

Ghana's Presidential Seats and Sword of State: Aesthetic Manifestation of Kwame Nkrumah's Cultural Policy on Ghana's Political Culture

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This study explores the aesthetic dimensions of Kwame Nkrumah's cultural policies in the creation of Ghana's Presidential Seats and the State Sword. The study is an Art Historical research situated within the qualitative research paradigm. It had a population of a defined class of cultural policy makers, art historians, traditional rulers, nationalists, visual artists and Ghanaians resident both in and outside Ghana. The study examined how the creation of Ghana's Presidential Seats and the State Sword were influenced by Kwame Nkrumah's cultural policies and the cultural significance of the aesthetic interplay of ethnic insignias used in capturing the Ghanaian concept of Political authority. The study revealed that, Nkrumah recognised the cultural art forms and elements of ethnic Ghana as assets for national development. In line with his policy of building the Nation State of Ghana, he used ethnic cultural art forms and elements. At independence, Nkrumah commissioned some visual artist to create some artistic pieces (politico-cultural artefacts) for the Ghanaian political authority with inspiration or based on what pertains in the traditional authority (Chieftaincy) of Ghana. Politico-cultural artefacts as used in this study refer to the artefacts produced based on the cultural concepts of the ethnic states for the use of the political authority of the Republic of Ghana. Among these artistic pieces are the three Presidential Seats, The State Sword, The President's Personal Standard Pole and the State Mace.

Keywords: Adinkra, Presidential Seats, State Sword, politico-cultural artefacts, Kwame Nkrumah's cultural policies

Introduction

In the ethnic culture of Ghana, the ascent and descent to authority is accompanied by artefacts and art forms which provides a physique to the political transitional process. These artefacts are not only believed to be the dwelling place of the souls of the ancestors but they also serve as the visual objects that mark the accession to political power. Present day Ghana is a conglomerate of ethnic states right from the 10th Century AD. From the mid-1800s to 1957, it became a British colony territory. Known as the Gold Coast until 6th March 1957,

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Ghana became the first black African state south of the Sahara to gain political independence. The new black African state, drawing on the traditions and cultures of its ethnic groups, took its name from the medieval empire of Ghana which occupied an area around the upper Niger River, several hundred miles to the northwest of present day Ghana. It has a total land area of 238,500 sq. Km, a coastline of 539 Km (Encarta, 2009) and more than 50 different ethnic groups.

Ghana had a lot of cultural intangibles which together inspired Kwame Nkrumah in the crafting of a new foundation of nationhood based on the "Ghanaian national" culture and that meant the Ghanaian ethnic art forms, artefacts, motifs, symbols, etc. which were labelled as primitive by the colonisers should serve as assets for national development. After independence, Nkrumah saw the need to immediately recognise the "Ghanaian national" cultural heritage and took pride in projecting it. Botwe-Asamoah (2005) claims that "It was after the entrance of Nkrumah to Ghana's political scene in 1947 that the proposition was put forward that colonialism was evil and must be overthrown now". He continues to state that "Not only did Nkrumah use African art forms, orature, aesthetics, motifs and symbols, during and after the campaign for national independence, but he also initiated policies and created cultural movements and institutions in Ghana" (p. 120). Traditionally, Ghanaian ethnic cultures, over the many years of their civilizations, had used the arts and crafts to ensure their continuous existence. The pursuit of Nkrumah's African Personality concept after independence made it possible for Kofi Antubam to create the three Presidential Seats and The State Sword for the political authority of the new nation Ghana.

In Ghana, costume and artistic visual elements have a symbolic place in the culture of the people. Their importance cannot be over looked as they help to identify and mark the place or status of members of the ethnic cultures. Hagan (1991) argues that "Any accession to new status, power or privilege tends to be marked in change of costumes" (p. 16). As the 1996 political tussle over who actually carved the Presidential Seats was nearing culmination, the seat's domicile as the emblem of Ghana's political authority was rejuvenated during the political campaign in that same year. Abbey (2008) records that, the incumbent President; Flt-Lt. J. J. Rawlings teased his political opponents that the real Presidential Seat would elude the opposition forever. It was interesting how a creation of the Art had become the emblem of political authority even on the political platform. It is however important that Ghana as a nation takes steps in safeguarding the cultural significance of these masterpieces. In the view of the researchers therefore, the Presidential Seats and the State Sword of Ghana are not just artistic pieces but cultural symbolism of the total being of the Ghanaian people. They are carefully and painstakingly crafted resulting in an ethnographical representation of a multiplicity of their belief systems governing political authority. Our failure to recognise the significance of these artefacts and preserve of them will deprive future generations of the cultural symbolism of the Presidential Seats and the State Sword.

The study therefore has been undertaken to identify the politico-cultural artefacts produced in relation to Nkrumah's cultural policies. It also enquires about the cultural roles of the Presidential Seats and the State Sword in state ceremonies, enquires about the cultural symbolism of the motifs used in decorating the Presidential Seats and the State Sword and finally, to explore the significance of Ghana's Presidential Seats and the State Sword in relation to their established roles in the political culture of the Republic.

Methodology

The framework to this study was situated within the qualitative research paradigm. Data collection instruments used include: interviews, field notes, observation and discussions and the data collected were

mainly qualitative. The focus of the study was on Nkrumah's cultural policy directives and actions on Ghana's political culture. Triangulation and multiple data sources were used to ensure the validity of information accrued. For ethical reasons, interviewees' consents were sought and the agreed terms of confidentiality were respected.

Data for this study were collected through both structured and unstructured interviews with historians, art historians, traditional rulers, nationalists, artists and Ghanaians living both in and outside the country. Participant observation enabled the researcher to observe some of the art products made as part of the implementation of the cultural policies in order to gain a clearer picture of the research context. This is because the research study discussed the influence of Nkrumah's cultural policies on Ghana's political culture.

The total membership of a defined class of cultural policy makers, art historians, traditional rulers, historians, nationalists, visual artists and Ghanaians resident in and outside Ghana constituted the population in the context of this study. Out of this population size, thirty individuals were selected across the eight groups. Fraenkel and Wallen (2009, p. 99), say that, based on previous knowledge of a population and the specific purpose of the research, investigators use personal judgement to select a sample and researchers assume they can use their knowledge of the population to judge whether or not a particular sample will be representative. In situating this study within the qualitative paradigm, interviews, field visits, oral tradition and observation were considered as appropriate data collection instruments for the study. Also forming part of the sample for the study pictures of some of the politico-cultural artefacts exhibited to the interviewees in some cases for better clarity and appreciation.

Findings and Discussions

The main politico-cultural artefacts included the three Presidential Seats and the State Sword. The three Presidential Seats are The Chair of State (*Asipim*), Seat of State (*Asesegua*) now referred to as The Presidential Seat and The Vice-President's Seat (*Asipim*). These seats and the State Sword (*Afena-nta*) came into existence as a result of Kwame Nkrumah's policies on the Ghanaian political culture. It was revealed in the researcher's findings that, all the politico-culture artefacts created by his cultural policies were Ghanaian and for that matter African.

According to Abbey (2008), the need for the State Seats appealed to the "Show boy" Dr. Kwame Nkrumah so he requested for three State Seats prior to the attainment of Ghana's First Republic (p. 48). The governors of the various British colonies who ruled as representatives of the Queen of Britain had ceremonial chairs moulded after the throne of the queen. It was on these chairs that the governors of the various colonies sat during meetings with the local assemblies. These chairs had the backrest and armrest like the *Asipim* chairs used by traditional rulers of Southern Ghana. At Ghana's attainment of the Republican Status, Nkrumah ordered for seats that combined the best ideas of the governor's chair and that of the traditional rulers of the southern part of Ghana for his use. This led to the modernization of the *Asesegua* and the *Asipim* into what we now call the Presidential Seats (R. Wemega-Kwawu, personal communication, 17th January, 2015).



Figure 1. The Seat used by the governor when he visited the National Assembly (Photo courtesy ISD, Accra).



Figure 2. The Seat used by Nkrumah when he visited the National Assembly (Photo courtesy ISD, Accra).

In describing the Presidential Seats designed and made by Kofi Antubam with the help of some local carvers, Fosu (1986) pens that:

The overall design of Antubam's Presidential Chair assumes a modern version of many of the characteristic features of the traditional stool, also meant to embody the characteristic personality of the state. His version of the Presidential Chair in the National Assembly carries similar symbolic meaning and function to those attached to Akan traditional royal stool. (p. 18)

The task of designing the seats was assigned to Kofi Antubam who produced the seats with the help of a team of carvers. It took the carvers almost a year to complete. It included one *Asesegua* (Stool), which is the Seat of State; now generally referred to as the Presidential Seat. The other two are the *Asipim* chairs which are the Chair of State and the present Vice-President's Chair. Antubam also worked on the State Sword (*Afena-nta*) which till today is used for the swearing-in of The President of the Republic of Ghana.

Profiling the Selected Politico-Cultural Artefacts. Seat of State (*Asesegua*), Now Referred to as The Presidential Seat

The Seat of State which has become the symbol of Political Authority of presidents of the Republic of Ghana is completely covered with a finish of gold dust. The gold finish signifies the plethora of the natural

mineral resources of Ghana. The *Aseseɖɖua* (Stool) as it is called by the Akans of Ghana is not only a functional art piece but, also a symbolic piece of art. Its symbolism is well captured in the various shapes and forms that collectively revealed the beauty of the stool. In a description of the female version of the traditional stool (*Aseseɖɖua*), Amenuke, Dogbe, Asare, Ayiku and Baffoe (1991) note that:

The stool symbolizes the soul of society and serves as a symbolic link between the common people in the society and their head. Every component part of the design of the stool represents one of the main ideas that make a perfect society. The curved top of the stool symbolizes the loving embrace of a mother, thus represents the warmth of the female influence in society. The four rectangular-shaped pillars at the corner of the stool represent the influence of male power in the society. It signifies strength, power and good fortune. The strong circular pillar in the centre of the stool symbolizes the power and the presence of God in society, while the base signifies the stability of the earth. (p. 151)

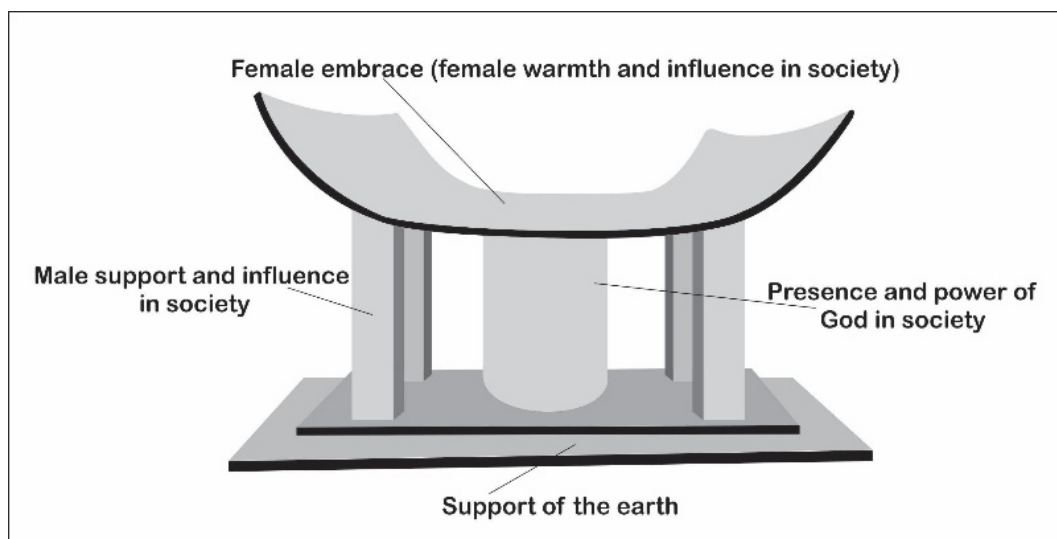


Figure 3. The Traditional Female Stool (*Aseseɖɖua*) (Illustration courtesy Researcher).

The researchers agree with Atiase (2012), who argues that, signs, symbols and images or objects in Ghanaian arts are meant to represent the basic social principles of life. These have guided the general outlook to life throughout the ages. As a result, there is no variation between symbols and general ways of living. It must be noted that, in the absence of photography, Africans documented the historic past in their signs, symbols, artefacts and arts forms. Atiase (2012) further explains that the functions of symbols in nature are many. This is because they are recognized and understood in terms of their communicative and aesthetic appeals. A lot of visual symbols were used by people in the olden days to communicate their thoughts, besides, to outwit their opponent in war. Chief among these visual symbols are the Adinkra symbol of the Akans. The use of a symbol in the Adinkra family is worth a thousand words.

Adinkra symbols are crafted with utmost precision and unique identity in the pudding of Ghanaian philosophical thoughts, ideologies, cultural values and beliefs. They independently offer hint on Ghanaian worldview of cosmic understanding, religious and secular beliefs, flora and fauna plus their relationships with each other. Fashioning of these symbols was greatly inspired by these tangible and intangible materials. Based on these overt inspirational variables of Adinkra, it could be grouped into symbols that depict: celestial bodies, flora and fauna, human body parts and non-figurative shapes (Ofori-Ansa, 1999; Arthur, 2001; Danzy, 2009 as cited in Essel & Opoku-Mensah, 2014).

The exact origin of the Adinkra designs is unclear to researchers. The Adinkra designs are believed to have their origin from Gyaman, a former kingdom in today's Côte D'Ivoire. According to an Asanti legend, Adinkra was the name of a king of the Gyaman captured in a battle by the Asantis for having copied the "Golden Stool", which represents for the Ashanti absolute power and tribal cohesion. But during his captivity before he was finally killed and his territory annexed to the kingdom of Asanti, tradition had it that Nana Adinkra wore patterned cloth, which was interpreted as a way of expressing his sorrow on being taken to Kumasi the capital of Asanti. Adinkra also means "goodbye" or "farewell" in Twi the language of the Akan ethnic group of which Asante is a part. Other historians question the veracity of this historical account since king Adinkra was beheaded at the war front; perhaps, it was his cloth design together with his subjects who were captured contributed to the perpetuation of Adinkra cloth in the Asantiland (Arthur, 2001; Danzy, 2009 as cited in Essel et al., 2014).

The Seat of State (*Asesequa*), now referred to as Presidential Seat is made of hard white sese (a type of tropical wood) and its design takes the form of the traditional royal stools used by traditional rulers from the southern part of Ghana. Abbey (2008), reports that, the sese was brought down from Swedru to Achimota School compound where three carvers worked on it. In the first place, white in the traditional Ghanaian society signifies; triumph, sanctity and purity so, in the selection of the wood for the stools the white sese was ideal. This is because the white sese for the Seat of State represented Ghana's Political victory over the colonialist. Again, as the symbol of the sanctified souls of a liberated society and the purity associated with traditional leadership as the stool represented the power and authority of the Presidency of the Republic of Ghana. According to Abbey (2008), white wood, as opposed to brown wood or any colour of wood, was used to symbolise the Ghanaian traditional idea and practice of associating a ruler with purity, sanctity and guiltlessness (p. 50). The concept behind the State Seat (*Asesequa*) for example was that of a "Super Chief" who had authority over rulers of the ethnic states. This is why in its design, one sees a depiction of a stool mounted on another stool.

In the Ghanaian society, whenever the cultural meaning of the Adinkra symbols is not known, it is only its aesthetic beauty that is appreciated. But because the African and for that matter the Ghanaian produced functional art forms, most of the Adinkra symbols are proverbs transformed into visible forms to illustrate knowledge, conscious and unconscious thoughts, ideas and conceptions of the Akan society. Again, other Adinkra symbols depict historical events, human behaviour and attitudes, animal behaviour, plant life forms and shapes of objects peculiar to the Ghanaian society.



Figure 4. The Seat of State (*Asesequa*), now referred to as The Presidential Seat (Photo courtesy of New Times Corporation, Accra).

According to Essel et al. (2014), like any system of writing, the non-verbal communicative pungency of Adinkra is dissolved in its proverbial and idiomatic messaging that may eschew straightforwardness but imminent in brevity of expression. Its usage prompts interpretational rhetoric dependent on the circumstantial contextualization of a particular Adinkra symbology. Adinkra links a particular symbol to a unique meaning in the culture of the Akan. The main symbols used to decorate the *Asesequa* (Seat of State) therefore were all taken from the collection of Adinkra symbols and the traditional Ghanaian stool symbolism. The seat is completely adorned with real gold finish to symbolize the life and sovereignty of the Nation State of Ghana. The signs, symbols and images used in the design and production of the *Asesequa* were therefore expected to represent some of the basic communal principles which have guided the lives and activities of the Ghanaian society throughout the ages.



Figure 5. The original design of the *Asesequa* (The Seat of State), now referred to as The Presidential Seat (Photo courtesy ISD, Accra).

The use of proverbs in the Ghanaian society is considered as a mark of wisdom and one's knowledge of his culture. As visual proverbs, the Adinkra symbols on the *Asesegua* communicate wisdom to both the governing and the governed. The Adinkra symbols used as adornments on the *Asesegua* are *Osramfa*, *Okosuasu*, *Kontonkurowi*, *Kuntinkantan* or *Anantwurom*, *Aborobe*, *Dadebene* or *Ahokera wo*, *Abankuo*, Ghana *Soroma-Bire*, *Ananum*, *Puruw*, *Ananum*, *Owo-Koforo-Adobe*, *Akosane (Dame-Dame)*, *Krapa (MusuYide)* and *Nkyinkyim*. The original design of the *Asesegua* included flat wooden wings at both sides of the arm-rest but these were removed. And to aid its movement, the design of the *Asesegua* consisted of three pieces which fit into each other to make the seat. For the purposes of this discussion, the researcher divided the Seat of State into three (3) parts. The back rest forms the first part, the *Asesegua* forming the second part with the Foot Stool and the base of the *Asesegua* forming the third part.

First Part: The Back Rest

Okosuasu (the ellipse shaped wood) back-rest symbolises perfection in all that is beautiful in the society. *Aborobe* (the pineapple) done in gold and black lines in front of an oval back-rest, symbolises the sovereignty of the state. *Dadebene* or *Ahokerawo* (that, which quickens life, is made on the back-rest). *Abankuo* an architectural motif done usually in relief on the wall against which royal stools stood. It symbolises the power of life in the society. A careful examination of this symbol shows that it is made up of two large crescent moons meeting at the top and bottom to represent the idea and the existence of female beauty in society. The square at the centre symbolises male power in society and the circle represents God's presence in society (Abbey, 2008).

The *Soroma* (Star) in the traditional Akan society symbolises uniqueness, distinctiveness or the ability to outshine (E. E. Adoko, personal communication, 30th January, 2015). Abbey (2008) explains that, Ghana *Soroma-Bire* (the Black Star of Ghana) symbolises the supremacy of the nation's authority over all the component states that make up the nation. By this explanation, it means that, the Black Star had become a symbol of African unity and emancipation; an idea originally adopted from Marcus Garvey's shipping line which operated between 1919 and 1922 (Ghana Web). For example, the five pointed lone star in Ghana's National flag signifies the symbol of African emancipation and unity in the struggle against colonialism. The five pointed Black Star became the new nationalist emblem, a symbol of national unity. The Black Star on the back rest therefore is to remind Ghanaians of their uniqueness and their role as a leading example for the black race.

Ananum (the five-sided shape set within the star) symbolises old age and dignity—it is used here to assert the idea that as a nation Ghana may be young, but as a people Ghanaian are old. *Puruw* (the circle set within the five-sided shape) symbolises the sanctity and the presence of God in society. Lines have been extended from the centre of the circle towards the five-sided shape, *Ananum*. This is done to assert the Ghanaian's respect for the sanctity, wisdom and dignity of old age (Abbey, 2008).

Second Part: The *Asesegua*

The shape of an *Asesegua* (traditional stool) is itself an *Adinkra* symbol that is called *Ohene Adwa*, literally meaning the king's stool. Symbolically, this *Adinkra* symbol signifies a State or a Chieftaincy. Fosu (1986) pens that:

the Akan state stool serves as an all-embracing symbolic link between the people and the ruler. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, the stool, among the Akan, is the repository of the *Sunsum* (Soul) of the state. Thus every Akan traditional state possesses *Omandwa* (State stool). (p. 18)

The ach shape of the top which forms the actual seat is also an *Adinkra* symbol known as *Osramfa* (literally meaning the crescent moon). It symbolises the influence that natural feminine disposition has in the well-being of society and state. As Amenuke et al. (1991) put it: it symbolizes the loving embrace of a mother.

Kontonkurowi (the rainbow) on which the ach shape rest, symbolises the common sharing by all citizens of Ghana of the responsibility for the prosperity and well-being of the State. This is because, the ethnic states that formed the Republic of Ghana were communal societies that believed in good brotherliness and being responsible for one another. This is seen in some Akan wise sayings like: *W'aninya a na wo hweneanya* (When it touches the nose, it has reached the eye too); this means when a brother is affected, the whole community is affected. *Duakor gyi mframa a edu* (Literally meaning one tree cannot stand the storm without falling); this means in the event of an emergency or enemy attack, it is effective to approach it collectively. *Won som won somwo ne nipa* (Literally meaning a call for help is a call for human response); this means when someone shouts for help, he or she is calling on the other members of the community who can hear his or her cry to come to his or her rescue. *Wo nyoko da ne wo da* (Literally meaning it is when your neighbour sleeps that you can enjoy your sleep); this means, it is in the interest of members of the society to wish their fellow members well always because when evil befalls a member of the community, everyone has to suspend his or her activities in order to offer a helping hand to the fellow. The examples above illustrate the fact that, the Akan believed in common sharing by all citizens of the responsibility for the prosperity and well-being of the State.

However, the society is reminded of the need to be tactical with human relationships. The zigzag pattern used to reinforce the rainbow shape is known as *Owo-Koforo-Adobe* (Literally meaning the Snake climbs the pineapple). That is to suggest, if the snake has to venture the uncomfortable task of climbing the pineapple plant, it achieves that by tact and skill because the pineapple plant has both smooth and thorny surfaces. The Akan acknowledged that though society is made up of both good and bad people, with wisdom one can live peacefully with everybody. *Owo-Koforo-Adobe* therefore, symbolises the exercise of prudence and diplomacy or wisdom in human association.

The supporting columns also assume an abstract motif of the sun, to represent the authority of the new Ghanaian nation over protection, rewards and punishments of every individual citizen (Fosu, 1986). Again, within the rainbow shape is a solid curved shape in the centre that symbolizes the power and the presence of God in society. The African and for that matter the Ghanaian believed in the existence and supremacy of the Almighty God and therefore did nothing without first acknowledging His presence. Some Akan descriptions of God are; *Kokromotiyɛn san ne hommɔpɔ Nyakopɔn* (literally meaning God is like the thumb that cannot be side-lined when tying a knot); this means that, the Akans believe that, without the presence of God in their affairs, they will not get far. *Otumfoɔ Nyakopɔn* (literally meaning the Owner of power); they acknowledge that all power reside in Him and He appoints rulers to represent Him on this earth. *Onyame a ɔbɔɔsoro ne asaase* (literally mean the God who created Heaven and earth); the Akan also believed that God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in it. The solid curved shape in the centre of the stool is therefore to remind political leaders that, the authority to exercise power is a God given one.

The red leather armrest that is placed on the elongated ends of the *Asesegua* was another innovation by Kofi Antubam to provide comfort to the president. He also included a leather cushion on the seat. The leather cushion is treated in a beautiful mosaic of the national colours of red, yellow and green to form a bold *Adinkra* symbol called, *Krapate se okra okyiri fi* (literally meaning a good soul like cats, abhors filth); meaning a pure in heart brings good fortune to the governed because, the good in heart dislike evil deeds that may bring shame

to the Presidency. Embossed at the centre of this symbol is another *Adinkra* symbol; *Nkotense* (secret oath) a sign of loyalty, selfless and unquestioning service to one's society. Considering the fact that the traditional *Asesequa* normally had a white pillow to provide comfort to the king, it is more likely that the leather fixed on this *Asesequa* was not only to provide comfort to the president but also to represent the Royal Skins of Northern Ghana.

Third Part: The Foot Stool and Base of the *Asesequa*

The base of the traditional stool signifies the stability of the earth. The innovation in the design of the Presidential Seat is the inclusion of the foot stool and a base for the *Asesequa*. It incorporates abstract traditional motifs and four skewed supporting columns which comes in between the *Asesequa* and the huge base that signifies the nation's political stability. Embossed at both ends of the front of this huge base is the *Adinkra* symbol known as either *Akosane* (literary meaning went but, returned) or *Dame-Dame* (draft; a board game). The symbol *Akosane* is the Ghanaian symbol of reincarnation whiles to those who referred to the same symbol as *Dame-Dame*, associate the symbol to intelligence and ingenuity as is needed in the game of draft.



Figure 6. *Osagyefo* Dr. Kwame Nkrumah at the First Session State Opening of Parliament (Photo courtesy of Longdon, 1960).

At the front side of the Foot Stool is a line of four *KrapaTe Se Okra Okyiri Fi* symbols (literally meaning a good soul like cats, abhors filth) with the two sides decorated with the zigzag pattern used on the arm rest and as a border on the edge of the back-rest. Just as explained earlier in this paper, *Owo-Koforo-Adobe* symbolises the exercise of prudence and diplomacy or wisdom in human relationship. On top of the foot stool is a red leather cushion embossed with *Nkontim* (literary meaning hair of the Queen's Servant) at the centre. This *Adinkra* symbol is associated with Loyalty, selfless and unquestioning service to one's society or master. According to Abbey (2008), the Seat was first used by the late *Osagyefo* Dr. Kwame Nkrumah on the First Session State Opening of Parliament on 4th July, 1960. Since then, there is no thought that this Seat has become a prominent political symbol of the Republic of Ghana. The Seat stands at 6 feet (183 cm) high by 3 feet 6 inches in length (106 cm) by 1 foot 7.5 inches (49 cm) inches in breadth. The foot stool is 10 inches high (25 cm) by 1 foot 7 inches in length (48 cm) by 1 foot 1.5 inches in breadth (34 cm).

The Chair of State (*Asipim*)

The Chair of State (*Asipim*) is moulded after the royal stools traditionally used by chiefs during durbars.

The innovation here was the use of two flat boards as the supporting legs instead of the usual four legged chair. The back rest is also flat with the national emblems of the Black Star and two eagles. Abbey (2008) records that, the Chair of State was first used by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah on Republic Day, 1st July, 1960 to swear the ... oath of office, holding in his right hand the State Sword made of solid gold (p. 50).



Figure 7. Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah taking the oath of office with the *DmanAkomfowa* (State Sword) on the Chair of State (Photo courtesy of Longdon, 1960).

The *Adinkra* symbols on this chair also communicate wisdom to both the governing and the governed. The *Adinkra* symbols used as adornments on the Chair of State are *Ananum*, *Adinkera-Hene*, *Krapa (MusuYide)*, *Kɔ deɛMɔwerɛwa*, *Mbensu*, *Owo-Koforo-Adobe*, *Adomand Fihankra*. For the purposes of this discussion, the researcher has divided the Chair of State into three (3) parts. The back rest forms the first part, the seat and armrest forming the second part with the Foot Stool and the Flat legs forming the third part.

The Back Rest (First Part)

Unlike the traditional royal stool that has two or three horizontal bars forming the back rest, this chair has one piece of a carved board forming the back rest. It consists of an *Adinkera-Hene* (literally meaning, Chief of all the *Adinkra* designs). It symbolises greatness and royalty of a state. It is the three-circled symbol that is traditionally associated with the sovereignty of a state. It had at the centre, the symbol of *Krapa (Krapate se okra okyiri fi)*, meaning the pure in heart like the cat, abhors filth. Among the Akans, it is believed that the pure in heart when enthroned brings good fortune to his people. And like the cat, will not entertain anything that brings shame and evil to the throne. These are all encased at the four sides with the symbol of *Owo-Koforo-Adobe* (Literally meaning, the snake climbs the pineapple). It symbolises the exercise of prudence and diplomacy or wisdom in human relationship. At the top of the back rest are two eagles guiding the state emblem of The Black Star that represents the State of Ghana. At the centre of the black star is *Ananum*, this five-sided geometric shape which traditionally symbolises age; a suggestion that the Republic of Ghana will flourish forever.

The Seat and Arm Rest (Second Part)

The cushion on the Chair of State just like the *Asɛsegua* is also covered with a leather cushion encased by the two arm rests attached to both sides of the seat in a manner that suggests masculine strength and firmness. This leather cushion is also treated in a beautiful mosaic of the national colours of red, yellow and green to form a bold *Adinkra* symbol called, *Krapate se okra okyiri fi* which signifies that, a pure in heart brings good

fortune to the governed because, the good in heart dislike evil deeds that may bring shame to the Presidency. This chair is also the most decorated with the *Adinkra* symbol that express the exercise of prudence. Abbey (2008) suggests that, this is an attempt to express the Ghanaian tradition or conception that the Head of State must be an embodiment of the qualities of wisdom.

Foot Stool and the Flat Legs (Third Part)

The seat sits on two flat legs carved in the shape of *Adom*, the *Adinkra* symbol which represents God's grace on the society. The symbol may sometimes be referred to as *Dwennimmen* (ram's horns) a symbol of humility together with strength. The ram will fight fiercely against an adversary, but it also submits humbly to slaughter, emphasizing that even the strong need to be humble (www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/dwen.htm). Superimposed on the four sides of the foot stool is the *Fihankra* symbol of a perfect house or home of joy. Adorned overall with real gold, the Chair of State takes the form of the *Asipim* (traditional royal chair) used by chiefs at durbars. The Chair of State stands at 7 feet 4 inches high (223.52 cm), 2 feet 3.5 inches in length (69.85 cm) and 2 feet in breadth (60.96 cm). The foot stool is 1 foot 1 inch (33 cm) high by 1 foot 10 inches (55 cm) in length by 1 foot 2 inches (approximately 35.5 cm) in breadth. It is the tallest of all the State Seats (Abbey, 2008, p. 48).

The Vice-President's Seat (*Asipim*)

Although currently being used as the Vice-President's Chair, Abbey (2008) records that, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah used this Chair at different sittings at parliament House during his tenure of office (p. 56). On the evening of Tuesday 24th July 2012 when the then president, John Atta-Mills died while in office, the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana directed the swearing-in into office of his vice-president. At the swearing-in event telecasted live on national television (GTV), John D. Mahama (then vice-president) appeared seated on the Vice President's seat at the beginning of the ceremony. It was after he had been sworn in as president and taken the oath of office that he was led to sit on the Presidential Seat. This is how these two politico-cultural artefacts of Kwame Nkrumah cultural policies have impacted on Ghana's political culture.



Figure 8. Vice-President John D. Mahama on the Vice-Presidential Seat on 24th July 2012 (Photo courtesy ISD, Accra).



Figure 9. President John D. Mahama on the Presidential Seat on 24th July 2012 (Photo courtesy ISD, Accra).

This chair has almost all the *Adinkra* symbols found on the other chairs and in terms of size, it is the smallest of the three State Seats. It is gold-plated with pure gold just like the others but without a foot rest. Its seat cushion and back-rest is without any superimposition of an *Adinkra* symbol but rendered in a plain navy blue colour. Resting on the back-rest are two eagles with their feet supporting the *Adinkra-Hene* (a traditional Ghanaian three-circled symbol of sovereignty) with *Krapa* (*MusuYide*) symbol of wisdom and knowledge, superimposition of *Krapa* symbol at the centre. The excessively use of the *Owo-Koforo-Adobe* (zigzag motif) which symbolises the exercise of wisdom in human relationship is an indication of what is expected of its occupants. The inner sides of the extended flat legs that supports the arm rests is carved two black stars encased in a circle. According to Abbey (2008), the black star and the two eagles that sit on top of the back-rest represent the Nation Ghana. It stands at 4 feet 6 inches (137 cm) high, 2 feet 4 inches (71 cm) in length and 2 feet (60 cm) in breadth (Abbey, 2008).

It must be noted also that, on 7th January 2017 during the swearing-in into office of Nana AkufoAddo as the fifth president of the Fourth Republic of Ghana, the president elect was offered an “ordinary” seat beside the Presidential Seat which was used only by the President elect at the beginning of the ceremony because, constitutionally he was not the president. It was only after he had been sworn in as president and taken the oath of office that he was led to sit on the Presidential Seat.



Figure 10. The President Elect sitting on an “ordinary” seat beside the Presidential Seat (Photo courtesy Graphic.com.gh).



Figure 11. President Nana Akufo-Addo sitting on the Presidential Seat after his swearing-in (Photo courtesy Graphic.com.gh).

In an interview with Prof. Kojo Fosu in 2015, he narrated to the researcher an encounter he had with the Presidential Seat in 1986 when he was documenting it. He said he had a full scholarship to travel across Africa with a professional photographer to document some historical art pieces located in Africa which included Ghana's Presidential Seat. He recounted that, when he was presented with the opportunity to take snapshots of the seat, he requested his photographer to take shots of him seated on the seat which he did. However when the pictures of their study tour were finally developed, they had all except the shots he took with him seated on the Presidential Seat. In the case of the chair of state, there is no evidence of its use after it has been used by President Kwame Nkrumah on his swearing-in on 1st July 1960. Currently, the Chair of State is permanently located at the National Museum.



Figure 12. The Chair of State sits on the right with the chair used by Duke Adolf Fredenich at the centre and Lord Listowel at the left (Photo courtesy: The Researcher).

After the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah's government, successive governments have not used the Chair of State for the swearing-in of the President either. From the inception of the Second Republic up to the end of the Third Republic, the now vice president's seat for example has played different roles at most swearing-in functions, serving as seats for A. A. Afrifa and Jerry John Rawlings at the Second and Third Republican swearing-ins respectively. The Seat of State (Presidential Seat) has however retained its role as the ceremonial seats for sitting presidents of Ghana. The other *Asipim* Chair (Vice-President's Chair) that was used by *Osagyefo* Dr. Kwame Nkrumah on his visit to the National Assembly is now reserved for the Vice-President of the Republic.

The researchers are therefore suggesting that, the reason why the Chair of State was only used by *Osagyefo* Dr. Kwame Nkrumah for his swearing-in and was never used again is that, like a new traditional ruler, Kwame Nkrumah created a Black Stool for the Presidency of the Republic of Ghana. This is because, in the Akan tradition, when a new chief is enstooled, he either selects a "Stool Name" from any old lineage or creates a new stool lineage in consultation with his clan elders. So for example, the Ashanti State has: *Otumfuo* Osei Tutu, *Otumfuo* Opoku-Ware, *Otumfuo* Agyemang Prempeh all as stool names a new Ashantihene can choose from. The new Ashantihene during the period preceding his enstoolment is blindfolded in the "stool room" (where all the Black Stools are kept) and made to select a stool name by touching one of the stools used by his predecessors. In the events that a new stool is created for a new Ashantihene, this stool is blackened and added to the old stools in the stool room upon the death of the Ashantihene who created that lineage and that become a new stool name. These Black stools are believed to house the spirits of the ancestors. The researcher is therefore suggesting that, by reserving the Chair of State to only his transition from Prime Minister to President, and his swearing-in as The President, Nkrumah created a black stool for the State.

By Akan tradition, when you become a *Nana*, you get a stool that you usually sit on and it bears your name. Upon the death of the *Nana*, this stool is blackened. The blackening of the stool is attributed to the blood that is occasionally poured on it as purification rites. But, these are things that developed when societies were instituted and were not moving along because, during the ethnic wars, they could not carry all their stools and belongings when fleeing. The African sees himself as a composition of body and spirit and all the arts he produced then were for spiritual art. That is the African's perspective of the world and he does not see only the material world but also the spiritual world.

After the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah's government, no government has used the Chair of State for the swearing-in of the President. As indicated earlier the Chair of State is permanently located at the National Museum in Accra but it is not blackened. This however does not weaken the argument of the researchers because; the blackening of the stool is attributed to the blood that is used during purification rites of the stool usually during festivals of the ethnic state. Even though Ghana as a nation state has national festivals in her Independence and Republic day celebrations, no purification rites are performed. That, therefore, explains why the stool (Chair of State) is not blackened till date.



Figure 13. Political Culture of the Presidential Seats in the 4th Republic (3rd President) (Photo courtesy ISD, Accra).



Figure 14. Political Culture of the Presidential Seats in the 4th Republic (4th President) (Photo courtesy ISD, Accra).



Figure 15. Political Culture of the Presidential Seats in the 4th Republic (5th President) (Photo courtesy Graphic.com.gh).

These are images indicating the established political culture of the Presidential Seat (Seat of State) and the Vice-President's Seat in state events of the 4th Republic of Ghana.

The State Sword (*ɔmanAkomfowa*)

The Sword of State is the symbol of Presidential authority. In an article entitled, State Sword published in the 2nd July, 1960 edition of the Daily Graphic, it was stated that, this is the Sword of State, the symbol of Presidential authority which was held by the President when he took the Oath of State at his inauguration. It is carried before him when he attends the National Assembly for the State opening of Parliament on Monday [4th July, 1960] (p. 3). It was first held by *Osagyefo* Dr. Kwame Nkrumah when he swore the oath of office on 1st July, 1960. It is of solid gold and its design is based on that of the double-bladed *Afena-nta* (the traditional symbol of inter-state peace) (Longdon, 1960; Abbey, 2008).



Figure 16. The bearer of the State Sword (*ɔmanAkomfowa*) leads *Osagyefo* Dr. Kwame Nkrumah to the chamber of parliament on Monday 1st July, 1960 (Photo courtesy of Longdon, 1960).

Indeed, one cannot fail to notice the solid piece of sculpture made of pure gold from the land of gold. It is adorned on both sides with ethnic symbols to showcase the beauty associated with political authority of the ethnic states. The annulated handle is decorated at both ends with two balls with a continuous flow of lines and circles, perhaps to highlight its intense and extraordinary splendour, and social status. The firm but almost free standing star portray its majesty, perhaps a suggestion that its somatic attractiveness is a representation of its wealth and authority. According to Abbey (2008), it was first carried by Mr. E. C. Quaye, the then Chairman of the Accra Municipal Council on 1st July, 1960, dressed in a special Roman uniform designed by Kofi Antubam. Again on 4th July, 1960 bearing the Sword, he led the presidential procession, in and out of the National Assembly for the first State Opening of Parliament. Below are images indicating the established political culture of the State Sword in state events of the 4th Republic of Ghana.

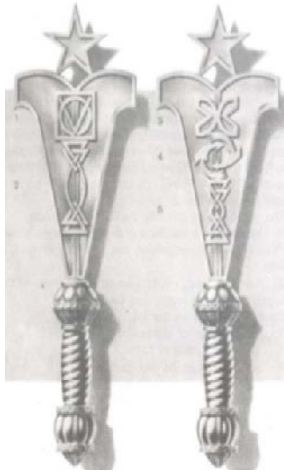


Figure 17. The State Sword (*OmanAkomfowa*)
(Photo as in Abbey, 2008).



Figure 18. Nkrumah taking the oath of office with The State Sword (Photo courtesy of Longdon, 1960).



Figure 19. President John A. Kufuor showing the State Sword after having been sworn-in into office on 7th January, 2001 (Photo courtesy ISD, Accra).



Figure 20. President John Evans Atta-Mills showing the State Sword after having been sworn-in into office on 7th January, 2009 (Photo courtesy ISD, Accra).



Figure 21. President Nana AkufoAddo showing the State Sword after having been sworn-in into office on 7th January, 2009 (Photo courtesy Graphic.com.gh)

The politico-cultural artefacts produced in relation to Kwame Nkrumah's cultural policies included the three Presidential Seats, the State Sword, The President's Personal Standard Pole, The State Mace, the Talking drums, framed kente cloth and wood carving located in the chamber of the National Assembly in Accra. The core of the artefacts the cultural policy sought to project was based on the African cultures of the ethnic groups that were already known to the people. The colonial period had cultivated in the people a sense of division and the different ethnic groups were sometimes antagonistic towards each other so Nkrumah wanted all the ethnic groups to come together by recognising that in spite of their differences, they were the same people and for that matter the fundamentals of all the different cultures were the same. By adopting and adapting the ethnic cultures of the various ethnic states and nationalising them, Nkrumah made the various ethnic groups feel a part of one unique cultural identity. His cultural policy sought to absorb rather than reject the ethnic cultures into a "Ghanaian culture". These nationalising ideas brought about clichés like "unity in diversity" and others like the "Akan Ghanaian", "Ewe Ghanaian" and "Ga Ghanaian". This was the time that the Ghanaian's commitment to the nation was at its highest. It is a fact that, one can only cherish what he or she appreciates and so by appreciating first of all that the African has his own unique cultural heritage, it sets the ground for success. The appreciation of the cultural heritage made it possible for the African past to inspire the present. It was the cultural awakening that made artists return to the traditional concepts that were labelled primitive by colonial education.

Ghanaians tend to throw away the ideas and concepts of the past instead of allowing them to inspire their thinking. Our ancestor picked solutions from their environments for solving their problems and it worked for them. Until our developments are built on our traditional concepts, with the environment dictating and showing the way and providing answers to the problems, then all the effort will be just copying from the solution people found to problems in their own environments which may not fully resolve our own problems. Or we may rather end up creating a new problem with the application of a foreign solution because the solution used was what somebody found for a problem in their environment. Our environment has its special challenges and those that lived here years ago used their native thinking to find solutions to the challenging situations. Therefore, we cannot throw all that knowledge away and solve problems by picking somebody's answers for our challenges. It is for this reason that Nkrumah made the cultural heritage of the ethnic states the basis for national development.

In the creation of the three Presidential stools and the State Sword, one can see the promotion of an indigenous skill of stool carving. Nkrumah's requests for these stools were in line with his African Genius concept which recognised and sought to promote the African state craft and creativity. He recognised that, when it came to ideas associated with the ascent to power and descent from power, the African had elements of cultural art to help people follow and understand what was taking place. So in line with those cultural ideas, he had the stool and the sword created for the state, that is, creating the nation state of Ghana based on the culture of the people. Traditionally, these artefacts spoke about power and so by using them in the swearing-in of the president, the people are able to appreciate the process of making a Head of State.

Cultural heritage of the ethnic states in Ghana are our national assets for development in that, it is the capital that we have for development and if we set that capital aside, we are likely to have no foundation to develop. This issue was very important because, during and after colonial rule, development was defined in European terms in a way that indicated that for Africans to develop, we had to abandon our culture and accept European culture and values. Nkrumah however felt that, we will be losing our personality, our culture, our identity and become black copies of white men if we did. He argued that, if we wanted to develop, we can borrow ideas that were good but we should not copy European culture and value systems as models for ourselves because that will compromise our dignity and always play the fiddle of the European. So Nkrumah's cultural policy saw the cultural life of the ethnic groups as assets based on which there could be sustainable and meaningful development. Generally, before independence, the educated looked down on the traditional culture as primitive but, it was the confidence to project the Ghanaian culture that had led to the African Personality. The cultural policy recognised that Africans had made a contribution to the world and had created a culture with its values and its institutions. Nkrumah said Africans must begin to respect that culture and be confident in projecting it.

The Impact the Two Politico-Cultural Artefacts Have Had on the Political Culture of Ghana

The introduction of the Presidential Seats gave a cultural colouring to the National Assembly. Nkrumah's "Africanisation" policy, like holding the State Sword for the Presidential oath and the use of the Presidential Seat gave a body to the abstract transitional ceremony and made Ghanaians understand and appreciate the process better, while initiating a shift from the established British order. Nkrumah's cultural policies were based on an existing Pan African culture and its pursuit also brought about the creation of a new political culture. Kwame Nkrumah did not just support and show interest in the art and culture for nothing. He realised that the art had the creativity to tap into the abundant rich cultural traditions of Ghana and Africa. Using Ghanaian cultural art expression, Nkrumah cultural policies was able to touch and link several aspects of the socio-cultural and political life of Ghanaians.

Conclusion

This study investigated the impact Kwame Nkrumah's cultural policies had on Ghana's political culture. The results show that Nkrumah understood the strength and significance of the cultural heritage and value systems as expressed by the Ghanaian people as the personification of the highest cultural values of the land. It was realized that in his appreciation and projection of the various cultural symbolisms, Nkrumah projected the Ghanaian political culture identity in line with his concept of African Personality. Based on the data of this study, it was realized that the cultural policies Nkrumah pursued made Ghana unique as a cultural nation and

Ghanaians took pride in their cultural heritage and projected it. There were lots of creativity and movements in the traditional culture of the nation. It was a general perception that the cultural policies were African centred and it placed Ghana on the map. The researchers conclude that the three under listed ideals and principles: that Africans needed to recognise their cultural heritage and to take pride in projecting it; that Africans needed to create their nation state based on their culture; and lastly, that Africans should recognise their cultural heritage as assets for national development were the key framework for Kwame Nkrumah's cultural policy that impacted positively on Ghana's political culture.

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