, such attacks had targeted her marriage. Describing the consequences of engaging in CEO activism as "very big," she revealed that some of her verbal assailants had gone to the extent of calling her husband on the phone to report all manner of falsities to him:

> I remember my husband would get phone calls from people who thought they were doing him a favor, who would seek to report to him, or wonder why he would allow me to go on business trips with my bosses and meet all manner of people. Thank God that our relationship has been strong, and we have survived these things.

Lucy Quist described some of the attacks she had experienced, including questioning her marital status and whether she had children:

> I've had on occasion a few business leaders - not just men, but typically men - who feel that it's a lot of hot air; that you're making too much noise and you should forget about it all. They try to discourage you; saying it is not the place for a woman to be doing this. They want to find major minuses and the major minus is not being married and not having children.

Among the major negative tags that women CEO activists in Ghana faced was being labeled as "a feminist." It turned out that in Ghana, such a label carried many negative connotations, borne out of a poor appreciation of the meaning of the concept.

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Regina Honu indicated that the "feminist" label had been many times hurled at her by her detractors, in hopes of stopping her from speaking up against the patriarchal norms and institutions in Ghana:

> When they say you're a feminist, they mean you hate men, and that you don't want men to progress. With such a tag in Ghana, you always have that immediate negative reaction, even without having your thoughts heard.

She mentioned that some of the opposition to the gender diversity agenda in Ghana had been from other women. Regina Honu explained that such a tendency by the few successful women in Ghana to break the glass ceiling to feel the need to protect their turfs had something to do with the pattern of tokenism in the appointment of women to senior positions in the country.

Other participants indicated various forms of name-calling, as arising from their activism. Pearl Esua-Mensah mentioned that she and her colleagues at the EWN had been referred to with such adverse comments as *"The Diva Club,"* or *"The women doing their thing,"* indicating some condescending and patronizing attitude that reflects the fact that those making these comments do not take the EWN seriously.

Several participants disclosed that such attacks had caused them to feel concerned about their safety and the security of their families. Regina Honu indicated that, as she was becoming increasingly strident in her activism, such the voices in her head kept urging her to become more restrained in her utterances:

> Another resistance I face involves my security that of my loved ones. I'm getting increasingly vocal as I'm getting older and as I am having more opportunities to speak. When I was younger, I was a little more controlled in my pronouncements. Now, I'm unhinged; I'm fully liberated, and I have found my voice. I worry that will get me into trouble.

Some participants indicated that many media attacks had been politically motivated by members of the sitting government who may perceive the pronouncements of the CEO activist as making the government unpopular. According to Alex Mould, some "rottweilers" and serial callers to radio and television call-in programs had been unleashed on him:

> Most of the negative outcomes have been from political people. They unleash their *rottweilers* on you. Instead of exposing themselves by coming directly, they have these serial callers or serial social media guys who try to pounce on you.

Charles Wereko-Brobbey described a range of problems that came the way of CEO activists in Ghana, simply because of the desire to drive positive social changes. He revealed that such negative consequences included: being perceived as an enemy; others picking personal fights with him due to his activism; name-calling; and several other forms of attacks. He noted that because of these challenges, not many business executives felt bold enough to answer the call to engage in activism:

> The response is always personal attacks. You encounter many enemies and politicians see it as a personal fight with you because you're targeted as an enemy of the political establishment. The environment for democratic encounter and accountability is not well-developed in developing countries. It's a bigger risk to be a CEO activist where debates, reasonableness, and tolerance are not appreciated. That's why we have fewer CEO activists here.

Brigitte Dzogbenuku described a series of attacks she had to endure. According to her, soon after participating prominently in the Occupy Flagstaff House protest in 2014 and engaging a member of the then NDC government in a heated confrontation on live radio, she was attacked in an unsavory publication in a popular tabloid that was sympathetic to the NDC party. She told the story of her image being splashed on the front page of this tabloid, together with a press feature that was designed to put her in a

negative light. According to her, she was not so much concerned about the content of the press feature in the tabloid as she was about the motivations and capabilities of those that masterminded the bad press attacks against her for her role in the Occupy Flagstaff House protest of 2014:

> Whatever the story contained was no news at all. What bothered me was that if they were so desperate to write such a story about me, then I figured that they were capable of physically harming me too.

Thus, she expressed feelings of fear and insecurity because of the extent to which her attackers went in maligning and ridiculing her in the media. This experience left her feeling fearful about her safety and the security of her family members.

Arrests and detentions

A direct effect of engaging in CEO activism in Ghana was the risk of being arrested or detained by the Ghana Police. According to serial activist Kofi Bentil, during the Occupy Flagstaff House protest march, he was arrested by the Ghana Police for being the convener of the protest.

In Africa, when your actions deprived politicians and their favored business cronies of lucrative, but ill-deserved financial resources, you are putting yourself in very clear and present danger. For Kofi Bentil, the threats had come in many forms, including beatings and death threats. These have made his family and close associates concerned for his health and safety. However, he disclosed that he was not deterred and that his father's advice had kept him going:

> I've been threatened many times … all manner of threats, from beatings to many others. I don't dwell on that because you could walk out of here and get run over by a car. I am not reckless, but it's clear to me that we all have one life to live,

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and we must choose how we want to live it. Live every day like it's a special gift. When it's all said and done, I want to be part of the solution. As my father said, even if you don't get the results you desire, just play your part.

Several collaborators in this study intimated that their family had expressed grave concern and worry about their continued role as activist CEOs. Kenneth Ashigbey revealed that his immediate family had been telling him about their unease:

> There are times that your close family members feel concerned. Family members remind you that you are the breadwinner and that you ought to be mindful of the repercussion of your activism. Should something bad happen to you, and the impact on your dependents could be telling.

Kofi Bentil disclosed that although his wife, children, mother, and other family members appreciated his role as an activist, such feelings of support were interlaced with a strong sense of foreboding, especially in Ghana where it was risky business to confront powerful politicians:

> It's not a comfortable thing, and it's not something that my family jumps up and down about in excitement. Things happen, and you'll never know how it's going to turn out. I thank God that nothing serious has happened to me so far, but anytime I put myself in harm's way, my family wonders how it is going to end. They're uncomfortable because they bear the brunt of it all. If my business is not going well, my family will be the first to suffer. I am always in the forefront … I was attacked by the police … I was arrested … everybody worries about what could happen to you when you keep on challenging politicians.

Removal from office

It was found that some CEOs suffered attempts to bring them down, using false allegations and anonymous letters, written to various investigative and oversight organizations in Ghana. Kenneth Ashigbey disclosed that several such letters had been sent about him to the Economic and Organized Crime Office (EOCO), alleging that he

had misappropriated funds of the company. He indicated that these were designed to
intimidate him or have him removed from office:

> People wrote letters to the EOCO and the National Media Commission (NMC),
> alleging that I was using corporate funds and resources at the company to fight
> *Galamsey*. They write anonymous letters to powerful people and regulators to try
> to intimidate you.

Many informants indicated that engaging in CEO activism could lead to the
removal of the CEO from office. While such a risk confronted most CEOs, it was felt that
it was more so for other CEO activists. It emerged that in firms that were regulated or
influenced by the government, CEO activism was significantly curtailed, especially when
the action was against some workings or policy of the Government of Ghana.

Thus, one notable consequence of CEO activism in Ghana was the risk of job
losses by CEOs of firms regulated by the government, as described by Kofi Bentil:

> In Ghana, if you work in an industry, a sector, or a firm where the government
> influence is strong, you can't be an activist. They will get rid of you … you will
> surely lose your job. In Ghana where the government controls virtually everything
> – including finance, oil, and gas, etc. – if you work in any of those sectors,
> activism puts you at great risk.

Exclusion

Some activist CEOs in this study revealed that their actions had not been without
some collateral damage, especially in terms of exclusion from the political establishment.
For instance, although being an important part of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in power
in Ghana at the time of data collection, Charles Wereko-Brobbey revealed that his activist
stances over the years had led to his alienation from the inner circle of the party.

It would be recalled that he marched the streets of Ghana alongside some of the
current bigwigs of the NPP during the early days of Ghana's Fourth Republican

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constitution. He was one of the people that marched alongside current president Nana

Akufo-Addo during the *Kumepreko* demonstration against the introduction of a regime of

value-added taxes in Ghana in the mid-1990s. During his interview for this study, he

expressed the conviction that the very people he marched with, who were now in political

leadership in Ghana had excluded him from the core, simply because of his divergent

opinions:

> Those who were very active with me 20 to 25 years ago are now in government. We were together when we were doing all the major activities such as the *Kume Preko* demonstrations. Our current president was the chief legal advisor for *Radio Eye*. Most people would have thought that I would be his Chief of Staff … it doesn't matter because, at the end of the day, it is what is best for Ghana that matters. CEO activism has its pitfalls.

In talking about some of the negative consequences of engaging in CEO activism,

some informants discussed differences between CEO activism in Ghana and elsewhere.

According to Charles Wereko-Brobbey, despite attacks against CEO activists and other

activists in Ghana, they must persist because of the prevalence of the pursuit of private

interests, corruption, and state capture. He stressed that the stage of an activist CEO's

lifecycle has a strong influence on the sort of pronouncements he or she could make. He

explained that being advanced in his years, he had nothing to fear, and that had the

boldness and the courage to ask the hardest of questions with less to lose than the

relatively younger activist CEOs in Ghana:

> I'm in a very comfortable position at the end of my life to be able to put out those questions so now the activism I do is mainly asking the questions that people who are more active in their professions will like to ask but dare not ask. It is not exactly a question of some people being scared, but it is more because they have families to take care of.

A few participants expressed the view that others may seek to engage in activism when they knew that they had nothing to lose. Referring to this as an *"Odjwain funu"* (Dead Goat Syndrome), Charles Wereko-Brobbey revealed that some CEOs may engage in activism, knowing that they were on the way out:

> I'll take Mr. XXX [name withheld], he was never an activist, until he knew he was about to leave XXX Company Limited [withheld] because he had been pushed out. In his case, it was more like *Odjwain funu (Dead Goat Syndrome).* So, in his case, at the time, there was less danger to his position.

The *Twi/Akan* expression *"Odjwain funu"* literally means "the corpse of a goat." In Ghana, it is generally said that a dead goat cannot be frightened with a knife, since it is already lifeless. The expression was made popular in March 2015 when former President John Mahama was reported to have told a group of Ghanaian expatriates in Botswana that:

> "I have seen more demonstrations and strikes in my first two years. I don't think it can get worse. It is said that when you kill a goat and you frighten it with a knife, it doesn't fear the knife, because it is dead already … I have dead goat syndrome" (Quist-Arcton, 2015).

Akin to the English epigram *"He that is down needs fear no fall,"* which is attributed to John Bunyan, it is a metaphorical reference to the feeling of fearlessness and nonchalance because of a battalion of problems, runs of bad luck, and similar chains of challenges that may confront an individual.

It was found that the litany of negative consequences of suffered by activist CEOs CEOs appeared to be affecting their appetite to pursue social actions in Ghana. According to Charles Wereko-Brobbey, such negative consequences were gradually rendering many corporate executives in Ghana jelly-boned and risk-averse. He observed that most

corporate chieftains who would have taken up activist stances have instead chosen to belong to the *"mimp3 mihu as3m" (meaning "I don't want trouble for myself"* or *"I need to save my skin"* in the Akan/Twi language in Ghana*)* camp. He also noted some negative branding of activists in Ghana:

> If you stuck out as an activist, others would label you as *controversial* – a term which gets used in this environment for people who are exceptional and who push against the grain, and a reference to trouble seekers who needlessly provoke or destabilize the social fabric with their activities.

Similarly, Geraldine Gina Abaidoo revealed that many CEOs she knew (especially women CEOs in Ghana), who would have taken on activist stances in Ghana, had been cowered by the fear of such attacks into choosing instead to mind their own businesses. She indicated that she had personally suffered such negative consequences, and spoke of some collateral damages against the person of the CEO activist and his/her organization:

> Such threats are real because I know a lot of CEOs are in that capacity – especially the women - who are not coming out to speak. They have chosen to rather focus on managing their companies because they don't want to be tagged and attacked. If you are a woman and you speak out in Ghana, they tag you a bitch, meaning that you are trying to be masculine. I have felt like recoiling because of such attacks.

Discussion

This chapter reported the findings from the interviews of the 24 CEO activists who participated in this study, relating to the effects that working as CEO activists in Ghana. It was found that the role of CEO activist was associated with some improvements in the society, but also some positive and negative consequences for companies and the CEO activists.

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It also emerged that within the Ghanaian context, numerous negative consequences were occasioned by the resistance actions undertaken by CEOs. While both men and women activist CEOs suffered their share of such repercussions, it appeared that women activist CEOs faced some special challenges and attacks. It could be possible that the relentless attacks and negative effects of CEO activism in Ghana could be working to discourage some CEOs from taking the activist path.

These findings are consistent with current literature on CEO activism that suggests some effects of CEO activism, including some impacts on CEOs and their organizations. For instance, Chatterji and Toffel (2018) paint the picture of several risks for CEOs, including charges of hypocrisy, double standards, and bad press; Chatterji and Toffel (2019) speak of potential pitfalls of CEO activism, including such consequences for various stakeholders, including online protests, boycotts, viral social media protests, and CEO removals. Weber Shandwick (2017) found that CEO activism did not only have an influence on the buying decisions of Millennials but that it also had some implications for the retention of top talents with Millennial populations.

Several other organizational outcomes have also been found to be associated with the practice of CEO activism. For example, Chatterji and Toffel (2017) found that CEO activism had an impact on some consumer attitudes and public opinion on selected issues and causes; while Dodd and Supa (2014; 2015), Dodd (2016), and Chatterji and Toffel (2016) all found that CEO activism affected customers' purchase intents.

Despite these findings in the extant literature, the findings reported in this chapter build on the current literature in several ways. Besides generally introducing findings from the developing world into the literature, it is significant in also introducing the

voices of women CEO activists, whose lived experiences as activist CEOs have been significantly elided from the literature.

The findings in this chapter could deepen our understanding of CEO activism by identifying various classes of effects of CEO activism on the society, but also identifying company effects as well as effects on CEO activists. The effects of CEO activism identified for a developing country such as Ghana included gender rights promotion, environmental stewardship, promotion of democracy, and protection of economic and public financial management.

Several positive and negative consequences are reported for companies and CEO activists. These can serve as the basis for further investigation by scholars who may be interested in undertaking further studies in the developing world or comparing such a typology of impacts (on society; on companies; and on CEOs) between Western and non-Western societies.

Again, these findings necessitate the further evolution of the working model. The next iteration saw the incorporation of the range and types of effects produced by the actions of CEO activists in Ghana, as shown in Figure 18 (below). The findings relating to the effects of CEO activism called for some fundamental changes to be made to the original formulation of the model.

The findings indicated that CEO activism produces both negative (undesirable) and positive (desirable) effects on society, companies, and activist CEOs in Ghana. In my original (basic) formulation of the conceptual framework, I had expected the effects produced by CEO activism to lead to (i) safeguards and (ii) influence guidelines for future CEO actions. However, the findings call for some rethinking of the working

model. I expect that the dyadic patterns of outcomes – positive and negative - to generate diverse pathways of action to trigger changes in the evolution of the working model.

Owing to their undesirable nature, I expect the negative effects of CEO actions to cause affected CEOs to actively put in place diverse safeguards to (i) insulate themselves from such effects, and/or (ii) minimize any such unwanted effects of CEO activism. However, positive effects (because they are desirable outcomes) are expected to inform guidelines for future activist campaigns.
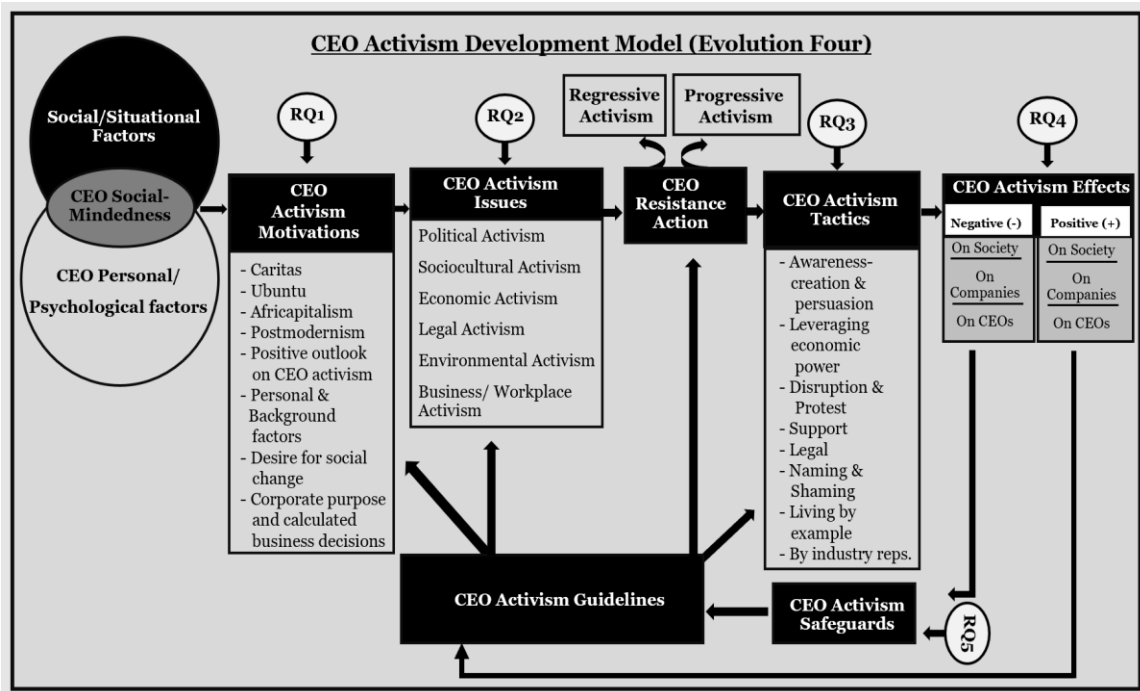
Figure 18: Evolution Four of the CEO Activism Development Model (indicating the range of motivations, clusters of issues/causes, the tactics, and the effects produced by CEO activism).

Thus, overall, within the context of the working model for this dissertation, the tactics deployed in CEO activism lead to some effects. The effects produced could relate to improvements in the society; but also, positive (desirable) and negative (undesirable) consequences for (i) companies, and (ii) individual CEO activists. While positive

corporate and personal consequences are suggested to inform guidelines for future CEO

activism, the negative consequences necessitate some safeguards, designed to shield the

CEO activist from harm.

The next chapter presents the findings for RQ5 on the range of safeguards

employed by the participants in this study to insulate themselves from the unwelcomed

consequences of engaging in CEO activism.

CHAPTER X

CEO ACTIVISM SAFEGUARDS IN GHANA

Despite the risks and negative consequences of engaging in CEO activism in Ghana, most of the 24 CEOs who participated in this study expressed the resolve to persist in their roles as activists.

In this chapter, the results of the findings relating to Research Question 5 (What safeguards do activist CEOs in Ghana employ to insulate themselves from the pushbacks they face because of their resistance actions?) are discussed. The major findings are presented next.

Social safeguards

A category of safeguards emerged from the conversations with the participants, which related to diverse forms of safety and protection found in various types of human social relations. Virtually all participants in this study were of the view that CEO activism ought not to be a solo activity. Thus, for many participants, an important safeguard involved finding safety and strength in joining forces with others.

It emerged that safe and successful CEO activism revolved around creating what some described as "a coalition of the willing." By this, they were referring to the need for the CEO activist to have a group of like-minded people and organizations who could help with various aspects of the campaign: legwork, brain work, staying ahead of enemy strikes and helping the activist to navigate any pitfalls.

Kenneth Ashigbey described some of his perspectives on forming such a coalition during his long-standing fight against illegal small-scale gold mining activities in Ghana:

Form a coalition of the willing, comprising those who can help. You can't achieve much as a lone ranger. It's not safe for you to be a one-man army. Have people who'd ask hard questions of you.

Others highlighted creating well-knit communities of people who shared the ideas and ideals of the campaign, and who also found each other within a defined locality or digital echo chamber. Such a community could provide the opportunity for community members to meet each other to plan actions within the community and support each other to achieve what they planned to do. Lucy Quist described the utility of such groups:

Create communities of people who share these ideas, but also find each other within their locality. Give them the channel to find each other, to meet, to plan actions, and to support each other.

Referring to traditional Ghanaian adages that highlight the importance of drawing in-depth strength from numbers, most participants noted several benefits of building coalitions, including the benefits of multiple perspectives, but also serving as a protection from attrition and attacks of individual members:

There's safety in numbers. A Ghanaian proverb says a broom straw can be easily broken, but when the sticks are tied together into a broom, the broom may bend but cannot easily break. Bring people together, not only because of numbers but also because of their diverse perspectives. Building a coalition brings resilience and insures against attrition.

It was found that many of the participants in this study saw the importance of activist CEOs in Ghana developing a mindset of supporting other CEO activists as an important social safeguard for CEO activism in Ghana. Some of the informants underscored the need for unity and support for other CEOs. For those that shared this viewpoint, the common connecting thread that should bind all activist CEOs together was the fact that they were activists who shared the commitment to risk themselves in the

fight for the common good. Kofi Bentil was one of those that believed the CEO activists

should support each other:

> CEOs should support other CEO activists. There's something about people who
> are prepared to put themselves on the line. If you're a CEO, you must support
> others who decide to play activist roles.

Such cooperation could be in various respects, including funding and the

provision of diverse forms of moral support and protection for each other. According to

some participants, because of the nascence of the phenomenon, activist CEOs in Ghana

were in a minority, and thus, it was important for them to close their ranks and support

each other in their actions.

Some participants extended the need for partnerships and alliances beyond

working with other CEO activists. According to Kenneth Thompson, a success factor and

safeguard measure in CEO activism involved drawing strength from all manner of

sources, including directors, employees, and family members:

> A critical thing is that you must find good people to work with, as employees,
> other CEOs, your family, the community, civil society organizations, and
> directors. I could never have done this alone.

According to Kofi Bentil, because his stances were public, the generality of

Ghanaians knew both his supporters and his adversaries. Thus, should any harm befall

him, it would be obvious who the possible suspects would be. He expected his supporters

to serve as a shield of protection:

> Your supporters look out for your interests. There've been many times when
> we've planned to engage in some actions and others have tipped us off regarding
> plans to attack us. We've hired extra security agents, and there are times when
> you must just be careful about where you go; just being careful about your
> surroundings; not walking alone, and being careful where you go at night.

Spiritual safeguards

It was found that many of the collaborators in this study counted on one form of spiritual protection or the other. Most of the informants found security in supernatural forces, be these a God-factor, ancestors, or some other unseen spiritual force. Some participants expressed the view that they relied on God or some divine nature.

Kofi Bentil disclosed that although he took personal charge of his physical security, there was only so much that he could do as a human being. Given the limitation of man-made security measures, he spoke of leaving his ultimate security and self-preservation in the Hands of God:

> My faith in God is ultimately the strongest source of strength for me. We do what we have to do to protect ourselves, but security is a myth. Those who find themselves with all the security in the world are not more protected than the rest of us who leave ourselves to outright exposure. Do what you can but leave the rest to God. I believe in God.

In sharing her experiences and thoughts about the pushbacks, threats, and dangers CEO activists in Ghana faced because of their resistance actions, Brigitte Dzogbenuku referred to receiving a lot of help from the unseen real and forgiving her attackers:

> People will try to harm you. I can't do much about that, except to keep quiet. Yet, I can't keep quiet because of who I know I am. Pray about it, then head out and soldier on, knowing that you're acting in truth. Forgive all, and those that try to harm you would be piling coals of fire on their heads.

Similarly, Kenneth Ashigbey said he drew his strength from spiritual sources. He disclosed that although he felt scared sometimes, he took refuge in the power of personal and corporate prayers from his family members and other supporters:

> As an activist, you have your fears … you're afraid for yourself, but you think it's a price worth paying. I remind those who express concern for me that the best they can do is to support me with prayers. I believe many people I don't know

have been praying for my safety and the protection of all who join me in my actions.

Corporate safeguards

It emerged that some participants found safety in the protection offered by their companies. These include the safety provided by the company, its board of directors, individual board members, other members of the C-Suite, and sometimes, employees of the company.

In this regard, an important safety measure in CEO activism was identified as establishing strong connections between the CEO's actions and the corporate strategy. It was found that such strategic linkages could be at various levels. For instance, right from the incorporation of Dalex Finance and Leasing, activism was identified as one of the ways of positioning and promotional strategies.

Thus, some informants spoke of benefits and attributes of an activism-embedded strategic focus as including working to provide some consistency, authenticity, and budgetary support for the initiatives – factors that could provide a hedge of support and protection for the activist CEO.

Some participants disclosed that they had enjoyed the protection and support of their companies because their actions were driven by elements within their companies such as connections with the purpose, mission, vision, and goals of the company. According to Kenneth Thompson, his activist stance had always enjoyed massive corporate support because it was grounded in the strategy of the company:

> The board has been supportive. I have a board chair, who doesn't interfere needlessly. The board hasn't prevented me from speaking publicly. From the outset, we planned to build the brand by advocating for the greater good. Advocacy is part of our strategy and everybody here knows why I speak out. I

have a management team that's familiar with what I say, who can guide me, give me valuable feedback, and can shape my messages.

Here, Kenneth Thompson was articulating a widespread view shared by most participants who referred to the importance of having a so-called "Kitchen Cabinet" that comprised a carefully selected team of people who served as consultants, reviewers, and several other roles in guiding and assisting the CEO activist in his/her actions.

Another theme that emerged regarding safe CEO activism was the need for corporate values and principles to drive corporate activism. In this respect, the suggestion was that CEO activism ought not to be a knee-jerk (re)action. Some informants underscored the need for CEOs to ensure that their actions were underpinned by some higher-order corporate purposes. Kofi Bentil explained how this matrix of purpose-driven activism operated to insulate the CEO activist by offering some corporate support and protection:

> The purpose of being in business and showing concern for the greater good should precede activism. It's these corporate ideals that signal that something happening in the environment doesn't sit well and prompts the company or the CEO to take some action. When the CEO's actions are informed by corporate purpose, the company would be a solid shield of protection for the activist CEO.

Indeed, there are several benefits for grounding the corporate or CEO activism on some long-established corporate purpose(es). It emerged that in the first place, it serves as insulation against being inauthentic and ill-prepared in CEO activism by making CEO activism a deliberate corporate action.

Related to being purpose-driven and deliberate about activism, the informants underscored the importance of being consistent regarding every aspect of their resistance campaigns, including the range of causes pursued; messaging strategy and tactics; and the

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overall campaign approach. For Lucy Quist, there were some merits to staying consistent, including having mastery over the issue:

> Your consistency will pay off because you will understand what you are doing more. You will not have all the answers from Day One, but you become a greater expert in your activism if you keep doing it consistently. That will save you from so many issues.

Many participants underscored the need for CEO activists to select their issues properly, to assure some safety and the success of their campaigns. Senyo Hosi advocated for activist CEOs to have a "signature advocacy," that would help to define the image and public persona of the CEO activist:

> Select causes well because you can't solve every problem in society. Have a signature advocacy -issues that define who you are and what you stand for, and causes that can deliver the change you seek, but without much negativity or backlash.

> Some CEOs in this study intimated that having such flagship advocacy related to consistently sticking with an issue or a family of interrelated issues with which an activist CEO and his/her company could become known. For David Ampofo, it was important to become known for a cause or a range of causes:

> Don't set yourself up for attacks by flip-flopping, doing this today and something else tomorrow. If that must be the case, it must be because you are adding on or naturally extending your initial cause. Be sure that the range of causes mutually reinforces each other.

Some of the informants said it was therefore important to select issues or causes that reasonably fit in with the core business of the company. In this vein, David Ampofo noted that a useful guideline for effective and safer CEO activism related to ensuring that the range of causes championed by the activist CEO was not regarded by the public as

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far-fetched. He thus advocated for selecting issues that people would see as a reasonable thing for an activist CEO to concern himself/herself with:

> First, identify something that lies within their area. It should be something that makes sense for you as a CEO activist to be doing, because it is not contrived or too far-fetched, judging by the operations of your organization. Don't engage in an activity that would make people question why you are concerning yourself with such a matter. The cause must ring true and be in sync with what you or your organization stands for.

A part of being consistent that emerged related to staying true to the positions taken by CEO activists, irrespective of which political party was in government. According to Senyo Hosi, when an activist CEO keeps fighting consistently, opponents do not only give up on resisting him/her. He believed that consistency was a powerful safeguard for maintaining the authenticity, neutrality, and issue-mindedness of the CEO activist:

> When you keep fighting consistently, your opposers tend to give up on fighting you. If this political party does something and you can speak out against them, but you can't seem to do so when that other political party does so, it means that you don't know who you are now. You need to have a healthy level of consistency in your activism.

Personal safeguards

It emerged that the informants employed a range of personal safeguard measures in their bid to insulate themselves from the pitfalls of being CEO activists. These were measures that the CEOs in this study felt were in their personal or individual power to take in protecting themselves from the undesirable effects of being CEO activists in Ghana.

Although effective activism required activist CEOs to engage with multiple stakeholders and to come out publicly about their positions on various issues, many of the collaborators in this study observed that an important safeguard was for CEO activists to

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weigh the extent to which they exposed themselves. Some of the participants stressed that

while fighting for the greater good, activist CEOs needed to be mindful of their security

and the long-term viability of their companies. Thus, several informants underscored the

need to limit the extent of exposure to attackers, including investing in private security, as

explained by Kofi Bentil:

> Don't over-expose yourself to attackers. Invest in personal security, safety, and protection. Activism here can be dangerous, so you must safeguard yourself very well, including having security advisors.

Some participants believed that owning shares in businesses made it easier for

them to be targeted. Thus, several informants said they steered clear of having

investments in businesses in Ghana, choosing instead to invest in money market

instruments, and in hard currencies, as stated by Alex Mould:

> I don't own businesses. I just have investments in shares and financial instruments. Here, your opponents will try to harm your businesses, especially, if you do business with the state.

To make it difficult to be targeted by their detractors, a few participants revealed

that although they may be the brains behind their campaigns, they sometimes delegated

speaking to others. In displaying this pattern of behavior, it emerged that Kenneth

Thompson sometimes allowed his co-Executive Director, Joe Jackson to speak on his

behalf. Charles Mensah also adopted a similar hedging strategy:

> I am beginning to play a background role. I try not to be the only face. I am beginning to stay back because if you are not careful and you are out there all the time, it might affect the business.

For other participants, taking a personal charge of their security meant being

constantly on the lookout for danger. Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante disclosed that since

her protest march against political vigilantes and electoral violence in Ghana, she had been extra vigilant:

> I am very conscious of my physical security. After the walk, I was for a couple of months consciously aware, looking to see anything unusual; I went through all those emotions.

Some participants said that, despite their passion for driving social change, they had on countless occasions contemplated keeping quiet and quitting, since they reckoned that ceasing to speak out publicly would snuff out the attacks. John Awuah revealed that such attacks had made him contemplate applying the brakes on his activism. A similar sentiment was shared by Ace Ankomah, who said he would not actively encourage a CEO to become an activist.

Some participants indicated that although they had many times nursed the idea of ceasing to be CEO activists, they had the staying power in having a strong belief and personal conviction in the need for their causes. For Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante, without a deep sense of belief in oneself and a strong passion for the cause, any CEO's attempts at activism was bound to fail or be short-lived:

> Don't put your voice to an issue that you're not passionate about. It is usually a long journey. Whatever the cause, be ready to commit to the struggle. Believe in your cause and have a personal conviction. Don't do it simply because you think it looks good on you or your business.

Thus, a safeguard mechanism that was employed by some of the participants related to drawing the strength to continue from having deep levels of conviction in whatever cause(s) they were pursuing. This meant not only being tenacious but also remaining resolute and unwavering, even in the face of mounting levels of attacks.

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Others saw such personal safeguards in terms of setting limits, beyond which they ought not to extend their actions. Kenneth Ashigbey observed that a safe thing to do involved some boundary-setting regarding the safe limits to which to take their struggles:

> There's a tendency to get carried away. Set boundaries for yourself. There's an extent beyond which activism shouldn't go. Everything has limits.

Safety in CEO activism included the caution to look out for not only hypocrisy but also duplicity from both friends and foes. According to several participants, their survival toolkit included being conscious of many forms of mistrust. Ace Ankomah described different shades of hypocrisy, backstabbing, and duplicity that must be guarded against:

> The thing is that when you fight corruption, it fights you back harder. Some who cheer you openly, jeer privately. That's the nature of many. It is not just hypocrisy; it is duplicity.

A few informants saw a safety measure in investing in their personal development, as it was felt that one could not provide for others what one did not have. Therefore, an important safety measure for the CEO activist's credibility was for CEOs to keep preparing themselves. For Brigitte Dzogbenuku, the constant need for personal growth and development made up the vital preparation she needed to protect her from failures and attacks:

> I am applying for a public service leadership fellowship at New York University (NYU). This will position me to do what I do even better. It will help me avoid the explosives on this minefield.

Being prepared also meant activist CEOs immersing themselves in research material on the issue/cause to ensure a good grasp of the matter, while remaining

apolitical in their pronouncements. For Alex Mould, a useful safeguard involved relying

on research insights in selecting cross-cutting issues:

> To be safe, a CEO activist should thoroughly understand the issues and try to be non-political. Have a broad appeal and people will see your activities as something that benefits society in general. Being led by research insights helps a lot in being relevant and safe.

According to Edith Dankwa, a necessary step on the road to success in CEO

activism was ensuring that the activist CEO steeped himself/herself in the knowledge of

the matter at hand through deep research and thorough briefing. For her, speaking

authoritatively on an issue was a matter of credibility and impact, but also personal

safety:

> The worst thing is to talk about issues you're not conversant with. Be sure you understand the issue before speaking. You make more impact when you speak authoritatively, and you are credible.

Although activism was seen as an important role of the modern CEO, some

participants noted that it was important for a CEO to first develop a credible personal

brand and a strong public profile before seeking to positively impact society through an

activism campaign. For Edith Dankwa, an important point on which to anchor one's

activities was the lived experience of the CEO:

> Not every CEO is meant to be an activist. It is good for CEOs to get into this space because they are institutional leaders and they must inform and shape social change. However, CEOs must first build a personal brand that becomes attractive for others to listen to and to want to associate with.

A few informants shared the view that a vital source of protection concerned

being perceived not as unnecessary naggers, but as genuinely caring about the society. As

recalled by Charles Mensah, the test of a valuable CEO activist was the level of relevance

and authenticity in offering solutions to perceived social problems:

> There's a difference between a critic and an activist. Whenever you speak, have a problem-solving orientation, rather than mere criticisms and attacks. Offer an alternative that solves problems.

CEO activism best practice safeguards

In referring to their means of protection from the negative effects of being CEO

activists, some participants described what they saw as the employment of some best

practices in CEO activism. Here, several informants pointed to the importance of

profiting from the experiences of other CEO activists in Ghana, but also elsewhere. In

expressing this view, they called on current and future CEO activists to have access to

some publications and guidelines or documented cases of the works of other CEO

activists.

In calling for ways of protecting CEO activists from the pitfalls of their actions,

Kenneth Ashigbey called for the establishment of Afrocentric research-informed

guidelines for successful CEO activism within the African context:

> CEOs should have access to rule books to find out how other CEO activists have done; to learn what are the things that have negative repercussions; what are the boundaries; what are the needed resources; and the toolkit you should have in your arsenal before engaging in such battles. Our brand of CEO activism is beginning to shape up as a practice, and we must have standards that ought to be followed.

For some participants, safeguarding oneself from some of the negativities of

engaging in CEO activism involved the careful selection of one's approach or route to

market. Some of the participants revealed that there were various approaches to CEO

activism, of which an adversarial or frontal approach was only a part. They indicated that

alternative approaches could include influencing the position statements of pressure

groups and similar civil society organizations and through funding or financing other

activists in ways that assured the CEO opportunities to influence the causes of

campaigns.

For Senyo Hosi, such indirect routes to activism were achieved by his association

with the One Ghana Movement:

> For the One Ghana Movement, although some things may not be said by me, I
> contribute to what is said. I have a strong voice, and I can write the statement to
> reflect my passion or my perspective and give it to the team for them to also make
> their input and for them to take ownership of the resulting statement. I may not
> sign the statement, but the matter and the espoused position is out there. The
> important thing is to choose your strategy or route to the market. I sometimes
> adopt a more direct and solo path in some of my activities. However, when it gets
> too sticky, I find it necessary to take a somewhat indirect path by partnering with
> other agencies.

Thus, safeguarding oneself as an activist CEO in Ghana meant avoiding conflict

by being somewhat inoffensive. In advocating against an adversarial stance, Senyo Hosi

noted that CEO activism should not always amount to an offensive and a controversial

posture, no matter how polarizing the issue. For him, often, an effective approach to

activism was a "kind" one:

> As an activist CEO, your approach should not be brash and offensive. Kill them
> with kindness by being deliberately tactful and diplomatic. Naturally, I am frontal
> in my approach, but that ought not always to be the way to go.

The themes of authenticity and truth emerged as safeguards. Some of the

informants expressed the view that one of the most effective ways of shielding oneself

from attacks was to base one's actions on such values as truth, honesty, integrity, and

authenticity. For instance, David Ampofo noted that the pursuit of truth ought to be a

primary principle for CEO activism, just as authenticity was important in ensuring that a

CEO's actions were not contrived. He identified these values as strong safeguards:

> The key thing is to be true to oneself. You don't want to engage in whitewash
> stuff. CEOs who make this happen are those who work for meaningful social
> change, rather than only for their company's strategic ends. CEOs and their
> companies must identify causes and genuinely throw their weights behind, for the
> good of all.

Some of the CEOs who participated in this study expressed the belief that there was

a sense in which the element of truth offered a shield of protection for the CEO activist

because it was an enduring value that many people could identify with. Even when a

CEO activist was being attacked or persecuted because of his/her resistance action, the

participants believed that the element of truth was important and would offer a safety net.

Weighing in on the need for authenticity, Lucy Quist indicated that genuineness

ought to be the very foundation of a CEO's activism and that business executives should

embark on activism that emanated out of a true desire to pursue issues that mattered to

the activist, and not because activism was a cool thing, the in-thing, or because it sounded

or looked good. She noted that an important value of authenticity-based activism was the

uniqueness and the signature value it accorded campaigns:

> Number One is authenticity. Activism must start from what you can relate to
> authentically. The thing about being authentic is that it means your activism will
> be expressed in different ways. If you are authentic, then you will do what comes
> naturally to you, and what comes naturally to you will not be what comes
> naturally to me. So, we will express your activism in different ways.

Others drew attention to the role of consistency and authenticity in driving down

the cost of activist campaigns while improving the effectiveness of the communication

effort. In this regard, Kenneth Thompson observed that being consistent, speaking the

truth, and being authentic had contributed to increasingly minimal activist campaign

budgets for him. He revealed that some inauthentic CEOs, noticing the positive publicity

of his activities had attempted to copy his resistance actions without success:

> You don't need as many resources as you think because over time, if you are consistent and you speak the truth, and you are authentic, people start to listen to you; but you can't buy the public's loyalty. While I've been doing this, I suppose some CEOs have felt that I've been taking too much of the space and have tried to also do some activism of their own, but they have not quite had the same impact because it is not a part of their corporate strategy. For me, activism is a core part of my strategy, and I know exactly why I do it, but they don't know it.

For several other CEOs in this study, authenticity had to do with a CEO choosing

an approach to activism that worked best in shaping public opinion or realizing the

objectives of the campaign. In this regard, some participants warned against copying

blindly from others. For David Ampofo, it was important for CEO activists to stay true to

themselves in all facets of their campaigns, even as they attempted to express their

thought leadership through CEO activism:

> I think CEO activists are potentially impactful in shaping public opinion because we have a significant public profile or influence as thought leaders who are now taking on a new role as social activists. The head of the organization in many respects represents the organization. Organizations that can leverage the CEO's profile tend to become more successful and are the forerunners in the world of work today, especially when truth and authenticity are the hallmarks of the effort.

Thus, a widespread sentiment among the participants was that acting in truth served

to inform the selection of issues that resonated with a wide cross-section of people,

minimized attacks, emboldened activist CEOs in rebutting attacks while engendering

vocal support from allies whenever an activist CEO was under attack.

Some informants noted that an important safeguard for activist CEOs to play by

the book. In this effort, the overwhelming sentiment shared by the participants in this

study was for CEO activists to ensure that besides the propriety of their resistance actions, that every other aspect of their normal business operations and personal life of the activist CEO was blameless. The CEO activist must have the moral authority to be a vanguard of social change. This is because engaging in CEO activism necessarily brought activists into direct conflict with entrenched and powerful interests in the societal and political establishment who would use anything they could lay their hands on against the CEO activist's image. Ergo, playing by the book was seen as a significant hedge against such attacks, because it provided the needed moral foundation for the activist CEO while offering a safeguard against attacks.

As noted elsewhere, a typical form of attack against activist CEOs in Ghana took the form of a multitude of harassments by government departments and agencies, swarming the offices and operational locales of the activist CEO. The modus operandi of these government agencies was to serve as an inescapable distraction for the activist CEO. Various demands are placed on the attention and the peace of mind of the CEO activist, as numerous requests are made for audits, operational checks, permits, and certifications. These place a significant strain on the ability of the CEO activist to focus on the efficient running of his/her business.

Brigitte Dzogbenuku demonstrated how operating above reproach should be a cornerstone for the activist CEO in Ghana:

> If because of my actions, someone decides to check my books to see whether I have paid my taxes, I would have no fears about that because my books are straight. You will find no wrongdoing at all. If you chose to inspect my licenses from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), you would find that it is all in order. When you want to engage in CEO activism, make sure you are blameless; Your business, books, licenses, permits, etc. should all be in order, before you can start thinking of helping others. Otherwise, it would be used against you.

Others stressed the importance of running a transparent business that employees support. Those that shared such sentiments did so, bearing in mind the important role of employees as potential ambassadors of the business who had pivotal roles in shaping virtually every organizational outcome.

Kenneth Thompson was of the view that, although no organization could be completely above board, it was important to be open in gaining the support of employees. According to him a key part of gaining the buy-in of employees entailed having a clear game plan that should be executed to perfection, with courage and deep resolve, despite the pushbacks:

> Nobody is perfect, but you must run a transparent business because the people who either carry you or crucify you are your employees. They are the first people who would either encourage people to do business with your company or not. So, get your employees to believe in you and your cause.

Kenneth Thompson further explained that it was worth engaging in CEO activism in a manner that carried employees along because, doing so could produce desired business outcomes, including deepening employee loyalty and building a company's customer base:

> As a leader, you sell a vision and you need the people to believe in that vision. Once you gain their buy-in, they would most probably help you to achieve that vision. However, if they don't believe in the vision, you can never achieve it. My activism gets my employees to become more loyal and has attracted more customers.

Communication-related safeguards

Some participants found safety in focusing on some aspects of the communication process, including approaches that tended to build support, cooperation, and understanding rather than conflict for the sake of conflict.

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A few informants indicated that they had to re-evaluate the messaging strategies employed in their resistance actions. It emerged that such revisions in messaging were varied, ranging from changes in tonality that tended toward solutions and conciliation, rather than criticism for its sake, to a greater focus on the benefits to be derived from adopting the positions proposed by the activist CEOs.

Charles Mensah shared some aspects of his survival tactics as an activist CEO in Ghana, including changing the tone and feel of his utterances, and positioning himself as a genuine publicly spirited expert who was a problem-solving facilitator:

> I have altered my narrative. I make it clear that I am focusing on the issues, rather than personalities. I also ensure that my audience realizes that I am suggesting and proffering solutions to problems. I highlight the positive impact of implementing my suggestions.

Among the most popular safety measures for CEO activism shared by some participants related to the importance of taking the middle line, being objective, and communicating clearly. Others referred to the importance of being able to defend one's position, based on facts while demonstrating neutrality by being apolitical.

In this regard, some participants such as John Awuah urged CEO activists to be strategic and tactful in their wider public statements. Indeed, for him, being strategic also meant having a media strategy that would not needlessly expose him to unnecessary attacks:

> Speaking out tactfully; not always being on the radio and talking – that way, you only work yourself into becoming a political agent. You need to know when, where, and how you speak, and to whom you speak because your voice can easily be taken away. How you activate your activism, and how you roll it out is very important.

Some informants underscored the need to separate the positions and opinions espoused in CEO activism from those of the organization. Despite stating this, it turned out that it was not always an easy distinction to make. For instance, as the CEO of the Ghana Chamber of Bulk Oil Distributors, Senyo Hosi had found himself in situations where his personal positions aligned with those of his Chamber, but do not necessarily reflect those of the oil companies in Ghana, who comprised the Chamber he heads:

> I make it clear that my activism is my personal opinion or based on my conviction. We issued the industry report and shared some strong opinions as a secretariat. My members may not agree with a lot of the things we shared in the industry report. However, we issued a disclaimer that this is coming from my office and the Chamber, but that it does not necessarily represent the views of the members of the Chamber. That means that if anyone has any issues whatsoever with the contents of such an industry report, they ought to contact the Chamber, rather than its members. This distinction is very important to make.

Discussion

This chapter reported the findings from the in-depth interviews the 25 participants in this study on various types of safeguards employed in response to the numerous attacks faced as a result of engaging in CEO activism in the country. In addressing RQ5, it was found that the activist CEOs in Ghana who served as informants in this study resorted to various forms of safeguards, designed to help insulate them from the pitfalls of their resistance activities. The six broad types of safeguards employed included personal safeguards, social safeguards, communication-related safeguards, CEO best practice safeguards, corporate safeguards, and spiritual safeguards.

Based on findings from interviewing CEO activists in America, Chatterji and Toffel (2019) expressed two main communication-related CEO activism safeguards, namely (i) When to communicate, and (ii) How to communicate effectively. They

proposed three safeguards under each of these two main headings. "When to communicate" was associated with (i) When the nudge comes from employees; (ii) When your corporate/personal values – and your corporate practices – align with the issue at hand; and (iii) When the issue is live. On the other hand, "How to speak effectively" entailed (i) Setting up a rapid response team to help the CEO activist plan for the unexpected; (ii) Anticipating backlash from opponents as well as proponents; and (iii) Working with your communicators.

When compared with the findings in this chapter, it is apparent that while Chatterji and Toffel's (2019) CEO activism postulations appear reflected in some of the outcomes of this study, it could be argued that their extant postulation appears somewhat limited to the communication-related safeguards found in this chapter. While their postulates related to "when" and "how" to communicate issues relating to CEO activism, CEO activism is emerging as a more cross-cutting phenomenon that requires more than communication-related safeguards.

Thus, the findings in this research project offer a more holistic range of safeguards that CEO activists could consider and deploy in protecting themselves from the undesirable consequences of engaging in CEO activism. Rather than being regarded as an extension of the communication-specific CEO safeguards posited by Chatterji and Toffel (2019), there is a compelling case to be made for the consideration of a wider scope of safeguards available for CEO activists, such as found in this study.

The findings for RQ5 regarding the safeguards for CEO activism promote the continued development of the process model for this dissertation. In doing so, it facilitates the incorporation of the forms of safeguards taken by the participants in this

study, as shown in Evolution Five of the CEO Activism Development Model, depicted in
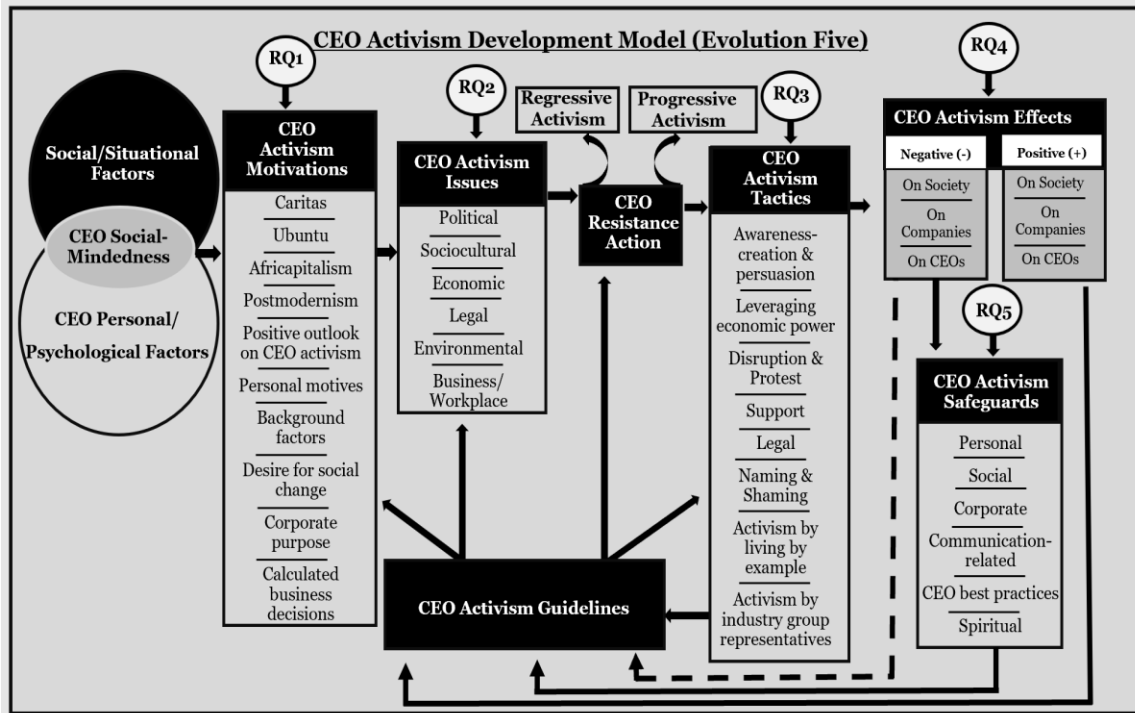
Figure 19 (below):

Figure 19: Evolution Five of the CEO Activism Development Model (indicating the range of motivations, clusters of issues/causes, the tactics, effects, and safeguards of CEO activism).

This iteration of the model depicts further modifications to the Evolution Four

(Figure 17). In Evolution Five (Figure 19 above), I argue that the negative effects

produced by CEO activism could also inform guidelines for future actions by the CEO, to

the same extent as positive outcomes. However, while the positive effects of CEO

activism bypassed the need for safeguards, directly informing future guidelines and

actions, negative effects acted in a somewhat different manner. In the first place, it is not

always that CEOs affected by negative effects would be in the position to adopt safeguard

measures. In such cases, the lesser of two evil options open to them would be to bet on

better fortunes in the future by learning from the undesirable experiences and building

such lessons into guidelines for the future. I depict this action by way of a dotted line between the negative effects and the guidelines for CEO activism.

Secondly, when faced with negative outcomes, some CEOs would be in the position to safeguard themselves by adopting any mixture of the six forms of safeguards found in this study. In this case, the negative effects directly lead to CEO activist safeguards, on the way to informing guidelines for future actions.

The findings in this chapter extend the application of some of the theoretical perspectives of this dissertation. Besides connecting such ideas as Caritas, Ubuntu, Africapitalism, and postmodern values in strategic communications with CEO activism, one can discuss some more specific connections with these theories.

The PRSA's modern conception of public relations underscores the field's posture of mutual beneficence to organizations and their publics (Corbett, 2012a; 2012b). The usual approach is to discuss such relationships in terms of employees and external stakeholders as the beneficiaries of the organization's actions. The findings tend to, for instance, reverse this usual focalization by positioning CEO activists as beneficiaries too, as companies could also work to offer some corporate safeguards for activist CEOs who sometimes work in the corporate interest by making companies more socially responsible through their progressive social resistance actions.

The Ubuntu philosophy stresses the ideas of community and relationship building in ways that promote the genuine pursuit of the common good (Mbigi, 2007). The findings reflect the ethical bedrock obligation of organizations (Tilson, 2014) to protect CEOs as members of an organizational constituency. The findings in this chapter mark a counter-intuitive expression of the ideas of Tilson (2014), Haviland (1978) in considering

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the responsibility of companies and the wider society in caring for CEO activists who

work for the greater social and environmental good.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

Thus far, this dissertation has laid out the general background to the study, presented and discussed factors within the Ghanaian context that serve as the backdrop to the inquiry, outlined the theoretical lenses underpinning the investigation, as well as a review of relevant related literature. The conceptual framework for the study, research questions, and their justifications have also been presented. The various methods and procedures concerning how data was collected, handled, and analyzed have been discussed. The findings regarding the five main research questions have all been reported and discussed in chapters, dedicated to each line of inquiry. In discussing the main findings, connections have been made with both the theories and the seminal literature.

In this chapter, I highlight the major findings and how they relate to the theories and the literature, especially concerning CEO activism. Other sections of this chapter present some limitations of this dissertation, point at areas for future research, and also present some implications for the practice of CEO activism, before offering some concluding remarks.

The findings and their relationships to theory and literature

Within the African context of Ghana, this dissertation employed in-depth interviews with 24 self-identified CEOs, to explore various aspects of the practice of CEO activism. The five research questions focused on (i) the motivations for engaging in CEO activism; (ii) the range of issues advocated for/against; (iii) the range of tactics employed by participants in CEO activism; (iv) the effects of CEO activism on the

society, companies, and CEO activists; and (v) safeguards employed by CEO activists to protect themselves from undesirable consequences of their actions.

<u>Motivations for CEO activism</u>

In terms of motivations for engaging in CEO activism in Ghana, the results revealed several motives, which had not been articulated in the extant literature on CEO activism. For instance, the participants in this study indicated that they were motivated by such factors as Caritas, Ubuntu philosophy, Africapitalism, and selected postmodern values in public relations; and an optimistic outlook on CEO activism. These motivations had hitherto not been associated with the literature on CEO activism. These are fresh contributions to the literature on CEO activism.

However, other findings emerged that extended some known motivations for CEO activism. These include calculated business decisions; the desire for social change; and a range of personal factors that included some personal convictions, serving the interests of multiple stakeholders, family, and personal background characteristics, and the influence of corporate values and purposes (see Chatterji, 2016; Chatterji & Toffel, 2018; and Livonen 2018). Some of these findings also align with some existing motivation postulates such as optimism for future stakeholder benefits, responding to current stakeholder pressures/expectations, and pursuing some ideological inclinations (see Nalick et al., 2016), and the pursuit of strategic corporate goals (see Dodd & Supa, 2014; 2015).

While some scholars, including Chatterji (2016) and Chatterji and Toffel (2018) have hinted at the possible influence of left-leaning ideological stances as motivations for

CEO activism, these suggestions were not backed by empirical evidence. Besides, the literature on CEO activism had displayed a preponderance of consensus-inclined, right-wing and a modernist perspective that not only privileges the interests of investors but also tends to make a case for profit-producing organizational outcomes as motivating CEO activism (see Chatterji & Toffel, 2018; Dodd & Supa, 2014; 2015, etc.). The findings in this study point to a different path in suggesting some postmodern values in public relations (see Holtzhausen, 2000; and Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002) as motivations for CEO activism.

The findings for the motivations for CEO activism provide a more detailed picture of the various expressions of how the pursuit of strategic personal and calculated business goals could serve as motivations for CEO activism. In this, the findings point to varying degrees of corporate motives, personal motives, and the pursuit of enlightened self-interest. The findings further suggest that a bullish outlook on CEO activism was a motivation factor for CEO activism.

Based on the notion of Caritas, some scholars have mooted the idea of the modernization of public relations and strategic communications as focusing on the building and management of mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and members of their strategic constituency (see Corbett, 2012a; 2012b). Seen as the bedrock of responsible behavior by organizations, the notion of Caritas is argued to align with the promotion of corporate behaviors that are empathetic, merciful, just, compassionate, and focused on relationship building (see Tilson, 2014).

Little is known about motivations for CEO activism in the African context. Looking at whether the motivations would differ for African activist CEOs versus what is

reported about Western-based ones speaks to the importance of context for theory-building. However, the contribution of this dissertation is not limited to the value of context in theory building, trying to replicate or confound existing studies. It holds much more utility values for research and theorizing on CEO activism than is afforded by the consideration of contextual factors.

Importantly, it brings fresh analytical and special insights into a fledgling field of inquiry by effectively introducing such concepts as Ubuntu, Caritas (see Tilson, 2014; 2009; Mbigi, 2007), and Africapitalism (see Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015) into scholarly discussions on the motivations for CEO activism. Since the Africapitalism postulates in 2015, this is the first time they are being empirically examined. In this dissertation, CEO activism is positioned as an expression of Africapitalism, just as Africapitalism motivates CEO activism. The dissertation contributes to research on the postmodern values in PR (see Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002; Holtzhausen, 2000) by empirically examining how such values motivate CEO activism.

Overall, my dissertation contributes to the literature on CEO activism motivations by introducing and empirically illustrating how such concepts as Caritas, Ubuntu, postmodernism, and Africapitalism drive the phenomenon in ways that do not currently exist in the literature.

This dissertation contributes to the literature by connecting the notions of Caritas, Ubuntu, Africapitalism, and selected postmodern values in public relations to CEO activism in ways that did not exist before. The findings in this dissertation concerning the motivations for CEO activism, while formally connecting the idea of Caritas to the literature on CEO activism, provide empirical evidence from the Ghanaian context

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regarding Caritas as a motivation for CEO activism. With such an entrée into the field of CEO activism, the stage is set for further studies on the various ways in which the notion of Caritas influences and conditions CEOs to take on various social causes.

Using CEO activism in Ghana as a research context, this study illustrates how some aspects of Ubuntu philosophy pervades and informs virtually every aspect of communication practice in Africa, especially in terms of how the philosophy promotes ideas of fellow-feeling and collectivism (see Mamdani, 2011; White, 2009; Mbigi, 2007). In this study, Ubuntu values are seen as working or having worked to condition traditional and corporate leaders to become socially-minded and to work in favor of promoting the welfare of the common good in Africa (see Tilson, 2014).

Tilson (2014) suggests that "the personal commitment of an individual in a position of authority can foster an organizational and a societal effort in favor of the general welfare regardless of cost or reward to the giver or institution" (see Tilson, 2014, p. 69); especially when such motivations derive from spiritually grounded commitments to social justice "toward the common good, pro-social behavior is further encouraged and magnified" (p. 69).

Despite such suggestions, the Ubuntu philosophy is yet to find formal expression in the corpus of literature on CEO activism. Identified as one of the motivations for the CEO activists who participated in this study, the findings in this dissertation finally connect Ubuntu with the phenomenon of CEO activism. Ubuntu philosophy is a deep and wide worldview. Future studies could explore how specific Ubuntu ideas and constituent values or principles inform various aspects and expressions of CEO activism in Africa.

The findings in this dissertation position CEO activism as an *expression of* Africapitalism, just as Africapitalism *motivates* CEO activism. Thus, it aligns with extant Africapitalism calls that advocate for the increased participation of Africa's private sector in the continent's development, working through more participation and partnerships of companies and corporate actors across Africa with governments, other private sector actors, the development community, and civil society organizations (see Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015).

These authors posit that Africapitalism is based on some Ubuntu philosophy and is built on some four pillars that deviate from neoclassical notions of capitalism, including (i) a sense of progress and prosperity; (ii) a sense of parity; (iii) a sense of harmony; and (iv) a sense of place and belonging. Again, the findings in this dissertation connect CEO activism with the notion of Africapitalism, identifying Africapitalism as a motivation for CEO activism. In a sense, CEO activism could be said to be an expression of Africapitalism – a way in which the private sector in Africa is participating in the continent's development, by working to promote the greater good.

The findings in this dissertation contribute to the literature on CEO activism by connecting it with extant postmodern values in public relations (see Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002; Holtzhausen, 2000). For the first time in the literature on CEO activism, the findings in this dissertation identified these postmodern values as serving as part of the motivations for CEO activists in Ghana who participated in this study.

Following Holtzhausen (2002), the evidence from this study characterizes the present-day CEO activist as an archetype that could be profiled as organizational activists who embody the conscience of their organizations, who act based on their personal

convictions in resisting dominant power structures (both within and outside of their organizations, including resisting the Government of Ghana and their boards of directors) in fighting for the common good. Further, such activists are characterized as making the most humane decisions, given specific situations, and having the appetite to exploit tensions within the environment to exercise new thinking and innovation in solving perceived problems in society (see Holtzhausen, 2002).

Holtzhausen (2000) advocated for a postmodern approach to public relations and went on to identify several postmodern values that were relevant to the field of public relations. A postmodern view of corporate communications posits that corporate communication practitioners and other corporate executives such as CEOs will be positively predisposed to serving as social activists (see Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002).

The postmodern perspective of public relations postulates that corporate executives would exhibit some postmodern behaviors that translate into various forms of organizational activism. Such postmodern behavioral traits have been identified as including local and situational ethical decision making, a desire for change, the use of biopower to resist dominant power, a concern for the representation of the marginalized sections of society, and dissensus and dissymmetry (see Holzthausen & Voto, 2002; Holtzhausen, 2000).

Figure 20 (below) graphically illustrates the range of motivations for the participants in this study that extend the current literature.
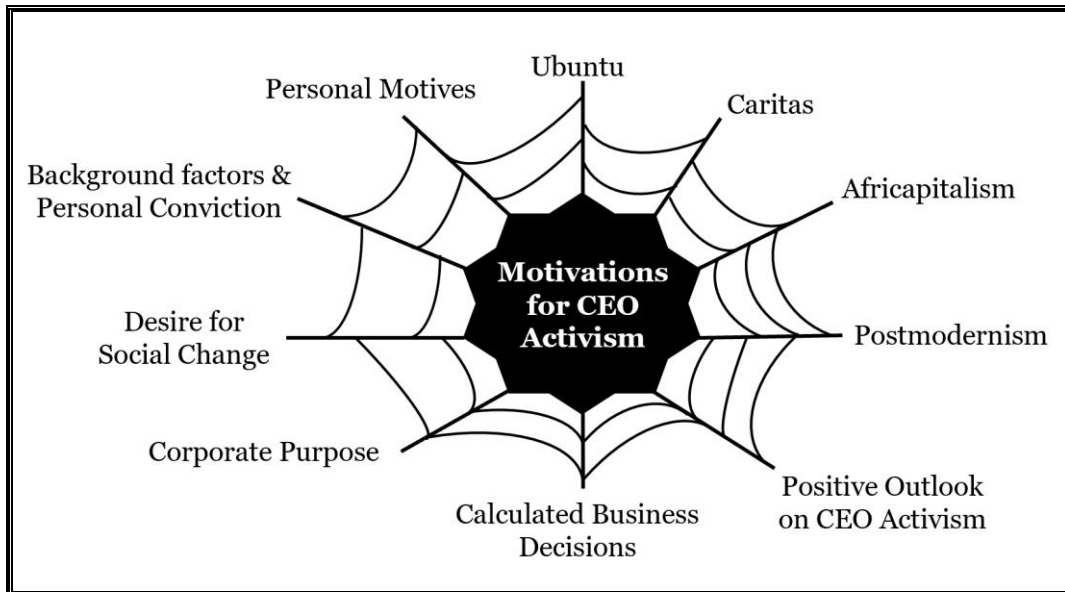
Figure 20: Motivations for CEO Activism

Taxonomy of issues in CEO activism

The findings indicate that the extant taxonomy of brand activism postulated by Kotler and Sarkar (2017; 2018b) applied to CEO activism, as this framework proved adequate to capture the wide array of specific issues and causes advocated by CEO activists in Ghana. These scholars had developed a typology of brand activism that comprised environmental activism, social (cultural) activism, legal activism, economic activism, business/workplace activism, and political activism (see Figure 21 below). The findings in this dissertation contribute to the literature by extending the scope of the current taxonomy on brand activism (see Kotler & Sarkar, 2017; 2018b) into the realm of CEO activism.

Adopting these categories for the range of causes of activist CEOs in Ghana proved adequate. However, this typology had to be moderately modified by extending the

"social activism" category to include cultural issues. Thus, for this dissertation, there was a need for "sociocultural issues" as a cluster of CEO activism issues.
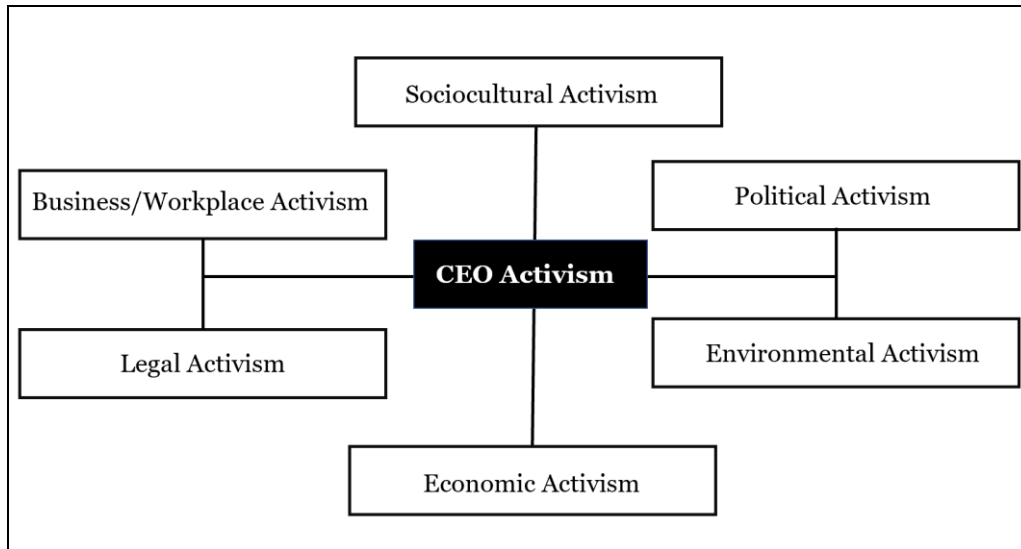
Figure 21: Taxonomy of issues in CEO activism
(Based on Kotler & Sarkar (2017; 2018b).

The findings on the issues involved in CEO activism in Ghana, for the first time in the literature on CEO activism, introduce specific context-specific causes/issues of interest to activists in developing countries. So far, the literature on CEO activism only contained examples of issues from Western contexts. I expect that this would also set the stage for more studies on CEO activism from non-Western contexts, as well as comparative studies between Western and non-Western societies.

The findings on the issues in CEO activism, mainly divergent from the current literature, illustrate the argument that place is not to be ignored or simply consumed (see Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015). Africapitalism embraces place, while the modernist view and capitalism both take place for granted. Until these findings, examples of the causes pursued by CEOs have been limited to examples in Western (American) contexts. Now, scholars can refer to the actions of activist CEOs in a non-Western context.

The findings effectively internationalize the literature on CEO activism and contribute to the literature on issues in CEO activism by providing specific examples of issues that matter in a non-Western society. However, beyond the value of context in theory building, examining whether or not the issues addressed by African CEOs are different goes beyond context. According to the postmodern values discussed, CEOs' actions are driven by local ethics and situational factors. This extends or helps us to better understand the value of place in postmodernism and Africapitalism's value of "a sense of place and belonging."

This dissertation contributes to the insider activist perspective (see Pompper, 2015; Briscoe, Chin, & Hambrick, 2014; Holtzhausen, 2002). Specifically, it enriches the literature on CEO activism (see Dodd & Supa, 2014; 2015; Chatterji & Toffel, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019) and *sustainability transitions*, (Delmas et al., 2019). It also contributes to the literature on the postmodern values in public relations, which casts corporations and their executives as being concerned with wider social issues that extend beyond the private interests of companies (see Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002; Holtzhausen, 2000). This way CEOs are moved to think socially and to identify social causes that would serve the greater good, even if doing so means going against their own business interests.

Overall, my findings here make a case for the increased role of Africapitalism in CEO activism, advocating for the increased participation of Africa's private sector in Africa's development, working through various partnerships with governments, CSOs, and other private sector players.

<u>The tactics of CEO activism</u>

The third area of findings relates to the tactics employed by CEO activists in Ghana. It emerged that the two extant taxonomies on the tactical repertoire on CEO activism (Chatterji and Toffel (2018) and Livonen (2018)) alone, did not suffice in capturing the wide range of tactics employed by CEO activists in Ghana, whether applied alone or in combination. Chatterji and Toffel's (2018) typology did not make room for support tactics and disruptive tactics, while Livonen's (2018) made no room for the tactic of leveraging economic power.

Thus, there was a need to conflate these two typologies into four main classes in the analysis of the tactics employed by CEO activists in Ghana. For the analysis of findings, the tactics were grouped into (i) leveraging economic power; (ii) awareness creation and persuasion tactics; (iii) disruption and protest tactics; (iv) support tactics (see Figure 22 below).

It was learned that very few CEO activists in Ghana leveraged economic power. Among the reasons why most participants shy away from flexing their economic muscles was (i) a feeling of powerlessness, relative to the Government of Ghana; (ii) fear of attacks from various sources and actors within the society; (iii) the feeling that it was not necessary yet to do so; (iv) their inability to come together as a corporate collective to implement such joint actions; and (v) the feeling that it was too risky to put their companies in harm's way in such a high-stakes manner. However, most of them tended towards awareness creation tactics. The findings further suggest several other classes of CEO activism tactics, hitherto not discussed in the literature on CEO activism.
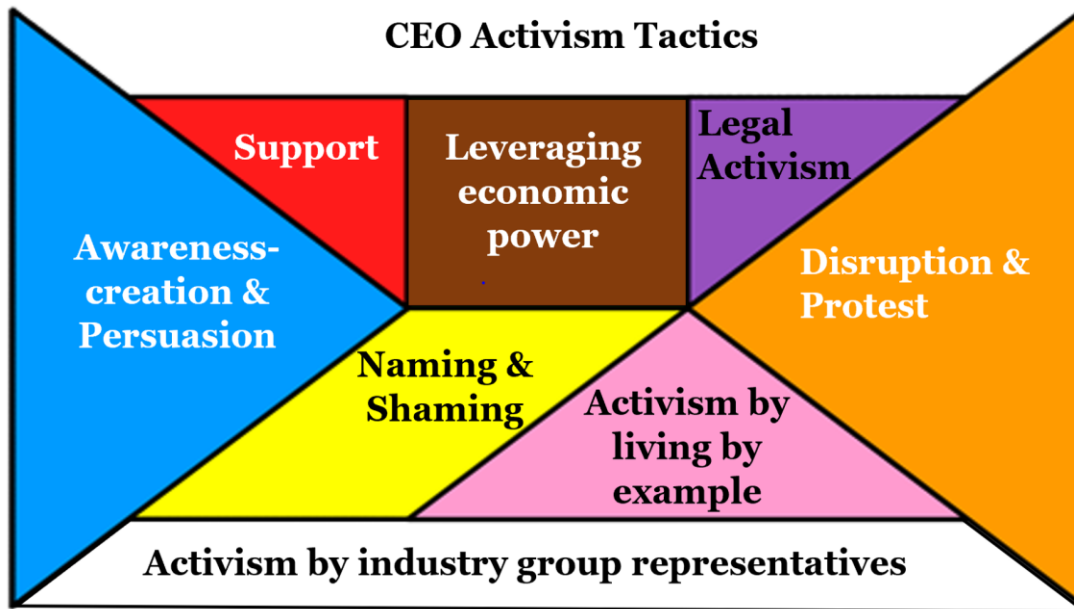
Figure 22: CEO activism tactics

These include such tactics as "activism by living by example," "activism by industry group representatives," "naming and shaming," "legal activism," and variants of the tactic of leveraging economic power that could extend the meaning posited by Chatterji and Toffel (2018), such as the positive use of economic power in which CEO activists undertake to match government investments.

I contend that the findings in this dissertation regarding the tactics of CEO activists in Ghana effectively extend the literature on the tactical repertoire of CEO activists (see Chatterji & Toffel, 2018; Livonen, 2018). As explained, we found that none of the current postulates suffice in describing the tactics of CEO activists in Ghana. They proved insufficient, even when combined. This is because some context factors limit the ability of the participants to leverage economic power while encouraging the use of awareness creation and persuasion; disruption & protest; and support tactics. Thus, the literature is enriched by the identification of other tactics. I now contribute a more

eclectic reflection of the tactical repertoire for activist CEOs to include legal activism, naming and shaming, living by example, and activism by industry group representatives.

Future studies could examine the uniqueness of these emergent tactics in other societies, with the view to more clearly defining them. Such studies could also consider aspects of the activist CEO's personal and corporate characteristics that either promoted or limited the deployment of such tactics. Scholars could also compare the extent to which wider social movements could employ some of the tactics employed by CEO activists, and vice versa.

Effects of CEO activism

In terms of the effects produced by CEO activists in Ghana, three main pathways of outcomes emerged. It was found that CEO activism had some impacts on the wider society. The practice also engendered some positive consequences for activist CEOs and their companies, while also being associated with some undesirable ramifications (see Figure 23 below).

Despite many examples of CEOs speaking out, the literature on the effects of their actions has been non-existent outside non-Western contexts. In Western contexts, the effects on their actions have been thin.

Hierarchy of CEO Activism effects

On the society

On companies

| Positive effects | Negative effects |

On individual CEOs
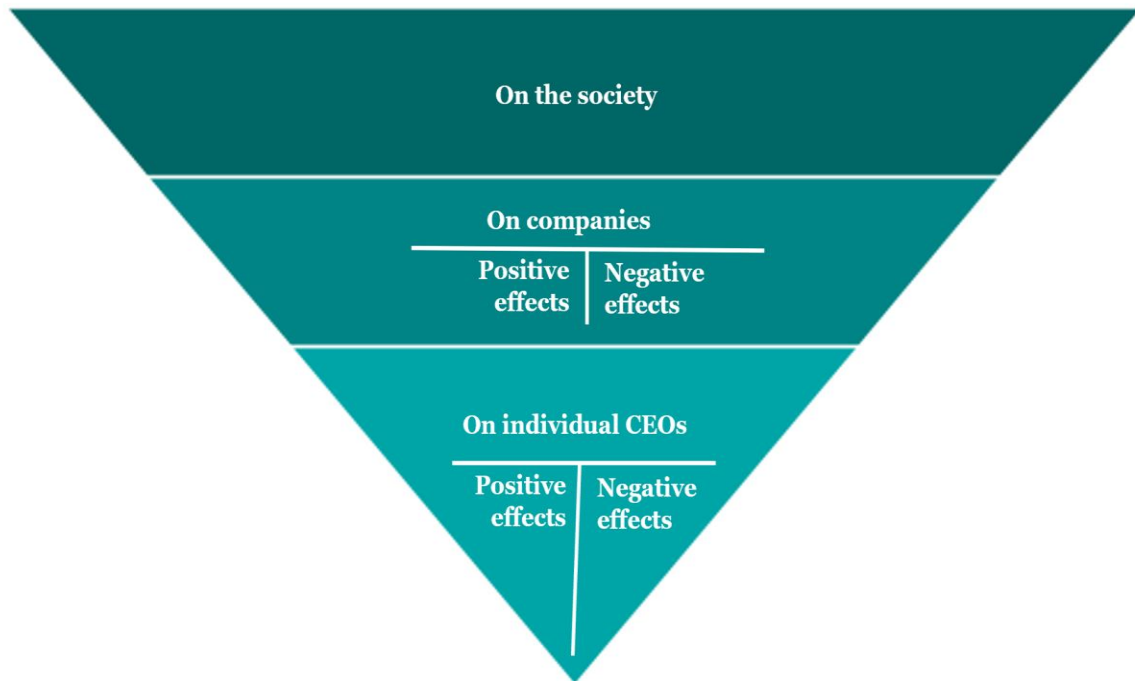
| Positive effects | Negative effects |

Figure 23: Hierarchy of effects of CEO activism

What little we know has been limited to anecdotal evidence, media reportage and analysis, and suppositions/postulations by some scholars. Scholarly work on effects has been limited to organizational outcomes – purchase intents (see Dodd & Supa, 2015), brand preference, employee loyalty, and public opinion-related brand equity (see Chatterji & Toffel, 2018; 2019).

This dissertation thus contributes to the literature by directly addressing Dodd & Supa's (2014) call for various research methods to be used in analyzing how various stakeholders are impacted by CSA. This dissertation offers a more comprehensive view of the effects of CEO activism, extending the literature in talking about a hierarchy of outcomes, offering a systematic analysis and discussion of the positive and negative effects of CEO activism, plus a model of these effects.

The findings in this section of the dissertation extend the current knowledge on the effects of CEO activism in remarkable ways. First, the findings in this dissertation introduce emerging market findings on CEO activism to the literature. The findings here are among the first to infuse the voices and lived experiences of women CEO activists to the literature on the field of CEO activism, thereby serving to provide some Black feminist perspectives to the current thought on CEO activism. Future studies could analyze CEO activism through the lens of black/intersectional feminist theory.

This dissertation supplements this stream of literature by examining the influence of the CEO's political and social attitudes on societies, on companies, and CEOs. Arguably, the findings here serve to deepen what we now know about CEO activism by its discussion of distinct classes of effects of CEO activism on (i) the society, but also positive and negative effects on (ii) companies, and (iii) CEO activists. For the first time in the literature on CEO activism, we have a sense of some of the effects of CEO activism within the context of a developing country, such as Ghana. We are also brought to a place of a deeper knowledge of some of the positive and negative consequences of CEO activism on companies, and on activist CEOs in a non-Western sociocultural context.

Such fresh findings and insights could serve as the springboard for future studies on the phenomenon, designed to delve deeper into examining facets of CEO activism at the Bottom of the Pyramid, or indeed, comparing systems of the effects of CEO activism between Western and non-Western societies.

CEO Activism Safeguards

Given the unpalatable consequences of CEO activism for both companies and CEO activists in Ghana, this dissertation was interested in examining some of the safeguards that practicing activist CEOs took to insulate themselves from such pitfalls. Six main classes of safeguards emerged, including (i) personal safeguards, (ii) social safeguards, (iii) communication-related safeguards, (iv) CEO best practice safeguards, (v) corporate safeguards, and (vi) spiritual safeguards (see Figure 24 below).

Chatterji and Toffel (2019) expressed two communication-related CEO activism safeguards, namely (i) When to communicate, and (ii) How to communicate effectively. The findings in this dissertation concerning the safeguards of CEO activism are supportive of some of the postulates of Chatterji and Toffel's (2019). However, many of the findings in this dissertation diverge from and/or extend the extant postulations regarding what activist CEOs can do to insulate themselves from the negative externalities of engaging in CEO activism.

Chatterji and Toffel's safeguards about "when" and "how" to communicate issues relating to CEO activism tend to limit the range of precautionary measures that CEO activists can take to only communication factors. The point however is that CEO activism appears to be more cross-cutting and multifaceted, with implications that extend beyond the protections that communication-related factors afford.

Because the literature has not systematically focused on the negative effects of CEO activism (especially on activist CEOs), the notion of safeguards has been virtually absent in the literature.
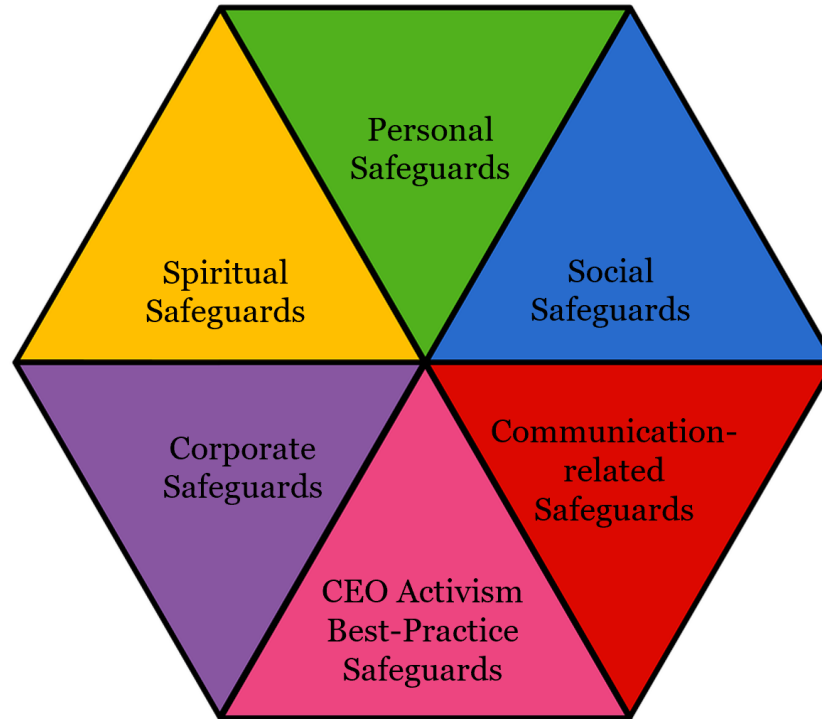
Figure 24: CEO activism safeguards

What scant knowledge we have about such safeguards have been limited to communication-related precautions (see Chatterji & Toffel, 2019), and various CEO activism playbooks (see Chatterji & Toffel, 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019). This dissertation contributes to the literature by not only formally introducing the notion of CEO activism safeguards but providing a model of six categories of safeguards, based on empirical evidence in Ghana.

Thus, the findings in this dissertation make a more realistic case for the multiplicity of life jackets that could help secure CEO activists in their actions. The safeguards reported in this dissertation make a more realistic argument for the range of protections available to CEO activists, as they reflect the lived experiences of CEO activists, some of whom have been engaged in CEO activism since the 1990s.

CEO Activism Development Model

Based on a systematic literature review, mapping of the field of CEO activism, and findings in Ghana, I contribute a process model that explains the development of activist stances by CEOs. The model is a result of one of the most comprehensive single studies on CEO activism. The model identifies various sites of scholarly inquiry to guide future studies. The model is a temporal and dynamic way of talking about various themes in CEO activism. It is a conceptual framework that explains the development of CEO activism.

This framework (see Figure 25 below) contains the main objectives of the five research questions, covered in this dissertation, namely: (i) motivations for CEO activism; (ii) issues advocated for/against; (iii) tactics employed in CEO activism; (iv) effects of CEO activism; and (v) safeguards for CEO activism.
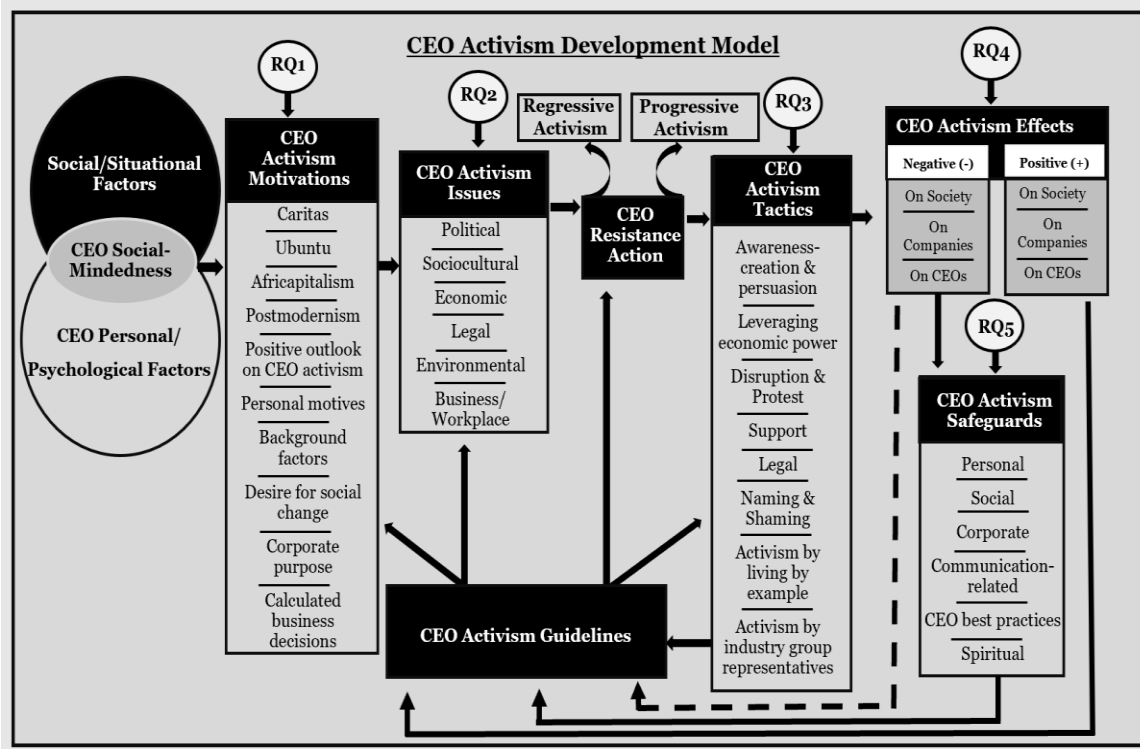
Figure 25: The CEO Activism Development Model

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It further covers social/situational factors and personal/psychological factors that could influence the development of a social mindedness of CEOs. Also covered are social resistance actions, which could be deemed to be progressive or regressive, as defined by Kotler and Sarkar (2017; 2018a).

As explained throughout this dissertation, this emergent CEO Activism Model (see Figure 25 below) is a central finding of my grounded theory building work. Although it departs from prior literature – it is a novelty in the field of CEO activism research – it is also a contribution to the field of process studies in organization and management, by its consideration of the elements of temporality, activity, and flow in the development of the activist stance by CEOs (see Langley et al., 2013; 2009).

In its basic form, it is the product of my review and reflection on the literature on CEO activism. However, it was fleshed out, revised, and extended throughout the fieldwork and data analysis. Its five-fold evolution was informed by the empirical findings from the fieldwork. In addition to incorporating insights, based on the responses from my informants, this developmental model for CEO activism was informed by my many returns to the literature to seek conceptual treatments of ideas triggered by conversations with my collaborators.

The above CEO Activism Development Model is a process model (Langley et al., 2013) that depicts my conception of the interrelationships among several concepts in the development of CEO activism. Process model building, as conceptualized by Langley and colleagues (2013; 2009) is somewhat different from generic grounded theory building. This is because process model building focuses on events, and their causal interrelationships, and is attuned to temporal issues, order, sequencing, and flow.

This dissertation is designed to focus on the generation of empirical data on five clusters within these complex linkages, namely motivations for CEO activism (RQ1), a taxonomy of sociopolitical issues (RQ2), tactics of CEO activism (RQ3), effects of CEO activism (RQ4), and classes of safeguards for CEO activists (RQ5). I argue for the genesis of CEO activism as occurring within the context of the production of a certain level of social mindedness within the CEO, as a complex web of social and situational factors interact with some personal and psychological factors within the CEO. While, typically, CEOs have not been concerned with wider social issues that do not impact on the profitability of companies, the resultant social mindedness conditions some CEOs to start thinking in a wider fashion, by considering non-corporate issues and the needs of multiple stakeholders besides investors/shareholders.

When this wider social mindedness is strong enough, it leads to the development of some desire, appetite, or motivation for engaging in CEO activism. While some segments of the literature on CEO activism have suggested some motivations, there is no existing typology of factors that could be regarded as motivating CEO activists generally, but especially within developing countries. Thus, RQ1 focused on addressing this scholarly lacuna by gathering and presenting data on the motivations of CEOs in Ghana for becoming/engaging in CEO activism.

Once motivated to undertake CEO activism, the researcher reasons that the next step would be for CEOs to select a range of sociopolitical issues that would serve as the fulcrum for their activism. Kotler and Sarkar (2018) posit that there are six classes of such issues that a brand could advocate. In their brand activism typology, these scholars identified political issues, social issues, economic issues, legal issues, environmental

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issues, and business/workplace issues. The researcher contends that such a typology could be reasonably adapted and extended to CEO activism. Thus, the focus of RQ3 was to examine the extent to which the range of issues that activist CEOs selected for this study in Ghana could fit these brand activism categories/clusters postulated by Kotler and Sarkar (2017; 2018b).

I argue that once a CEO has identified an issue or a range of issues on which to pivot his/her activism, the main thrust of the CEO's resistance posture/action is generated. As explained earlier in the literature review, brand activism could be regressive or progressive, depending on how such an action is perceived as working to promote the interests of society.

However, the implementation of a CEO resistance action follows some tactics. While Chatterji and Toffel (2018) discussed approaches relating to raising awareness and leveraging economic power, Livonen (2018) isolated the three classes of approaches as persuasive tactics, disruptive/coercive tactics, and supportive tactics. Thus, RQ3 examined the range of tactics employed by activist CEOs in Ghana who were selected for inclusion in this study.

The next web of factors in this model concern the effects of engaging in CEO activism. What outcomes are produced by the works of CEO activists? What are the consequences of engaging in CEO activism for the society, companies, and the activist CEO? Based on fieldwork, some scholars have identified some outcomes produced by CEO activism. However, these have all been within Western (American) contexts. What are the achievements and consequences of CEO activism in Ghana? The object of RQ4

was to investigate the effects, positive and negative consequences of CEO activism for the Ghanaian society, but also on companies and activist CEOs in Ghana.

Within this conceptual framework, (see Figure 25 above) CEO activism is conceived as producing two distinct classes of outcomes – negative and positive effects. Negative outcomes are those undesirable consequences, while positive outcomes are relatively desirable results of CEO activism. I argue that owing to their undesirable impact, CEO activists would employ a range of safeguards to insulate themselves and their companies from the effects of being CEO activists. The focus of RQ5 was to investigate the various types of safeguards employed by activist CEOs in Ghana.

It is noteworthy that the experiences drawn from both positive and negative consequences of CEO activism work to inform guidelines for future CEO actions. However, bitter experiences may do so either through the workings of present safeguards, or not. The development and the nature of guidelines for future CEO actions are conceptualized as working in various ways and could serve to determine whether the CEO would continue to be motivated to take such actions. Second, such guidelines could determine whether future CEO actions are progressive or regressive. Finally, the researcher argues that guidelines could also inform the sort of tactics employed by a specific CEO activist in the future.

The final point in this conceptual framework relates to guidelines for engaging in CEO activism. Positive effects for CEO activism are conceived as directly informing guidelines for CEO activism, while negative effects are first filtered through safeguards, on the way to informing guidelines for future actions. The nature of guidelines then

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determines (i) future motivations for engaging in CEO activism, (ii) the choice of future issues/causes, and (iii) future tactics employed.

Within this process model, CEO activism guidelines impact or influence four distinct sectors. The guidelines could determine whether activist CEOs would be motivated or disincentivized in taking future actions. Guidelines could also influence the selection of future issues or causes, determine whether the next courses of actions of the activist CEO would lean towards progressive activism or the regressive genre. Finally, CEO activism guidelines could inform future selection of tactics employed in CEO activism.

This dissertation contributes to several other theories and concepts. It contributes to the literature on Upper Echelons Theory that examines how the personal preferences of C-level executives and board members influence firm behavior (see Hambrick & Mason, 1984; Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996). It is linked to the literature on how CEO beliefs, characteristics, and preferences affect organizational strategy (see Chen, Crossland & Luo, 2014; Plambeck & Weber, 2009). It intersects with studies that focus on the effect of CEOs' political attitudes on business strategies such as CSR practices (e.g. Chin, Hambrick & Trevino, 2013; Di Giuli & Kostovetsky, 2014). The dissertation contributes by setting forth a strong research agenda in the field of CEO activism and identifies various methods for such investigations.

Policy implications

This dissertation has some implications for various policies, including corporate policy, communication policy, corporate governance, and business ethics.

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For corporate policy, this dissertation has shown some important ways in which the practice of CEO activism could affect various organizational outcomes. The literature also points to the growing popularity of CEO activism, as an expression of brand responsibility. With such growing importance comes the need for companies to provide for various measures to manage diverse levers of the effects produced by CEO activism. The safeguards discussed in this dissertation could also set corporate leaders in the directions in which to think regarding how to effectively manage the fallouts of CEO activism.

This dissertation has some applications for communication policy. For example, the findings on the range of issues that CEO activists in Ghana reported, could serve as some inspiration for companies that are seeking to provide policy guidelines regarding the issues or causes that their CEOs could pursue, as part of their social resistance actions. Again, the section of the tactics described could serve as guidelines for communication departments or practitioners who find themselves having to prescribe communication directions for a CEO activist's campaigns.

Indications are that most boards of directors are not very familiar with the practice of CEO activism and tend to resist CEOs who decide to undertake CEO activism. Some corporate governance implications include helping boards of directors to understand relevant aspects of CEO activism such as the motivations of CEOs, issues to be selected, tactical repertoire, effects of CEO activism, and the possible safeguards to employ. It also contributes by providing evidence-based guidelines for safe and effective CEO activism campaigns. This dissertation foreshadows a rulebook/playbook for CEO activism, tailor-made for the Global South.

In terms of business ethics, this dissertation is a small step in helping more businesses to better understand another way in which to become more socially and authentically responsible to more stakeholders than powerful owners of capital.

Limitations and further research

Despite the useful insights gleaned, this study is far from being an ideal inquiry. This dissertation is associated with several shortcomings. As a qualitative study, while it has provided some useful depth of information about the various research questions, the findings are only relevant to the participants of this study. Besides, the participants were purposively selected. The findings are thus far from generalizable.

The data were collected from participants in the non-Western context of Ghana. Thus, the findings may not hold for CEO activists in a different socio-cultural context. Indeed, the findings may not even hold for the same participants interviewed by different researchers at a different time because the analysis entailed some reflexivity and interpretation by this researcher.

The philosophical approach to this research is a postmodern orientation that recognizes the interests of multiple stakeholders, instead of those of only investors. Similar research undertaken from the modernist approach could present markedly different findings.

This study is by no means exhaustive in covering every facet of the phenomenon of CEO activism. Scholarship on CEO activism is still in its infancy, with many aspects of the phenomenon yet to be studied. CEO activism is still in its nascence, both as a field of practice and a line of scholarly inquiry.

The field provides some interesting prospects for further research and presents some intriguing debates that pull together various theoretical domains such as Caritas, Africapitalism, postmodernism, and feminist media theory and gender theory. With the inclusion of the experiences of women activist CEOs in Ghana, this dissertation only scratches the surface in contributing to feminist theory, especially the strands of feminist theory pertaining to intersectionality and African feminist thought. Drawing from these strands would enable a more in-depth feminist theoretical analysis of the experiences and choices of women CEOs in Ghana. A stronger theory-based, gender-centric analysis systematically examining the behaviors and motives of men and women activists is advisable as well. Unlike most studies, mine sought to include women CEO activists and elicit their motives; however, future work to develop a framework and elicit questions to better understand gendered views and initiatives is recommended.

Scholars are still grappling with the relationship between CEO activism and the specific ways in which it impacts companies. Thus, future CEO effects studies may focus on the many ways in which CEO activism is related to such organizational outcomes such as employee morale, employee loyalty, customer brand preference, and brand equity.

The practice of CEO activism is situation/context-specific. Thus, future studies could investigate how desirable and undesirable environmental conditions shape various facets of the practice of CEO activism.

There appear to be some corporate governance issues that are animated by the practice of CEO activism. Scholars may want to examine how CEO activism and various mandates of boards of directors are interlinked.

Increasingly, we are learning about the importance of "Kitchen Cabinets" in various aspects of the practice of CEO activism. Future studies could consider various factors that promote or impede the role of such insider allies in the works of CEO activists.

In CEO Activism Development Model presented in this dissertation, I trace the roots for the development of activist stances by CEO as a product of the interaction between social factors and personal factors within individual CEOs, which produce a certain form of "CEO Social-Mindedness." While this "CEO Social-Mindedness" could be seen as akin to the age-old nature-nurture debate, it is still unclear as to the exact nature of this phenomenon among CEOs. Future research could examine the specific pathways through which "CEO Social-Mindedness" evokes in CEOs the desire to become activists. Is there one monolithic form of "CEO Social-Mindedness" or does it present on various forms and gradations? Some scholars could examine the connections between "CEO Social-Mindedness" and various expressions of CEO activism.

Currently, we do not know much about the connection between the externally focused social resistance actions of CEO activists and related issues/causes they pursue within their organizations. Future studies could investigate the relations between what actions CEO activists take for the society, vis-à-vis what causes they pursue within their organizations.

So far, there have hardly been any studies that have employed textual analysis of external-facing communications of CEO activists. Future studies could employ discourse analysis, in ascertaining various facts about the messages relayed by CEO activists in their campaigns.

Implications for the practice of CEO activism

Without a doubt, CEO activism is an emerging phenomenon that scholars are yet to fully scope out, conceptualize and operationalize. While some scholars have contributed to the idea of having some guidelines that could guide the successful implementation of CEO activism in general, most of the current proposals pertain to Western sociocultural contexts. This is because, to date, virtually all studies on the phenomenon have been situated in Western/American contexts.

Countries in the developing world have unique political, cultural, social, and other situational factors that could make some of the extant guidelines to be of null effect. Among the motives of this dissertation is the development of a playbook to guide the successful implementation of CEO activism, especially in the developing world. Indeed, this researcher contends that many CEOs in the developing world are yet to embrace their evolving role as activists, partly because they do not fully understand how to effectively perform such roles. It is hoped that with the development of such a playbook, the current mystique surrounding CEO activism would be stripped away while providing activist CEOs in the emerging markets of Africa with a powerful arsenal of situationally developed toolkits to enable them better perform their role as activist CEOs.

Based on their experiences as activist CEOs, the participants in this study were asked to suggest some guidelines that other CEOs desiring to become activists could follow to assure more effective or successful social resistance actions. The following pointers were some of the critical success factors for engaging in successful CEO activism, within the context of a developing society such as Ghana.

The informants shared the view that a major guideline that any CEO who wants to become an activist ought to follow is to convince himself or herself that it is a course of action he/she wants to do. Many of the informants spoke of the need for the activist CEO to be triply sure that they feel called to engage in activism.

Several participants noted that they tended to be carried away sometimes in their resistance actions. Some collaborators urged activist CEOs to set some boundaries, beyond which they ought not to extend their actions.

Several participants underscored the need for all activist CEOs to become very knowledgeable about what it means to be a citizen, rather than a spectator. This is because of the overwhelming belief among participants that the bedrock of any activism is a sense of patriotism and citizenship.

The participants in this study were unanimous in expressing the view that a supremely important guideline for successful CEO activism in Ghana is that such activities ought to be based on authenticity and truth. The participants made the point that activism that is contrived would not be successful because members of an activist's strategic constituency would be discerning enough to see through any multiple layers of deceit and selfish motive.

Several participants indicated the importance of timing in ensuring that campaign messages were heard. For these informants, the right message delivered at the wrong time would not be as successful as an aptly timed message.

Many informants pointed to the importance of profiting from the experiences of other CEO activists. In expressing this view, they called for current and future CEO

activists to have access to some publications and guidelines or documented cases of the works of other CEO activists.

It turned out that, for some participants, corporate and CEO activism was a core part of the corporate strategy. For instance, it emerged that, right from the incorporation of Dalex Finance and Leasing, activism was identified as one of the ways of positioning and promoting the company. Some informants revealed that, besides according the role of activism the needed level of legitimacy of corporate affairs, doing so made it a central activity within the corporate strategy. Others spoke of benefits and attributes of an activism-embedded strategic focus as including working to provide some consistency, authenticity, and budgetary support for the initiatives.

For some of the CEOs in this study, besides the need for authenticity, guidelines for successful CEO activism ought to include a strong self-belief and belief in the cause. It emerged that the value of having a strong belief and personal conviction could be found in the ability of these attributes to provide the staying power for a long-term campaign.

Among the most popular guidelines for successful CEO activism shared by some informants are the importance of taking the middle line, communicating clearly, being able to defend one's position, based on facts, and showing objectivity by being apolitical.

Many participants underscored the need for CEO activists to select their issues properly, to assure some success for campaigns. For the informants that shared this view, accurate issue selection was important because of the plethora of possible causes and the limited resources available. In this regard, Senyo Hosi advocated for activist CEOs to

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have a "signature advocacy," that would help to define the image and public persona of the CEO activist.

Some participants spoke about the importance of the modern CEO developing a keen sense of his/her social environment, based on the realization of a strong inter-connectedness between the company and the wider operating context. Other participants shared the idea that it made business sense to think beyond the narrow confines of a company's profit motive.

For some informants, guidelines for CEO activism in Ghana or Africa should include the caution for neophyte CEO activists to prepare for huge doses of not only hypocrisy but also duplicity, not only from sworn opponents but from those that vaunt their support for the activist CEO.

For some participants, an important guideline for assuring success in CEO activism relates to the need to carefully study and understand various factors, motivations, and attributes of the target audiences.

The informants in this study noted that a useful guideline that CEOs must follow in engaging in successful activism is for them to come to the table with clean hands. Thus, the informant noted that it is important for all activist CEOs to lead by example in ensuring that every web and tissue of their operation is above reproach. Besides the sheer propriety of the activism itself being authentic and above board, every other aspect of the business operations and personal life of the activist CEO needs to be, as far as possible, blameless.

Another theme that emerged regarding guidelines for engaging in successful CEO activism is the need for the development and embedding of corporate principles at the

core of every corporate activity. In this regard, the suggestion is that CEO or corporate activism ought not to be a knee-jerk (re)action. This is because such corporate purposes would have been long-established and set in ways that effectively define those issues on which the company would agitate, should such issues be threatened within the social system. Importantly, it stands to reason that such ideals that underpin the business – the overriding corporate purpose(es) – ought to precede and drive every nature of corporate or CEO activism.

Several informants underscored the value of having and deploying a varied arsenal of strategies and tactics. For instance, some indicated the need for alliances and coalition-building and deploying various media vehicles.

Besides the fact that CEO activism ought to be driven by deliberate and well-established corporate purpose(s), it also emerged that a useful playbook for CEO activism ought to involve the setting of various scenarios. Such scenarios set should be based on several factors, among which is effective stakeholder mapping and the performance of issues analysis and sensitivity testing of how various strategic constituents would be impacted by or react to various risk issues within the social system.

It turned out that CEO activism was rarely seen as a solo or individual activity. Most of the participants disclosed that various significant others influenced their activities.

It was found that many of the CEOs in this study thought that an important guideline for effective CEO activism in Ghana involved the employment of flexibility in practically every facet of activist campaigns.

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Many of the informants think that an important guideline for effective CEO activism is for the CEO to always have the presence of mind in leaving no stone unturned in reinforcing previous statements made.

It emerged that, although CEO activism was strongly driven by the personal convictions of the CEO, the participants in this study still saw the need to carry their employees along, as much as possible through various internal communications.

Several informants saw the need for CEOs to be ready to start activist campaigns, even if on a small scale. For those that shared this view, many campaigns remain paralyzed and unborn because of the perception that some activist CEOs have about every campaign being huge. Thus, some informants saw the need to start small sometimes, and then scale up whenever necessary.

Other informants stressed the importance of goalsetting, monitoring, and evaluation of significant aspects of activist campaigns. These participants emphasized that the same rigor and performance-driven approach to business management ought to be applied to activism campaigns. They also urged activist CEOs to be strategic about their campaigns, measure the success/effectiveness of their efforts, and review their goals periodically.

A few informants shared the view that a vital guideline for effective CEO activism concerned being perceived not as an unnecessary nagger, but as one who genuinely cared about the society and was proffering workable solutions for social transformation and the benefit of all.

Some of the informants stressed the importance of personal development for CEOs who want to engage in activism. For some of the participants in the study, this is

important because one cannot provide for others what one does not have. Therefore, an important guideline for CEO activism is for CEOs themselves to keep preparing and developing themselves, as much as possible.

It was found that virtually all participants in this study were of the view that CEO activism ought not to be a solo activity. Thus, for many participants, an important success factor in CEO activism revolved around the need to create what some described as "a coalition of the willing." By this, they were referring to the need for the CEO activist to have a group of like-minded people and organizations who can help with various aspects of the campaign, from legwork to bran work.

It was found that the participants in this study saw the importance of activist CEOs in Ghana developing a mindset of supporting other CEO activists as an important element in a playbook for successful CEO activism in Ghana. Some of the informants underscored the need for unity and support for other CEOs, even when there is a disagreement with whatever causes they are pursuing or fighting for. For the CEOs that shared this viewpoint, the common connecting thread that should bind all activist CEOs together is the fact that they are activists and the fact that there is a shared commitment to risk themselves in the fight for the common good and the upliftment of humanity.

An important guideline that emerged is the call by some of the participants for CEOs to be mindful of the fact that CEO activism was not for everyone, even though activism was seen as an important role of the modern CEO. Some participants noted that it was important for a CEO to have developed a credible personal brand and public profile before seeking to positively impact society through an activism campaign.

Some of the participants noted that an important principle in ensuring impactful CEO activism was the courage to select controversial issues and the conviction to speak truth to power. In reflecting on the importance of courage, several CEOs in this study indicated the importance of self-belief and not paying heed to discouraging comments from others who may not have the same level of understanding and belief in the issues/causes being pursued by the activist CEO.

Several participants in this study indicated that in undertaking activism, CEOs in Ghana ought to be mindful of the fact that activism was a risky activity and to take steps to manage or minimize the risks involved.

Epilog

This dissertation was energized by the mission of reimaging current scholarship on CEO activism by considering some alternative approaches. The overall goal was to address the perceived dearth of scholarly research on the phenomenon of CEO activism.

In pursuit of this goal, this study had a differentiation strategy at various layers. A deliberate decision was made to select a non-Western context, to adopt a non-quantitative method, have parity of the voices and lived experiences of both men and women activist CEOs, and to approach the phenomenon from a postmodern perspective, among others. The various theoretical lenses that guided the inquiry included the notions of Caritas and Ubuntu philosophy and Public Relations practice, Africapitalism, and ideas surrounding postmodern values in public relations.

A qualitative research design that involved long interviews with 24 purposively selected CEO activists in Ghana. Some participants were also selected, using snowball

sampling. Data analysis followed the phenomenological theme-based method set forth by van Manen (2016; 1997).

Among the findings included the identification of new motivations, hitherto alien to the literature on CEO activism, such as Caritas, Ubuntu philosophy, Africapitalism, and selected postmodern values.

It was found that the categories suggested by Kotler and Sarkar (2017; 2018b) were appropriate in serving as clusters for the range of causes and issues advocated for/against by the activist CEOs in Ghana.

Regarding the tactics of CEO activism, it was learned that the extant postulates of Chatterji and Toffel (2018) and Livonen (2018) were both inadequate (whether separately or in combination) in reflecting the range of tactics employed by CEO activists in Ghana. Although these extant classes of tactics were combined into a new classificatory scheme of tactics that comprised (i) leveraging economic power; (ii) awareness creation and persuasion tactics; (iii) disruption and protest tactics; and (iv) support tactics, it did not suffice.

It was found that activist CEOs in Ghana predominantly employed awareness creation and persuasion tactics to a great extent, although some reported disruption and protest tactics, and some support tactics. The tactic of leveraging economic power was found to be employed to a minimal extent, for various reasons.

The findings further suggest several other classes of CEO activism tactics, hitherto not discussed in the literature on CEO activism. These include such tactics as "activism by living by example," "activism by industry group representatives," "naming and shaming," "legal activism," and variants of the tactic of leveraging economic power

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that could extend the meaning posited by Chatterji and Toffel (2018), such as the positive use of economic power in which CEO activists undertake to match government investments.

CEO activism was found to produce various categories of effects with various consequences in Ghana. CEO activism was found to be associated with some improvements to society, as well as some consequences for companies and CEO activists. It was found that the CEO activists employed six categories of safeguards to protect themselves from the undesirable consequences of CEO activism. These safeguards included personal safeguards, communication-related safeguards, CEO activism best practice safeguards, social safeguards, spiritual safeguards, and corporate safeguards.

Some guidelines are provided to inform safe and more effective CEO activism campaigns. In the tradition of process studies of change in organization and management, which privilege the elements of temporality, activity, and flow (Langley et al., 2013; 2009), a conceptual framework is also provided to explain, in broad strokes, various links in the development of CEO activism in Ghana that could be applied within other contexts.

-END-

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE PILOT STUDY

Section 1: Prologue and welcome

- Administer informed consent

- Seek permission to record the interview on a digital device

Section 2: Introduction

- Introduction of the researcher / primary investigator

- Introduction by the informant (Name, organization, designation, nature of the business, etc.)

- Self-identification (age, gender, religion/spirituality, marital status, other social identity dimensions, etc.)

Section 3: Discussion of informants' social resistance actions as a CEO

- Explore the nature of the informant's resistance actions as a CEO. Probe for specific issues that the informant has been weighing in on as a CEO activist.

    o Ask for real examples such as environmental protection/conservation, empowerment of vulnerable sections of society, employees' rights protection, etc.

    o Discuss details of issues that informants have been campaigning for or against.

- Discuss informants' motivation for engaging in activism.

    o Probe for an explanation of the tactics he/she has typically employed in activism.

    o Explore the main thrust of the focus of the tactics used:

- - Get informants to consider whether their tactics have focused on *awareness creation*, or on *leveraging on economic power*, etc.
  - o Find out about the media vehicles that informants typically employed in their activism campaigns.

- Discuss the extent of singularity or consensus-building in CEO activism.
  - o Probe whether the informant engages in activism alone, or as part of a coalition/networks of other activists.
  - o Ask about informants' willingness and/or ability to donate to / support other CEO activists in their campaigns.
  - o Probe for the limits/extents of their support for others, or otherwise.
  - o Ask about the nature of issues that engaged other CEO activists that informants know.

- Discuss the perceived utility of engaging in CEO activism.
  - o Probe for the estimation of the strategic relevance of embarking on CEO activism in Ghana.
  - o Probe for the importance of CEO activism to the CEO's personal brand.
  - o Probe for the perceived links between CEO activism and employee loyalty.
  - o Probe for the perceived interaction between CEO activism and customer brand preference.

- Probe for the perceived relationship between CEO activism and competitive advantage.
- Probe for the perceived relationship between CEO activism and other organizational outcomes.

- Interrogate the relationship between CEO activism and public opinion.
  - Probe for the effectiveness of CEO activism in swaying public opinion/public policy. Seek examples.

- Explore informants' perceptions of the personal and corporate consequences of engaging in CEO activism:

  Tonic effects:
  - Probe for positive personal consequences. Ask for a specific example.
  - Probe for positive organizational consequences. Ask for a specific example.

  Toxic effects:
  - Probe for negative personal repercussions. Ask for a specific example.
  - Probe for some negative organizational repercussions. Ask for a specific example.

- Discuss how informants have taken advantage of the positive consequences of engaging in CEO activism.

- Explore how informants have sought to take advantage of the perceived positive spinoffs of your activism.

- Examine how informants have sought to manage or mitigate the negative effects of engaging in CEO activism.
    - Probe for how informants have tried to mitigate/manage the negative backlash of your activism. Ask for a specific example.
    - Probe whether it is worth the risk. Seek some specific examples.

Section 4: Discuss some guidelines for engaging in effective CEO Activism
- Based on their personal experiences, discuss guidelines that informants think should be followed in engaging in effective CEO activism.
    - Probe for specific examples
    - Seek out some anecdotes, epigrams, lived experiences, etc.

- Discuss the relative utility of CEO activism for public companies, compared to private ones:
    - Probe for variability according to industrial sectors and the nature of business

- Explore the importance of authenticity, courage, social good in an effective CEO activism campaign.
    - Probe for the importance of authenticity. Seek examples.

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- o Probe for courage. Seek examples.

- o Probe for the desire for social change and social good. Seek examples.

- Discuss the value of performing a vulnerability audit prior to engaging in CEO activism.

- Discuss the use of personal resources and/or corporate resources in CEO activism campaigns.
  - o Probe for assertions regarding the relative mix of resources for such campaigns.

- Discuss whether informants see the need for a crisis management plan to help handle fallouts of activism campaigns.

- Discuss some factors that aid/hinder CEO activism efforts.

- Discuss the need for a kitchen cabinet.
  - o Discuss the importance of involving:
    - The Board of Directors, as a group
    - Individual directors
    - Executive management team

- Discuss the influence of some facets of the time dimension on CEO activism:

- Explore some factors that affect informants' timing or rollout of activism efforts.

- What factors determine the timing of the overall campaign?

- What factors shape the timing of specific facets of the campaign?

- Discuss the value of research:

  - Probe whether informants have data on the political beliefs of customers, employees, and other members of the strategic constituency

  - How do they monitor and/or evaluate the effectiveness of their activism campaigns?

  - What indicators do they use in assessing success/failure of campaigns?

- Discuss the value of postmortems and debriefing in CEO activism

Section 5: Epilogue

- Closing comments
- Thank you

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PARTICIPANTS IN PILOT STUDY

There were seven participants during the pilot study. These comprised four (4) men CEO activists and three (3) women CEO activists. The informants were Oheneyere Gifty Anti, Dr. Edith Dankwa, Lucy Quist, David Ampofo, Kenneth Thompson, Kenneth Ashigbey, and Emmanuel Awumee.

The mini profiles of the CEOs who participated in the pilot study are presented in here in Appendix B.

Participants	Profile Highlights
	Name: Dr. Edith Dankwa Designation: Group CEO, Business & Financial Times Group Religion: Christian Others: Member, Executive Women Network
	Name: Lucy Quist Designation: Managing Director, Technology Transformation – Morgan Stanley. Religion: Christian Others: Former CEO, Airtel Ghana Limited; CEO, Quist Blue Diamond; Member, Executive Women Network; Author, *The Bold New Normal: Creating the Africa where everyone prospers* (2019).

Participants	Profile highlights
	Name: Oheneyere Gifty Anti Designation: Managing Director, GDA Media Limited Religion: Christian Others: Former journalist, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation; Ghana Television (GTV); Author, *A Bit of Me* (2019).
	Name: David Ampofo Designation: CEO Ghana Upstream Petroleum Chamber; CEO Channel Two Communications Limited Religion: Christian Others: Former journalist, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation and Ghana Television; former journalist, CBS; past winner, Journalist of the Year award in Ghana (1988).
	Name: Kenneth Thompson Designation: Dalex Leasing and Finance Company Limited Religion: Undisclosed

Participants	Profile highlights
	Name: Kenneth Ashigbey Designation: CEO, Ghana Chamber of Telecommunications Religion: Christian (Catholic) Others: Former CEO, Graphic Communications Group (Ghana)
	Name: Emmanuel Awumee Designation: CEO, Sesil Consult Religion: Christian

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE MAIN STUDY

Overview of Interview:

- Who is the researcher?

- Estimated length of the interview.

- The general theme of the interview: CEO Activism (Concept of CEO Activism; three Definitions and some examples, etc.; the distinctiveness of CEO activism from CSR/S, Corporate Philanthropy, etc.)

Defining CEO Activism for informants:

- *"A* business leader's personal and public expression of a stance on some matter of current social or political debate, with the primary aims of visibly weighing in on the issue and influencing opinions in the espoused direction.*" - (Hambrick & Wowak, 2019).*

- *"*CEO activism … whereby corporate leaders (mostly CEOs) speak out on social and environmental issues largely unrelated to their core businesses." - *Chatterji & Toffel, 2016).*

- "Over the past few years, chief executives — including prominent figures like Lloyd Blankfein of Goldman Sachs and Howard Schultz of Starbucks have been taking public stances on controversial issues like race relations and gender

equality that are unrelated to their core businesses. It's headline-grabbing stuff." –
(Chatterji & Toffel, 2016).

Examples of CEO Activism (in America):

- 2012, Dan Cathy, CEO of the restaurant chain Chick-fil-A, announced his
  opposition to same-sex marriage on a radio show.

- 2015, Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, in a column for the Washington Post, registered
  alarm about "religious freedom" laws he deemed as legalizing discrimination.
  - 2016, more than 100 F500 CEOs signed a public letter in opposition to proposed
  legislation in North Carolina that would limit transgender individuals' access to
  the public.

- 2017, on the eve of President Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris
  climate accord, 30 CEOs took out a full-page ad in the Wall Street Journal urging
  him not to do so.

- 2017, Kenneth Frazier, CEO of Merck, very publicly resigned from President
  Trump's Manufacturing Council, after Trump's equivocation about white
  nationalist violence in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Examples of CEO Activism (in Ghana and Africa):

- 2019, Juliet Asante, speaking out against electoral violence and political
  vigilantes in Ghana

- 2018, Ken Ashigbey speaking against the environmentally unsustainable impacts
  of illegal small-scale gold

mining in Ghana.

- 2019, Senyo Hosi calling for educational reforms in tertiary institutions in Ghana

- 2014-2019, Ken Thompson advocating for better economic management of Ghana

- 2019, Ashim Morton pushing against plastic waste and poor environmental management in Ghana

- 2012, Tony Elumelu advocating for Africapitalism

- 2018, Executive Women Network advocating for increased gender diversity within corporations in Ghana.

- Kofi Bentil – Various activism campaigns

- Dr. Charles Wereko-Brobbey – Various activism campaigns

RQ 1: What are the motivations of CEO activists in Ghana?

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1. Now, have you personally ever engaged in activism of this sort?

2. How did you become a CEO activist?

    - When did you start engaging in activism as a CEO in Ghana?

    - How did you develop the activist stance?

3. What are your motivations for becoming a CEO activist?

    - To what extent is your activism grounded in a personal belief system?

    - To what extent is it a calculated business decision?

Examining Postmodernism – (Based on Holtzhousen, 2002):

Examining the extent to which CEO activism in Ghana is motivated by (or reflective of) postmodern concepts, such as micropolitics and alliances, biopower, dissensus, and dissymmetry, organizational politics, and situational ethics and decision-making?

4. What is your attitude towards people from diverse backgrounds (women, ethnic and sexual minorities, the disabled, etc?

   o Probe for real examples.

5. Please describe your attitude towards social change and in the business environment?

6. How democratic would you say your organization is?

   o Probe for the extent to which multiple stakeholder interests feature in decision-making.

7. How do you feel about the modern CEO working as an activist?

   - Probe for specific issues he/she has publicly weighed in on.

8. Do you normally engage in activism alone, or in concert with other CEOs?

   - Probe for his/her involvement in community actions.

   - Do you donate to/support other CEO activists in their campaigns?

   - How far do you go in supporting other activist CEOs in their campaigns?

9. How do you handle taking sides/conflict and disagreement?

   - Are there situations where you are unable to resolve/reconcile conflict/difference between your organization's position and those of stakeholders? Please give examples.

10. How do you feel when you realize that stakeholders (employees, society, etc.)

    have issues that they cannot resolve on their own?

    - Do you feel you must speak out on behalf of the less powerful in society?

11. Do you consider the historical, social, or political realities of stakeholders before

    or during your activism campaigns?

    - Please explain further.

    - Give specific examples.

12. To what extent would you say that your role as a CEO activism reflects the

    conscience of your organization or business?

Examining Africapitalism postulates (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015)

To what extent is CEO activism in Ghana motivated by such Africapitalism values as a) a sense of progress and prosperity; b) a sense of parity; c) sense of peace and harmony, and d) sense of place and belonging?

1. What do you think is the role of the private sector in the socio-economic

   development of Ghana/Africa?

Examining a Sense of Progress and Prosperity:

1. What do progress and prosperity in society mean to you?

   - Probe for whether these relate only to material accumulation.

   - Are progress and prosperity all about the absence of poverty in society?

- To what extent do you see progress and prosperity as also relating to the psychosocial wellbeing of humans.

2. To what extent do you think peace and prosperity refer to the presence of conditions that make life more fulfilling for all (including access to quality education, health, social capital, democratic institutions, etc.)?

3. What roles can the private sector play in promoting peace and prosperity for all?

Examining a Sense of Parity:

1. How can/should the fruits of progress and prosperity be shared equitably for the common good?

2. How can Ghana address issues of social inequality?

3. What should be done to rid the society of crony capitalism and corruption?

4. How can the private sector promote greater social inclusivity?

5. How can we have a society that creates financial and social wealth for all stakeholders and not just for shareholders?

Examining a sense of Peace and Harmony:

1. What are your views on the competitive/contentious struggles inherent in capitalism?

2. How can we achieve a more balanced society where we can have economic prosperity in harmony with social wealth?

3. How can the private sector operate sustainably (without negative effects of
   production/business on ecology, environment, society, and other economic
   spheres)?

4. What is the role of CEOs generally and activist CEOs in this push for harmony,
   peace, and security?

   - How should we create social wealth for all stakeholders?

Examining a Sense of Place and Belonging:

1. What is the influence of Ghana's/Africa's development on your work as a CEO
   activist?

2. How does your love for Ghana/Africa (patriotism, pride in your identity, etc.)
   inform in your desire to be a CEO activist?

3. How do the concerns about the progress of Ghana/Africa influence your activism?

RQ 2: What issues are/have been advocated for/against by CEO activists in Ghana?

1. What issues cause(s) have you advocated for/against, based on your personal
   convictions?

   - What range of causes/issues have you seen the need to advocate?

   - What internal and external issues do you feel strongly about?

   - Do you feel you have enough power to undertake your activism as you wish?

2. Have you engaged in activism that conflicted with the goals/values embraced by

your organization?

- How did this play out?

3. What happens next for you as an activist CEO?

- Probe for his/her plans with regards to activism.

RQ 3: What strategies and tactics are employed by CEO activists in Ghana?

1. What concrete actions did you take to advance this cause(s)?

2. What resistance strategies did you/do you employ to get your word out? (please describe your actions in specific detail).

3. What media vehicles do you employ in your activism?

4. Do your tactics lean towards *awareness creation,* or *leveraging economic power?*

5. To what extent does the nature of your company's business influence the causes you advocate?

   - What do you think is the influence of industry effects on the nature of activism engaged in by CEOs? (e.g. it is harder for a CEO in the oil and gas industry to be a climate activist than one in, say, coffee-growing).

   - What do you think is the role of industry associations in engaging in activism on behalf of their members?

6. Do you own the company you lead, or were you appointed/employed as a CEO?

   - To what extent does your ownership of your company affect your role as an activist CEO?

- How does your status as an appointed/employed CEO affect your role as an activist CEO?

7. What would you say are the **expectations** of significant others in your work as a CEO activist (such as the Board, individual directors, other members of your C-suite, employees, etc.)?

8. What would you say are the **roles** of significant others in your work as a CEO activist (such as the Board, individual directors, other members of your C-suite, employees, etc.)?
   - Is your activism included in the function of the Board?
   - Do you see the need for a "Kitchen cabinet" of Board members and Executives in your activism?

9. What other factors/conditions would you say aid your work as a CEO activist in Ghana?

10. What factors hinder such campaigns?

11. How do you carry your employees/team along?
   - How do they feel about your activism?

- What time factors affect your activism campaigns?

  - Factors determining overall campaign rollout.

  - Factors informing specific facets of the campaign.

RQ 4: What are the effects of the social resistance actions of CEO activists in Ghana?

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1. What effects did your actions have?

   - What happened?

   - Probe for outcomes.

2. Were/are there any surprises?

3. How effective have your activist campaigns been in influencing public opinion

   regarding the issues/causes you pursued?

4. What reactions have your activism produced?

   - Probe for **positive** reactions from stakeholders such as colleagues,

5. competitors, subordinates, family members, regulators, etc.

   - How have you sought to take advantage of the positive outcomes?

5. What pushback did you experience?

   - What resistance or criticism did your activism spark (against your person,

your family, your company, etc.)?

-      Probe for **negative** reactions from stakeholders such as colleagues, competitors, subordinates, family members, regulators, etc.

RQ 5: What safeguards do CEO activists in Ghana employ to protect themselves?

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1. What measures do you/did you employ to safeguard yourself/your company from the risks of engaging in social activism?

2. From your experience as an activist CEO, what guidelines should be followed by other CEOs who want to engage in activism? Give specific examples.

3. Have you ever observed your fellow CEOs engage in activism?

   - Have you collaborated with other CEOs in activism?

4. Have you engaged in activism that conflicted with the goals/values embraced by your organization?

5. How did this play out?

6. Do you perform a vulnerability audit (personal and corporate) before campaign(s)?

7. Do you have a crisis management plan in place?

8. What do you think about investing in corporate and personal resources in activism campaigns?

9. What sort of research do you perform regarding your activism campaigns (before, during, after)?

10. Do you do any research at all?

11. What postmortems/debriefing sessions do you perform for your executives, board, and employees?

Epilog

- Please tell me who you are: Age, gender, religion/spirituality, marital status, other identifiers, etc.
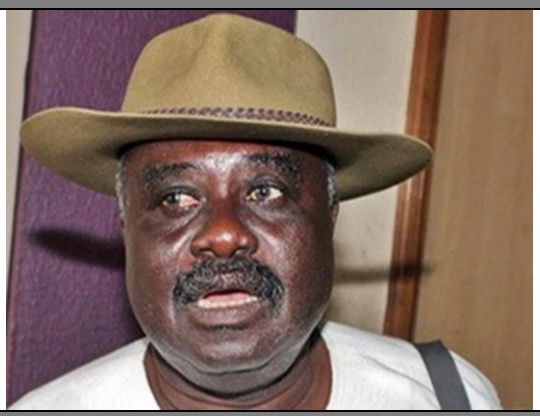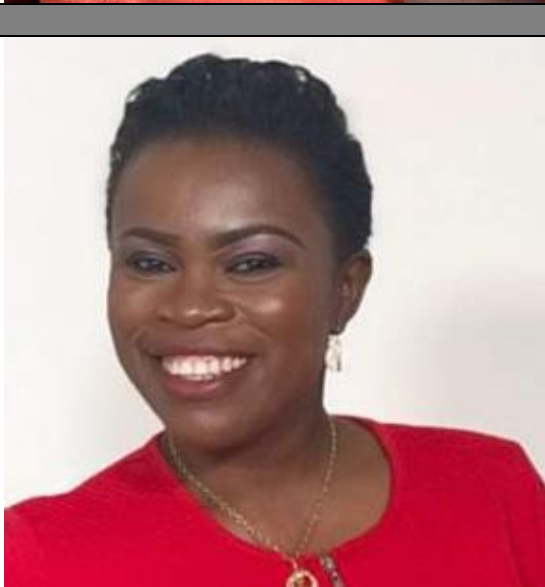- Are there other CEO activists in Ghana you would like me to interview?

-end

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANTS IN THE MAIN STUDY

The participants during the main data collection phase in the fall of 2019 were: Kofi Bentil, Patience Akyianu, Ace Ankomah, Eunice Biritwum, Dr. Charles Wereko-Brobbey, Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante, Senyo Hosi, Odelia Ntiamoah-Boampong, Albert Ocran, Dr. Geraldine Abaidoo, John Awuah, Regina Honu, Charles Mensah, Dedo Kofi, Alex Mould, Pearl Esua-Mensah, and Brigitte Dzogbenuku. The mini-profiles of the CEOs who participated in the main study are presented here in Appendix D.

Participants	Profile Highlights
	Name: Kofi Bentil Designation: Lead Partner, Lex Praxis Religion: Christian Others: Vice President, Imani Africa
	Name: Patience Akyianu Designation: Group CEO, Hollard Ghana Religion: Christian Others: Former Managing Director, Barclays Bank Ghana; Director, Ecobank Ghana; Member, Executive Women Network

Participants	Profile highlights
	Name: Ace Ankomah Designation: Managing Partner, Bentsi-Enchill, Letsa & Ankonah Religion: Christian Others: Member, Occupy Ghana
	Name: Eunice Biritwum Designation: CEO, Iribe Energy Religion: Christian Others: Member, Executive Women Network
	Name: Dr. Charles Wereko-Brobbey Designation: Former CEO, Volta River Authority Religion: Undisclosed Others: Former Presidential Candidate of the United Ghana Movement; Former CEO, Ghana @ 50 Secretariat.

Participants	Profile highlights
	Name: Juliet Yaa Asantewaa Asante Designation: CEO, Ghana National Film Authority; CEO, Eagles Productions Limited; CEO, Mobile Fliks Limited; Religion: Undisclosed Others: Board Chair, Ghana National Film and Television Institute
	Name: Senyo Hosi Designation: CEO, Ghana Chamber of Bulk Oil Distributors Religion: Christian Others: Member, One Ghana Movement
	Name: Odelia Ntiamoah-Boampong Designation: CEO, ON Media Limited; CEO, Ghana Chamber of Tourism. Religion: Christian Others: Deputy CEO, East Capital Properties Limited

Participants	Profile highlights
	Name: Reverend Albert Ocran Designation: Chairman & Lead Consultant, Legacy & Legacy Religion: Christian Others: Executive Pastor, ICGC Christ Temple; Former Executive Chairman, Combert Impressions Limited.
	Name: Dr. Geraldine Gina Abaidoo Designation: Founder/Director, PerFocus; CEO, Gomeg Limited; Proprietor, Rogee Catering Specialties. Religion: Christian Others: Board member, Hollard Life Ghana; Former CEO, Finnet Solutions; Former Senior Manager, Enterprise Life Ghana Limited.
	Name: John Awuah Designation: CEO, Ghana Bankers Association; Managing Partner, J. Awuah & Co. Advisors. Religion: Christian Others: Former CEO, UMB Bank Limited

Participants	Profile highlights
	Name: Regina Honu Designation: CEO, Soronko Solutions Religion: Christian Others:
	Name: Charles Mensah Designation: CEO, Trust Consult Religion: Christian Others: Member, Occupy Ghana Movement
	Name: Dedo Kofi Designation: CEO, Adeko Limited; CEO, Niche Limited Religion: Christian Others: Member, Executive Women Network.

Participants	Profile highlights
	Name: Alex Mould Designation: Former CEO, Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) Religion: Undisclosed Others: Former Executive Director, Standard Chartered Bank Ghana
	Name: Pearl Esua-Mensah Designation: CEO, Ghana Deposit Protection Corporation; CEO & Founder, Feniks, Limited Religion: Undisclosed Others: Chairperson, Ashesi University; Director, Letshego Ghana; Member, Executive Women Network; Former Deputy Managing Director, UT Bank.
	Name: Brigitte Dzogbenuku Designation: CEO, Ve Flavor Limited Religion: Christian Others: Former Vice-Presidential running mate, Progressive People's Party (PPP); Miss Ghana 1991.

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON | School of Journalism and Communication

October 20, 2019

The CEO
Trust Consult
Accra

Dear Mr. Charles MENSAH,

Invitation to Participate in academic research on CEO Activism in Ghana

I am pleased to invite your participation in an academic research study that examines the nascent phenomenon of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) activism in Ghana. The strategy of CEO activism involves heads of profit-seeking companies publicly weighing in on wider socioeconomic, political and environmental issues that may not be directly related to the profitability of their organizations.

While scholars are yet to fully conceptualize and operationalize CEO activism, it has been argued that this emerging phenomenon is indicative of some of the most significant shifts in corporate/brand advocacy and leadership. It has further been suggested that this phenomenon is driven by such notions as brand responsibility, corporate social responsibility, multiple stakeholder engagement, sustainability and the need to serve the triple bottom line.

As a notable exemplar of CEO activism in Ghana, you have been selected to participate in this study. I am confident that your rich experience and knowledge in this and other areas of leadership would help shed more light on this evolving concept, particularly within the Ghanaian and African contexts. This interview is estimated to last no more than ninety (90) minutes. In broad strokes, I have a set of areas I want to explore regarding your role as an activist CEO, about which I would like to elicit your candid thoughts and opinions. Some of the themes in this semi-structured interview will involve the specific forms of activism you have been involved in; your motivations for being an activist CEO; explanation of some strategies and tactics you employ as a CEO activist; and your estimation of the tonic and toxic implications of engaging in CEO activism in Ghana.

Your participation in this inquiry is voluntary. At any point in the interview, you are at liberty to refuse to answer any of the questions. Refusal to participate or continue will not have any negative effect, penalty, or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. This inquiry is being undertaken in keeping with rules of covenantal ethics. Every facet of this research study is a co-creation between knowledgeable informants such as your good self and the primary investigator.

Kindly let me know when and where we can have this interview. If you have any questions, please contact me, **Eric Kwame Adae** of the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Eric K. ADAE, Ph.D. Candidate & Graduate Teaching Fellow
University of Oregon School of Journalism & Communication
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APPENDIX F

ACRONYMS

1D1F	One District, One Factory (Program of Ghana)
AAP	Affirmative Action Policy
ADIC	African Development Investment Conference
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AGITPROP	Agitation and Propaganda (tactics)
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BA	Brand Activism
BR	Brand Responsibility
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPA	Corporate Political Activity
CPP	Convention People's Party
CSA	Corporate Social Advocacy
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DEI	Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
DPP	Democratic People's Party
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States

EI	Executive Instrument
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
EWN	Executive Women Network
FIC	Financial Intelligence Center
GAB	Ghana Association of Bankers
GCBOD	Ghana Chamber of Bulk Oil Distributors
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDPC	Ghana Deposit Protection Corporation
GIR	Gross International Reserves
GPRS	Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs
IFC	International Finance Corporation
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MMT	Metro Mass Transit Limited
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
NCA	National Communication Authority
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NGP	National Gender Policy
NIP	National Independence Party

NLC	National Redemption Party
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NRC	National Redemption Party
PCSR	Political Corporate Social Responsibility
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PHP	People's Heritage Party
PNC	People's National Convention
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PNP	People's National Party
PPP	Progressive People's Party
PRSA	Public Relations Society of America
ROA	Return on Assets
ROE	Return on Equity
RQ	Research Question
SIM	Strategic Issues Management
SIM	Subscriber Identity Module
SMS	Short Messaging Service
SOEs	State-Owned Enterprises
SYPALA	Students and Young Professionals African Liberty Academy
TBL	Triple Bottom Line
TEF	Tony Elumelu Foundation
TIN	Tax Identification Number

UBA   United Bank for Africa

UGCC   United Gold Coast Convention

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNO   United Nations Organization

UP   United Party

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