

## **Introduction: Cultural Change in Ghana**

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In this Special Issue of the African Journal of Social Sciences Education (AJSSE), our focus is to interpolate in critical pan-Africanizing and decolonializing analyses of current cultural undulations with their peaks and valleys in Ghana. These are framed around the praxes of what was, what has been modified, and the holistic results of the interlocking of change and continuity within specific joints of Ghanaian culture and heritage. In sum, we argue that Ghanaian culture has demonstrated both resilience and adaptability in the face of gripping cultic of 'Modernisation,' Globalisation, Afropolitanism, Cosmopolitanism, Transnationalism, and Cyber-Worldism. We conclude, among others, that cultural change and continuity in Ghana have succeeded in accelerating human creativity hence imaginatively blended cultural ethos and idioms. Thus, we assert that from critical standpoints, considerable aspects of Ghanaian culture and heritage, like those of other parts of the globe, are adrift in pursuit of ontological anchoring and aesthetical cosmopolitanizing. In sum, we harness material and temporal fellowship of variables to alchemize cultural change and continuity in Ghana that are syntheses rather than antitheses.

At the core of culture is a notion that defines human beings as agentic rational. Human beings possess creative agency allowing them to interact, dialogue, and dissent with nature to advance the frontiers of culture. Even so, the concept of culture, much as it is a watershed of human rendering, remains a highly contested terrain. Innovative contraptions and cognitive normativizing are the products of human cultures, but both do not advance tidy schemes, but gain from layered symbiosis asymmetrical consequences. Neither are cultural arrangements static models. Even if we assumed that culture is transmitted from generation to generation, its conduit is not interminable. At best, culture has varying pedagogic sites that serve as its surrogates. In essence, there are ontological norms, for instance, rites of passage, that create and shape culture. There are also contemporaneous forces, such as technology, education, and rapid urbanization that inform how culture is transmitted and sculpted in the conduits of change and continuity. In this regard, the past and modernity have kinship since culture is a process, not an event, that shapes its progeny of modernity that has traces of past at its core.

We seek empiricist African perspectives on cultural change, however tinged with coloration of extant theories that may be foreign provenanced with universalistic scramble. Thus, in this brief Introduction to this Special Issue we don't intend to give traction to belabored theories that have legitimated treatises

undergirding cultural continuity and change weaned from Western imperializing of knowledge. In essence, the archaeologizing of theoretical perspectives on culture take us to the totalizing territoriality of elites who wombed exclusive preserves of culture. Such elitist cultural parturitions do not come down to lethargic nativizing. Rather such verticality of cultures is rendered through horizontal cosmopolitanizing by the underprivileged who use weapons of the weak and popular culture to rebrand dominant elitist culture, thereby nursing pliable cultural change and continuity.

Not to essentialize cultural change in Ghana, based on the subject of this Special Issue, we have, as noted above, proceeded with culture as a product of human beings. It is dynamic and osmotic. Throughout the ages, Africans have used language, ritual performance, and aesthetic symbolism to archive and transmit culture from one generation to another. Given that orality precedes literacy in societies, the myriad forms of cognitive arts contribute to the composition of culture. The dynamism embedded in African culture is not the same across time and space. Thus, with its expanse conglomerate, African cultures are neither fossilised nor ossified entities.

Again, for this Special Issue, we use cultural change in Ghana to stake claims to tangible and intangible normative endowments of the past. Undoubtedly then, culture becomes a shifting phenomenon, with coterminous locations within identifiable sites defined by memory and history that aggregate as complementary vehicles of survivability, livability, and communality. Additionally, culture specializes in gendering, social and identity formations, and horizontal and vertical mobility activated in material, temporal, ontological, and epistemological frames. Thus, this Special Issue, therefore, involves the collection of articles that take on the issues of cultural dynamism of change and continuity. The authors, reflecting on a wide range of topics, emphasize the centrality of cultural demarcations in making sense of culture as dynamic and culture as foundational in serving as a guardrail holding society from the precipice of collapse.

To begin with, the co-authored article by Evelyn Aku Adjandeh and Kofi Semanu Atsu Adzei provides an insightful account of the functionality of dirges among the Akpini people of the Volta Region, Ghana. The authors indicate that the materiality of performance of Akpini dirges has undergone transformations in line with socio-environmental encounters, yet the philosophical bent and eschatological value of Akpini dirges remain vivaciously stable. Thus, the medium of the Akpini dirges have changed, but the mnemonic conceptualization of death remains immutable. From this article, therefore, the authors provide us with a cosmic window to assess the complexities of cultural change as a dynamic continuum with stabilizing effects.

For their part, co-authors, P. Kwame Adika and David A. Odoi, take the case of marriage, one of the enduring, yet complicating institutions that structures society as a gauge contributing to the discourse on culture and change. They indicate that the gendered roles and expectations in marriage have considerably changed by the overwhelming forces of colonialism, education, urbanization, and globalization. Navigating the contours of critical analysis, the authors conclude that gendered roles in marriage have registered some changes, but primordial gendered roles have endured the test of time. Again, from the perspective of this article, one may argue that the sinews of marriage may change by the attritions of modernization, broadly defined, but when the functionality of marriage is holistically assembled, gendered roles remain schematically tidy and less symbolic by the scalpel of functional conformity.

There may be hardly any equivocation that the outpourings of scholarship and activism from feminist corridors have hardly changed the role expectations of both men and women in the marital contexts. Charles Prempeh's article discusses the extent to which young men and women in the Church of Pentecost (CoP), Ghana's largest Pentecostal denomination, have deployed a counter-hegemonic use of the colonial camera to advance their prenuptial and conjugal freedoms. Using the camera to curate their aesthetic agency on social media, the female constituency of the CoP have sought to pre-empt all conjugal hostilities toward their marriage. From this perspective, it could be argued that these women have found the camera as strong alibi to routinize their agency in shaping the contours of conjugal relations to their advantage. Considering that these women belong to a Church that seeks to defend the boundaries of marriage as a divine-cultural mandate, the Church has stepped in to control the role of the camera notwithstanding its dismal success. The interface between the CoP and its young women, mediated by the camera in the world of social media, indexes the complicated interface between culture and modernity.

Culture and technology are taken up by Seth Kwadwo Frimpong. He provides a critical intervention in appreciating the demarcations between culture and technology. He looks the care offered by healthcare practitioners among the Ga people of Accra by pivoting the enduring capacity of Africa's cosmovision in the area of medicine. He argues that the forces of modernization, education and industrialization made Tema an appreciable cosmopolitan town at the turn of post-colonial Ghana. Once Tema became the industrial hub of Ghana, the assemblage of workers from various areas of the country also brought to the fore the complications of healthcare. Prior to this, the indigenous people had depended largely on herbal medicine. However, new health challenges demanded the incorporation of Western medicine in healthcare practices. The introduction of Western medicine broadened the frontiers of medical practices. Yet, it did not

completely stifle the fecundity of indigenous healthcare practices, such as the continued dependence on herbal medicine.

Nene-Lomotey Kuditchar explores Ghanaian culture and heritage by highlighting the generational ordering of global capitalism. It critiques capitalism's antithetical impact on African polities, arguing that it has led to economic and social disruptions that conflict with African values rooted in communalism and harmony. The essay advocates for a return to African totemic ancestorhood as a means to reconnect with values that prioritize collective well-being and environmental stewardship. Against this background, the main conclusions emphasize that Ghana and other African states can best address the legacies and contemporary challenges of capitalism by reclaiming indigenous knowledge systems and cultural practices which can be used as guide to map out fit-for-purpose Pan-African epistemic formulations. By reviving these values, African societies can (re)build resilient, balanced human-nature governance models to withstand the exploitation and crises often associated with capitalist norms.

Kwabena Akurang-Parry, Samuel Nkumbaan, and Albert Larbi Appiah look at the ways that small scale wars bring about cultural change regarding how gender is reconvened in wartime to further disadvantage women. The work is based on the Ghanaian newspapers' coverage of the 1994 Nanumba-Konkomba ethnic conflict and small war in the Northern Region of Ghana. Additionally, the study benefits from oral history collected from female victims of the war. Framed as a case study and defined by the 1994 Nanumba-Konkomba ethnic clash, the most violent and tragic to date, the study illustrates that the intermittent ethnic conflicts, their consequent wars, and forced migrations adversely impact women in the region. Overall, the principal subject matter of the study, which is the adverse effects of the ethnic wars on women, fills a major gap in the emerging historiography on gender and cultural change.

In sum, the essays packaged in this Special Issue deals with how Ghana has transitioned from the precolonial period and the colonial epoch to a contemporaneous post-colony of Globalization and Glocalization shaped by acculturation both within and without. It centralizes Ghana in the Internet Age, showing the ways that the local and the foreign have paired up to shape Ghanaian culture and heritage. Underpinning this amalgam of essays is how the concept of Social Change is historicized to measure the indicators of culture implanted in economic, political, technological, environmental, and social settings. In sum, just like the Ghanaian Sankofa epistemological symbol, a metaphor of fusing the past and the future, contextualized in the present as an agency, Ghanaian societies have recorded marked transitions over time. Consequently, key societal markers like marriage, gender, religion, medicine, and warfare and migration that inform this Special Issue, have gone through multiple changes and at variance continuity

and transmutation. Such alterations, characterizing core societal institutions, have been mediated by multiple factors, key among them is Globalization and the proliferation of the Internet Age starting from the later part of the 20th Century. This has created a Ghanaian world that is increasingly cosmopolitan, but also provincialized and orphaned, plunging for cultural parenthood. Even so, these have not necessarily destroyed the routines of the multiple cultures across the Ghana.