DRESS FASHION POLITICS OF GHANAIAN PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION CEREMONIES FROM 1960 TO 2017

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ABSTRACT

Presidential inaugurations are statutory in Ghana, but what a president wears during his inauguration are non-statutory, yet, it is a salient visual communicative apparatus that pulls the strings of patriotism, nationalism and fosters a sense of belongingness. In an attempt to throw light on the dress fashion politics of president-elects, the study examined their chronological inaugural dress fashion choice from 1960 to 2017 in order to establish the trend of dress cultural identity they have portrayed during their respective inauguration ceremonies. Using census sampling technique, the sample consisted of all democratically elected Presidents from the first to the fourth Republic. The instrumentation used were motion pictures, archival records and images of the president-elects during their respective inaugural ceremonies. Motion pictures and images gathered were subjected to semiological analysis. The study revealed that seven of the eight president-elects selected their inaugural ceremony dress fashion from the repertoire of Ghanaian fashion classics to signal their Ghanaian dress cultural identity. Their dress fashion, fabric weaves, pattern symbolisms and construal of colours used were sourced from the cultural knowledges of multi-ethnic nationalistic ideological experience and mindset with the aim of fostering unity, nationalism, and display of their Ghanaian identity. Though their ethnic cultural backgrounds and geographical locations partially influenced their dress fashion choice for their inaugural ceremonies, the nationalistic purview and psychologisation of the inauguration atmosphere took precedence, hence the blend in terms of fashion classics and fabric used. The study recommended that parliament must consider making presidential dress fashion choice statutory due to its cultural, social, political and economic factors for the development of textiles and fashion in Ghana.

Keywords

Dress Fashion; Fashion Politics; Presidential Inauguration; Ghana; Fashion Classics

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Studies of the ethnic art traditions, otherwise known as precolonial art of Ghana has revealed that before colonialists' invasion, there was a vibrant ethnic artistic productions and practices that characterised the populace. Textiles and fashion art production as part of the ethnic arts was done to serve the needs of the society. The Ghanaian society was organised in ethnic states and kingdoms who, amongst others, resorted to ethnic warfare to conquer others to widen their territories. The ethnic states and kingdoms also practised robust democracy in the governance of their respective ethnic states and kingdoms (Gyekye, 1996). Kings and chiefs consulted their elders who formed part of their traditional authorities and built consensus in decision-making process.

One of the ways the kings, chiefs and other members of the traditional leadership displayed their political power and supremacy was through their heavily diverse dress fashion practices at durbars, festive occasions, funerals and other *traditional* ceremonies. The fashion practice and diversity of the ethnic states and kingdoms have shaped the creative prowess and dynamism of the multi-ethnic fashion cultures of Ghana. Dress fashion have communicative, commemorative, symbolic and aesthetical values in the Ghanaian society. Cloth is valued and signifies identity, status, prestige and material wealth in the Ghanaian society (Antubam, 1963; Willard, 2004).

The advent of colonialism and its attendant Western formal school education brought its own dress cultural practices. Consequently, the Ghanaian elite who received Western education showed their elitism nomenclature through Eurocentric dress aesthetic order. 'During Nkrumah's rule, he tried to introduce the concept of *national dress*, a conscious attempt in eliminating adapted European dress culture which the nationals had been introduced to as a result of colonialism' (Essel, 2013, p.19). To signal a break away from the Eurocentric three-piece suit, which had been adapted by the Black elite to the detriment of their indigenous fashion practices, in the late 1950s, ambassadors from the newly independent nations – Ghana and Nigeria – wore variations of *national dress* to the United Nations meetings (Rogers, Adams & Brown, 1965; Akou, 2004).

Amidst the cross-cultural dress fashion practice from African and Western repertoire and the strong desire for building and solidifying a unique African personality and identity through dress culture practice, it became incumbent on the then leadership of the nation and their succeeding generation of national leaders to garner and use Ghanaian-centred dress culture to signal unity and a true Ghanaian identity. In the building and sustenance of national identity through dress practice from the first to the fourth republics of Ghana, there is the need to revisit the exemplary efforts of ceremonial and substantive heads of state towards that goal. This is an attempt to fill the wide scholarship gap of the dress cultural practices displayed by past democratically elected presidents from the first to the fourth republic of Ghana. The study, therefore, examines the dress fashion politics of Ghanaian presidential inauguration ceremonies from 1960 to 2017, focusing particularly on each president-elect's dress fashion won during the ceremony witnessed by thousands of spectators from different countries.

Scholars in communication have conducted studies on the presidential inaugural addresses delivered by Ghana's presidents. Boakye's (n.d) investigated the use of

assertives in five presidential inaugural addresses delivered by presidents of Ghana between 1993 and 2009 and concluded that the presidents mainly employ assertives to contextualise the country in terms of its past, present and future circumstances by recounting the past of the nation as murky, the present as encouraging and the future as promising. What has not been tackled is how past and present presidents selected and used clothing as a political language in constructing and signalling national identity and pride in multi-ethno-linguistic nation – Ghana during their respective presidential inaugurations. This aimed at deepening presidential fashion discourses, its aesthetic appreciation and the psychosocial effects of their fashion choices and its attendant psychologisation impact on the populace to work to make Ghana work.

1.1 Brief Chronology of Presidential Leadership in Ghana

After Ghana's attainment of independence in 1957 and Republican status in 1960, the nation has experienced shades of both democratic rule and military takeovers. The first coup d'état that ousted President Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, from power was on February 24, 1966, which was engineered by Colonel Emmanuel K. Kotoka led National Liberation Council (NLC) chaired by General Joseph A. Ankrah. The nation returned to constitutional rule in October 1, 1969 with Dr K. A Busia as Prime Minister (Amuah-Sekyi, 1970, October 1) while Edward Akufo-Addo became the ceremonial president in August 31 1970 (Duodu, 1970, August 31). Ignatius Kutu Acheampong led National Redemption Council (NRC) overthrew Busia's government on January 13, 1972. The NRC was reconstituted and named Supreme Military Council (SMC), which later metamorphosed into SMC II with General F. W. K. Akuffo as Chairman and Head of State.

Seven years into the military regime of the NRC, SMC I and SMC II, there was a dramatic overthrow of this government by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings led Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (A.F.R.C) on June 4, 1979. They prepared the grounds for the coming of the third republican constitution. On September 24, 1979, Dr Hilla Limann was inaugurated as the president of the third republic after winning the election. Rawlings returned to power on December 31, 1981 through a military takeover with his Provisional National Defence Council (P.N. D.C) of which he was the chair. The party stayed in power for almost eleven years before working out for the adoption of the Fourth Republican constitution through a referendum on April 28, 1992. Following that, presidential election was held, which Ft. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings led the National Democratic Congress (NDC) to win. This saw to the inauguration of Rawlings on January 7, 1993 as the first president of the fourth republic. The party stayed in power through elections until John Agyekum Kuffuor led the New Patriotic Party to win power in the year 2000. He was subsequently inaugurated on January 7, 2001. Kufuor had two terms (2001 to 2008) and was succeeded by Professor John Evans Fiifi Atta Mills who was inaugurated in January 7, 2009. After the painful demise of Mills on July 24, 2012, John Dramani Mahama continued his term of office as stipulated by the constitution. John Dramani Mahama contested and won the 2012 general election and was inaugurated as fourth president of the fourth republic on January 7, 2013. Nana Akufo-Addo took

over power from John Dramani Mahama of the NDC by winning the 2016 general elections and subsequently inaugurated on January 7, 2017, making him the fifth president of the fourth republic of Ghana.

From the brief history of presidential leadership in Ghana's political history, the democratically elected presidents were Dr Kwame Nkrumah, Edward Akufo-Addo (ceremonial President of the 2nd Republic), Dr Hilla Limann, Jerry John Rawlings, John Agyekum Kufour, John Evans Atta Mills, John Dramani Mahama and Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo.

1.2 Major Textiles Decorative Techniques in Precolonial Ghana

Textiles decorative techniques are generally classified into two – surface and structural. Surface decorative techniques, which include dyeing, painting, printing, embroidery and applique, are the embellishments or designs applied to textile fabrics after it has been constructed or formed while the structural decorative effects are achieved in the forming stages of the fabric structure (Essel, 2017). It is the anatomical patterns and arrangement that typify a textile fabric or article due to its method of construction or formation. Structural decoration includes bonding, felting, netting, weaving, knitting and crocheting (Essel, 2017). *Adinkra* printing and *kente* weaving are part of the dominant indigenous textile fabric decoration technologies (Rattary, 1927; Bowdich, 1819; Antubam, 1963; Agbenaza, 1965; Glover, 1969, Asihene, 1978; Hiamey, 1981; Adler & Barnard, 1992; Fosu, 1994; Willis, 1998; Ross, 1998; Ofori-Ansa, 1999; Picton, 2004; Kraamer, 2006) that are far researched than any Ghanaian textile art. Though both *Adinkra* (motifs and printing technology) and *kente* of Ghana have been extensively researched, the latter seemingly outweighs the former in terms of the extent. Bowdich (1819) hinted of the ethnic art tradition of the Asantes and other ethnic groups in Ghana and gave hindsight of the practice of naming fabrics after noble people, royals, kings, heroes/heroine and or events. *Adinkra* cloth, is said to have derived it name from a Gyaman King named Adinkra (Ofori-Ansa, 1999) who is automatically, a royal. It was produced using the calabash stamps dipped into natural dyes called *Adinkra aduro* and stamped onto woven fabrics.

Adinkra symbols are non-verbal communicative symbols of proverbial nature with idiomatic tone that may 'eschew straightforwardness but imminent in brevity of expression. Its usage prompts interpretational rhetoric dependent on the circumstantial contextualisation of a particular *Adinkra* symbology. *Adinkra* links a particular symbol to a unique meaning in the culture of the Akan' (Essel & Opoku-Mensah, 2014, p.31). *Kente,* a stripe-woven cloth stitched to form a broad fabric, on the other hand derived its name from the process involved in its production and or its pattern and association with basket weave pattern according to two different historical accounts of the Asantes and Ewes who have both claimed original creators of the unique fabric. The Akans call the fabric *kente* while the Ewes call it *kete*. The Ewes explained *kete* as: *ke* 'to open' and *te* 'to press' (Dennis, 2004; Kraamer, 2006). *Kete,* therefore, means open and press or beat at the fell of the cloth, which describes the shedding and beating up, which are primary loom motions. Fabrics produced with indigenous loom, in Ewe weaving culture are referred to as *agbamevo. Agba* means 'loom' while *Vo* refers to 'cloth'. *Agbamevo*

(loom made cloth) was therefore the original name for *kete* among the Ewes (Dennis, 2004). According to the Asante account of the etymology of the name, the basket weave pattern (under one over one or under two over two) that characterised the fabric gave the cloth its name. That is, *kɛntɛn* (basket) *ntoma* (cloth), hence the name *kente* (Abban, 2003). The dissenting historical account about the original inventors of the fabric among the two ethnicities does not wipe out its national origin of being Ghanaian product.

To Ghanaians, *Kente* is more than a cloth based on the space, time and context it is used. It is status-defining, prestigious and signifies wealth and power. For example, at a durbar of chiefs/kings, the quality and intricacy of a chief/king's *kente* designs show his status and power among the traditional leadership. It showed aristocratic power and wealth. There are different designs of great sophistication made in gaiety of colours and patterns to serve the status of traditional authorities and other club of leaders. The designs are given unique names that connote the social standing or class such as leadership role, wealth, power, values and events. Some of the *kente* fabric names associated with rulers are *Sika Futro* (gold dust)*, Sika Frɛ Mogya* (wealth promote family solidarity)*, Abusua yɛ dom* (a united family is a force to reckon with)*, Akyempem* (thousand shields)*, Ewdinasa* (ultimate of all designs)*, Obaakofo Mmu Man* (One person does not rule a nation) and *Fathia Fata Nkrumah* (Nkrumah deserves his beautiful wife, Fathia) (Fosu, 1994). Others include *Akyem* (colourful bird)*, Faprenu* (double weave) and *Kyiretwie* (ability to capture a live leopard) (Amenuke, Dogbe, Asare, Ayiku & Baffoe,1991).

1.3 Colour Culture of Ghana

Kente fabrics usually come in different patterns and bright colour schemes situated in Ghana's notion of colours (Antubam, 1963; Asihene, 1978; Amenuke, Dogbe, Asare, Ayiku & Baffoe, 1991). Colours used communicate the symbolic meanings ascribed to the social and religious life of the people. Colours such are red, yellow/gold, blue, green, black and white feature prominently in most *kente* designs. Antubam's (1963) research into Ghana's notion of colours revealed that red symbolises danger, bloodshed, war, death, bereavement and epitomises bravery, seriousness, energy and power over death. He found that blue is associated with love, calmness, tenderness and affection while yellow/gold represent royalty, high social status, wealth, gaiety, good living, rule of God or king. Green is linked with vitality, fertility, energy, growth, youthfulness and vegetation. He further pointed out that black is associated with death, sorrow, strength and history. White stands for joy, victory, freedom, purity, and virginity. The plurality of colours used in *kente* fabrics according to Amenuke et al (1991, p.183) add up 'to make a total life' since life in itself is full of ups and downs, twist and turns, joys and sorrows. Alternation of warp and weft weave patterns and floats characterised *kente* designs. The use of weave patterns, usually of geometric shapes, and their skilful combination and the choice of colours, to some extent, contribute to the names of *kente* fabrics in the society. They may be named after a plant, animal or high personalities the in society. For example, a particular design is named *akyem,* a colourful bird considered as a symbol of beauty. Though the weavers/designers append the names to the fabrics, it is sometimes suggested or named by the society based on who, what and the context of the fabric. For these reason fabrics have symbolic meanings.

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1.4 Major Fashion Classics of Ghana

In the world of fashion, *classics are* styles that have been accepted and practised for long period of time. Ghana's classics include smock, *kaba*, *batakari,* and wrap-around unstitched styles such as breast and waist covers, toga style and tunic combination, and queen mothers' style. Smocks come in variety of styles and sizes. Despite its great aesthetic functionality, the styles may give hints of the status of its wearer in the society based on the context, in terms of place, space and time used. *Kaba* style, a feminine fashion, is an ensemble consisting of a blouse, skirt and cover cloth. New designs are occasionally released onto the bespoke fashion environment. *Batakari* consists of a flowing outer gown, long sleeve inner robe and a trouser collectively referred to as three-piece wear. It may receive impressive embroidery decorations especially at the front parts of the garment (Essel & Amissah, 2015). There are a host of wrap-around unstitched styles one of which is the toga style. Bowdich (1819, p.35) gave a description of how this style was done. He wrote that: 'Ashantee cloths, of extravagant price from the costly foreign silks which had been unravelled to weave them in all the varieties of colour, as well as pattern; they were of an incredible size and weight, and thrown over the shoulder exactly like the Roman toga.' He compared the toga style of the Asantes to that of the Romans and realised that they were done in the same manner. This by no means is an autosuggestion that the Asantes were influenced by the Romans in the toga fashion culture. For this has been a longstanding dress practice of the Akans and other ethnic groups in precolonial Ghana.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Drawing a cue from the political history of Ghana, the study sample consisted of all democratically elected Presidents (Heads of State) from the first to the fourth Republic. Due to the relatively small number of the accessible population, the entire population formed the sample size. They comprised of eight gallant men with varying tenure of office as presidents. Starting from the order of succession from the first to the third republic of Ghana, the democratically elected presidents were Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Edward Akufo-Addo (ceremonial president with no executive powers) and Dr. Hilla Limann. The fourth Republic has sustained five presidents namely Jerry John Rawlings, John Agyekum Kufour, Prof. John Evans Fiifi Atta Mills, John Dramani Mahama and Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. Though Edward Akufo-Addo was a ceremonial president who did not go through national elections, he was selected by parliament, hence, his inclusion in the sample. The sampling technique used was census sampling. The instrumentation used are motion pictures, archival records and images of president-elects during their respective inaugural ceremonies. Motion pictures and images gathered were subjected to semiological analysis. Semiotics is concerned with selecting materials (images, motion pictures in this context) to explore with its denotative inventory and connotative signification (Penn, 2011) for the grasp of the underlining messages in visual artistic elements. Though some of the still images (Figures 1, 2, 8, 10) featured are in grayscale, the analysis took cognisance of the motion

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pictures (footages) of the respective inaugural ceremonies of the president-elects, which were in full colour.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presidential inaugural ceremony, also referred to as swearing in ceremony, marks a special day that a president-elect is mandated to 'take and subscribe before Parliament the oath of allegiance and the presidential oath' (Constitution of Ghana, 1992) before assuming office as President of the Republic. It is, therefore, a statutory requirement for every president-elect. It is also a president's (after s/he is sworn in) first formal encounter with the populace and an avenue to deliver presidential inaugural address. Generally, the presidential inaugural addresses capitalise on both verbal and non-verbal language systems to paint the picture of the past, the present and what s/he hopes to achieve thereby inspiring confidence and instilling hope of the populace. This, amongst other things, helps in rallying participatory support and invokes the spirit of nationalism and patriotism for the development of the country. Though what a president wears, *where*, *when* and *why* are non-statutory, they are salient important visual communicative apparatus that pulls the strings of national unity, patriotism and fosters a sense of belongingness. Based on this bedrock, the analysis captured the dress fashion choice and fabric weave pattern symbolisms; and the construal of colours and *Adinkra* motifs used and their associative symbolisms.

Of the eight democratically elected presidents, seven of them selected their inaugural ceremony dress fashion from the repertoire of Ghanaian classics while only one of them chose a purely Eurocentric fashion – suit. Out of the seven who favoured Ghanaian fashion classics, five of them namely Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, Ft. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, John Agyekum Kuffuor, Prof. John Evans Atta Mills and Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo wore toga with varied combinations. Hilla Limann and John Mahama wore the *batakari.*

Nkrumah was a pioneer and trailblazer of using the toga for presidential inauguration. On that historic day, July 1, 1960, he wore a white round-neck short sleeves shirt and a three-quarter trouser-like tunic that covered his waist and extended beyond the knees (Figure 1). Partially covering this outfit was the toga style that draped gracefully on his upper and lower torsi, which was complemented with ballet flat shoe. He looked stylishly distinctive. Bowdich (1819) confirmed that this fashion was a common precolonial practice by the people of Ghana. Nkrumah's *kente* fabric worn in toga style was mimetic of the *Toku kra ntoma,* which depicted *babaduahene* pattern. The *babaduahene* is characterised by beam of horizontal strokes of varied thickness that featured the colours – red, yellow, green and black. The strokes of horizontal are arranged alternatively in repetitive manner that creates rhythm as in Figure 1. The *babaduahene* pattern symbolises growth, healing and spiritual protection (Asmah, 2009). The *Toku kra ntoma* fabric with all its patterns symbolises courageous leadership, heroic deeds, self-sacrifice, spiritual vitality and rebirth (Lloyd, 2017). Besides, the national colours used in the design of the fabric share similar symbolism. Kwame Nkrumah's choice of such a prestigious fabric was strategic and demonstrated his speculative visuality of transformational leadership qualities such as patriotism and self-sacrifice that could help in shaping national identity through Ghanaian indigenous

cultural knowledges. This portrayed him as a cosmopolitan political leader of distinction who dwelled on the world of Ghanaian dress cultural knowledges to make particularistic fashion statement, which was a visible manifestation of contemporary ethnic nationalism. This inspired intellectually productive conversation among the populace. It was his demonstrative testimony of patronising locally produced fashion and textiles products and a conscious effort to whet down the appetite of the high taste for foreign fashion and textiles, which was an exploitative colonial trade apparatus that did not encourage high promotion of local textiles and fashion. At the time, there was high patronage of European fashion, especially, amongst the then Ghanaian elite who resorted to the European suit as a mark of erudition.

Buah (1998) observed that colonialism impacted negatively on the dress culture of the *educated* Ghanaian who as a result became imitator of the colonialists' dressing, speech and mannerism and discarded his/her own cultural roots. Nkrumah had made it clear to the teaming population during Ghana's independence declaration in March 1957 that: 'From now on, there is a new African in the world. That new African is ready to fight his own battle and show that after all, the Black man is capable of managing his own affairs.' Nkrumah, thereby, symbolically used his dress choice to make a dandified appearance as portrayed by the kings of precolonial Ghana to make a profound fashion statement.

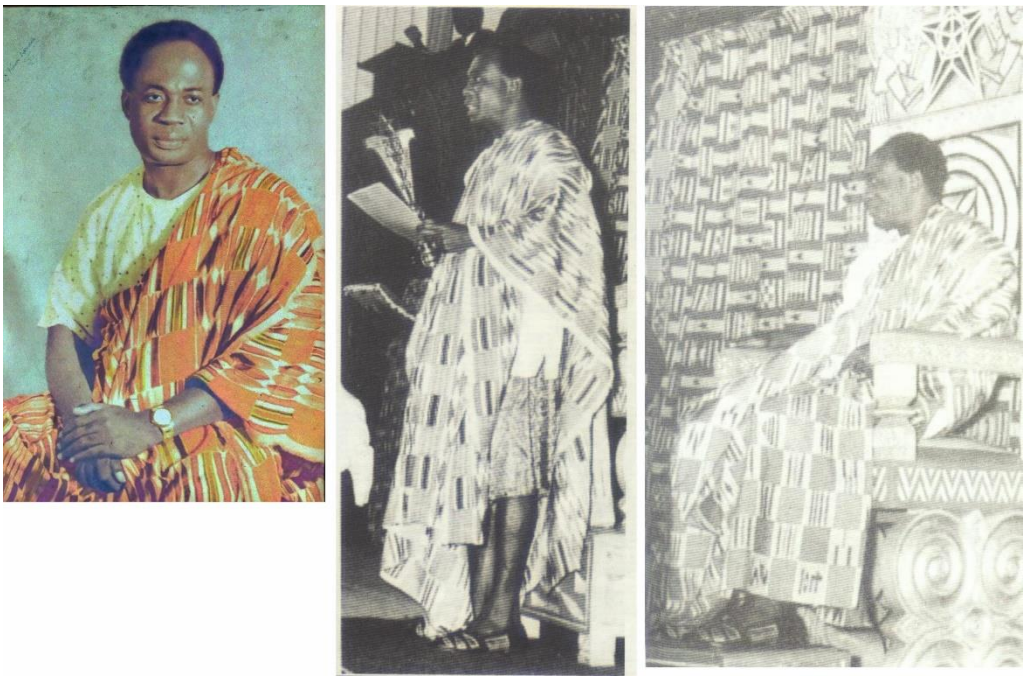


Figure 1. President-elect Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah dressed in toga fashion, one of Ghana's classics, during his inaugural ceremony as the first president of the Republic in July 1960. First from left, is a full colour of his outfit. In the middle, he was captured in a standing posture and holding the sword of office. On the right, he is seated on the Presidential chair. (Image Courtesy: George Padmore Library (full colour image); Information Service Department, Ghana).

His education overseas and frequent global trotting did not obscure his burning desire to tap from his cultural nuances in laying the foundation for the building of the then

new nation state – Ghana. He had expressed his dissatisfaction about the 'colonial students who gained access to metropolitan universities … on account of their social standing' and saw their knowledge acquired as personal distinction and privilege rather than an instrument to illuminate society. His expectation was that those educated should have joined hands with the many who had a deep sense of national cultural consciousness to use the knowledge acquired as an 'instrument of national emancipation and integrity' (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 4). For African art and culture had been labelled as *primitive* by the colonialists who studied it to 'reinforce the picture as something grotesque, as curious, mysterious human backwater' which was their way of retarding social progress and prolong their colonial domination agenda (Nkrumah, 1963, p.2). To help in rewriting and reinterpreting the Ghanaian indigenous art and culture, Nkrumah looked inward to tap the fashion practices of the people as one of the cultural bond of unification and as a symbol of anti-colonialism. Using the smock fashion as a collective style, Nkrumah together with his fellow compatriots sought to construct a true African Ghanaian dress identity (Essel & Amissah, 2015) during the independence declaration on the March 1957 at Old Polo Grounds.

Jerry John Rawlings, the first president of the fourth republic who served for two terms in office as president of Ghana from 1993 to 2001 wore the toga and round-neck shirt combinations on both of his inaugural ceremonies. On his first inauguration of these terms, he wore a dark-green round-neck short sleeve shirt, and clad with *Obaakofo mmu man kente* fabric in toga style (Figure 2). *Obaakofo mmu man* literally means one person does not rule a nation. This *kente* fabric design, which encourages participatory democracy, is characterised by minute square-like shapes arranged in implied diagonal linearity of multiple intersections that create interesting repetitive arrangement of rhombic shapes. Confined in each rhombic shape are corresponding zigzagged lines (*nkyimkyim)* in green, yellow and red colourations flanked with white thin vertical lines that help to define them. In addition to the identified colours is black. The colour choice has same symbolic association with the nation's flag. *Obaakofo mmu man kente* design was given another name, *Fathia fata Nkrumah* (Fathia befits his husband, Nkrumah), to celebrate the matrimony of the then president Nkrumah (Asmah, 2006; Llyod, 2017). However, Fosu (1994) demonstrated with pictorial example that the original *Obaakofo mmu man kente* design had a single zigzagged linearity in each rhombic shape while the *Fathia fata Nkrumah* depicted multiples zigzagged designs found in each rhombic shape. But all the authors (Fosu, 1994; Asmah, 2006; Llyod, 2017) testified that *Obaakofo mmu man kente* design symbolically warns against dictatorial rule. Rawlings' choice of this *kente* design for his first inauguration was, therefore, an expressive visual propaganda and a salient symbolic renouncement of coup d'états through which he entered national political leadership.



Figure 2. President-elect Ft. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings dressed in toga and round-neck shirt combinations during his two-term inaugural ceremonies as President of the Republic of Ghana on January 7, 1993 (left image) and on January 7, 1997 (middle and right images) respectively. (Image Courtesy: Information Service Department, Ghana; Daily Graphic, 1997).

On his second inauguration in 1997, he wore white round-neck short sleeve shirt and *Sika Futro kente* design (Figure 2, middle and left image) in toga style. The *Sika Futro* (gold dust) *kente* design depicts a full drop arrangement of square-like shapes filled with zigzagged linearity. The design is dominated with yellows complemented with orange and black colours, creatively woven into rhythmic and harmonising patterns. The *Sika Futro kente* was reserved for 'rulers to designate their exalted positions' (Fosu, 1994, p. 38). It symbolises the wealth, elegance, supremacy and leadership. Rawlings, a proselyte of Nkrumah in terms of political ideology, had publicly said that Ghanaians must continue the battle Nkrumah begun for the restoration of historical destiny of Africa (Alomele & Okutu, 1992). His similar choice of the toga fashion as in the case of Nkrumah suggest his pursuance of Nkrumah's nationalistic dress culture identity making.

John Agyekum Kuffuor, successor of Rawlings and the second president of the fourth republic who also served from 2001 to 2009 wore the toga without the round-neck short sleeve shirt on both of his inauguration ceremonies (Figure 3). In Ghana, toga may be worn with or without the short sleeves depending on the ethnic or personal preferences of the wearer. Customarily, Asantes do not fancy wearing of the toga over the round-neck short sleeve shirt. This perhaps, informed president Kuffuor's toga style. Nonetheless, the nationalistic flavour of the toga supersedes the ethnic inclinations. On his first inauguration in 2001, he wore *kente* fabric composed of interesting array of motifs namely *Nkyemfre, Kaw mframa, Fa hia kɔtwere Agyeman* and *babaduahene* (Figure 3, first image from left; Figure 4). *Nkyemfre* (meaning 'a pot shed'), rendered in alternating right-angled triangular shapes with different colours, symbolises history, recyclability and healing power, knowledge and service. *Kaw mframa* (developed from

the physical characteristics of centipede) symbolises uniqueness. *Fa hia kɔtwere Agyeman* (literally translated as 'lean your poverty on Agyeman'), rendered in diagonal beam of lines in national colours – red, yellow, green and black stands for hope, faith, sharing and benevolence whilst the *Babaduahene* symbolises growth, healing and spiritual protection. These amalgam of motifs with rich socio-cultural, political and economic connotations are rallying icons for good political leadership with root in Ghanaian culture for meaningful development and growth.

During his second inauguration in 2005, his *kente* fabric design (Figure 3, middle and right images) showed *Nkyemfre* and *Babaduahene* dominantly featured in full drop arrangement to create a harmonising chequered effect. The interplay of these central motifs could be interpreted as dwelling on cultural knowledges of the nation to cause accelerated economic growth and development. This was a reminder to the wearer (the president-elect) that real change and development occur when the indigenous cultural knowledge systems are harnessed rather than alien and foreign cultural imposition, which the people cannot identify with.



Figure 3. President-elect John Agyekum Kufuor dressed in toga style on both occasions of inaugural ceremonies as President of the Republic of Ghana on January 7, 2001 (left image) and on January 7, 2005 (middle and left images) respectively. (Image Courtesy: Agoo Magazine, 2002 (first image from left); http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/ module-twenty-four-activity-two/).

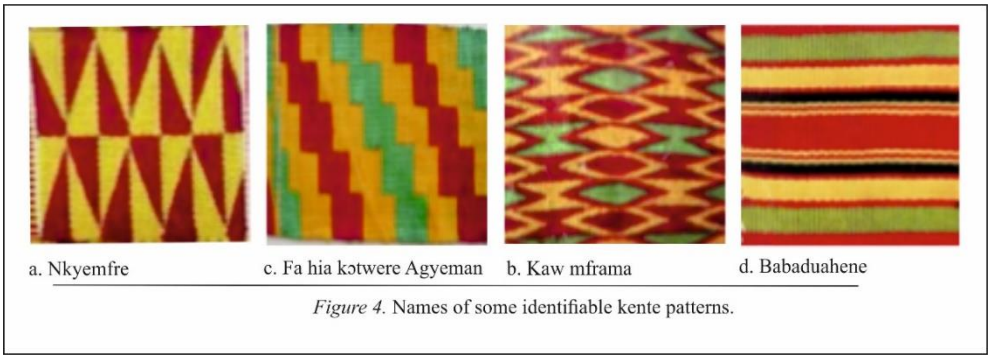


Figure 4. Names of some identifiable kente patterns.

John Evans Atta Mills took over office as the third president of the fourth republic from president Kuffuor. Mills' dress fashion on his day of inauguration, January 7, 2009, was mimetic of President Rawlings' first inauguration in 1993. He wore *Obaakofo mmu man kente* fabric in toga style over white round-neck short sleeve shirt and *ahenema,* a native sandals (Figure 5). The major difference was the colour of Rawlings' shirt – dark green velvet. The choice of the same *kente* fabric design could be attributed to the fact that they hailed from the same political party and perhaps his personal preference and obsession with the symbolic connotation of the fabric design, *Obaakofo mmu man* – which is antithetical to dictatorial rule. Mills' dress fashion choice shared corresponding interpretation of involving many great minds and hands in his governance of the nation.



Figure 5. President-elect Prof. John Evan Fiifi Atta-Mills dressed in *toga* style and white round-neck shirt combinations during his inaugural ceremony as President of the Republic of Ghana on January 7, 2009. (Image Courtesy: Daily Graphic, 2009; Ghanaweb, 2009).

One of the president-elects who drew much renewed attention of the world to Ghana's unique fabric decorative culture in the Twenty-first century through his dress fashion choice during his inauguration was Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the fifth president of the fourth republic of Ghana. His dress fashion (Figure 6) was unprecedented in the history of presidential inauguration dress fashion choice in Ghana. The technical finesse and corresponding stylisations of the fabric structure seemingly gave it no distinctive difference in appearance in comparison to the internationally acclaimed *kente* fabrics of Ghana. At a casual look, one may be tempted to call it *kente*, yet, it is not. The fabric was composed of *kente* and embroidery (locally called *nwomu*) stripes conflate to form large and heavily patterned fabric with enhanced decorative richness. The conflation of the stripes have been interspersed in horizontal orientation to feature one embroidery stripe followed by one *kente* stripe in that order. Potent *kente* motifs including *akokobaatan, babaduahene, nkyimkyim, kuronti ne akwamu* and *nkyemfre* formed part

of the patterns in the *kente* stripes. *Akokobaatan* motif symbolises tender loving care, motherliness and protection, *babaduahene* stands for growth, healing and spiritual protection, *nkyimkyim* represent dynamism, versatility and enterprisingness. *Kuronti ne akwamu* means democratic principles, balance of power and duality of essence of life; and *nkyemfre* is a symbol of history, recyclability and healing power, knowledge and service. These cohorts of symbolic *kente* motifs are cultural configurations of good leadership and progressive development ideological signification. Featured in the embroidery stripes are *Adinkra* motif designs including *aban, nkrumakese, bese saka, akoma, fofo,* and *ahofe ntua ka* (Figure 7). Some of these motifs adore the superior political position of the wearer whereas others carry advisory message about the position of the wearer. The *aban* motif symbolises social security, centralised political authority, seat of power, wealth, prosperity and superior quality (Ofori-Ansa, 1999). *Akoma* (heart), the seat of all human emotions, represents patience and faithfulness that the leader must demonstrates in all his day-to-day governance of the nation whilst *nkrumakɛse* (big okra) signifies greatness, superior quality and wisdom. Affluence, power, abundance and unity is represented symbolically with *bese saka* (bunch of kola nuts) motif, impressing on the wearer to ensure unity of the populace for development. *Fofo* symbol warns against hatred and covetousness since these negative tendencies destroys a nation. *Ahofe ntua ka* (beauty pays no debt) motif also admonishes the leader to demonstrate good leadership character.

The intensity of the machine embroidery effect armours the designs with three-dimensional quality and appliqued appearance. However, Nana Kwaku Dua II, who designed and produced the fabric made use of no applique technique. Applique has to do with cutting and fixing of motifs on a larger fabric using *in-lay* or *on-lay* technique. The fixing may be done with adhesive or embroidery stitches. Embroidery technique has been explored by the Ghanaian ancestry in the design of special cloth named *akunintam* (cloth for bravery) which featured figurative motifs derived from plants, animals, humans and geometrical shapes. When President Barrack Obama visited Ghana in 2008, the machine embroidery technique was used to design creative fabric named after him, hence, the name *Obama Cloth*. Two major fabric decorative techniques were used in the design of Nana Addo's fabric. These techniques are weaving (*kente* weaving) and embroidery. Weaving is a structural decorative technique whilst embroidery is a surface decorative technique.



Figure 6. President-elect Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo dressed in *toga* style during his inaugural ceremony as fifth President of the fourth Republic of Ghana on January 7, 2017. (Image Courtesy: Photo Club Imaging, 2017 (left image), www.nanaaddo.org, 2017 (right).

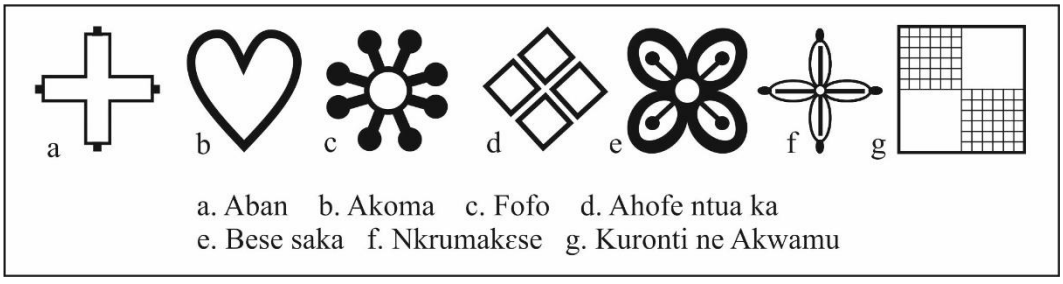


Figure 7. *Adinkra* motifs found in President-elect Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo fabric composed of *Kente* and embroidery stripes.

Two of the president-elects who wore *batakari* on their day of inauguration were Hilla Limann (Figure 8), the president of the third republic and John Dramani Mahama (Figure 9), the fourth president of the fourth republic respectively. This might be largely influenced by the fact that both hailed from the northern sector of the country. Limann, sworn-in on September 24, 1979, was the first to use such a dress fashion for presidential inauguration, with multi-ethno-nationalistic sense and ambience. His *batakari* was fashioned with rich *kente* fabric – a creative way of representing and displaying multi-ethnic nationalistic unity and peaceful co-existence between the two major division of the country, southern and northern parts of Ghana. Apart from his peculiar exploration with a fashion classic predominant in the northern sector that was

constructed with *kente* from southern sector, he complemented it with symbolical wearing of the cap accessory in oblique posture (towards the left), which is a dress fashion gesticulation and code that symbolises peace and unity (Essel & Amissah, 2015). Limann's *kente* fabric was patterned with *nkyimkyim,* a symbol of dynamism, versatility and enterprisingness, rendered in blue, yellow and red colourations. This was his way of deepening the dress cultural aesthetic order Nkrumah began.

President-elect John Mahama chartered similar dress fashion course of wearing the *batakari* during his inauguration on January 7, 2013. He wore white *batakari* ensemble without the cap (Figure 9). The flowing gown of his ensemble received embroidery decoration. He was the first president to use all-white fabric colour scheme for his inauguration. It was a suggestibility of his victory over his political opponent. After he was declared as the winner of the 2012 election, the opposition contested, though this did not stop the inauguration ceremony on January 7, 2013. The issue ended in the Supreme Court but still went to his favour. However, in Ghana's notion of colours, white stands for holiness, sanctity, victory and the presence of God in the society. It was therefore not totally out of place in Ghanaian cultural context.



Figure 8. President-elect Dr. Hilla Limann dressed in *Batakari* during his inaugural ceremony as President of the Republic of Ghana on September 24, 1979. (Image Courtesy: Information Service Department, Ghana).



Figure 9. President-elect John Dramani Mahama dressed in *Batakari* during his inaugural ceremony as President of the Republic of Ghana on January 7, 2013. (Image Courtesy: Ghana Celebraties.Com, 2013).

Ceremonial president-elect, Edward Akufo Addo wore Eurocentric suit (Figure 10) during his inauguration on August 31, 1970, as the first president of the second republic after the overthrow of Nkrumah. In the preachment of *national dress* agenda of the early independent African nations including Ghana, their decline in use of the three-piece suit was a symbolic gesture of signalling their independence status, and a marker of new national identity construction and instillation of national pride (Akou, 2004). This is attributable to the fact that clothing was one of the means through which the British used to colonise Ghana and as a measure of civilisation (Allman, 2004). The mental decolonisation of the people of Ghana through dress fashion choice and usage by the top leadership to make the people regain their national pride in their fashion practice was what Nkrumah initiated. Edward Akufo-Addo announced his nonconformist bona fides and exhibited purely Eurocentric agenda through his choice of the three-piece suit. He was the third Chief Justice and later became ceremonial President, and perhaps was informed by the colonialist occupational dress associated with law practice – the suit. Edward Akufo-Adoo was dismissed by President Nkrumah as a judge following his involvement in the not guilty ruling of the people accused as perpetrators of Kulungugu bomb attack on President Kwame Nkrumah's life (Edward Ulzen Memorial Foundation, 2017). Besides, he suffered house arrest after his dismissal. Both Edward Akufo-Addo and Nkrumah were part of the 'Big Six' who were arrested by the then colonial government. According to Duodu (1970, Augst 31), Edward Akufo-Addo perceived Kwame Nkrumah as a man obsessed with African 'superstitious' beliefs and indigenous systems (p.9). Going by Duodu's account, it was Nkrumah's love for indigenous knowledge and statecraft that informed his choice of the toga. It also presupposed that Edward Akufo-Addo's choice of the Eurocentric suit demonstrated his repulsion to indigenous fashion as formal wear or classic for such a prestigious occasion – inauguration ceremony. Edward Akufo-Addo had maintained prior to his swearing in

an interview that 'As the Father of the Nation, what I'd hope to do would be to bring together all the warring parties and make myself a sort of conciliation platform' (Duodu, 1970, p.8). The issue of using Ghanaian dress fashion as demonstrative tool for unity and nationalism at the crucial day of his inauguration.



Figure 10. President-elect Edward Akufo-Addo dressed in suit and tie during his inaugural ceremony as President of the Republic of Ghana in August 31, 1970. (Image Courtesy: Information Service Department, Ghana).

4.0 CONCLUSION

Presidential inauguration itself were made statutory right from the first to the fourth republic of Ghana and continues to be the status quo. It is a special day a president-elect takes the oath of allegiance and the presidential oath before parliament and for that matter, the people of Ghana. What a president-elect wears during the inauguration has remained non-statutory. That notwithstanding the study examined the dress fashion choice of the democratically elected presidents to from 1960 to 2017 in order to establish the trend of dress cultural identity they have portrayed during their respective inauguration ceremonies.

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The study revealed that, of the eight presidents sampled, only one wore the European fashion, the suit for his inauguration. The seven remaining selected their inaugural ceremony dress fashion from the repertoire of Ghanaian classics to signal their Ghanaian dress cultural identity. Nkrumah was the pacesetter in the use of Ghanaian classics for presidential inauguration in Ghana. His exemplary use of the Ghanaian fashion classic has been maintained and practised for more than half a century, though it is non-statutory. Judging from this historical precedence and what informs the philosophical underpinning of sociological and historical laws, parliament must consider making presidential dress fashion choice statutory due to its cultural, social, political, and economic factors for the development of textiles and fashion in Ghana. It would be highly prudent to include the various dress fashions used by these presidents in their inaugurations in the collections of the Heads of State Museum established for the memory and historicisation of past presidents of Ghana.

The most featured Ghanaian fashion classics was the toga style (Five president-elect namely Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, Ft. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, John Agyekum Kuffuor, Prof. John Evans Atta Mills and Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo used it) while the *batakari* was also featured by two president-elect (Dr Hilla Limann and John Dramani Mahama). President-elects who hailed from the southern sector of the country wore the toga, with those from the northern sector used the *batakari.* Though their ethnic cultural backgrounds and geographical locations partially influenced their dress fashion choice for their inaugural ceremonies, its nationalistic purview and psychologisation of the inauguration atmosphere took precedence hence the blend in terms of fashion classics and fabric used. Based on this premise, it is concluded that any president-elect who might introduce a roller coaster of a dress fashion that has no contemporary ethnic nationalism characteristic of Ghana must be responsible for precipitating his own public support for his/her government. S/he may be perceived as a leader who does not demonstrate and promote Ghanaian textiles and fashion.

Their dress fashion choice, fabric weave pattern symbolisms, the construal of colours of their various dress fashion and *Adinkra* motifs used were sourced from the cultural knowledges with multi-ethnic nationalistic character and mindset with the aim of fostering unity, nationalism, a sense of belonging and display of their Ghanaian identity. This has rich socio-cultural, political and economic implications for the country. These president-elects have demonstrated their love and obsession for Ghanaian cultural knowledge during their inauguration ceremonies, which have socio-cultural, political and economic potentials for national growth and development. It would be novel and interesting to investigate whether their programmes and policies they rolled out during their tenures of office translated into the visual and cultural symbolisms portrayed in their dress fashion for their inauguration. In other words, there is a gap in how their actions and inaction helped to promote and market the textiles and fashion art of Ghana through exemplary leadership and must be tackled.

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