Gender Politics and Contradictions in an Emergent Ghana

by
Emily Flores

History 194AH-BH-CH
Professor Lansing
April 11th, 2005

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Stephan Miescher for being such a wonderful mentor throughout the course of this project. He constantly offered guidance and support, and he never failed to be honest. His constructive criticism helped me create this final product and without his help I would have been unable to effectively articulate my research. Also, I would like thank the Undergraduate Research and Creative Awards department at UCSB for awarding me a grant that allowed me to travel to Northwestern University to conduct research. I would like to acknowledge David L. Easterbrook, the curator of the Melville J. Herskovitz Library of African Studies at Northwestern University. Without his help, I would have been lost in unfamiliar territory. He made my research experience effective and enjoyable. I would also like to thank my peer review group for all of their guidance and support. Finally, I would like to thank Carol Lansing for the weekly encouragement that convinced me to keep working, even when things got difficult. Without the help of these special people, I would not have successfully completed this project. Thank you all for your support.

"Revolutions are brought about by men, by men who think as men of action and act as men of thought."[1]

This quote perfectly describes Kwame Nkrumah's male centered ideology during his quest for independence for the Gold Coast from British colonial rule. Nkrumah led the Gold Coast to independence, and was the leader of the new nation of Ghana between 1957 and 1966. Although he encouraged women to actively fight for independence and join his party, his views of women and his political presentation of these views were contradictory. Nkrumah was a walking contradiction. Many ambiguities existed in Nkrumah's words and deeds. He believed in the polygamous nature of men and the idea that marriage was enslaving, yet he got married in 1957, coincidentally the year that Ghana became an independent nation, and he continued to have only one wife. He tried to appeal to all Ghanaians and stressed the importance of the commoners, yet he was educated in the Western world, and clearly a member of an elite intelligentsia. He encouraged women to be politically active, yet reasserted his beliefs in male supremacy in much of his popular writing. Ultimately, Nkrumah embodied multiple forms of masculinity. He stressed the importance of a modern African masculinity, defined by one's success in an industrialized and urbanized Ghana. In order to achieve a mass following and succeed politically, he had to appeal to the majority of Ghanaians. He broadened his appeal by embodying other older forms of masculinity throughout his leadership. A background of

---

[1] Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 224.

twentieth-century Ghana provides insight into how Nkrumah took the circumstances of the time and created a new nation, founded on his beliefs and Convention People's Party (CPP) politics.

In his seminal study of Ghana's struggle for independence, Dennis Austin argued that African self-government was present for more than two centuries before the imposition of British rule in Ghana in the late nineteenth century and this set it apart from other African nations.[2] Austin concentrated on the CPP and Nkrumah's leadership without attempting to explain in detail the origins or goals of its opposition, the National Liberation Movement (NLM). He discussed chieftaincy and the prevalent satisfaction among local groups in the years leading up to the nationalist movement. Despite a thriving economy, increased enrollment in schools and advanced communication networks, the roots of nationalism took hold in the decade prior to independence.[3] Austin wrote his history before Nkrumah's government was overthrown, so his ground-breaking work is not reflective, like many others, of why Nkrumah was ousted. Without any purposeful analysis of gender, Austin provided a vital background of the political situation that characterized Ghana in the time of Nkrumah's leadership. This political situation set the stage for gender relations and expectations that thrived during the time of the struggle and early independence.

A discussion of the socio-economic changes such as attempted industrialization, urbanization, and monetization of the Ghanaian economy in the early twentieth century helps to outline the characteristics that defined the

---

[2] Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana 1946-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 2.
[3] Ibid., 4.

modern man in an independent Ghana. The population of the capital city Accra increased by nine times between the years of 1921 and 1960.[4] Railway mileage more than doubled, and exports increased by sixteen times. Because of this industrialization and socio-economic change, Deborah Pellow and Naomi Chazan argued that "individuals [we]re no longer defined merely by their kin group affiliation; they c[ould] achieve new roles, especially through western education...This diversity contribute[d] to a broadening of cultural awareness and a breakdown in traditional behavior."[5] Industrialization and modernization have the ability to transform a country's landscape and people; Ghana experienced some of these changes in the twentieth century. Urban areas were the site for new ideals and practices of gender relations. People exposed to western ideals were less likely to be involved in polygynous relationships. Many women in urban areas made it clear that they believed that men should have only one wife. Also, young women took on the western role of girlfriend. "Among the urban elite, movement ha[d] begun towards the western conjugal family type and toward marriages performed according to the civil marriage ordinance (which, unlike native laws, d[id] not permit polygyny), both of which [we]re approved in the modernizing milieu."[6] The fight for independence spurred these changes, but they were previously present and encouraged by British colonialists, who also participated in programs of modernization.

---

[4] Ibid.
[5] Naomi Chazan and Deborah Pellow, *Ghana: Coping With Uncertainty* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), 99.
[6] Ibid.

It is necessary to understand colonial gender divisions to grasp more thoroughly the changes that were occurring due to fervent nationalism and the achievement of independence in Ghana. Jean Allman and Victoria Tashjian chronicle gender relations in colonial Asante in their women-centered study. Women had some sense of independence during this time, and strove for economic autonomy. With the introduction of indirect rule, chiefs, social welfare officers, elders and missionaries tried to "make dutiful wives and 'proper' mothers out of a generation of women who, by official accounts anyway, were nothing short of intractable."[7] This started the trend that drove women towards domesticity and attempted to confiscate their hard earned economic autonomy. Although women today make up the majority of market traders and in turn have access to wealth, men in the decades leading up to independence tried to claim power over them and force them into labor outside of the economic sphere. The colonial ideals of domesticity and Victorian gender roles infiltrated the minds of Africans. This effort by elite African men is indicative of the formation of a modern, western ideal of masculinity that pervaded Ghana during the 1950's and into the early years of independence. With the fight for independence this new type of masculinity gained prominence. Modernity, as portrayed through Nkrumah's words, combined with success, became characteristics that men strove to embody. Another indicator of the infiltration of modernity into Ghanaian society is the decline of the importance of chieftaincy.

---

[7] Jean Allman and Victoria Tashjian, *"I Will Not Eat Stone": A Women's History of Colonial Asante* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000), xxxiv.

Chiefs' loss of power and authority in the 1950's demonstrates the marginalization of pre-colonial and colonial institutions. Although Nkrumah claimed that he wanted to rid Ghana of all colonial relics, chieftaincy still remained. Colonialists had used chiefs as puppets of indirect rule so they were therefore linked to colonialism. The institution of chieftaincy was in crisis under Nkrumah's CPP. According to Richard Rathbone, Nkrumah's government tried to "break, co-opt, and coerce chieftaincy."[8] Chieftaincy and its historical importance played a prevalent role in politics in Ghana during the 1950's. Rathbone depicts chieftaincy as a steadfast institution that survived through independence "against very heavy odds."[9] Chieftaincy was supported by colonial administration before independence. Many people fighting for independence correlated colonial government with chiefly power and therefore felt that ending colonial rule should result in the elimination of chiefs. "Colonial rule and chieftaincy were widely perceived to be unheavenly twins linked by mutual support, an unholy alliance, and they were thus jointly destined to enjoy the fate of all doomed *anciens regimes*."[10] In a modern independent state there was no room for such an ancient political structure. But chieftaincy survived. Nkrumah later used the institution to his advantage.

Masculinity cannot be described or defined by any one set of rules or expectations. Many forms of masculinity co-exist and greatly differ from one and other. The field of masculinity studies has become more prominent in recent

---

[8] Richard Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: the Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana, 1951-1960* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2003), ix.
[9] Ibid., 2.
[10] Ibid., 3.

years but remained Eurocentric. The study of masculinity on the African continent is a fairly new area of scholarship, with much left uncovered or ignored.[11] Although there has been a wealth of scholarship about the history and political aspects of the liberation struggle in Ghana, none focuses directly on changing ideals of masculinity from the Gold Coast into independence. The CPP, founded in 1949 and led by Nkrumah, dominated the independence struggle and prescribed gender ideals through rhetoric and policy. The CPP had an all-encompassing plan to dominate many aspects of Ghanaian life. Nkrumah was head of government under the final six years of British rule, became the country's first Prime Minister upon independence in 1957, and was elected President when Ghana changed into a republic in 1960. Nkrumah's charismatic and increasingly authoritarian regime dominated this new nation until the coup of 1966. While Nkrumah embodied multiple forms of masculinity, a modern form of African masculinity was most prominent in his rhetoric and political strategies. Stephan Miescher argues that, in colonial contexts, a hegemonic masculinity is not always present; rather multiple types of masculinity co-exist.[12] This is also true when considered in terms of a new form of modern Ghanaian masculinity that emerged during the nationalist struggle and co-existed with older forms of African masculinity stemming from pre-colonial times.

---

[11] See Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher, *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), and Robert Morrell, "Of Boys and Men: Masculinity and Gender in Southern African Studies," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (1998), 605-630.

[12] Stephan F. Miescher, "The Making of Presbyterian Teachers: Masculinity and Programs of Education in Colonial Ghana" In *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, ed Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 89.

Competing ideals of masculinity can be teased out of popular newspaper advertisements as well as out of Nkrumah's political rhetoric. An older ideal of masculinity, relying on chieftaincy and pre-colonial gender relations, existed throughout the 1960's and embodied ideals of strength and physical power. For example, a frequently printed advertisement in the *Accra Evening News* in 1957 pictured a muscular man riding a lion. The text states "Strong as a lion—you can be too! Men who are strong and healthy always take Atwood's Jaundice Bitters."[13] This advertisement for Jaundice Bitters stressed the importance of strength and health, like many other advertisements in newspapers at the time. An ideal of modern and industrial masculinity had also infiltrated Ghanaian society focusing on intellectual prowess and the importance of success enabled by western education, which were highlighted by the influence of Nkrumah on modern Ghanaian society. *The Ashanti Pioneer* featured many of these gendered advertisements. One for Kiwi Shoe Polish pictured a smiling man polishing his shoes saying "I always use Kiwi Polish--my shoes look much smarter. Buy kiwi, be smart." The advertisement declares, "You will only be really smart if your shoes look smart. That's why so many successful men use Kiwi"(figure 1).[14] Nkrumah's ideals of success and intelligence as a way to move forward as an independent nation were apparent in his own writing and popular newspapers at the time. He was quoted in 1957 saying "We have no bombs. We have only brains. And with their proper use, we have succeeded in liquidating colonialism

[13] *Accra Evening News*, January 24th, 1958.
[14] *Ashanti Pioneer*, July 1st, 1957.

in this country."[15] Intellectual capacity was a key element to masculinity in Nkrumah's Ghana.

This paper explores popular expectations of masculinity as prescribed by such an influential figure as Nkrumah. Although there were co-existing forms of masculinity in Ghana at the time, Nkrumah's support of a modern African masculinity dominated his politics. Modern masculinity relied on education and western values. Nkrumah's mass support shows that many Ghanaian citizens agreed with his political beliefs and policies. Although Nkrumah's political rhetoric involved gender equality, he promoted specific expectations for men at the expense of women during the liberation movement and after achieving independence. Popular notions of masculinity increasingly converged with ideals introduced under colonial rule. British colonial officials, working with African elders, had encouraged women to retreat into a domestic sphere. This type of colonial masculinity, dominated by Christian ideals, continued to remain important to Nkrumah despite his rhetoric of total Africanization. Although these forms of masculinity were present under colonial rule, Nkrumah did not entirely disregard them. He supported a form of Christian masculinity, introduced by missionaries starting in the middle of the nineteenth-century, and was favorably disposed toward Christian ideals of marriage and seniority. I argue that Nkrumah's gender policies did not greatly differ from those of the British colonial government; he simply wanted a ruling class of elite Africans to replace British imperialists.

---

[15] *Daily Graphic*, February 27th, 1957.

Many ideals of masculinity, prevalent at independence, had been introduced in previous decades while African politicians worked hand in hand with the British government. Through an analysis of newspaper advertisements and articles, I will show how popular culture offered a discourse that frequently embraced Christian ideals of masculinity. A discussion of Nkrumah's written work and CPP documents demonstrates that his political rhetoric focused on gender equality, yet not all of his policies supported this notion. Rather, his ideals of masculinity remained similar to those introduced by missionaries in the mid-nineteenth century and upheld by British colonialists until independence in. By examining such an influential political figure, one can more easily understand the nature of popular forms of masculinity in an emerging nation.

In order to understand the gendered expectations that existed in Ghana during the liberation struggle, an examination of colonial forms of masculinity, based on western ideals and Christianity, is necessary. What Miescher calls Presbyterian masculinity defined masculine ideals that existed and were promoted by two mission societies and subsequently became part of an independent Ghanaian church. Despite Nkrumah's efforts to rid Ghana of all things colonial, I argue that such a Christian masculinity continued to hold importance in Ghanaian society, co-existing with older and newer forms of masculinity. Although Miescher deals specifically with men in the folds of the Presbyterian Church, I refer to his findings as a form of Christian masculinity, which was also relevant for members of other mission churches: Methodist and Catholic.

Christian Masculinity

In order to understand how gender relations were "intimately practiced, contested and transformed," Miescher cultivated relationships with eight Ghanaian men who came of age during the height of British colonialism. These men distinguished themselves in different ways; senior masculinity meant different things to each of them. The attainment of senior masculinity relied less on age and more on character, meaning the ability to speak well and take responsibility for one's family. It was not possible to obtain senior masculinity without being married. Missionary expectations shaped the way that masculinity was interpreted during colonial times: "The Basel Mission made a conscious effort to reshape personhood, promoting specific notions of masculinity and femininity. According to these guidelines—and contrary to Akan practice—husband and wife were expected to live with their children, and to share meals and worship. For sons, schooling was compulsory; for daughters, it was optional, though recommended."[16] Men who followed this ideal of Presbyterian masculinity were "guided by strict discipline expressed in regular work, Christian devotion, and deference to secular and religious authorities like the colonial state, local chiefs, and church leadership."[17] This definition helps shape my argument. Despite Nkrumah's effort towards Africanization of the Ghanaian government and society, his gender ideals and political motivations continued to resemble those of missionaries and church elders—pillars of colonial rule.

---

[16] Stephan F. Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, in press), 5.
[17] Ibid., 98.

For over a century, missionaries had been promoting the importance of "monogamous husbands who showed primary allegiance to wife and children and secondarily to their abusua [matrilineage]."[18] Due to the matrilineal nature of Akan society, husbands and wives did not co-habitate. Rather in hometowns, a married couple resided separately and supported their matrilineal line. A man's primary responsibility was to his matrilineage. European influence, however, stressed the importance of the western nuclear family. Nkrumah supported these ideals. Although he believed in the polygamous nature of men, he eventually married and continued to have only one wife until his death. According to Presbyterian ideals of masculinity, this was the appropriate way to live, yet Nkrumah's marital arrangement greatly differed from the way that many men viewed marriage before and well into the period of colonial rule in Ghana.

Miescher describes characteristics of senior masculinity. Men with senior status enjoyed "wide respect in their communities" and distinguished themselves "with polished speech and comportment, and recognized accomplishments."[19] Ideals of senior status gradually changed in the twentieth century. Nkrumah's beliefs about the achievement of seniority were vital to the people of Ghana. Nkrumah supported a modern form of African masculinity which resembled Christian masculinity but with an African face. The importance of worship, monogamy, and a Christian God, ideas and practices introduced by missionaries in the second half of the nineteenth century remained prevalent. At least in terms of gender ideals, Nkrumah did not envision an independent Ghana that was much

[18] Ibid., 10.
[19] Miescher, *Making Men*, 37.

different from colonial Ghana. There were changes in men's dress code. Some men began to revalue older forms of dress. Still Nkrumah continued to wear suits when addressing a western crowd. Western clothes--tie, shirt and trousers--became the appropriate way to dress for an educated man who strove to please the new God with his appearance. Teachers had to wear western clothes while rural elders preferred traditional cloth. Debates about dress code also reflected ideals of senior masculinity.

According to Miescher, separate games for boys and girls in the childhoods of the men he interviewed were "crucial in preparing children for adult life."[20] The type of play children engaged in was reflective of the gender roles they would assume upon reaching adulthood. Male children imitated hunters and warriors while female children would engage in more feminine types of play. Female children would choose mock spouses, although this was condemned by missionaries, and assist their play husbands in their everyday work. They would do their laundry and engage in other activities that were deemed feminine in nature.[21] Older men engaged in gambling which women did not have time for. Women had less leisure time because they were expected to do "domestic chores like cooking, cleaning, and gathering of firewood, as well as agricultural work of cultivating food crops and helping husbands in weeding and harvesting cocoa."[22] These activities existed in a time when ideals of masculinity were being frequently contested. The early decades of the twentieth century saw an increase of migrant labor and a reconfiguration of how men attained senior

[20] Miescher, *Making Men*, 57.
[21] Ibid., 62.
[22] Ibid., 69.

status in Ghana. An emerging popular culture, particularly dancing and social drinking, changed the way that many people viewed the attainment of senior status. "Senior masculinity no longer depended exclusively on age and locally acquired status but now was linked to migration, wage labor, and the new cash economy. They evoked older notions of big men who had publicly displayed their riches, while they redefined the meaning of big-man status."[23] Ultimately, in a monetized economy, the attainment of senior masculinity relied heavily on one's access to cash.[24]

As Miescher shows, schools were instrumental in promoting Presbyterian ideals masculinity and femininity. Nkrumah stressed the importance of education in his political agenda. In his 1951 manifesto, he called for a unified system of free compulsory elementary school, followed by secondary and technical education up to sixteen years of age; the University College should be brought up to University status; and a campaign should abolish literacy.[25] From the beginning of his political prominence, Nkrumah sought to advance education for all Ghanaian citizens. Girls were exposed to an education suited towards their expected gender roles upon reaching adulthood so they were instructed in areas such as hygiene, cooking, and motherhood. Men were instructed in areas such as carpentry and masonry, and they were also given an academic education.[26] Mission education, according to Ebenezer Obiri Addo, helped cultivate early feelings of nationalism among students. Although this was obviously unintended,

---

[23] Miescher, *Making Men*, 73.
[24] Ibid., 76.
[25] Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, 130.
[26] Miescher, *Making Men*, 110.

"the products of mission schools emerged as a new class, educated and politically conscious enough to question the colonial arrangement."[27] Nkrumah was forced to use chieftaincy and its accompanying traditions in order to "create a pluralism that could support his integrative revolution."[28] Nkrumah had to embrace traditional African religions, Islam and Christianity, in order to amass such a large base of support.

The institution of marriage was of specific importance to missionaries and colonialists. Many different types of marriage were employed. "Most couples entered customary marriages involving an exchange of marriage payments between lineages. A small minority contracted marriages regulated by statutory law. Members of Christian congregations had their customary marriages blessed in church...The colonial state, Christian churches, and matrilineages sought to regulate marriage. Chiefs' courts enforced customs that stipulated men's responsibilities towards wives and children, and set fees for adultery and divorce."[29] Nkrumah's continued support for gender roles introduced by missionaries is prevalent in arguing that his masculine ideals did not greatly differ from those of the British. The easy dissolution of Akan customary marriages worried missionaries and men often failed to provide for their children.[30] Marriage ideals were shifting and customs were changing. As Miescher notes, the introduction of different institutions brought new notions of masculinity to colonial Ghana but did not lead to the collapse of an "indigenous

---

[27] Ebenezer Obiri Adoo, *Kwame Nkrumah: A Case Study of Religion and Politics in Ghana* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., 1997), 41.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Miescher, *Making Men*, 229.
[30] Ibid. 255.

gender system."[31] Men embraced older forms of tradition and newer forms of Presbyterian masculinity throughout their lifetimes. "Missionary ideas about patrilineal inheritance and compulsory education seemed at first remarkable and foreign, yet by the middle decades of the twentieth century, those living in former Basel Mission settlements had partially accepted patrilineal decent without completely neglecting their matrilineal ties."[32] African men employed agency in deciding their fate, despite CPP values and popular expectations of marriage and gender roles. Many men in Ghana wholeheartedly followed Nkrumah's lead and adored him as their leader, but this did not negate their ties to traditional practices. The importance of the nuclear family and Christian ideals of marriage can be seen in advertisements in Ghanaian newspapers from the 1950's and 1960's.

Introducing consumer goods through advertisements, manufacturers used the following characteristics to define modern men: Men were successful by wearing western clothing and embracing Christian family values. The *Accra Evening News* was a political tool used by Nkrumah and the CPP to advance party politics. This newspaper was full of advertisements that prescribed specific gender roles for men and women. Advertisements offer insight into what was accepted as proper behavior for men at the time of Ghana's liberation. In order to sell a product, advertisers tried to make consumers desire what they were selling. The advertisements selected here were promoting an image as much as a product. They were selling the image of the modern Ghanaian: a successful, healthy,

[31] Ibid., 386.
[32] Ibid.

industrial, western-oriented man. The idea of the nuclear family surpassing ties to one's matrilineage became increasingly important in the course of the twentieth-century; Christian ideals of marriage flourished. Nkrumah supported these ideals, even after he rid Ghana of imperialist officials. Yet neither Nkrumah nor the rest of his editorial staff seem to have minded printing advertisements with such clearly gendered images in the *Accra Evening News*.

An advertisement for Ovaltine, printed about three years after the achievement of independence, pictures a family of four, drinking Ovaltine together. Every member of the family is dressed in western apparel. The smiling father is wearing a business suit and tie, and his two children, one male and one female, are wearing school clothes. The caption reads "Health, strength, and vigour are treasures beyond price, nature's finest gifts... Thousands of families know the supreme value of Ovaltine, the ideal food beverage"(figure 2).[33] The emphasis on western oriented familial ideals and dress in this ad show the importance placed on these values in Nkrumah's Ghana.

Another advertisement that illustrates the presence of this ideal and its connection with consumer goods was for Golden Corsair shoes (figure 3). It pictures a western-style dress shoe and says, "Well-dressed men choose Golden Corsair shoes. Golden Corsair shoes have smart, modern styling that's admired everywhere... Made from selected English leather."[34] This ad stressed the importance of intelligence, style, and modernity. Modern, smart men, wore western clothing that matched the style of the advertised business shoes. This ad

[33] *Accra Evening News*, March 23rd, 1960.
[34] *Accra Evening News*, February 29th, 1960.

also comments on the growing importance of the industrial world and urbanization in Ghana in the mid-twentieth century. Smart, well dressed men wore western clothes, not traditional cloth. Another advertisement found in Nkrumah's paper truly epitomizes the importance placed on the nuclear family. Like the Ovaltine advertisement, this ad for Lifebuoy soap pictures a happy family of five, dressed in western clothing and looking incredibly clean. Its slogan reads "Lifebuoy, the modern soap for modern homes" (figure 4).[35] Modernity was a quality that people desired and effectively helped advertisers sell their products. This ad stresses the importance of the health of one's family, meaning wife and children. Men were increasingly encouraged to value their wife and children over their matrilineage, even within the form of newspaper advertisements.

A different type of advertisement, also regularly seen in the *Accra Evening News*, stressed the monetization of Ghanaian society and the new importance placed upon a cash economy. These ads encouraged saving money and obtaining insurance. An advertisement for First Ghana Building Society encouraged men to save money for their children's future. Its slogan reads: "Love alone is not enough... Your children look to you for security, for opportunities such as higher education and a chance to enjoy the better things in life. It takes money to ensure for your child's future—for a right start in life" (figure 5).[36] It was important for men to create security for their wives and children. The importance of the nuclear family and Christian morals within that

[35] *Accra Evening News*, January 25th, 1960.
[36] *Accra Evening News*, February 13th, 1960.

family were constantly re-iterated in newspaper advertisements. Love was no longer enough among families. In order to thrive in a new, independent, monetized Ghanaian society, money was the most important thing. A similar advertisement also printed in 1960 pictures an African man in a western business suit relaxing in a recliner. The Slogan reads, "Your dreams for your CHILDREN can come true" (figure 6).[37] This ad is trying to sell endowment plans and insurance. The caption reads, "When you look into your child's face you see before you the man of the future as you want him to be."[38] This ideal of the man of the future was prominent in Ghanaian newspapers in the mid-twentieth century. In order to ensure a child's success, parents, especially fathers, needed to save money and finance their education. For children to achieve the goals of a man of Ghana's future, they needed to be educated and have a healthy supply of cash. These values were new to Ghana in the twentieth century. Although the importance of the nuclear family and a monetized society were introduced with the rise of colonialism and the presence of mission societies in the late nineteenth century, these ideals took hold of Ghanaian society upon independence. Nkrumah vehemently supported them.

The advertisement that most clearly depicts these values was for the United Africa Company. The Slogan reads "Men of Tomorrow." An African man is pictured wearing a business suit and carrying a briefcase. In the background, there is a desk with a typewriter on it. The ad states: "Progress and expansion are the driving forces of the country today! *Trained* men are needed for tomorrow's

[37] *Accra Evening News*, February 26th, 1960.
[38] Ibid.

important business developments... The United Africa Company is proud to play an important part in the training of such highly-skilled 'Men of Tomorrow'" (figure 7).[39] This idea of a specific type, the "man of tomorrow," was prevalent in newspapers at the time of independence. The value placed on modernity, industrialization, monetization, western dress, and the nuclear family could be seen in most advertisements that ran in the *Accra Evening News* and other newspapers following independence. These ads are a crucial source for understanding the expectations placed on men in Nkrumah's Ghana.

CPP Gender Ideologies

Gender in the context of Ghanaian nationalism has been largely ignored by scholars, except for Pashington Obeng's re-evaluation of senior masculinity in Ghana's independence struggle. Obeng focuses on "the intersection of age, gender, and seniority with social and economic forces concerning constructions of masculinity."[40] Before the liberation struggle, the status of an Akan man was dependent on whether or not he had senior masculinity. Senior masculinity was not determined by age but by actions. This brief discussion of senior masculinity, and how it was reinterpreted by the NLM in the 1950's, is the only study that deals directly with masculinity. Obeng, who concentrates on a certain social group, youngmen, rather than addressing changing national ideals of masculinity, argues that senior masculinity was not only dependent on gender, but also on age

[39] *Accra Evening News*, February 22nd, 1960.
[40] Pashington Obeng, "Gendered Nationalism: Forms of Masculinity in Modern Asante of Ghana. " In *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, ed. Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 202.

and attributes. Although this ideal remained important in Ghana after independence, but its qualifications changed. A monetized economy and the introduction of reliance on wage labor and migration changed the face of senior masculinity; a new form of African masculinity, tied to ideals of modernity, became prominent. Obeng points out the fluid nature of masculinity in twentieth century Ghana. Senior masculinity did not necessarily involve being a man; rather it involved a group of characteristics that defined one's senior status.

CPP efforts to forge equality of the sexes illustrate practices of appropriate gender roles. Although all of Nkrumah's published writings were political, his personal comments about women reveal his masculine ideals. His published writing may have been of a political nature, but it was not always consistent. For example, some sections in his autobiography show his personal feelings about gender relations, masculine ideals, and the place of women in society. He worked to place women equally in political terms and supported new forms of popular culture that included women. Still he personally believed in male supremacy. This is one of the many ways that Nkrumah proved to be full of contradictions.

Takyiwah Manuh's essay, *Women and Their Organizations During the Convention People's Party Period*, provides insight into Nkrumah's specific efforts to create equality for women in Ghana. Nkrumah stated that "the degree of a country's revolutionary awareness may be measured by the political

maturity of its women."[41] Women were heavily involved in the CPP; Nkrumah claimed to regard them as equals. Crowds of women followed Nkrumah and supported his policies. As Manuh notes, women heavily participated in the struggle for independence and vigorously supported Nkrumah and the CPP.[42] With the help of Nkrumah, women went from occupying a subordinate domestic role, as prescribed by British and African leaders during the period of indirect rule, to fully engaging in political struggles.

> In Africa universal franchise encouraged Nkrumah to pioneer experiments in mobilizing women's power. The ideology that women are equal, that women held up half the sky as the Chinese would have it, was not easy to get across. Central decision making remained in male hands and women's power was insulated in special purpose women's organizations, a tradition which was to carry out throughout the African Revolution even in countries where women actively supported an armed struggle against settlers.[43]

Nkrumah's motives in supporting equality for women were more political than personal. Nkrumah did not deny the important role of women in the CPP. Once independence was achieved, he worked hard to ensure equality for women in politics, economics, and education. Women formed a women's electoral college to elect ten women to the National Assembly. There was to be a woman deputy minister, women district commissioners, and a new space for ten women parliamentarians.[44] Under Nkrumah, women were not only allowed extensive political participation but also gained access to education which had had been previously denied.

---

[41] Takyiwah Manuh, "Women and their Organizations During the Convention People's Party Period." In *The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah*, ed. Kwame Arhin (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, Inc., 1993), 101.
[42] Ibid., 102.
[43] David Birmingham, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Father of African Nationalist* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1998), 28.
[44] Manuh, *Women and Their Organizations*, 109.

By 1966, women accounted for forty-four percent of primary school enrollment, thirty-five percent of middle school enrollment and twenty-five percent of enrollment at secondary schools.[45] Many more women were seeking higher education in universities world wide. Fields of employment were broadened for women, and ideas of equal pay for equal work and maternity leave were introduced. Nkrumah also supported the use of popular culture as a political arena that included women for the first time.

The language of official CPP documents calls for equality for women, but much of Nkrumah's writing is contradictory to that ideal. The Constitution of the Convention People's Party clearly states that "their shall be no separate status for women."[46] Still, each branch of the CPP was to have a separate women's branch and no women were to be involved in any other part of the organization. Although women were given equal status with men, they were forced to occupy separate sections of the organization with their own responsibilities. "The Women's Section shall hold rallies, dances, picnics, and other social functions throughout the year."[47] Women were assigned tasks that were normally associated with feminine activities. Men held meetings and conferences to make big decisions involving party legislation, while women were in charge of planning parties and picnics. On Independence Day, Nkrumah publicly acknowledged women's contribution in his midnight speech: "At long last the battle has ended. And thus Ghana our beloved country is free forever. I want to take this opportunity to thank the chiefs, the youth, the people and the women

---

[45] Ibid., 111.
[46] Kwame Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path* (New York: International Publishers, 1973), 70.
[47] Ibid.

who have fought a wonderful battle"(figure 8).[48] Although Nkrumah granted women equal status through his words, CPP actions and rhetoric frequently placed them in a separate sphere. A popular advertisement, encouraging men to vote, was printed in the *Accra Evening News*. The ad pictures a group made up of only men marching forward. The text reads "March on comrades! Ours is a common cause—the cause of the common man. Register now!"[49] This advertisement is aimed solely at men. Although Nkrumah claimed that CPP women and men had equal status, the advertisements in the paper he sponsored did not support these claims.

Nkrumah and the CPP also encouraged a change of gender roles through popular culture. The importance of popular culture for the success of the CPP and its impact on gender relations can be seen through Nkrumah's endorsement of concert parties, dances, and many forms of nightlife. Emmanuel Akyeampong discusses the impact of alcohol on politics during the liberation struggle and the importance of alcohol consumption at social gatherings with political motivations. Akyeampong offers insight into emerging social arenas that allowed for changing gender relations. Women were present at drinking bars and were encouraged to consume alcohol. Because of the political situation, women were given social outlets that never existed before. "Whereas drinking by urban women had originated as part of their rebellion against male attempts to define female social decorum, the endorsement of popular culture by the new political

[48] *Daily Graphic*, March 6th, 1957.
[49] *Accra Evening News*, January 20th, 1958.

elite and their women now lent sophistication to female drinking."[50] Thus women's presence at dances and nightclubs gained acceptance. Because of this correlation with politics and popular culture, Nkrumah was able to place women on a social scene that had previously been reserved for men.

The importance of politics in popular culture can also been seen through popular theater performances. Catherine Cole chronicles the changes that the Concert Party underwent during the struggle for independence.[51] Like the CPP, the Concert Party began catering to common people, as opposed to the educated English speaking elite. In the 1920's and 1930's, the Concert Party had performed solely in English so many people could not understand. With the initiation of the struggle for independence, the Concert Party started performing in Akan-Twi and other African languages and tackled matters such as marital disputes and other gender issues that mattered to a broader spectrum of Ghanaians. A vital part of Nkrumah's party was its effort to appeal to all members of society.

An analysis of Nkrumah's goals and gender ideology cannot be complete without an analysis of his language in official political documents and his published autobiography. Africanization was the cornerstone of Nkrumah's campaign for independence. Peacefully moving the British government out of Ghana and replacing their officials with Africans was Nkrumah's goal. The government structure was not meant to change significantly, but the people in

---

[50] Emmanuel Akyeampong, *Drink, Power, and Culture: A Social History of Alcohol in Ghana, c.1800 to Recent Time* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996), 128.
[51] Catherine Cole, *Ghana's Concert Party Theatre* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), chapter 6.

power were to be African rather that British. The 1951 CPP manifesto, entitled "Towards the Goal," shows policy priorities that reveal a gendered agenda. Robert Fitch and Mary Oppenheimer argue that these goals were strikingly similar to the goals laid out in Arden-Clarke's "Ten-Year Plan" of 1951.[52] The CPP manifesto pushed for industrialization in every sector, from extended railroads to the progressive mechanization of agriculture. It stated that "Industrialization will be carried out with all energy."[53] The fact that the CPP manifesto was so similar to the Ten-Year Plan of the British governor Arden-Clarke shows that Nkrumah's objectives were not to rid Ghana of all things British, but to put the power in the hands of elite Africans. The civil service sector's Africanization sharply increased between the years of 1949 and 1954. In 1949, 13.8 percent of Senior Officers were Africans; by 1954 the percentage had increased to 38.2.[54] Although Nkrumah wanted a country run by Africans, the British influence not only continued to affect government structure, but also affected gender relations. A new African masculinity was born, a type of masculinity that encompassed missionary ideals, British influences, and African interpretations of seniority. Nkrumah's goals for the CPP and Ghana endorsed this new African masculinity.

Published in 1951, the Convention People's Party Constitution stated Nkrumah's main goal:

1) To fight relentlessly to achieve and maintain independence for the people of Ghana (Gold Coast) and their chiefs.

---

[52] Bob Fitch and Mary Oppenheimer, *Ghana: End of an Illusion* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966), 33.
[53] Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, 130.
[54] Ibid.

2) To serve as the vigorous conscience political vanguard for removing all forms of oppression and for the establishment of a democratic government.
3) To secure and maintain the complete unity of the people of the colony, Ashanti, Northern Territories and Trans-Volta/Togoland regions.
4) To work with and in interest of the Trade Union Movement, and other kindred organizations, in joint political or other action, in harmony with the constitution and Standing Orders of the party.
5) To work for speedy reconstruction of a better Ghana (Gold Coast) in which the people and their chiefs shall have the right to live and govern themselves as free people.
6) To promote the political, social, and economic emancipation of the people, more particularly of those who depend directly upon their own exertions by hand or by brain for the means of life.

These goals were of the utmost importance to Nkrumah. His western education helped frame his mindset in which total emancipation of all colonized people was a main goal. Many aspects of a new African masculinity were discussed in this constitution. Youth organizations played a crucial role in the creation of the new nation of Ghana.

The introduction of the Boy Scouts to the African Continent in 1910 exemplifies the importance of Presbyterian masculinity. Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of the Boy Scouts, "intended the organization to develop character, manliness, honour, endurance, patriotism, and good citizenship in boys' by organizing outdoor activities."[55] Scouting was meant to create "the perfect 'men of the future' with qualities of 'right doing, straight living and clean thinking,' the ideal of manliness."[56] These ideals reliant on character, straight living and clean thinking, were all important characteristics of Presbyterian masculinity. In 1960 the CPP launched the Ghana Young Pioneer Movement, intended to replace

[55] Miescher, *Making Men*, 135.
[56] Ibid., 136.

the Boy Scouts "which were regarded as relics of colonialism."[57] Yet the Young Pioneers had similar goals. Its objective was to "inculcate in the children of Ghana a feeling of pride for the country."[58] The movement sought "to foster physical fitness, respect for manual work, self discipline, sense of duty and responsibility and above all love for and a strong desire to serve the country."[59] These goals did not greatly differ from the goals of the Boy Scouts. In order to start the Young Pioneer Movement, Nkrumah sent a five-man delegation to the United States, Great Britain, Germany, and the USSR to observe the youth organizations of these powerful countries. This tour, Nkrumah noted, "would enable the nation to create an acceptable youth organization for all the people."[60] The delegation recommended that Ghana follow the examples of the United States and Britain, and have youth programs taught in all schools and colleges, as was done by the Boy Scouts.[61] In Great Britain, the delegation met with Boy Scouts and Girls' Guilds Groups in order to create their own organization. Although Nkrumah claimed to rid Ghana of everything British, he followed the example of the Boy Scouts, with its British origins, when creating the Young Pioneer Movement.

The Young Pioneers illustrates Nkrumah's lingering reliance on Presbyterian masculinity. This organization allows insight into what was considered important to instill in young boys in independent Ghana. The modern Ghanaian man was expected to be responsible, physically fit, and love his

---

[57] Addo, *Religion and Politics in Ghana,* 142.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] M.N Tetteh, *The Ghana Young Pioneer Movement* (Ghana: Ghana Publicity Limited, 1999), xii.
[61] Ibid, xiv.

country. Nkrumah was admired as a Messiah figure in Ghana, exemplified by the Young Pioneer code and pledge. This pledge was recited by all members at all meetings:

1. I sincerely pledge to live by the ideals of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, founder of the state of Ghana and initiator of the African personality
2. To safeguard by all means possible, the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State of Ghana from internal and external aggression
3. To be always in the vanguard for the social and economic reconstruction of Ghana and Africa
4. To be in the first ranks of men fighting for the total liberation and unity of Africa, for these are noble aims guiding the Ghana Young Pioneers
5. As a Young Pioneer, I will be a guard of workers, farmers, co-operatives and all the other sections of our community
6. I believe that the dynamic Convention People's Party is always Supreme and I promise to be worthy of it's ideals[62]

The Young Pioneers were instilled with beliefs and values that would lead them into adulthood and help them become the modern African man. One of the most important beliefs was absolute non-violence. Dependence on brain power, modernization, and industrialization for a new Ghana characterized this modern form of African masculinity, as did the CPP's non-violence policies.

The CPP campaign of Positive Action is indicative of Nkrumah's ideals of masculinity. Positive Action required legitimate political agitation, newspaper and educational campaigns, strikes, boycotts, non-cooperation, and absolute non-violence.[63] Because Nkrumah relied on women's participation and non-violence, his Positive Action campaign can be looked at through a gendered lens. CPP members were required to swear that violence would only be used as an absolute

[62] Addo, *Religion and Politics*, 143-144.
[63] Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path*, 94.

last resort tactic. At least initially, his ideal of masculinity did not involve overpowering colonial forces through violent action. Rather an independence fighter should resort to his intellect to achieve his goal, not his muscles. Through politics, discussion, education, and peaceful demonstration, Nkrumah believed the goal of independence could be achieved. He was put in jail for his campaign of Positive Action in 1950 but still allowed to be on the ballot for the 1951 election. Morrell discusses the importance of studying masculinity in movements of non-violence: "It is understandable and important that we should look at masculinity when violence occurs, but it is important to understand that masculinity is at play all the time. It may be particularly evident in action, but it has social force within the workings of non-violent organizations and institutions too."[64] Nkrumah's strategy of non-violence is as important as masculinities embodied in violent actions. In this case, Nkrumah's practice of non-violence indicates his desire to support intellectualism and modernity in an independent Ghana.

Upon reaching independence party leaders articulated a notion of a new Ghanaian man, being industrial and modern. This new Ghanaian man engaged in wage labor and supported his nuclear family, practiced monogamy and focused more on his nuclear family, his wife and children, than on his matrilineage. These characteristics had all been introduced by missionaries and upheld as important by British colonial officials. Nkrumah continued to support these understandings of masculinity. He supported the western ideal of the nuclear

[64] Morrell, *Of Men and Boys*, 614.

family and the prioritization of a man's wife and children over his matrilineage. In his own life he exemplified the practice of monogamy. Yet this new Ghanaian man, introduced during the independence struggle, was in fact not very new at all. Nkrumah simply put an African face on western ideals and stressed a plan of Africanization. Although this new Ghanaian man strongly resembled the Christian man of colonial times, he did differ in some ways. He was no longer "tribal," rather expected to transcend ethnic categories. He was no longer loyal to a chief, but to a political party, like the CPP. He was culturally African and supposedly no longer oriented towards the British. Still western ideals remained in Ghana after the exit of the colonial government and continue to exist today.

Nkrumah the Leader

In order to understand Nkrumah's ideals of masculinity as portrayed during the independence struggle, it is helpful to look at his effectiveness as leader of Ghana's nationalist movement. Nkrumah's charisma has fascinated many scholars. His ability to gain the support of the masses and continue to impress foreign leaders and dignitaries is the focus of many studies. Nkrumah was born to poor uneducated parents on September 21st, 1909, in the Nzima village of Nkroful, in Ghana's western region. He attended Roman Catholic elementary school, and enrolled in the prestigious Achimota College. He then taught Catholic elementary and junior school. In 1935 he decided to continue his education abroad, at Lincoln University in the United States. Nkrumah was a hard worker and he was forced to engage in many odd jobs to afford his room

and board. His popularity began at Lincoln because of "his easy accessibility and winning way."[65] Nkrumah's Christian education remained important to him in the U.S. He wanted to become "a living symbol of all that is best both in Christianity and in the laws, customs, and beliefs of [his] people."[66] He considered himself "a Christian... but never a blind Christian."[67] He went on to study at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1945, Nkrumah left the U.S. and headed for Great Britain to study law. His years abroad made him part of an elite intelligentsia. His education played a vital role in his quest for independence. While studying abroad, Nkrumah gained a talent for public speaking and his charismatic abilities began to become apparent. He was a born leader. The people of Ghana understood this about him upon his return in 1947. He became the trusted advisor of man Ghanaian citizens who believed that through their grassroots efforts and Nkrumah's charismatic leadership, independence was nothing short of inevitable.

Nkrumah's invincibility was attributed to what many Ghanaians thought of as psychic powers.[68] Ebenezer Obiri Addo discusses Nkrumah's use of Christian symbols and language during his leadership, which is truly illustrative of his continued reliance on colonial and missionary ideas, despite his efforts at Africanization. The following statement was inscribed on Nkrumah's statue in front of the parliament building: "Seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things shall be added unto you." This statement was based on Matthew

---

[65] Bankole Timothy, *Kwame Nkrumah From Cradle to Grave* (Dorchester, Dorset: The Gavin Press, 1981), 10.
[66] Ibid
[67] Timothy, *Cradle to Grave*, 16.
[68] Addo, *Religion and Politics*, 52.

6:3.[69] "The God language was indeed part and parcel of the C.P.P. political mechanism, and in most statements, both official and unofficial resonances to biblical language can be heard."[70] Nkrumah's use of Christian language proves that he relied heavily on missionary values during his campaigns and his utilization of such symbols represents his continued beliefs in Christian masculinity. The gender ideals laid forth by missionaries and colonialists in the century preceding Ghana's independence remained vital in Nkrumah's quest for liberation. His followers parodied the Lord's Prayer to adore him:

> O Imperialism which are in Gold Coast, his grace is thy name;
> Thy Kingdom go
> Our will be done in Gold Coast
> As it is done to you in Britain
> Give us this day our full self government
> And forget about the infringement of charges
> Against our leaders, as it was done to you when you advocated for independence from the Romans
> And lead us not into fear,
> But deliver us from evil,
> For Ghana is a glorious land
> For ever and ever[71]

The CPP newspaper, *Accra Evening News,* was full of headlines that employed biblical references. Different wings of the CPP had different ways of praising Nkrumah; many used biblical references. The Ghana Young Pioneers chanted, "if you follow him Osagyefo, he will make you Fishers of men...if you follow him."[72] This was followed by shouts of "Nkrumah is our Messiah! Nkrumah is our leader! Nkrumah never dies!"[73] Despite Nkrumah's anti-church rhetoric,

---

[69] Ibid., 101.
[70] Ibid., 102.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid., 107.

Christianity was important to his spirituality and leadership. He did not want to rid Ghana of all British institutions and European practices; he simply campaigned for the Africanization of the government and religious authority.

Despite Nkrumah's efforts to marginalize chieftaincy, he took advantage of popular respect for the institution during his own reign. Addo argues that Nkrumah invoked the pomp and regalia of traditional chieftaincy in order to advance his status. To achieve his quest for national integration, he "strategically sought to politicize primordial sentiments and particularly those enshrined in the institution of chieftaincy. This led eventually to a kind of institutionalization of adulation of Nkrumah as the paramount leader."[74] Appellations reserved for chiefs and libation were performed in Nkrumah's presence.[75] So, despite his early efforts at eliminating chiefs, he did not fail to utilize their symbolic power and position in society when directed towards him. Nkrumah received many honorable titles by his followers during the struggle and after the achievement of independence. Osagyefo, his most commonly used title, was given to Nkrumah by the Asantehene, Sir Osei Agyeman Prempeh II.[76] Meaning savior and redeemer, this title was one of the many ways that Nkrumah embodied a Christ-like essence. He was viewed as the Messiah and used this to his advantage. He was viewed as the hero of Africa's independence, without whom Ghana would likely have been stuck in the chains of imperialism forever. In order to promote his plan of Africanization and decolonization, he contributed to the disempowerment of chiefs, but when the institution of chieftaincy enabled him to

[74] Ibid., 111.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.

enhance his leadership and appoint him as a Messiah, he fully embraced it. He supported and embodied Christian masculinity, or a modern form of western masculinity. Still many different forms of masculinity co-existed in Ghana in the 1950's.

This importance placed on Christianity in Nkrumah's language and CPP official language was consistently present in the *Accra Evening News*. Nkrumah was seen, with help from the CPP and his own influence, as a Christ like Messiah in 1950's Ghana. He was worshiped by Ghanaians who contributed the success of the independence movement to him. To celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Positive Action campaign, the *Accra Evening News* printed a large picture of Nkrumah on the front page. Though not an uncommon practice, the caption of the picture read: "The Apostle of Freedom."[77] Underneath the picture, a message read "The Messiah" and involved a statement from Nkrumah: "We have made the cause of the people our very own. We have taken upon ourselves all the sorrows of a generation. We have placed ourselves between the people and their adversary, and God has accepted us"(figure 9).[78] This religious language was heard in party slogans, songs and chants, and the CPP newspaper regularly printed stories and ads that were full of biblical references. Another picture praising Nkrumah during the celebration of the third anniversary of independence featured the caption: "Nkrumah, our pillar of freedom. He's simple, so human and unassuming. But that does not detract from Kwame Nkrumah's greatness. It is the basis of it for this man is opening a brighter future

[77] *Accra Evening News*, January 25th, 1960.
[78] Ibid.

of freedom and plenty for the people by fortitude and hard work is a true Messiah; a man of Destiny."[79] Nkrumah was seen in the essence of Christ. He brought salvation to the people of Ghana and he was immortalized for being their Messiah. An article titled, "Seek Ye First the Political Kingdom..." discussed Nkrumah's greatness in detail. It reads, "Ye men of little faith, Pharisees, false prophets and friends, behold: he [Nkrumah] comes disguised. But for Africa and the world, he may well be the second Christ who cometh..."[80] This article carried the title Nkrumaism, the name given to Nkrumah's philosophy, and referred to as "the highest form of Christianity."[81] Nkrumah relied on God and Christianity for all of his campaigns and party politics.

> According to Nkrumaism, one's ideology must be:
>
> all-pervading, and while its theories in full can only be developed in and around the Party Leadership, it must influence in some form all education, and, indeed, all thinking action... within this ideology there should be a full scale intellectual, educational, and organizational attack on all aspects of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and imperialism.[82]

Nkrumah truly valued education in his fight against imperialism. Intellectual power was more masculine in his eyes than physical power, although he embodied both ideals. Nkrumah used gendered language to discuss his nationalist goals in more than one way. He regularly referred to the feminine nature of Ghana.

> Let us dedicate ourselves to serve this country of ours, this nation, with all the strength, knowledge and wisdom that God has given us. And let us pledge ourselves anew to serve our country selflessly, to protect her rights

---

[79] Ibid.
[80] *Accra Evening News*, January 25th, 1960.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, 409.

> and interests and to play our part among the nations of the world in promoting peace, happiness and the progress of mankind.[83]

His belief in the superiority of men can be seen in this gendered language that he used to describe conquered land. Ghana was previously conquered by the British, now he would be its leader, and because it was conquered by men, it was of a feminine nature. His masculine language is wrought with indications of his beliefs in male supremacy, and despite his constant urging for equality for women, it is not difficult to see his true beliefs beyond his political rhetoric.

Nkrumah's Contested Personality

Nkrumah's language is the site where his deeper, more honest, less filtered views about gender roles can be found. Frances Gouda reflects on the prominence of masculine language during the Indonesian struggle for independence. Gouda states that "gendered language refers to a wide range of figures of speech that invoke images of femininity and masculinity, which are often embedded in a hierarchy of values."[84] Such a hierarchy was evident in Nkrumah's language. Men in Nkrumah's Ghana were brave and courageous while women were supportive and supplementary. Gouda states that "linguistic statements often imply judgments about the social identity of a particular human being or group of people."[85] The CPP as an organization was defined through Nkrumah's linguistic statements. Although Nkrumah granted women equal status

---

[83] Nkrumah, *Ghana*, 288.
[84] Francis Gouda, "Gender and Hyper-Masculinity As Post-Colonial Modernity During Indonesia's Struggle For Independence, 1945-1949." In *Gender, Sexuality, and Colonial Modernities*, ed. Antoinette Burton (London: Routledge, 1999), 161.
[85] Ibid.

in the CPP, his personal language within his political writing suggested otherwise. When referring to the requirements of CPP membership, he was not gender specific. He used the term "he or she" when discussing these requirements.[86] But, when referring to leadership within the group, he was commonly gender specific and only used the pronoun he. For Nkrumah it took "an organization of trained, selected and trusted men" to obtain freedom.[87] This dichotomy shows that he needed women as ordinary members of the CPP to boost support for his party but he did not see them as leaders. His language was also indicative of what he thought was necessary for men to do in order to achieve freedom. Men needed to make "mighty decisions" and commit "brave deeds."[88] He used words like "gallant" and "brave" to describe members of his party. He called for an organization that is "active and viril."[89] The quote used at the beginning of this paper perfectly describes his male centered ideology.

Nkrumah's personal feelings towards women can be seen through a close reading of his autobiography. Although this book served as a political tool, he discussed his personal beliefs briefly in the beginning. A man's accomplishments depended on the number of wives he could keep: "The more wives a man can keep, the greater his social position."[90] The modern conception of monogamy and the nuclear family fueled his politics, but his personal opinions disagreed. He believed that people should accept the naturally polygamous character of men. His personal opinions about women were indicative of his feelings about

---

[86] Nkrumah, *Ghana*, 292.
[87] Ibid., 303.
[88] Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path*, 81.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Nkrumah, *Ghana*, 6.

masculinity and expected male behavior. Nkrumah feared women because he dreaded being trapped, having his freedom taken away, or being overpowered in some way. He feared that his personality would be crushed and he would become a slave.[91] His masculine nature sprouted from his ability to resist the temptation of women and focus all of his efforts on the liberation movement. He was convinced that women would make him lose sight of this goal.[92] He even claimed that his physical anatomy was not equipped for marriage: "I suppose one would say they [his hands] are somewhat delicately made for a man and the fingers are rather unusual in that they are the same thickness all the way up. This makes it impossible for me to keep a ring on them."[93] His reluctance towards committed personal relationships with women and his belief in polygamy demonstrate that he was not interested in European ideals of love or marriage but rather focused all of his energy on the fight for independence. Strangely, despite all of these statements, Nkrumah married an Egyptian woman named Helena Ritz Fathia at the end of 1957. I suppose that once independence was achieved, he felt pressure to marry, which had always been a marker of adult male status in Akan societies.

As a man during the liberation struggle, it was important to remain focused and not lose sight of one's goals. Women distracted men and enslaved them, much like colonial rulers. Nkrumah strove to secure an equal place in society for women to receive their support during the movement, but his political actions were not reflective of his personal opinions. We must wonder what his true personal opinions were because he expressed his distaste for marriage yet

[91] Ibid., 12.
[92] Ibid., 42.
[93] Ibid., 67.

proceeded to get married. As is the case with many politicians, one must ask which of their actions were political and which were personal. Nationalism was equated with masculinity in Nkrumah's writing. He states that "not protesting equals cowardice."[94] *The Accra Evening News* carried three slogans; one of them stated "We have the right to live as Men."[95] Masculinity in Nkrumah's Ghana during the 1950's involved a feeling of national fervor. Although Nkrumah strove to defend equality for women, his language set men apart from and above women.

Conclusion

Through an analysis of the political rhetoric of the leader of Ghana's independence movement, supplemented with popular newspaper advertisements, ideals of co-existing forms of masculinity are identifiable. Nkrumah focused on a modern form of masculinity, centered on wage labor, city-living, and success, despite his claims that his party was inclusive of all members of Ghanaian society. He stressed the importance of education and intellect in the struggle for independence and relied on brain power rather than physical power to overcome his obstacles. He recommended these ideals to his party. These ideals were also present in the popular culture of 1950's Ghana.

An older, "traditional" form of masculinity, relying on senior status, co-existed with Nkrumah's belief in modern masculinity. This older form stressed the importance of being a "real man." In order to be a "real man" physical

[94] Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path*, 83.
[95] Ibid., 72.

strength was the most important attribute. Health, strength, and physical ability characterized ideal masculinity in many ways. As Obeng argued, even women could achieve senior masculinity if they had these attributes. Looking at Nkrumah's political strategy of Positive Action one may challenge the more common analysis of masculinity as connected with forms of violence. Yet it is important to understand this as an intellectual form of masculinity and not to assume that all masculinity is embodied in violence.

Nkrumah's political rhetoric was motivated by his desire for leadership and did not always reflect his personal opinions about gender. Nevertheless, women's opportunities in politics and education thrived in Nkrumah's Ghana. The language used in his writing provides insight into his feelings towards women, and in turn his masculine expectations. Popular newspaper advertisements illustrate this strand of modern, African masculinity that was present during the liberation struggle and upon the achievement of independence in Ghana. Multiple forms of masculinity co-existed in Ghana, but the modern and African masculinity discussed in this paper were embodied and supported by Nkrumah and therefore became most prominent. Early in the twentieth century, chiefs and colonial reformers urged women to take on more domestic roles. These ideas remained relevant throughout the independence struggle in many ways while, at least occasionally, they were challenged by Nkrumah's encouragement of women to be active in the political arena.

With goals of development and industrialization, a more western form of masculinity emerged, supported by Nkrumah throughout his political career.

Because of Nkrumah's larger than life presence on the political stage, his captivating rhetoric and influential opinions allow insight into the complex and ambiguous nature of masculinity in Ghana in the mid-twentieth century. This complexity defined many aspects of Ghanaian society during the struggle for independence. Studying Nkrumah's role in this ambiguity allows a broader understanding of how gender ideals emerged during this turbulent political era. These gender complexities existed before colonialism, continued under colonial rule, and did not disappear with the introduction of independence.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Accra Evening News. Star Publishing Company. Accra, Ghana, 1955-1965.
Ashanti Pioneer. Abura Print Works Ltd. Kumasi, Ghana, 1955-1962.
Daily Graphic. West African Graphic Co. Accra, Ghana, 1955-1965.
Nkrumah, Kwame. *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*. New York: International Publishers, [1957] 1971.
Nkrumah, Kwame. *Revolutionary Path*. New York: International Publishers, 1973.

Secondary Sources

Adoo, Ebenezer Obiri. *Kwame Nkrumah: A Case Study of Religion and Politics in Ghana*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., 1997.
Akyeampong, Emmanuel. *Drink, Power, and Culture: A Social History of Alcohol in Ghana, c.1800 to Recent Times*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996.
Allman, Jean. *The Quills of the Porcupine*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993.
Allman, Jean and Victoria Tashjian. *"I Will Not Eat Stone": A Women's History of Colonial Asante*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000.
Arhin, Kwame (Ed). The *Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah*. Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press, Inc., 1993.
Austin, Dennis. *Politics in Ghana 1946-1960*. London: Oxford University Press, 1964.
Baynham, Simon. *The Military and Politics in Nkrumah's Ghana*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988.
Birmingham, David. Kwame Nkrumah: *The Father of African Nationalism*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1998.
Botchway, Francis A. *Political Development and Social Change in Ghana: Ghana Under Nkrumah*. Buffalo, New York: Black Academy Press, Inc., 1972.
Chazan, Naomi and Deborah Pellow. *Ghana: Coping With Uncertainty*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986.
Cole, Catherine. *Ghana's Concert Party Theatre*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.
Fitch, Bob and Mary Oppenheimer. *Ghana: End of an Illusion*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966.
Gouda, Francis. "Gender and Hyper-Masculinity As Post-Colonial Modernity During Indonesia's Struggle For Independence, 1945-1949." In *Gender, Sexuality, and Colonial Modernities*, ed. Antoinette Burton. London: Routledge, 1999.
Lindsay, Lisa A. and Stephan F. Miescher. *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003.
Manuh, Takyiwah. "Women and their Organizations During the Convention People's Party Period." In *The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah*, ed. Kwame Arhin. Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press, Inc., 1993.
Miescher, Stephan. *Making Men in Ghana*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, in press.

Miescher, Stephan. "The Making of Presbyterian Teachers: Masculinity and Programs of Education in Colonial Ghana" In *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa,* ed. Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003.

Mohan, Jitendra. "Ghana, The Congo, and the United Nations." *In Colonialism and Nationalism in Africa: African Nationalism and Independence,* ed Maddox, Gregory and Timothy K. Welliver. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993.

Morrell, Robert, "Of Boys and Men: Masculinity and Gender in Southern African Studies," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (1998), 605-630.

Obeng, Pashington. "Gendered Nationalism: Forms of Masculinity in Modern Asante of Ghana." In *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa,* ed. Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003.

Rathbone, Richard. *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: the Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana, 1951-1960.* Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2003

Tetteh, M.N. *The Ghana Young Pioneer Movement.* Ghana: Ghana Publicity Limited, 1999.

Timothy, Bankole. *Kwame Nkrumah From Cradle to Grave.* Dorchester, Dorset: The Gavin Press, 1981.

White, Luise. "Matrimony and Rebellion: Masculinity in Mau Mau." *In Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, ed. Lindsay, Lisa A. and Stephan F. Miescher. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003.


"I ALWAYS USE
KIWI
POLISH—
my shoes look
much smarter"
KIWI
KIWI
BOOT POLISH
NEW POPULAR TIN 6d.
LARGE TIN 1/-
You will only be really smart if your shoes are smart. That's why so many successful men use KIWI. KIWI's rich waxes and real shoemaker's dyes not only give your shoes a brilliant shine, but protect the leather and make your shoes last longer. Buy a tin today and see for yourself!
BE SMART—BUY
KIWI

figure 1

JOHNNY FRANCOIS ACN 8/23/1960

...oa by air later

...e team motored ...ang up match ...esentative side ...e the three-day ...row

... the Accra Oval

...e team and the ...n Monday. ...captain of the ...hances his team ... but said "We

...st to ...dium

Quartey said later ...no better place ...have been selec...

...sent at the meet... ...ra Mr. J A Den... Secretary to the ...ral Commissioner ... R Hammond ... Secretary, Mr. ... Berman Chairman ... Cape Coast Muni... Council and Mr. ...h Foote, Town ...

...ree visitors will ...resides, a football ...lawn tennis courts ...k, gymnasium and ...rowing pool

SPORTING BRIEFS

ACCRA C B Ordnant Table Tennis Club beat Vans Club by eight games to one at Swedru on Saturday The tournament was in honour of the District Manager, Mr J R Bell, who is on transfer to Accra

★

BECHEM Agriculture beat Bechem Town by 4-2 in a football match played at Bechem on Sunday to mark the census night

★

ODA Shooting Stars defeated Swedru CYO by two goals to nil in a census football match played at the Catholic School Park, Asim Swedru

★

RAHIU King, the Nigerian feather weight who has board a draw with Graciew Lamperti the French European Champion, makes his first appearance in Britain at the Empire Pool, Wembley, next Tuesday when he meets Con Mount Hassey, of Jamaica

The contest will be over eight rounds at 9st. 2lbs.

...ect New

...President of the ...ch with Mr. E. W. ...ng held at Swedru

...Mr. S. K. Gordon, ...Gonash, Assistant ... Financial Secre...

ABOVE: ***B. Bashiru breaks the tape to beat Mike Ahey by three clear yards. Mike Ahey beat Bashiru during the heats of the Accra Regional Championships over the week-end. Bashiru's win con...***

figure 2


Well-dressed men choose
Golden Corsair
SHOES
Golden Corsair shoes have smart, modern styling that's admired everywhere. So comfortable to wear, too! Yet the prices are very reasonable. Made from selected English leather, Golden Corsair are the finest value shoes you can buy!
THE SHOES IN THE GOLDEN BOX!
GOOD SHOE SENSE!
Never decide on shoes until you're sure they're comfortable! The shopman knows your correct size. That's why it's best to buy
FROM YOUR LOCAL U.A.C. STORE.
EXCLUSIVE TO U·A·C

figure 3

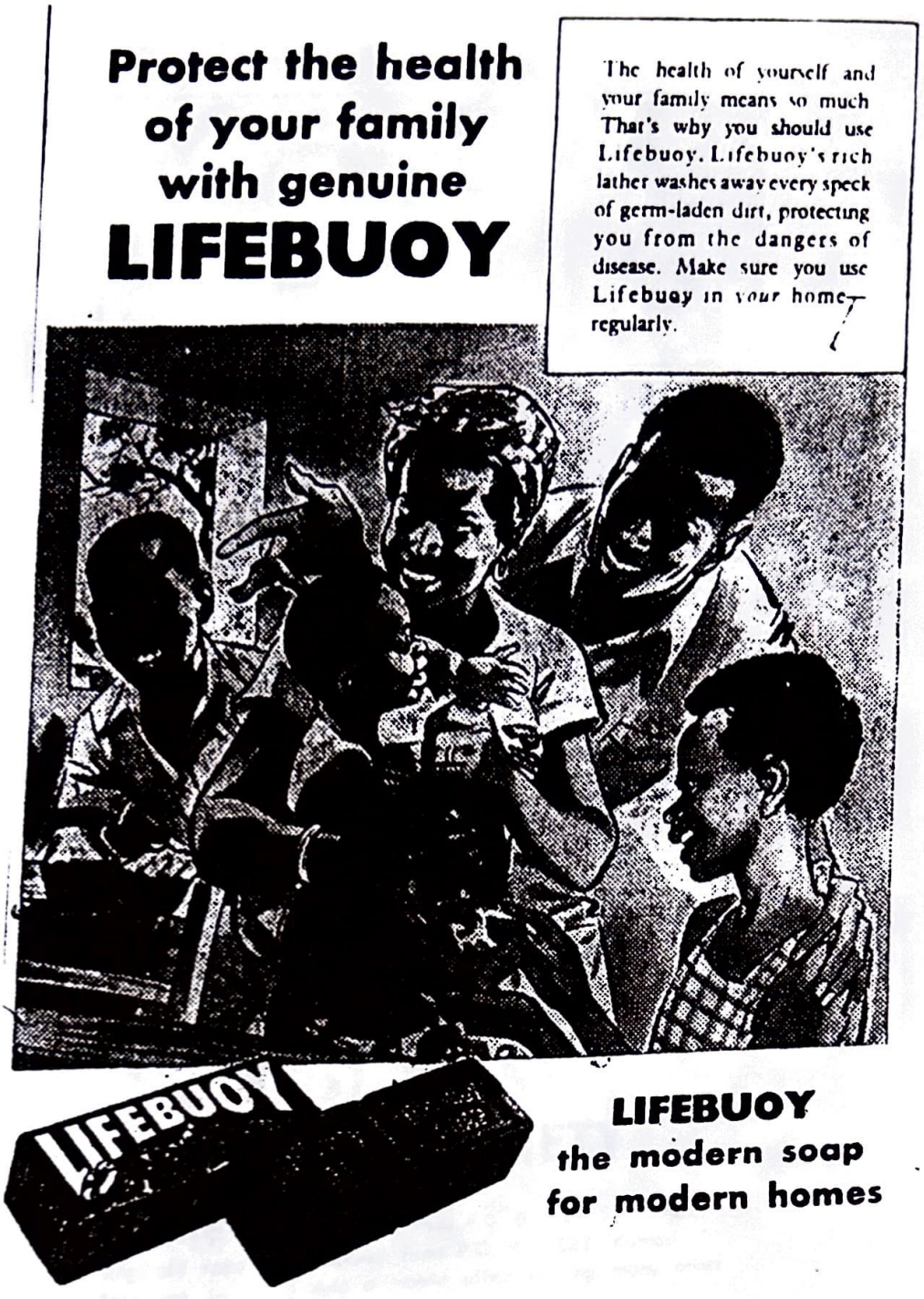
Protect the health of your family with genuine LIFEBUOY
The health of yourself and your family means so much That's why you should use Lifebuoy. Lifebuoy's rich lather washes away every speck of germ-laden dirt, protecting you from the dangers of disease. Make sure you use Lifebuoy in your home regularly.
LIFEBUOY
LIFEBUOY
the modern soap
for modern homes

figure 4

Love alone is not enough...

Your children look to you for security, for opportunities such as higher education and a chance to enjoy the better things in life.

. . . it takes money to ensure for your child's future—for a right start in life.

A few pounds a month in the First Ghana Building Society soon builds up into a substantial sum.

It pays to save with the

FIRST GHANA BUILDING SOCIETY

Pays 4½% the highest rate of interest in Ghana.

Boundary Road P.O. Box 2958, Accra.
Maxwell Road P.O. Box 827, Kumasi.
And a mobile office visiting many other towns.

figure 5

Your dreams for your CHILDREN CAN COME TRUE

When you look into your child's face you see before you the man of the future as you want him to be—a big man in all ways. If you have hopes for your children you can help bring them about with Ghana Insurance's Special Endowment plan at a surprisingly low cost. Funds for his education are assured—even if you die after the first premium. With Ghana Insurance there are benefits for you while you live—or for those who live after you.

Contact us for further information

GHANA INSURANCE CO. LTD.

GHANA GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED

HEAD OFFICE: P.O. BOX 4363
TELEPHONE: 2096 ACCRA

REGIONAL BRANCHES AT SEKONDI
TAKORADI—SWEDRU—AKIM ODA
KUMASI—HO—HOHOE
TAMALE—TEMA

Your Key to Security

figure 6


men of tomorrow
THE SALES MANAGER
Progress and expansion are the driving forces of the country today! Trained men are needed for tomorrow's important business developments. The Sales Manager controls the sales team, and his expert knowledge of marketing is vital to commercial success. The United Africa Company is proud to play an important part in the training of such highly-skilled 'Men of Tomorrow.'
SALES
Training
FOR THE FUTURE
In office or workshop, at the docks or store or wherever he works, it is the trained man who makes progress—the man who knows his job thoroughly. U.A.C. trains its staff in many different skills and has many comprehensive training schemes and schools for this purpose.
Hundreds of Africans every year qualify for positions of authority in U.A.C. in this way. U.A.C. training produces technicians, salesmen, clerical and secretarial staff, transport and lighterage staff and management—men with a future, 'Men of Tomorrow.'
THE UNITED AFRICA COMPANY
OF GHANA LIMITED

figure 7


DENCE
NKRUMAH'S MIDNIGHT MESSAGE...
"At long last the battle has ended. And thus Ghana our beloved country is free for ever. I want to take this opportunity to thank the chiefs, the youth, the people and the women who have fought a wonderful battle."
THE PRIME MINISTER
MARCH 6, 1957
Independence Day
Hoe
Keta

figure 8


BEHOLD YOUR MAN
POSITIVE ACTION
MAN
TO DO
DUTY
The Messiah
"WE HAVE MADE THE CAUSE OF THE PEOPLE OUR VERY OWN, WE HAVE TAKEN UPON OURSELVES ALL THE SORROWS OF A GENERATION, WE HAVE PLACED OURSELVES BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND THEIR ADVERSARY. AND GOD HAS ACCEPTED US" —NKRUMAH

figure 9