

Nana Twumasi-Ntiamoah

**DIGITAL SAFEGUARDING OF INTANGIBLE AUDIO-  
VISUAL HERITAGE: MAKING THE JHK NKETIA  
ARCHIVES ACCESSIBLE**

MA Thesis in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management.

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**DIGITAL SAFEGUARDING OF INTANGIBLE HERITAGE:  
MAKING THE JHK NKETIA AUDIO-VISUAL ARCHIVES  
ACCESSIBLE**

by

Nana Twumasi-Ntiamoah

(Ghana)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,  
Central European University, Vienna, in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
of the Master of Arts degree in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy,  
Management.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Chair, Examination Committee

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Thesis Supervisor

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Examiner

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External Reader

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External Supervisor

I, the undersigned, **Nana Twumasi-Ntiamoah**, candidate for the MA degree in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research, and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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# Abstract

The JHK Nketia Archive represents the history of modern Ghana. The archival materials reflect the political story and journey of Ghana from its immediate colonial past through to the independence of the nation as well as the intangible political heritage of present-day governance in Ghana. For this reason, it is important to find the means and strategies to preserve this archival heritage and the materials extant in the archive that speak to Ghanaian cultural identity.

An important but fragile part of Ghanaian intangible heritage is stored within the archive. Due to the physical delicacy of old media such as film and tapes, there is a possibility that this heritage will be lost if measures are not taken to preserve at least part of the older audio-visual information by digitizing the recordings of song, dance, ritual, stories, and other data stored there now but in danger from a variety of sources. Ghana's archival institutions are experiencing various difficulties in managing their collections. Some of these include staff with limited expertise and equipment that is not sufficient and efficient to properly manage the materials. These issues are coupled with the absence of cultural policy decisions by the government towards digitization as well as limited public and scholarly accessibility. In outlining the processes and need for safeguarding the audio-visual heritage of Ghana, I selected a qualitative methodology together with interviews, participant observation, and ethnographic research as the main data collection instruments. The research emphasizes the need to safeguard this heritage through digitization to preserve information and make at least part of it accessible to the public accessibility. Some suggestions and recommendations were proposed to help champion policy formulation and legislative decisions connected to these aspects of Ghana's tangible and intangible heritage.

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# Introduction

In Ghana, the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage knowledge systems is still predominantly preserved in continuous and evolving traditional performance in rural Ghana. Although effective in the past, the shifting direction of national development towards industrialization renders oral tradition as a carrier of social identities and culture unstable and unsustainable. Many young people who could potentially continue these cultural legacies through performance shift their attention to white and blue-collar jobs in towns and cities and only associate performance heritage with entertainment.

The work of UNESCO in helping to preserve and support tangible and intangible heritage has come at a time when new methodologies for protecting oral traditions in modern, urban contexts need to be reconsidered. “Following the adoption of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage in 2003, the protection of cultural traditions has become prominent on an international level. One of the key arguments in this area is that humanity's intangible heritage is threatened by processes of globalization. Modern technologies and mass culture are often regarded as a threat to the survival of traditional expressions.”<sup>1</sup>

In this thesis, I will investigate the existing technical apparatus available for safeguarding ICH in Ghanaian institutions such as universities, archives, and museums to ascertain its physical shortfalls and identify possibilities for improvement, while protecting the rights of the people who still actively participate in traditional oral and dance performance. I will carry out a critical analysis of how modern scientific archiving techniques can augment existing efforts to promote

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<sup>1</sup> Marilena Alivizatou-Barakou et al., ‘Intangible Cultural Heritage and New Technologies: Challenges and Opportunities for Cultural Preservation and Development’, in *Mixed Reality and Gamification for Cultural Heritage* (Springer, 2017), 129–58.

ICH propagation and sustainability. The study will also identify and look at how the tools and strategies of digitization can be used to make this intangible heritage attractive and accessible to younger generations living removed from rural life as well as for academics who wish to conduct further research. I situate this project within intangible cultural heritage scholarship and the protection of cultural traditions as well as within the history of digital globalization in Ghana as part of the concept of heritage.

# Chapter 1 – Background to the Study

## 1.1 Introduction

I remember back in our towns and villages, we used to sit outside by the fire side and our grandparents would tell us stories and teach us things about our heritage that remains with us till today such as the virtues of discipline and honesty found in orally transmitted stories.

The notion of intangible cultural heritage, as it is used in this thesis, concerns the immaterial expressions and manifestations of culture. Intangible heritage represents the variety within the rich living heritage of humans and their communities and is an essential means of expressing and maintaining cultural diversity.<sup>2</sup> This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their natural environment, their interactions with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

Archives in today's Ghana primarily serve to strengthen a political and national identity connected to the beginnings of independent and developing Ghana as well as the dance, music and song heritages of various tribal groups in Ghana.

The JHK Nketia Archive materials represent both the history of modern Ghana as well as the political story and journey of Ghana from its immediate colonial past in the 1950s through to national independence and the present-day, forming the tangible political heritage of present-day governance in Ghana.

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<sup>2</sup> Federico Lenzerini, 'Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Living Culture of Peoples', *European Journal of International Law* 22, no. 1 (1 February 2011): 101–20, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/chr006>.

It is for this reason that it is important to find means and strategies to preserve this archival heritage and the materials extant in these archive that speak to this part of Ghanaian cultural identity. An important but fragile part of Ghanaian intangible heritage is stored within archives on older media that degrade over time. Due to the physical delicacy of old media such as film and tapes, there is a possibility that this heritage will be lost if measures are not taken to at least preserve the older audio-visual information by digitizing the recordings of song, dance, ritual, stories, and other data now stored on them but in danger from a variety of sources.

A particular dance performance was selected as an illustrative case study for this research as it contains elements connected to the political heritage of Ghana as well as living dance and music elements still practiced and evolving today. The creation and formation of this dance movement was part of the liberation fight for the freedom of Ghana from the British who called the area the Gold Coast.

Much of traditional, living intangible cultural heritage in Ghana is threatened with oblivion due to the impacts of globalization.<sup>3</sup> Thus, there is also a need to record, document and preserve this part of Ghanaian cultural heritage and knowledge through digital technologies and online platforms, bringing new life to audio-visual heritage through broader public access to such materials. Audio-visual materials can be one of the bearers of intangible heritage, allowing the intangible to be stored and protected, at least in their older forms, in archival institutions. These media continue to be an effective medium for extending the life of most African intangible cultures and their accompanying knowledge systems.

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<sup>3</sup> Michelle L Stefano, Peter Davis, and Gerard Corsane, "Touching the Intangible:" 2021, 1–7.

Ghana's climate is tropical and the hot damp conditions in inadequate storage facilities, often lacking climate control, is especially hard on older forms of audio-visual recording materials and its preservation. The increasingly volatile physical conditions in existing archival systems connected to the raw materials, age or storage conditions need urgent reassessment. A more conscious, dynamic, and effective approach through emerging technological advancements is required to safeguard this part of Ghana's audio-visual heritage.

The increasing global recognition, both international and national, of the need to protect, promote, and invigorate cultural expressions and practices of communities, groups and individuals is growing in importance. Intangible cultural heritage has a long history that concerns less palpable but equally critical aspects of human existence, that is, knowledge, memories, feelings, etc. The digital transformation of older types of media is an important way to protect knowledge within any institution and organization.

In the JHK Nketia Archives, the institution at the core of this thesis, preservation and storage issues have essentially blocked access to the information they hold, even by researchers. An example is the case of inaccessibility of an important dance performance material in the archive that was requested by a researcher. He found access very challenging because the dance performance was recorded on old materials in storage and there were also difficulties with the equipment need to look at them. A very long process and multiple attempts down various technical paths were required before the dance performance content could be retrieved. This problematic story highlights the need for employing transformation of archival content through digitization to help safeguard these ICH and made them easily accessible to scholars as well as the broader public.



Digital transformation requires institutional change realized by means of new digital technologies and with the aim of improving the institutions operational performance.<sup>4</sup> In heritage archives such as the Nketia Archives, digital transformation deals with the technological advancement of the operations in management of collections. The digitization of intangible cultural heritage recorded on old media to help with the management of collections and improving operational performance, in turn affects public access and dissemination of this content of such great value to both the political and intangible heritage of Ghana. The potential impacts on the other communities and stakeholders of users and potential users of the JHK Nketia Archives are even more important.

Digitization of older types of media is an important way to protect knowledge within any audio-visual institution and organization. CDs (mp3, mp4, etc.), and other physical records of living heritage are always in danger of being lost or damaged, so their digitization ensures that the material is backed up and can last longer. Since making this material accessible to the public raises awareness and contributes to feelings of national identity and cohesion, transforming collections into a digitized format supports the longevity of traditions for communities or institutions. In addition, access to older materials may revitalize traditions that are no longer practiced but can still be appreciated by a wider public for whom the memory of this heritage is fading.

The process of safeguarding, based on digitization, creates accessibility for use at any time. Safeguarding the audio-visual heritage of Ghana through digitization lies at the core of this research project because it connotes continuation of cultural actions that promote Ghanaian

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<sup>4</sup> Adam Marks et al., 'Digital Transformation in Higher Education: A Framework for Maturity Assessment', *International Journal of Computer Science and Application* 11 (1 December 2020).

national identity among the many and varied Ghanaian tribal groups and far-flung communities found across the nation.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Ghana is at a disadvantage since it does not have a technology-focused framework for the preservation of its traditional audio-visual heritage as a form of ICH. This is because many indigenous people in the country live in remote or hard-to-access rural areas. Here, these oral traditions are kept alive through daily performance during festivals, ceremonies, or events. New dances are introduced and have local impact, but less knowledge is being shared through various means to these audiences to help them understand the history of that dance and what the dance looked like in traditional performance.

Archival institutions in Ghana suffer from or are currently undergoing lots of difficulties in managing their collections.<sup>5</sup> Some of these difficulties include staff with limited expertise and equipment that is inadequate for properly managing and viewing these materials. This lack of management and technical experience as well as absence of proper equipment, causes problems when managing large amounts of information, also causing physical damage to these old media materials. The main need at the moment is to rapidly transform all or, at least, some key aspects of their activities or operations before these archival institutions, together with the media materials stored within them, are damaged beyond repair.<sup>6</sup> The difficulty is to figure out how these audio-visual institutions need to be organized and, in particular, be equipped to allow

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<sup>5</sup> Monica Mensah, Emmanuel Adjei, and Musah Adams, 'Keeping Our Story: Preservation of Audio Visual Archives in Ghana', 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Bitange Ndemo and Tim Weiss, 'Making Sense of Africa's Emerging Digital Transformation and Its Many Futures', *Africa Journal of Management* 3, no. 3-4 (2 October 2017): 328-47, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322373.2017.1400260>.

them to embrace digital safeguarding. The stock of audio-visual heritage about Ghana can be found online through the works of amateur archivists who may not necessarily understand the importance of their recordings to future research. There has little concerted effort to sensitize the academic field of Heritage Studies (music, dance, drama, archeology, etc) in Ghana on the relevance of this knowledge. These issues are coupled with an absence of cultural policy decisions by the government towards digitization. Broader public and scholarly accessibility to the audio-visual materials and proper administration of the respective institutions is also problematic.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study will comprise a guide or a management plan and ultimately a model for other institutions archiving traditional materials in Ghana or even in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. The Nketia archives in Accra have already to begin to embrace this digitization process in liaison with other institutions and organizations in technologically more advanced countries but much remains to be done. These recommendations are also aimed at archives of Ghanaian audio-visual materials connected to cultural heritage and will include policy recommendations based on my personal experience at the JHK Nketia archive.

As a case study, I have selected the recordings and current situation of the Borborbor Dance of the Anlo-Ewe people of Ghana. This dance-drumming tradition, which emerged among the Ewe people as an off-shoot of the older secular dances known as *Konkoma*, *Tuidzi* and *Akpese*,

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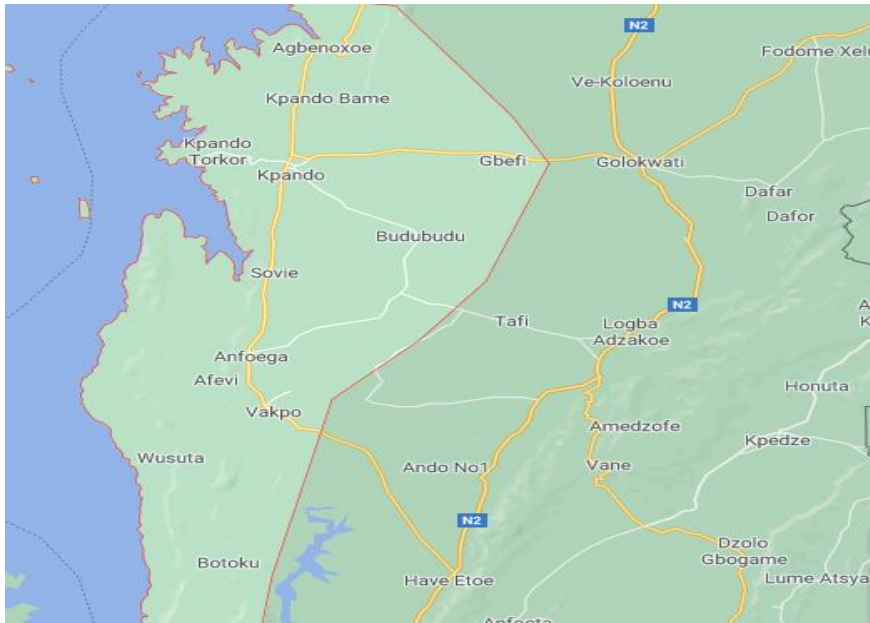
<sup>7</sup> Mercy U Nwegbu, Cyril C Eze, and Brendan E Asogwa, "Globalization of Cultural Heritage: Issues, Impacts, and Inevitable Challenges for Nigeria," *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 2011, 1; .Catherine F. Pinion, 'Preserving Our Audiovisual Heritage: A National and International Challenge', *Alexandria* 4, no. 3 (1 December 1992): 155–70, <https://doi.org/10.1177/095574909200400302>.

gained great popularity and prominence in the 1950s in the village of Kpando in the Volta region. The dance became one of the recreational dance creations of the independence movement in Ghana as well as a source of entertainment.<sup>8</sup> It is also known as *Agbeyeye* which means “New Life” and *Akpese* which means “Music of Joy.”<sup>9</sup> The dance was chosen as a stage upon which to address the digitization procedures and means adopted by the archives for making this evolving dance tradition accessible to young people and researchers for academic purposes. I selected this dance as a case study due to its connection to the historical background of Ghana’s independence as well as its role as part of an intangible heritage bringing unity among Ghanaians through performance and dance education as well as training in this dance form among other ethnic groups.

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<sup>8</sup> Efram Fiagbedzi, ‘Eve Recreational Drum Music in the Course of Time – Talking with Drums.’, 2018, <https://talkingwithdrums.ch/?p=284&lang=en>.

<sup>9</sup> Paschal Yao. Younge, *Music, and Dance Traditions of Ghana: History, Performance and Teaching* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2011), 113–15.



*Figure 1 Area in south western Ghana along the Volta river (in light green) where the Borborbor Dance originated. Source: Google Maps, 2021*



*Figure 2 Local people performing the Borborbor Dance. Source: Field Data, 2021. Photo by Joshua Benumanson*

## **1.4 Justification of the study**

The neglect of constant technological interrogation in the drive to preserve audio-visual heritage materials in Ghana has the potential to accelerate the physical, inadvertent destruction of ICH forms or oral traditions even more quickly than does actual non-participation in the rituals, songs, dances, and stories of traditional village life. This is because the materials available in the archives or institutions have been recorded on storage media which easily deteriorate in the climatic conditions in Ghana and as they naturally age. This also can make it difficult for to the wider public to access these materials since the materials can only be accessed within the archive and technological channels of access such as websites and apps, are not available etc. National and institutional policy in this regard must be supported by research into effective ways to digitize these materials to support existing on-going efforts of supporting heritage in the country.

## 1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the physical problems with older audio-visual materials in the archives?  
What are the organizational problems?
2. What are the challenges and ethical issues involved in digitizing materials identified by the archives themselves?
3. What are the roles of universities, museums, and private institutions as stakeholders in championing an effective national policy towards safeguarding audio-visual ICH through digitization?
4. What is the political heritage aspect of the materials connected to the intangible heritage of Ghana currently stored in the archives?

## 1.6 Research limitations

The study began in the region of Ghana where the Borborbor dance form originated, with the original aim of interacting with traditional dance participants. Unfortunately, I had only a very short time to stay in the village and the weather was bad, which made it difficult to visit places according to their customs before they agreed to take part in interviews, incurring financial obligations for the study of various forms of the dance within the community. These restrictions meant that I was able to conduct far fewer face-to-face interviews than I originally hoped to.

## 1.7 Ethical issues connected to Intangible Culture Heritage in Ghana

Ethical issues are important and key aspects of every profession, nation, association, etc. I needed to be aware and organize the research so that it does not infringe on the privacy of the

subjects. The ethical issues addressed in the paper comprise aspects that relate to my work are connected to digitization and safeguarding intangible heritage in Ghana at the JHK Nketia Archives. The ethical issues with regards to the materials in the archives include making public, the faces of long-dead relatives without permission of the descendants as well as the older and modern forms of the dance which the descendants feel belong to them and their village.

Ethics are norms of conduct regarding acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in a society from a cultural perspective.<sup>10</sup> These ethical principles for the safeguarding of the intangible heritage are derived from the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage as well as existing international normative instruments for the protection and consideration of human rights and the rights of indigenous peoples. The core values of this convention are to ensure effective community participation and ownership of the safeguarding practices.<sup>11</sup> This is an international agreement that has been framed based on the need and requirements of safeguarding, protecting, and promoting intangible heritage.

Ethics inform the laws of operation, and the law informs ethics. This means ethics are the derived from policies that have become a model used with regards to intangible heritage. The power of ethics and the impact of the law form within social contexts. This differs according to societies and cultural settings.<sup>12</sup> This also means that the community determines the norms that can be acceptable or unacceptable behaviours.

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<sup>10</sup> UNESCO, 'UNESCO - Ethics and Intangible Cultural Heritage', 2015, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866>.

<sup>11</sup> Manase Kudzai Chiweshe, 'Ethics in the Context of Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding', May 2019, 21.

<sup>12</sup> Hilary A. Soderland and Ian A. Lilley, 'The Fusion of Law and Ethics in Cultural Heritage Management: The 21st Century Confronts Archaeology', *Journal of Field Archaeology* 40, no. 5 (1 October 2015): 508–22, <https://doi.org/10.1179/2042458215Y.0000000024>.



The case study for the kind of intangible heritage preserved in the archives is the aforementioned Borborbo performance from the Anlo-Ewe community in Ghana.

This convention provides a framework for the discussion and conceptualization of ethics within the sphere of intangible cultural heritage and its activities. Due to the humanistic nature of intangible heritage through lived experiences, there is a need for ethical considerations that seek to protect the persons, communities, and cultures through safeguarding practices that are universally accepted. The ethics provides a framework that gives contextual basis to analyse and document as well as minimise impact of misrepresentation which can be common within the context of safeguarding practices. These ethical principles are intended to serve as basis for the development of specific codes of ethics and tools which helps with the implementation of the convention and national legislative frameworks.<sup>13</sup>

### 1.7.1 Intellectual property rights (intellectual property rights, copyright and fair use of materials)

Even though many developed countries have recognized the advantages and importance of intellectual property rights, Ghana as a developing country is yet to fully implement them, especially regarding traditional forms of cultural heritage. Intellectual property rights is concerned with things of an intangible nature, aimed at safeguarding and rewarding creativity and uniqueness. This is considered relevant as an ethical issue because of the nature of the dance and the claims of many people and communities to be the originators of the performance.

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<sup>13</sup> Marc Jacobs, 'The Spirit of the Convention—Interlocking Principles and Ethics for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage', *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* 11 (2016): 72–87.

There is the need for such protection since it helps avoids indiscriminate use of this dance form and helps to properly structure the dance's dissemination.<sup>14</sup>

The main intellectual property laws in Ghana are the Copyright Act, 2005(Act 690)

Patents Act,2003(Act 657)

Protection Against Unfair Competition Act, 2000 (Act 589).

Copyrights protect original works of authorship and normally the original expressions of an idea. Copyrights last the duration of the life of the author plus an added 70 years in Ghana. The importance of this element of copyright is to protect creative individuals such as authors and artists (including traditional dance artists) from having their work copied or reproduced without their consent.<sup>15</sup> Ghana is one of the countries in the world with a restrictive copyright legal system. The government seeks to prevent misuse and guard against exploitation of this heritage.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Seidu Adams, *Intellectual Property Rights and Copyright Protection in Ghana*, 2018, <https://www.grin.com/document/470975>.

<sup>15</sup> Eva Owusu Sarpong, 'The Dilemma of Copyright in Sub-Saharan Africa: Ghana in Focus', 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Stephen Collins, 'Ghana's Copyright Law for Folklore Hampers Cultural Growth', *The Conversation*, 22 September 2019, <http://theconversation.com/ghanas-copyright-law-for-folklore-hampers-cultural-growth-123550>.

# Chapter 2 -The Borborbo Performance and Historical Background of the JHK Nketia Archives

## 2.1 History of the JHK Nketia Archives



Figure 3 Location of the JHK Nketia Archives in Accra Source: (Google Earth Engine, 2021)

The JHK Nketia Archives (henceforth JHKNA) has been and continue to be a formative institution in the collection, organisation, management, and preservation of its holdings. This archive is an important asset because it contains materials and field recordings collected as part of Ghana’s post-colonial national thinking and policy. There are two main types of archives at the University of Ghana: The University archive is a paper-based archive set up to preserve the records of the entire university, while the JHK Nketia Archives, the subject of the present study, were set up to preserve both audio-visual and paper-based materials, focusing most sharply on

many aspects of Ghanaian traditional intangible culture. The archives contain both historical and present-day data.<sup>17</sup>



Figure 4 Emeritus Professor J.H.K Nketia. Source: Dominik Phyfferoen, 'Tribute to Joseph Hanson Kwabena Nketia', *Celebrating a Legend: Emeritus Professor Joseph Hanson Kwabena Nketia (1921-2019)*, 2019, 50–51.

The JHKNA started as a sound archive within the Institute of African Studies. The archive is named after a world-renowned Ghanaian ethnomusicologist, Emeritus Professor J.H. Kwabena Nketia, who is known to have first conceived the idea of preserving indigenous cultural materials from different ethnic groups all over Ghana. This archive began from his personal collection. Before him, nobody had produced such collections, except for the national archive. There is a National Archive but policies for maintaining the archive and its use by the general public are not strong enough which made it quite unknown until Nketia Archive came onto the

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<sup>17</sup> Judith Opoku-Boateng et al., 'The J.H. Kwabena Nketia Archive at the University of Ghana- Legon', *History in Africa* 47 (June 2020): 375–82, <https://doi.org/10.1017/hia.2019.27>.

scene. One of the reasons why the Nketia Archive is thriving is that it is situated in academic circles. This has heightened the need for this archive because people know its value due to their academic interest in its holdings. This initiative was affectionately supported by Professor Kofi Abrefa Busia, Head of the Sociology Department in the 1950s. Professor Busia provided J.H. Nketia with recording equipment, a Land Rover, a driver, a field assistant, and a technician from the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC).<sup>18</sup> The collections which started the archive originally came from the Department of Sociology, University of Ghana, where Professor Nketia began to store the materials recorded in different places around Ghana. These materials collected by Professor Nketia and his team, comprised music and dance forms, oral histories, rites of passage, etc. The materials were later moved and handed over to Institute of African Studies in 1962. Over the years, researchers affiliated with the institute have added to and increased the collection.

The historical background of the J. H. K. Nketia Archives (hereafter referred to as JHKNA) cannot be expressed without talking about the integral role played by the ethnomusicologist Emeritus Professor J. H. K Nketia. The period the archives were set up are extremely relevant for this study because the archives draw from the work and experience of the founder whose works highlighted the need to safeguard intangible heritage and make it accessible to a wider public. The information and the materials preserved in the archives are crucial since they represent a significant piece of the Ghanaian African's cultural and artistic history.<sup>19</sup> The archives were named after J. H. K Nketia by the Institute of African Studies in honour of his exemplary work and contribution to African studies. His work mainly concerned African music

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<sup>18</sup> Judith Opoku-Boateng et al., 'The J.H. Kwabena Nketia Archive at the University of Ghana- Legon', *History in Africa* 47 (June 2020): 375–82, <https://doi.org/10.1017/hia.2019.27>.

<sup>19</sup> Opoku-Boateng et al., 'The J.H. Kwabena Nketia Archive at the University of Ghana- Legon', June 2020.

and dance, written papers, and books, especially on the culture of the various ethnic groups in Ghana, focusing mainly on the Akan Culture. His research field and interests became the cornerstone of the JHKNA.

During the time of his teacher training from 1937 to 1945 at the Presbyterian Training College & Theological Seminary at Akropong, he met with one of the renowned artists and composers in Ghana at that time and head of that institution whom he admired very much, Ephraim Amu. After this meeting and during further discussions he decided he wanted to develop his interests in music. Ephraim Amu, composer of the Ghana national anthem, said to him, “Young man, don’t copy my music!” but rather advised him to go back home and study the traditional music of his people and find originality there.<sup>20</sup> These words began his career journey of studying and documenting traditional Ghanaian intangible heritage, especially Akan music as performed by elders in the various communities. He was thus, led back to his hometown, where he studied traditional music under the guidance and tutelage of his grandmother and mother, who were pioneers and key players in the musical life of their community. This in-depth music study was documented and transcribed by him and constitutes part of the materials that formed the archives. These collected documentations were identified and earned him scholarships for further studies.<sup>21</sup> The documented material became a manuscript called the *Funeral Dirges of the Akan people*. This manuscript was discovered by Ida Ward from the London School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) when she visited Ghana. She was impressed by the work he was spearheading and helped JHK Nketia get a scholarship to study linguistics, anthropology, and music at their school between 1944 to 1946.

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<sup>20</sup> Dominik Phyfferoen, ‘Tribute to Joseph Hanson Kwabena Nketia’, *Celebrating a Legend: Emeritus Professor Joseph Hanson Kwabena Nketia (1921-2019)*, 2019, 50–51.

<sup>21</sup> E. A. Akrofi, *Sharing Knowledge and Experience: A Profile of Kwabena Nketia, Scholar and Music Educator* (Accra: Afram, 2002).

Kwabena Nketia taught *Twi*<sup>22</sup> for some years before beginning new studies at Birkbeck College, University of London and Trinity college of Music, London to obtain his Bachelor of Arts Degree. It was in London, through the African Students Union, that JHK Nketia met Nkrumah Ako Adjei and many other individuals important in the Ghanaian liberation movement.

In the 1990s, Professor Nketia helped expand the archives, turning them into the International Centre for African Music and Dance (ICMD), a centre that focused on the collection and documentation of materials of music and dance from across Africa, funded by support from institutions and foundations such as the Ford Foundation.<sup>23</sup> The archival collections in their entirety were donated to the IAS after the funding ended in 2008. It was at this time that moving images were added to the already existing collections and the archives became an audio-visual archive. The establishment of the archives in this new format was agreed upon by an Academic Resource Committee. The management further included paper documents placed in the repository in 2014. In February 2015, the archive was officially named after J. H. Kwabena Nketia, in honour of his exemplary, ground-breaking work and contributions to the documentation and archiving of indigenous cultures and the living arts in Ghana, West Africa and other parts of Africa.<sup>24</sup>

With the knowledge and expertise that he accrued, he began moving into rural communities, villages, and so on, to gather music and dance data that he documented on storable materials to preserve these art forms and make them accessible for various purposes. The political

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<sup>22</sup> This is a local language that is widely spoken in Ghana, but it is the main language of the Akan ethnic group.

<sup>23</sup> Opoku-Boateng et al., 'The J.H. Kwabena Nketia Archive at the University of Ghana- Legon', June 2020.

<sup>24</sup> Colter Harper and Judith Opoku-Boateng, 'Renewing Cultural Resources and Sustaining J.H. Kwabena Nketia's Vision for an African Music Archive in Ghana', *International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA) Journal*, no. 50 (7 August 2019): 76–90, <https://doi.org/10.35320/ij.v0i50.101>.

heritage aspect of archives was connected to the business of uniting Ghana as a new country after foreign colonial rule by Great Britain. This is one of the reasons why Prof. Nketia went into the field to gather the materials. Collection of intangible heritage materials from around the country was also seen by the government and Professor Nketia as a way of unifying the Ghanaian people through traditional culture.

This form of data gathering used by Professor Kwabena Nketia is important and has been adopted as a modern practice by the archives and researchers contributing to the archives. This collecting of traditional forms of dance and music provides a sense of national cultural continuity down to the present day.

The materials in the archives are relevant in present-day Ghana because they show the changes in storage devices and information documentation over an approximately 70-year period. The various storage methods are now only important in themselves as material manifestations of then new, politically driven need to collect data on traditional music and dance forms from all parts of Ghana as part of the national unification process.

These audio-visual materials began the digital preservation of intangible heritage elements until recent materials were added. They display the volatile physical nature of the materials the devices are made from and the importance of the content which will be lost if not correctly preserved.

Even though safeguarding of our heritage is important, especially through digitization, not all information needs to be remembered and safeguarded. In order to form new memories with heritage value, some parts of the information may need to be excluded from preservation for practical reasons. These reasons for preservation are currently not well thought out and



seemingly occur at random, all the while information is lost irretrievably because the media, they were recorded on physically deteriorates. Due to the huge size of the collection, assessments must be made to determine priorities concerning which materials must be preserved and which ones are of secondary importance.<sup>25</sup>

## 2.2 Current state of the collections

Since 2014, the archives have played a key role in expanding the academic resources of the Institute of African Studies through their mission to collect, preserve and make these Ghanaian and African Heritage materials accessible and indispensable in support of diverse activities such as teaching and research within the Institute, university, and other educational institutions as well. The JHKNA houses audio-visual heritage materials, Arabic manuscripts, photographic albums, and the historical paper records of the Institute of African Studies. Most of the collections comprise field records from various regions in Ghana and some other parts of Africa as well.<sup>26</sup> The materials are organized in two major collections. The paper-based heritage collection and the audio-visual heritage collection which is what this thesis is concerned with. The archives represent the second largest audio-visual collection in Ghana after the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) Archives. The collections have expanded and grown over the six decades since their inception.<sup>27</sup>

Ghana is only in the preliminary stages of digitization projects and initiatives compared to other countries, with few institutions or organizations taking steps to digitize their endangered

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<sup>25</sup> Rodney Harrison, 'Forgetting to Remember, Remembering to Forget: Late Modern Heritage Practices, Sustainability and the "Crisis" of Accumulation of the Past', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19, no. 6 (1 September 2013): 579–95, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2012.678371>.

<sup>26</sup> Opoku-Boateng et al., 'The J.H. Kwabena Nketia Archive at the University of Ghana- Legon', June 2020.

<sup>27</sup> Harper and Opoku-Boateng, 'Renewing Cultural Resources and Sustaining J.H. Kwabena Nketia's Vision for an African Music Archive in Ghana'.

archival materials.<sup>28</sup> Ghana has only begun quite recently to digitize and digitally preserve their cultural heritage materials.<sup>29</sup> Archives in Ghana focussed more on paper-based forms of preservation with little attempt to develop recording in other media such as images and audio-visuals. It is only recently that certain individual institutions, with the support of other sponsorships and partners, begin digitizing their collections. This digitation work has also begun at the JHKNA as well.

### 2.2.1 Paper-based heritage collections

The paper-based heritage collection is rich in materials connected to the memory of the institute itself, including historical events like the opening of IAS by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana. It contains the personal files of J.H. Kwabena Nketia. These files consist of numerous pieces of information about his work: published and unpublished ethnomusicology research, various work on Akan proverbs, dirges, and recordings of songs. There are documents and correspondence with past directors and deputies of the institute, various academic sections, and units of the institute, as well as their faculties. There is information on various building projects undertaken by the institute and university like the chalets, the Yiri lodge guesthouse, the new IAS building and connections with other institutions and universities in Ghana and internationally.<sup>30</sup>

The paper-based records are labelled and shelved in high-quality and durable storage boxes with a unique filing system (that is, using unique identifiers and numbers). Some boxes bear the stamp of the Institute. Additionally, the Arabic and Ajami manuscripts, collected by Ivor

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<sup>28</sup> A. Alemna and M. Cobblah, 'Relevant Issues in the Provision of Digital Information in Africa', *Library Hi Tech News* 22, no. 9 (1 January 2005): 18–20, <https://doi.org/10.1108/07419050510640486>.

<sup>29</sup> Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (SAGE, 1994).

<sup>30</sup> Opoku-Boateng et al., 'The J.H. Kwabena Nketia Archive at the University of Ghana- Legon', June 2020.

Wilks and Thomas Hodgkin in the early 1950s as well as the associated photograph albums, also form part of the paper-based archives.

The Arabic manuscripts play an essential role in the history of Ghana and West Africa. The Ajami manuscripts contain forms of writing invented to preserve the sacred teachings of Islam. They included a system of transcription and writing from the local languages like Hausa, Gonja, Swahili, Mampurie, Fulfulde, Wolof, and Dangomba. These manuscripts represent expressions of the manuscript tradition in Africa.<sup>31</sup>

## 2.2.2 Audio-visual heritage

Audio-visual materials form the largest proportion of what is stored in the archive. It comprises two major groups of collections: an audio collection and a video collection. The main collection that comprises this unit was compiled by Emeritus Professor JHK Nketia himself. These collections were also expanded over time by various researchers from the Institute and from other parts of the world.

The audio collection contains materials in various media formats such as reel to reel audio (1/4”), micro-cassettes, cassettes, Shellacs<sup>32</sup> (78, 45, and 33 rpm), compact discs, as well as digitally recorded materials in audio formats. Each kind of recording format poses its own problems in terms of physical preservation and finding machines these media can still be played on. Each recording format material may require decisions that will have to be made in terms of what MUST be saved and what can be potentially sacrificed.

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<sup>31</sup> S. Moumouni, ‘Manuscript Tradition in Africa: The Arabia and Ajam Manuscripts at the Institute of African Studies’, *Research Review of the Institute of African Studies* 23, no. 1 (29 October 2007): 15–25, <https://doi.org/10.4314/rrias.v23i1.22965>.

<sup>32</sup> Shellacs are vinyl records, that was previously used to record materials for archiving in the 1950s and 60s.

The video collection is made up of VHS, S-VHS, Betacam, Mini-DV, Hi-8, Video 8 DVD, U-Matic as well as new, digitally produced materials.

(Source: JHK Nketia Archives, 2021)

A few examples of notable content that can be found in this collection are: Numerous examples of Anansesem, Mmoguo, Odurugya music (unique music performed at the court of the Asante king), Fontomfrom music, rare recordings from the Konkomba, Mamprusi, Frafra, Dagarti and Kasena tribes; funeral dirges, work songs, hunters songs, witches songs, storytelling, possession music, traditional cult music, music performed during initiation rites, old highlife music, old brass band music, folk and traditional music from beyond the borders of Ghana and even from outside Africa (a few very rare recordings collected by researchers).<sup>33</sup>

## 2.3 Borborbo Dance as intangible heritage

The Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ (pronounced Borborbo here) is used to refer to this traditional dance and drum performance of the Anlo-Ewe people of the Volta Region in Ghana. It was chosen as representing both the political heritage of the modern Ghanaian state as well as an artistic form that has gradually changed and evolved over the years since it first came into being. The joy that came with achieving independence in Ghana was expressed in various ways by its people. The kind of peace and new life led to the development of several new musical forms. These creations reflected the freedom won and to be enjoyed throughout independence. One of the fruits of Ghana's independence was the Borborbo dance, one of the most popular recreational

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<sup>33</sup> 'J.H. Kwabena Nketia Archives | Institute of African Studies | University of Ghana', accessed 21 November 2021, <https://ias.ug.edu.gh/content/jh-kwabena-nketia-archives>.

dance-drumming events of the Evedomeawo (valley dwellers), Ewe people living in the traditional areas of Ho, Peki, Kpando, Hohoe, Awudome, and so on.<sup>34</sup>



Figure 5 Regional location of the Kpando township Source: Asare-bediako, and others, 2017<sup>35</sup>

The Borborbo dance originated in a town called Kpando during the struggle for independence in Ghana and played a key uniting role during the tumultuous times between 1947 and 1957. It

<sup>34</sup> Zelma C. M. Badu, “Ewe Culture as Expressed in Ghana West Africa through Adzogbo Dance Ceremony: A Foundation for the Development of Interactive Multimedia Educational Materials,” Ph.D. diss. (McGill University, 2002), <https://escholarship.mcgill.ca/concern/theses/fx719m90m>.

<sup>35</sup> Elvis Asare-bediako et al., ‘Spatio-Temporal Variations in the Incidence and Severity of Maize Streak Disease in the Volta Region of Ghana’, *Journal of Plant Pathology & Microbiology* 08 (1 January 2017), <https://doi.org/10.4172/2157-7471.1000401>.

is also known as Agbeyeye (New Life) and Apkese (Music of Joy), expressing the beginnings and impact of independence from colonial rule on the diverse peoples of Ghana.

This performance, also derived from another older secular dance performance called *konkoma*, came into being through the efforts of Francis Kodzo Nuatrɔ, affectionately called F.C. after his retirement from police service. Changes were made in what instruments and drums were used, the dance movements, and the use of more community-based ideas in the choreography. Human, philosophical, moral, and topical themes were given to songs associated with the performance. This new style and developments were very different from the old *konkoma* form of performance, hence the name of the first group to perform was the Kpando Borborbo Band. This performance was, at first, limited to very few towns and villages in this part of the Volta region of Ghana. In recent times, the music and dance spread throughout Ghana and many other parts of West Africa. The dance performance of all Borborbo groups are today based on the foundations laid down by the F.C. Borborbo Band of Kpando and recorded in these early years of the revolution by Professor Nketia.<sup>36</sup>

The historical overview of the Borborbo performance would be incomplete without the integral role played by F.C. His passion and artistic production of the dance caught the attention of important people such as Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who became the first president of Ghana during the period of independence and after. The dance was affectionately called Osagyefo's own Borborbo between the period of 1957 and 1966 until his removal from power in 1966.

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<sup>36</sup> Paschal Yao. *Younge, Music, and Dance Traditions of Ghana: History, Performance and Teaching* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2011).

This event nearly meant the end of the dance, but F.C was a very creative and artistic personality who reorganized the importance of the performance. The focus shifted from its political functions to other forms of entertainment during social occasions and funerals, etc.

The development of Borborbo performance since the 1970s was greatly influenced by the Christian religion, the British system of education as well as other kinds of western music. These transformations can be seen in the forms of instrumentalization that were introduced, the costumes used and the themes of the songs as well as musical styles.<sup>37</sup> The performance is relevant because of the role it plays and continues to play on Ghana's roadmap of toward independence and unity. It has survived through the seasons and years of change, making it a good example of the kind of intangible heritage in need of safeguarding.

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<sup>37</sup> Paschal Yao. Younge, *Music, and Dance Traditions of Ghana: History, Performance and Teaching* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2011).

# Chapter 3- Research Methodology

## 3.1 Introduction

There are several kinds of intangible heritage of great importance, central to cultural identity in Ghana which were recorded and are now stored in the JHKNA archives. However, the lack of a technical framework to digitize and make these ICH materials truly accessible constitutes a threat to the continuation of these forms of intangible heritage. Most of these older performances are preserved on storage materials within the JHKNA as well as at other heritage institutions. These media materials have become obsolete and are impacted by the humid and hot climate characteristic of tropical Ghana. This means many of these materials may eventually become inaccessible over time, not because a deliberate choice was made to not retain them but rather they will be destroyed at random if certain measures are not taken by the government and other stakeholders to digitize them. The JHKNA have records dating back to the early period of Ghana's journey to independence as well as cultural practices of the various ethnic group or tribes in Ghana at the time of collection and still in use even today. The very act of collecting them and disseminating the information they contain is connected to consolidation of national identity. To properly understand how to cope with and standardize approaches to protect these physically endangered materials, there is the need to find ways to study the current state of affairs and to develop into relevant policy suggestions.

## 3.2 Research Design

I chose qualitative methodologies; this approach was used for exploring and understanding the meaning ascribed to certain human or social phenomena, in this case the archival audio-visual materials stored in the JHKNA archives. The process involves the use of questions and



procedures, data collection from respondents setting was used clarify the situation.<sup>38</sup> I conducted research and interviews at the JHKNA, the Czech Museum of Music (*České muzeum hudby*) and at the Kpando Community where the Borborbo dance was first created and performed.

### 3.2.1 Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative methodology was relevant for this kind of research because the purpose of the study was to understand and discover how certain aspects of digitization of old media technologies used to record ICH in Ghana's recent past can employ new methods to safeguard both tangible and intangible aspects of Ghanaian heritage. These early forms of storage materials comprised mostly of tapes and reel-to-reel, were used to gather cultural materials with the political intent of strengthening Ghanaian national identity during the formation of the country. One of the aims of the thesis was to examine and assess the institutional needs and recommend national and archival policy and best practices for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the Ghanaian setting. The qualitative methods generated data from individuals/defined groups through structured, semi-structured, or unstructured questioning formats, identifying problems during participatory work as well as creating a justification for safeguarding ICH heritage safeguarding through digital technology.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2014), 4–6.

<sup>39</sup> Michael J Baker, 'Selecting a Research Methodology', *The Marketing Review* 1, no. 3 (2000): 373–97.

### 3.3 Sample Selection

In using the qualitative approach, data was obtained through semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and archival research. A purposive sampling method was adopted to select samples and participants for the research. This is a non-probability form of sampling in which the researcher uses their own judgment when choosing participants within the described population: the Kpando Community, workers at the JHKNA and the University of Ghana.<sup>40</sup> To help better understand the set of research and goal related objectives, I selected participants who possessed qualities such as sufficient knowledge and expertise in relation to archiving and digitization as well as dancing in the Borborbo performance. I looked for available people who were willing to provide sufficiently authentic information.

The target audiences for such digitized materials included university students, staff working in the archival centres as well as the local people of Kpando community in the case of the Borborbo dance archives:

- i. university students/youth studying dance performance.
- ii. archivists/heritage professionals.
- iii. people still involved in living ICH traditions from Kpando town.

These different sets of people were able to provide their own different understandings concerning the physical protection and future use of such audio-visual materials (intangible heritage) and how technology can play a role in preserving it, making it accessible for posterity.

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<sup>40</sup> Ilker Etikan, 'Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling', *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics* 5, no. 1 (2016): 1, <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>.

## 3.4 Qualitative Methods Used

### 3.4.1 Case Study Method

I selected the case study method as it is an empirical enquiry that examines in-depth and modern-day phenomenon in their real-life environment. It is a form of inquiry aimed at clarifying the potentials of modern digitization methods in safeguarding Ghanaian ICH traditional heritage as well as the best practices and recommendations.<sup>41</sup>

The case study method was selected to contextualize one particular contemporary issue, digitization of intangible heritage materials, within the social environment of modern Ghana. To effectively handle such issues in a developing country such as Ghana, a rational method that allowed me to fully grasp the research problem in a real-time situation was required.<sup>42</sup> To answer the research questions and to examine its intricacies, I selected the JHKNA as the main case study because their stored material is mainly audio-visual in nature and deals with traditional aspects intangible heritage. To further explain the need to digitize old audio-visual materials, I selected the Borborbo Dance of the Ewe people of Ghana as a representative example of the issues involved. The old recordings of this dance itself represents part of the intangible heritage of Ghana's journey towards independence as well as a great form of entertainment and a heritage that needs to be safeguarded.

To gain comparative insights for my case study at the JHKNA, I visited the Czech Museum of Music (*České muzeum hudby*) in Prague and used participant observation to study how the

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<sup>41</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (SAGE, 2009).

<sup>42</sup> Izak Benbasat, David K. Goldstein, and Melissa Mead, 'The Case Research Strategy in Studies of Information Systems', *MIS Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (1987): 369–86, <https://doi.org/10.2307/248684>.

museum operates and digitizes music and visual materials recorded on old tools. I was looking for effective strategies that could be adopted to the Ghanaian situation.

### 3.4.2 Ethnographic research

The ethnographic method is “the primary form of knowledge acquisition is by observation in order to understand the researchable phenomenon”.<sup>43</sup> I used this method to interview the staff of the JHKNA to understand their day-to-day activities connected to digitizing the audio-visual materials (intangible heritage content) as well as the constant challenges they face in working with digital technologies. I engaged with young university students and local people to study how they envision using this form of intangible cultural heritage for the benefit of future generations. I also talked to living Borborbo practitioners. This work made it easier to understand the producers/creators/protectors of this digitized recorded heritage. Thus, the selected institution that possesses such audio-visual heritage materials were observed as they worked while with researcher interacting with them. A combination of interviews and focus groups were used to gather the views of the students, archivists, librarians, and academics on digitization of the materials, especially concerning issues of ethical public accessibility.

### 3.4.3 Archival/library research

To understand the role of institutions in championing national policy for safeguarding heritage through digitization I conducted research in archival/library sources. I mainly focused on existing legal instruments connected to international and Ghanaian archival standards for acquisition, classification and cataloguing these materials as well as their digitization and analysis in order to identify relevant problems such as managing digitized materials, allocation

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<sup>43</sup> Giampietro Gobo, *Doing Ethnography* (Sage, 2008).

of resources, devising new and modern methods of description and access, collection development priorities and strategies, to mention a few.<sup>44</sup> In addition, digitization standards used in the workplace and cultural policies in Ghana concerning safeguarding intangible heritage were studied to assess both their shortfalls and strengths. I could extract information and evidence from the original archives where such historic materials are kept and preserved. Aside from policies at the national level, this work helped me identify and implement potential work structures for the JHKNA designed to preserve materials in standard ways as well as more technologically sophisticated ways connected to the policies of digitization.

### 3.4.4 Interviews

Ten interviews were carried out in questionnaire form, which made it possible and easier to ask follow-up questions and record the answers in an orderly manner for effective analyses later. This method also proved more useful because of the covid-19 situation when face to face interviews were difficult or even impossible. I used modes of channels of communication including WhatsApp and Facebook as well as sending the questionnaires via email.

Data collection tools included modern recordings and videos of the dance performance as now practiced in the local communities were captured as interesting episodes relevant to the study as modern versions of the performance.

One of the interesting participants interviewed about the Borborbo dance performance as living heritage was the Odikroo of the Kpando Traditional Area. This man is a well-regarded figure in the community, due to his age and depth of information he possesses about the conception

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<sup>44</sup> H. Thomas Hickerson, 'Ten Challenges for the Archival Profession', *The American Archivist* 64, no. 1 (2001): 6–16.

and progression of the dance over the years. In the Ghanaian culture, it is believed that if someone wants to inquire about tradition, it is best to talk to the elders in a community.

### **3.5 Data capture and recording**

I used videorecording to capture moving images of both the diverse activities undertaken in the JHKNA to preserve and make accessible its stored audio-visual materials as well as the modern Borborbo performance. I was, thus, able to observe the performance of the Borborbor dance as well as document the performance and analyse the reaction and response of the local people to the performance as their heritage. Video material also captured the way old audio-visual materials were currently being digitized in the centre and other related institutions, revealing the physical challenges associated with digitization as well as other important activities. Problems highlighted here include the way such materials are ultimately made accessible to a wider public. The recording work was carried out, taking into consideration all ethical issues and the written consent of all participants.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Critical heritage and heritage future approaches will be adopted as a theoretical framework to analyse and compare some ICH traditions. The aim is to find out how these traditions of recording - even ones that are no longer practiced - can be made available to the wider Ghanaian community to provide individuals with a sense of continuity and connection with their heritage. The challenges faced by the archival institution as well as the audio-visual heritage will be analysed and discussed as a critical heritage issue while the relevance of digitization to enhance

the accessibility of the materials as a digital heritage for the youth of Ghana comprises a heritage future issue.

# Chapter 4 - Digitization and the Intangible Heritage

## 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I consider the related materials of other authors in the field of heritage that have made relevant contributions. The issue of heritage and identity is an important subject in every culture and there is therefore the need to critically examine its nuances.

Heritage is the depth of cultural legacy that has been received or inherited from the past, that is being lived in the present and will be passed on to the future generations. Heritage is that which has been or may be inherited, despite its value to nation, community, or humanity.<sup>45</sup> The cultural heritage of the people is not only focused on monuments and collections of objects but includes living expressions such as languages, performing arts, oral traditions, knowledge, and practices that have been inherited from ancestors. Intangible heritage despite its fragility, plays a significant role in cultural diversity.<sup>46</sup> The concept and ideology of cultural heritage has grown beyond just buildings, monumental structures to include evidence of human creativity and expression such as performing arts, instruments, etc. These represent elements that must be preserved for future generations. Based on their contribution to humanity there is therefore the need to safeguard through various means such as national laws, international conventions, and treaties.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Constantine Sandis, ed., *Cultural Heritage Ethics: Between Theory and Practice* (Open Book Publishers, 2014), 11–12, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0047>.

<sup>46</sup> UNESCO, 'Cultural Heritage', UNESCO, 19 November 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/santiago/cultura/patrimonio>.

<sup>47</sup> Elena Franchi, 'What Is Cultural Heritage? (Article)', Khan Academy, 2015, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/special-topics-art-history/arches-at-risk-cultural-heritage-education-series/arches-beginners-guide/a/what-is-cultural-heritage>.



The cultural heritage present within this work is the JHK Nketia Archive as tangible heritage reflecting the political heritage of the relatively new Ghanaian state and the Borborbo dance as intangible heritage that derives from the birth of the state, but which has changed and developed to become an artistic form in its own right today for various purposes such as entertainment.

## 4.2 Archives as tangible heritage institutions

Heritage institutions, whether libraries, museums, or archives bear great responsibility for preserving and safeguarding intellectual and cultural resources produced by all societies as a representation of their heritage in any means possible.<sup>48</sup> Archives as a part of a nation's tangible heritage play a very important role in the preservation and safeguarding of the rich cultural heritage of any community or nation. Their effective activity is made possible through the preservation methods used to keep the materials available to them. Their work generally aims to spread understanding and awareness of the value of the materials they store for scholars and the wider public within a nation or community.<sup>49</sup> Archives also represent the documented memory of a nation. The memory is retrieved through telling stories and providing a form of understanding connected to the identity of a particular group of people or even a nation. Archives can provide relevant information that guides both individual and government actions. Archives help us learn from the past to provide an understanding of the future. In such a case, archiving becomes a process of making choices about what needs to be preserved and which materials can eventually be discarded, procedures to be implemented and materials and personnel needed for implementation.<sup>50</sup> The nation or community determines, always with a

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<sup>48</sup> Sarah CC Choy et al., 'The UNESCO/PERSIST Guidelines for the Selection of Digital Heritage for Long-Term Preservation', 2016.

<sup>49</sup> WIPO, 'Archives and Museums: Balancing Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage', September 2005, [https://www.wipo.int/wipo\\_magazine/en/2005/05/article\\_0010.html](https://www.wipo.int/wipo_magazine/en/2005/05/article_0010.html).

<sup>50</sup> Agnese Ghezzi, 'Filing the World: Archives as Cultural Heritage and the Power of Remembering', *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 19, no. 5 (1 December 2021): 1738–55, <https://doi.org/10.1093/icon/moab138>.

degree of cultural bias, what must be valued, preserved, and safeguarded as representative of a nation's or community's identity. What must be saved or discarded should also be based on legislative and policy guidelines that have been set and drafted by an elected governing body. Such policy also shapes those materials that are to become historical evidence and promote knowledge. The archives as heritage institutions are sometimes used to secure vital and private information for present and future generations thereby influencing the narratives and historical evidence of such information through documented details.<sup>51</sup> Thus, heritage, as indicated by David Lowenthal, must be differentiated from history. Heritage is a celebration of the past which represents history.<sup>52</sup> The archive is one of the heritage institutions that joins these two concepts together by developing processes and programs that display the past and provide avenues for its celebration as heritage memory. In as much as heritage is the celebration of the past, there are certain information or aspects that carry dark memory such as issues of slavery, mass murders, etc within a country's heritage. In order to appreciate certain aspects of heritage and what to remember, Rodney Harrison suggests that in cultural heritage and its institutions, forgetting or concealing plays an integral role in remembering. Harrison adds that one cannot fully acknowledge new memories and connect important value to them without making an effort to select some aspects that must be or, at least can be, forgotten to create room for others.<sup>53</sup> This happens in archival institutions through the process of appraisal<sup>54</sup> of accessions<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Agnese Ghezzi, 'Filing the World: Archives as Cultural Heritage and the Power of Remembering', *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 19, no. 5 (1 December 2021): 1738–55, <https://doi.org/10.1093/icon/moab138>.

<sup>52</sup> David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade, and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3–5.

<sup>53</sup> Harrison, 'Forgetting to Remember, Remembering to Forget'.

<sup>54</sup> Appraisal is the process of determining whether materials have permanent/ archival value.

<sup>55</sup> Accession is the process that involves the transfer of legal and physical custody of permanent records of value to the archives.

to determine which ones are worth keeping and preserving and which accessions can be forgotten through the act of being discarded.<sup>56</sup>

### 4.3 Intangible Cultural heritage (ICH)

Intangible heritage is a vital heritage component of any country or community. Due to its value and importance, there has been great attention paid to finding ways and means to safeguard it. This has been tackled on various levels: local, national, and international levels. ICH is quite a recent term created to represent living cultural expressions and practices which are recognised, cherished, and accepted by a community as a distinct expression or representation of aspects of their identity.<sup>57</sup> The matters of safeguarding ICH has been of global concern for some time now, especially within the work of UNESCO. Based on these efforts guidelines and conventions were developed to address such intangible heritage issues. One of such is the UNESCO convention for safeguarding heritage drafted in 2003, Article 2, which describes Intangible Cultural heritage as, the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills - as well as instruments, objects, artefacts, and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interactions with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.<sup>58</sup> The UNESCO convention for safeguarding ICH has set up recent holistic approach to cultural heritage. It has included new

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<sup>56</sup> Kara Flynn, 'Issues of Ownership: Leveraging Accession Documentation and Provenance Research to Improve Collection Access' 7 (2020), <https://core.ac.uk/reader/287000360>.

<sup>57</sup> Alivizatou-Barakou et al., 'Intangible Cultural Heritage and New Technologies: Challenges and Opportunities for Cultural Preservation and Development'.

<sup>58</sup> UNESCO, 'Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003', *International Journal of Cultural Property* 12, no. 4 (November 2005): 447–58, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0940739105050277>.

set of administrative and legal instruments and strategies that helps to identify, preserve, manage, and promote intangible cultural heritage. These ICH issues, captured within the policy convention, is the conceptualization of the components of ICH within the national cultural policy framework for recognition and effectiveness.<sup>59</sup> The need to properly handle ICH as connected to communities, groups and individuals is gaining serious recognition and attention both internationally and nationally. The ICH examined in this thesis is the audio-visual materials at the JHK Nketia Archives and, in particular, the Borborbo Dance of the Kpando community.

### 4.3.1 Audio-visual as intangible cultural heritage

Audio-visual materials, such as those found in the JHK Nketia archives in the form of reel-to-reel, tapes, etc., represent one form of ICH. The Head Archivist indicated in an interview that, "The materials are from various categories such as religion, media and visual acts, history, and politics (rituals of chieftaincy), society and cultures, music, and dance. Staff document living heritage and receive materials. They have also created archives of other researchers for a project called the 'archive on archives' project. They produce more audio digitization and are yet to go to video digitization." They provide an understanding and interrelation between the media and the ICH. Some authors believe that such materials can be best used in the safeguarding of heritage.<sup>60</sup> These audio-visuals materials that have been produced represent a record of documentary evidence of the ICH of a people, community, nation, and events. Use of such materials is essential and very representative of the various ethnic groups of Ghana

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<sup>59</sup> Teodora Konach, 'Intangible Cultural Heritage Projects—National Policies and Strategies. The Creation of Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventories', *ENCATC Journal of Cultural Management and Policy* 5, no. 1 (2015): 67–79.

<sup>60</sup> Shina-Nancy Erlewein, 'Screening Intangible Heritage: Media, Heritage and Representation: The Case of Kutiyattam Sanskrit Theatre, India' (BTU Cottbus - Senftenberg, 2015), <https://opus4.kobv.de/opus4-btu/frontdoor/index/index/docId/3598>.

because it mostly captures the heritage in its native environment and can be stored as a record for a longer period of time.<sup>61</sup> Through these records, the heritage can be reproduced in multiples any time, integrating it into the living heritage of a wider public. This kind of heritage storage then needs to be safeguarded to ensure cultural continuity through technological means such as digitization. This audio-visual heritage, through these sound recordings and moving images, may hold the original record of past events which when preserved properly can be handed over to the future generation despite the fragility of its original media form. These records of past events are carriers of memories and knowledge systems that provide better grounds and foundations to establish dialogue between generations, communities, and nations.<sup>62</sup> Irina Bokova said about audio-visual as intangible heritage that mark important milestones and records of the lives of a people as a memory that depicts identity. The stories told by this heritage are powerful expressions of the culture and place shared among people and communities, and it is thereby urgent to safeguard these materials as a part of a shared heritage.<sup>63</sup> Even though ICH can be used as a medium of strengthening people's livelihoods through tourism, craft and music/dance performances in social, economic, political, and environmental contexts, there are a substantial number of cultural expressions representing ICH threatened by extinction through the channels of urbanization, globalization, and mass culture.<sup>64</sup> This situation creates a challenge and a gap in helping easy transmission of this heritage. In responding, transnational initiatives are being implemented to reduce the potential

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<sup>61</sup> Skaidre Urboniene, 'Audiovisual Production in the Studies of Intangible Heritage: Lithuanian Cross-Crafting Tradition', 2019, <https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/sief2019/paper/46836>.

<sup>62</sup> UN News, 'Linking Past and Present, Audiovisual Heritage Is "Part of Our Common History," UNESCO Says on World Day', UN News, 27 October 2017, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/10/569462-linking-past-and-present-audiovisual-heritage-part-our-common-history-unesco>.

<sup>63</sup> UN News, "'It's Your Story – Don't Lose It," UNESCO Says Marking World Day for Audiovisual Heritage', UN News, 27 October 2016, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2016/10/543892-its-your-story-dont-lose-it-unesco-says-marking-world-day-audiovisual-heritage>.

<sup>64</sup> Stefano, Davis, and Corsane, 'Touching the Intangible':

disappearance and degradation of these ICH heritages. An essential benefit of intangible cultural heritage has been social cohesion and engagement as a medium of bringing communities together.<sup>65</sup>

## 4.4 Digitization and Safeguarding of Intangible heritage

The ways and means by which heritage has been documented poses many new challenges and possibilities in heritage practice. For instance, how do you document and safeguard intangible heritage that comes alive through movements of the hands, heads, and practice among particular peoples? This means the heritage is neither tangible or fixed but intangible and, thus, a living heritage. Such heritage that lives within the community through active practice requires participatory and dynamic approaches in its safeguarding.<sup>66</sup> Safeguarding has emerged as a normative framework for handling intangible heritage. Safeguarding intangible heritage as expressed in the 2003 convention, means the measures aimed at ensuring viability of the intangible heritage, including identification, documentation, research, preservation, transmission, etc, to revitalise heritage.<sup>67</sup> One such approach to safeguarding is digitization of these materials. documented for longevity and transmission to future generations. The intangible heritage, threatened by disappearance, needs to be continuously refreshed because of its value to the community. For instance, the constant performance of the Borborbo Dance helps safeguard this dance tradition among the people as well as teaching younger people how

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<sup>65</sup> UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage et al., 'What Is Intangible Cultural Heritage' (UNESCO. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003>, 2019).

<sup>66</sup> Tandon International SOIMA Conference Aparna et al., *Unlocking Sound and Image Heritage: Selected Readings from the International 2015 SOIMA Conference, 2017*, <https://library.avanet.nl/unlocking-sound-and-image-heritage-selected-readings-from-the-2015-soima-conference/>.

<sup>67</sup> Marilena Alivizatou, 'Digital Intangible Heritage: Inventories, Virtual Learning and Participation', *Heritage & Society* 12, no. 2–3 (2 September 2019): 116–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159032X.2021.1883950>; UNESCO, 'Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003'.

to perform this heritage. Through documentation and recordings, these materials are being safeguarded in heritage institutions such as JHK Nketia Archive.

Safeguarding such information through digitization of the media it was recorded on is not carried out to freeze or fix the ICH in the past but a means of transmitting it the knowledge, skills, and cultural meanings across various time periods, from generation to generation through increased accessibility.<sup>68</sup> The desktop accessibility area in the Archives helps with these issues although there is a need to expand out-reach to the wider public through online platforms. Digitization is a medium through which the value of this audio-visual heritage can be unlocked and its longevity prolonged from the analogue format. Through increased access, the development of new services promoting heritage within very remote communities can be ensured in the future.<sup>69</sup> Digitization has been one of the channels transforming cultural resources into economic assets for creative and innovative business at national levels.

In recent years, it has become needful that most archival institutions as carriers of heritage engage in projects that make their collections and materials accessible to a public audience online. This not only safeguards the materials but also provides accessibility to them which, in turn, promotes heritage. Through this act, cultural institutions are able to open up control of their data to the wider public and make digital copies that can be easily accessible and re-used.<sup>70</sup>

This technological development also has a way of fostering improvements in the processes of digitizing this audio-visual heritage, making specific content accessible as cultural heritage for the future generation.<sup>71</sup> Digital technology can be employed as a participatory tool through

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<sup>69</sup> Johan Oomen et al., 'Images for the Future: Unlocking the Value of Audiovisual Heritage', 2009.

<sup>70</sup> Catherine Jasserand, *Audiovisual Heritage 2.0*, ed. Susanne Nikoltchev (Strasbourg: European Audiovisual Observatory, 2013), 7–10.

<sup>71</sup> Annabel Georges, Sara Logghe, and Dimitri Schuurman, 'Developing an Audiovisual Cultural Heritage Platform for Educational Purposes: A Case Study of Teacher-Involvement Using a Living Lab Approach',

which community engagement and unity can be enhanced through the materials the archives make accessible.<sup>72</sup> Digitization is an important aspect of care for the audio-visual heritage since it physically protects historical collections and analogue records from further disruptions and deterioration, protecting original copies and content of the audio-visual materials from repetitive handling.<sup>73</sup>

The urgent need for digitization as a form of safeguarding has been necessary, especially in the Ghanaian context. The digitization of these archival materials serves as a form of digital versions of the formerly analogue media, controlled only by the researchers and institutions that hold the materials, into media forms that can be duplicated and used for multiple purposes.<sup>74</sup> This turns the materials themselves into a form of digital cultural heritage as described by the UNESCO Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage, consisting of unique resources of human knowledge and expression. It embraces cultural, scientific, and administrative resources, as well as technical, legal, medical, and other kinds of information created digitally, or converted into digital form from existing analogue resources.<sup>75</sup> The purposes this kind of heritage serves is to ensure that they remain accessible to the public through online channels such as websites, etc. Furthermore, access to these digital heritage materials should be free from any form of unreasonable restriction. Additionally, sensitive, and

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International Journal of Heritage in the Digital Era 4, no. 1 (1 March 2015): 87–102, <https://doi.org/10.1260/2047-4970.4.1.87>.

<sup>72</sup> Paul Basu, 'Reanimating Cultural Heritage: Digital Curatorship, Knowledge Networks, and Social Transformation in Sierra Leone', *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies*, 2013, 337–64.

<sup>73</sup> Samira Oteley Adjin–Tetty, 'Preservation of Audiovisual Collections in the JH Kwabena Nketia Archives' (PhD Thesis, University of Ghana, 2016).

<sup>74</sup> Kate Hennessy, 'From Intangible Expression to Digital Cultural Heritage', 2021, 15.

<sup>75</sup> UNESCO, 'UNESCO Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage', 2003, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000229034>.



personal information should be protected from any kinds of intrusion especially when indicated privacy is requested by the individuals involved.<sup>76</sup>

## 4.5 Conclusion

The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage through digitization is an activity that aims to preserve the content or value of materials in digital format in order to avoid losses due to repetitive handling of the media carriers or inability to access the content due to obsolescence of the technology equipment. The digital heritage created from these materials represents a resource for various cultural functions on the community or national level as well as making the content accessible through the constant preservation of the intangible heritage and its transmission from generation to generation.

Ghana will benefit from digitization in many ways and the institutions will become repositories of heritage memory through the materials they hold. The issues of policies, public awareness and funding are certain challenges that need to be addressed to make this process effective.

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<sup>76</sup> UNESCO, 'Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003'; UNESCO, 'UNESCO Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage'; Hennessy, 'From Intangible Expression to Digital Cultural Heritage'.

# Chapter 5- Discussions of heritage safeguarding through digitization for accessibility

## 5.1 Introduction

Here, I will discuss the interactions and conversations I had with professionals and dance performers in local settings as they connect to ICH heritage using critical heritage and future heritage approaches. Furthermore, the challenges faced by the archival institution as well as the audio-visual heritage will be examined and discussed as a critical heritage issue. Finally, the relevance of digitization for accessibility as digital heritage will also be put into perspective as a heritage future issue.

It is evident that heritage studies have embarked upon a critical turn. The banner of critical heritage should not only be based on critiques of the heritage profession and its practice or heritage organizations and their policies. There is also a need, as argued by Tim Winter, to address the critical issues that face our world today. It has become necessary for heritage to play a significant role in the complicated and multi-layered challenges that confront society today. One such critical issue that must be tackled by critical heritage theory is the safeguarding of our culture and preservation of national and local heritage.<sup>77</sup> This is the core matter addressed in this thesis.

The archival institution with its audio-visual materials, with the Borborbo Dance performance as my case study, comprise critical heritage issues in several different ways. First, the establishment of the archives and the collection of traditional song and dance recordings from different ethnic groups around the new state of Ghana by Professor JHK Nketia was also a

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<sup>77</sup> Tim Winter, 'Clarifying the Critical in Critical Heritage Studies', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19 (1 September 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2012.720997>.

political action aimed at building a sense of national identity at a critical moment in the formation of the modern nation state of Ghana. These materials in themselves contain elements of events that became part of the foundations of modern-day Ghana's journey to independence from colonial rule.

The past documented on these audio-visual materials within the archives remain an element in nation-building as part of effective cultural and national policies but the contents must be promoted and safeguarded for future progress and national development.<sup>78</sup>

The volatile materials stored on reel to reel, audio recordings from the early 1900s should be preserved first before other materials are concerned due to their extremely fragile nature. Within the JHK Nketia Archive, there are variety of materials of different ethnicities but due to the limited resources, others can be digitized while other cannot immediately. This issue of physical vulnerability has also resulted in a profusion of heritage materials where available resources must be weighed against what is most important top protected in a given place and time.<sup>79</sup>

This need for selection applies to the digitization of the audio-visual materials present in the JHKNA archive as a heritage issue for the future. Due to poor storage conditions, including lack of climate control and the state of the storage carriers, there are some materials that may no longer be accessible. Other materials can no longer be read because the equipment needed to display them is obsolete. These conditions also affect what can be digitized or not. This raises an urgent need for the digital safeguarding of the remaining available materials before

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<sup>78</sup> Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (Milton Park, Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 96–100.

<sup>79</sup> Rodney Harrison, *Heritage Futures: Comparative Approaches to Natural and Cultural Heritage Practices* (London: UCL Press, 2020), 155–65.

all those materials are eventually lost. These solutions can be strengthened and hastened through conscious and deliberate efforts, policy review, funding, and public awareness through different forms of education.

In addressing the need for digital safeguarding of the intangible heritage the JHK Nketia Archive as a case study together with recordings of the Borborbo dance performance stored by researchers on older media formats such reel to reel were selected because of their political relevance to nation-building in modern Ghana. I interviewed some of the staff at the archive as well as performers and some key stakeholders of the Borborbo Dance performance. I also visited the Czech Museum of Music (České muzeum hudby) in Prague to observe their set-up and exemplary strategies that can be adopted or recommended for the Ghanaian context. These data were analysed using content analysis in line with the research questions addressed in the thesis.

The following research questions will be addressed in this discussion; a) What are the physical problems with audio-visuals materials in the archives? What are the organizational problems? b) What are the challenges and ethical issues involved in digitizing materials that have been identified by the archives themselves? c) What are the roles of institutions as stakeholders in championing an effective national policy towards safeguarding audio-visual ICH through digitization? d) What is the political heritage aspect of the materials in the archives?

## **5.2 Problems in the management of audio-visual materials in the archives**

The JHK Nketia archives are unique in nature, containing materials that represent the history of the Ghanaian people. One group of these materials is the audio-visual recordings of events captured on these storage media with the intent of preserving them for the future. Although

Ghanaian society began with oral traditions and forms of knowledge transmission, audio-visual eventual became generally available throughout the country. The audio-visuals contain moving images and sound recordings of performances, ceremonies, etc, that communicate Ghanaian heritage.

I had the opportunity to speak and observe the staff of the JHK Nketia Archives about how they handle and work with these audio-visual materials within their custody. As I visited the institution at the University of Ghana, I observed the ways in which the variety of archival materials were being sorted, classified, prepared for digitization and the digitization process itself. Afterwards, I spoke with some of the staff and the head of the archives, Mrs. Judith Opoku-Boateng. Through observation and discussion, the physical problems I realized about the audio-visual materials were that some were in old formats of storage media that was difficult to access because of obsolescence of some audio sound players while other more recent machines had broken down and not been replaced. Another issue was some of the recording materials had become very weak and fragile because of the conditions of storage and the unfriendly, hot and humid, climatic conditions in tropical Ghana. As described above, tropical regions have high temperatures, high humidity, and dust problems, etc. These environmental conditions speed up deterioration processes or decay of these old audio-visual materials and when not handled properly, the content can be lost.<sup>80</sup> Aside from that, the archive has a small storage space available to keep the physical storage materials and other relevant documents. In order to understand the organizational problems, I had a discussion with the head of the archives, Mrs. Judith Opoku-Boateng, who has been working in the areas of audio-visual archiving, preservation, and management for a very long time. She is very passionate

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<sup>80</sup> René Teygeler et al., *Preservation of Archives in Tropical Climates: An Annotated Bibliography* (Paris: The Hague: Jakarta: ICA ; ARA ; ANRI, 2001).

about the audio-visual collection and all aspects of the work needed to maintain them and preserve them.

The organizational problem of the archival institution begins with their staffing and recruitment of new people. The archive is faced with a major challenge of understaffing because the institution is under the leadership of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana. Public universities in Ghana have restrictions placed on them concerning employment and employment processes are long and tedious. As a result of these institutional problems in hiring, the archive has to rely on national service personnel<sup>81</sup>, who are trained yearly and are not retained after their term of work ends. This affects effective and proper management of the archives because there is always a continuous turnover of people who need to be trained but leave after one year. There is the issue of bureaucracy, in that the institution has to go through serious protocols and levels of administration before procurement, amendment and acceptance of policies and allocations of funds. These slowed down processes seriously affect workflow and effectiveness in the archives.

Nevertheless, the JHK Nketia Archive has been able to reduce the problem of deterioration of most of the audio-visual materials in its custody. This is partly due to keeping most of the materials in climate-controlled rooms, preserving some of these magnetic tapes in quite good condition. A few important audio-visual materials are in bad condition and quite inaccessible, making it difficult to preserve, and safeguard the content value. Some of the old Borborbo recordings and old recordings of festivals, the *kete* dance of the Asantes (this is a royal dance

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<sup>81</sup> National Service Personnel: is a student who after graduating from the university is required by the laws of Ghana to give service to the nation through work in various sectors for a year.

of the Asante people of Ghana), and other dances are currently inaccessible because of the technological obsolescence and their poor physical conditions.

### **5.3 Challenges and ethical Issues involved in digitizing materials.**

There are different techniques and procedures used by archival institutions to protect and ensure maximum use of their materials including digitization. It is through the process of digitization that digitized materials are generated.<sup>82</sup> Aside the protection of the content of the materials, digitization also allows materials to be stored for a longer time without much fear of loss or content corruption since they are not often handled.<sup>83</sup> In the Nketia Archive, there has been ongoing attempts to digitize materials, especially digitizing audio materials. This is because the archive carries out a lot of prioritizations in relation to what will be digitized. What will be digitized is contingent on what must be digitized based on which ethnic culture is likely to become extinct or be lost. The major concern at the JHK Nketia archive has always been that ICH heritage could be lost forever and therefore requiring urgent safeguarding, particularly for those audio-visual materials whose playback machines have become obsolete and may not be available for some time to come. This is the case for the Borborbo dance and other forms of traditional performances. Video digitization involves more tedious work and requires a complex set-up and some equipment that has not yet been fully acquired by the archive due to financial constraints.

Additionally, other major challenges to the digitization of the audio-visual materials are the breakdown of equipment, especially servers or hardware components that are used in storing

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<sup>82</sup> Eric Boamah, 'Towards Effective Management and Preservation of Digital Cultural Heritage Resources: An Exploration of Contextual Factors in Ghana', 2014, <http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/handle/10063/3270>.

<sup>83</sup> Burçak Şentürk, 'Effective Digitization in Archives', *Journal of Balkan Libraries Union* 2, no. 1 (31 May 2014): 11–15, <https://doi.org/10.16918/bluj.78275>.

the digitized files. There are many bureaucratic procedures in the university of Ghana in relation to procurement and acquisition of key equipment that affect the digitization of the materials, prolonging the digitization process and allowing further deterioration of the materials.<sup>84</sup> Archives in tropical environments and developing countries are faced with hostile administrative conditions such as shortage of funds, trained staff, and training facilities. It is difficult to obtain sophisticated machinery for preservation and safeguarding processes such as digitization.<sup>85</sup> This supports my findings from my field interviews with the head of the archive on the challenges they face in digitizing materials.

Aside from these problems of the physical decay, ethical issues have raised other delicate matters connected to digitizing materials. Per the discussions with the Head of the Archive, she indicated that, as a professional there is the need to be ethically sensitive. Ethical issues are an important element that is considered when working with audio-visuals. One such issue is with intellectual rights and copyright. The archives contain many materials that are copyrighted such as Ghanaian commercial music of artists such as Ghanaian Highlife, Hiplife, etc (these are types of music genres produced in Ghana). Although they are being made more accessible, there are still many restrictions and controls on these music genres in accordance with the laws of Ghana. Some of the materials are work of researchers that are yet to be published and others represent primary data from the field that are kept by the archive. Here, the accessibility of the materials or section of the recorded data is determined by permissions given by the researcher. Most of the time, the materials brought to the archive by researchers, performers, etc each have their own access policy or restrictions that the archive follow strictly and that may not be used for any purpose or commercial means except as indicated in the attached documents. When it

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<sup>84</sup> Field Interview with Mrs. Judith Opoku-Boateng, Head Archivist at the JHK Nketia Archives, 2021.

<sup>85</sup> Teygeler et al., *Preservation of Archives in Tropical Climates*.



comes to the ethical issues related to deceased performers or researchers, the digitization of such materials is carried out without any restrictions or rules. The ethical issues apply to the accessibility of such materials and the approved requirements for them. For instance, certain materials recorded by Professor Nketia in the field between 1950-1954, was made available strictly for educational purposes. This is because the indigenous people agreed with Professor Nketia that the recorded materials should be used for only such purposes and these restrictions and standards have been followed by the archive ever since. Providing access is an important functionality of the Nketia Archive since it seeks to properly disseminate African and Ghanaian materials and findings as a way of promoting local heritage. Access to these audio-visual materials, especially in digitized form have been provided within the limitations of legally defined privacy, confidentiality and security restrictions and exemptions described by the researchers.<sup>86</sup> The early recordings of the Borborbo dance was for political documentation and educational purposes in contrast to the modern forms of the dance that are for other or additional purposes of entertainment.

## **5.4 The role of institutions in championing policies for digital safeguarding**

Policies are needed in the drive for safeguarding through digitization in Ghana. Good policy requirements would go a long way toward ensuring effective implementation and proper allocation of funds. The policies, strategies, and actions help ensure access and accurate rendering of access as well as proper handling of the digitized content regardless of the challenges associated with it.<sup>87</sup> More streamlined operations and management provide

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<sup>86</sup> Richard Pearce-Moses and Laurie A Baty, *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, vol. 2013 (Society of American Archivists Chicago, IL, 2005), 2–3.

<sup>87</sup> Emily Rafferty and Becca Pad, 'Better Together: A Holistic Approach to Creating a Digital Preservation Policy in an Art Museum', *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* 36, no. 1 (March 2017): 149–62, <https://doi.org/10.1086/691378>.

accountability and checks. The heritage institutions of Ghana have a major role to play in championing effective national policies for safeguarding ICH in Ghana.

In Ghana, the Public Records and Archives Department (PRAAD) is the governmental organization or body established in Ghana with the sole responsibility of overseeing the affairs of records and archival materials of national interest. Their role is to regulate and see to the welfare of archival institutions as well as the work they do concerning record keeping and archiving.

Enshrined in the PRAAD Act 535, 1997, archival institutions must maintain good storage conditions and must see to it that, the materials in their custody follow the requirements and laws.<sup>88</sup> The Act has not been effective and not implemented properly. Furthermore, there is nothing in the ACT that explicitly addresses audio-visuals since most of its focus is on paper-based heritage. This makes the work in the archives very difficult because the majority of its holdings as audio-visuals do not fall under the standardised policies, laws, and conventions that must be followed by all related organizations for their management and preservation.

The Nketia Archive has to struggle to find its own means to provide an open access platform for their data and databases. In addition, the Cultural policy of Ghana, 2004, focuses on various aspects of Ghanaian heritage which covers all the cultural ethnic groups. The aim of this cultural policy is to document and promote Ghanaian cultural values, ensuring the growth and development of cultural institutions as well as enhancing Ghanaian cultural life and developing programs that promote and contribute to national development.<sup>89</sup> Through the pioneering

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<sup>88</sup> Ghana, *Public Records and Archives Administration Act, 1997: Act 535*. (Accra: Govt. Printer, Assembly Press, 1997).

<sup>89</sup> Ghana and National Commission on Culture, *The Cultural Policy of Ghana*. (Accra, Ghana: National Commission on Culture, 2004).

efforts of J.H.K. Nketia, the first Cultural Policy document was produced after Ghana attained independence. The maiden policy was later adopted by UNESCO and has been the reference point for other cultural policy in successive governments. This policy treats archives and heritage institutions as important sources for the study of Ghanaian heritage and facilitation of collection and preservation of important data as well as providing accessibility of that data to the public without establishing guidelines on the technical means to achieve this goal.

There are no requirements for the preservation and safeguarding of audio-visual materials especially in relation to digitization and providing access as these were concepts that came much later. The same requirements and conditions have been used for all these years. Ghanaian heritage institutions and governmental bodies as important stakeholders should now seek and champion updating and upgrading certain sections of the Acts and policies to highlight emerging trends in digital safeguarding of heritage audio-visual materials in their keeping. There can also be new policies, laws and conventions instituted that focus mainly on these heritage elements and outline recommendations and regulations for all accessibility issues with specific reference to various kinds of ethical issues including copyright and materials connected to living individuals and their direct descendants and their accessibility.

## **5.5 Political heritage of materials in the archives.**

The materials in the heritage institutions like the archives are also part of the political heritage of modern Ghana. These materials speak to the struggles and road to attaining independence and freedom from colonial rule. The materials also comprise aspects of the cultural heritage of the many ethnic groups in Ghana and thus, represent both the country's cultural diversity and unified national identity. There are also elements of chieftaincy and previous forms of local

governance from before the modern state that refer to issues of hierarchy and respect for rulership and authority among Ghanaians.

The Borborbo dance performance is a typical example. I visited the town where this dance was traditionally created and had the opportunity to interact with some of the elders that were part of its creation and inception. Regarding the interview with the Odikroo (Traditional Head) of the Kpando Traditional Area and the Borborbo performers, I understood that the dance played a role or was part of the campaign music used in the fight for independence and the unification of the Ghanaian people. Most of the messages of the songs and dance styles were about unity, morality and promoting Ghanaian culture. Additionally, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah liked the performance very much and invited the group, known then as the Kpando Borborbo International, to every government function and national program. This gave this dance a national identity and acceptance. It became a tool for promoting the acceptance of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah by the people of Ghana (then called the Gold Coast) as president and was instrumental in the fight for independence and freedom from the British colonial rule.<sup>90</sup>

The recordings of the first Borborbo dance performances is a good example of materials in these heritage institutions that not only represent Ghanaian culture or identity but also represents the political heritage of the country because of the key role this dance form played in the struggle for independence and national unification.

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<sup>90</sup> Interview Sessions with Togbe, the OdiKroo of the Kpando Traditional Area and the Borborbo Group.

## 5.6 Recommendations for effective digitization of audio-visual heritage and accessibility

The need for effective digitization of audio-visual materials is very important today due to the widespread accessibility it offers for protection and preservation of old audio-visual materials through available channels such as websites, online databases, mobile and web applications as a way of promoting national and local cultural heritage in Ghana.-Training in the effective use of various accessibility channels such as websites, online databases, and mobile and web applications for digitized materials should be encouraged in second-cycle institutions (Senior High School (SHS) in Ghana). Such training would foster the connected interests surrounding the safeguarding of ICH.

The initiative taken by developed countries to record, preserve and make heritage accessible is a great achievement in today's world.<sup>91</sup> This has encouraged many institutions, especially in developing countries, to emulate and provide ways to achieve such achievements. Despite these initiatives elsewhere and based on the interview with the head and staff of the archives, I was made aware that some Ghanaian institutions still have no expressed plans or strategies to digitize their audio-visual materials which will inevitably be threatened by gradual physical deterioration and inaccessibility through the broken down, obsolete machines formerly used to show them. Both issues lead to the continuous loss of the Ghanaian heritage stored in those content formats. These problems are related to a variety of factors which have been highlighted in this thesis including financial constraints, bureaucratic issues, issues of outdated cultural policies, regulations and laws and inadequately trained staff without the requisite knowledge

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<sup>91</sup> Judith Opoku-Boateng, 'Applying the "Baby Nursing Model" in under-Resourced Audiovisual Archives in Africa: The J. H. Kwabena Nketia Archive at the University of Ghana', in *Unlocking Sound and Image Heritage: Selected Readings from the 2015 SOIMA Conference* (SOIMA 2015: Unlocking Sound and Image Heritage, Brussels, Belgium: International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.18146/soima2015.4.18>.

to carry out archival activities related to organization, storage, and digitization to provide wide public access.

The work being carried out by the JHK Nketia archives should serve as a model institution regardless of their present challenges with certain strategies and steps that can be recommended for use by other organizations. This will be necessary to impact policy development and decisions. The archive management has developed a strategy that has been used in their archives and has been successful up to a point, despite inadequate staffing issues. This strategy is known as the ‘baby nursing model’ which can be used by heritage professionals within their organization especially for under-resourced institutions. In this case, the baby refers to the audio-visual materials and the mother is the heritage experts or heritage institutions. This model explains that the nursing of a baby is both exciting and challenging as applicable to the digitization and management of audio-visual materials. The principles include:

- Accepting responsibility for your baby (audio-visual materials): this happens because some of the materials may come by accident or in a moment of unpreparedness. So, the archive must be willing to accept the responsibility of the materials and take proper care of the collections with the limited resources available.
- Emotional attachment to the baby; here it involves the duty to getting to know the baby which in this case are the stored materials as a way of establishing bonding. The archive and its staff need to develop a sense of intimacy with the materials, in order to take good care of them to ensure proper preservation. If this unique relationship is not achieved certain positive results and expectation about the audio-visual collections cannot be achieved.
- Caring for the baby involves preparing and applying digitization principles to secure the materials. Here, much more attention must be paid to the materials, the state of the audio-visual materials and the digitized contents, all aspects that are dependent on the love and commitment shown by the parent which is the archival institution. Providing

an environment conducive to effective work is also paramount to the care for the materials.

- Identification of the key problems as well as securing outside help when needed. In moments when the institution is stretched beyond its resources and effort then external support and partnership must be sorted to bring quality preservation and safeguarding. This include emergency and immediate response to certain situations when the need arises, is a principle that should not be overlooked. Such help includes training and workshops, connecting with other archival institutions in developed countries for experts to get help and advice.<sup>92</sup>

-The Head of the Archive stated that the goal of the self-designed workflow is to “... collect, preserve, and make accessible the materials they hold. They rely on the Institute of African Studies (IAS), they talk with researchers about submitting their research field data documented in the field, they process them and keep the raw data there and the researchers refer their students and other researchers there to have access for other purposes. “

The Nketia Archives has been moved by these aims to collect, preserve, and make accessible their audio-visual materials. Additionally, I was able to visit the Czech Museum of Music (*České muzeum hudby*) in the Czech Republic, Prague. I was able to observe their work and interact with Filip Sir and his team. This is a museum housed within the seventeenth century former Baroque Church of St. Mary Magdalene. It exists to house and collect music-related materials in the collections of the National Museum. In its holdings there are over 700,000 documents connected to music history, which comprises an extensive music archive, a

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<sup>92</sup> Judith Opoku-Boateng, ‘Applying the “Baby Nursing Model” in under-Resourced Audiovisual Archives in Africa: The J. H. Kwabena Nketia Archive at the University of Ghana’, in *Unlocking Sound and Image Heritage: Selected Readings from the 2015 SOIMA Conference* (SOIMA 2015: Unlocking Sound and Image Heritage, Brussels, Belgium: International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.18146/soima2015.4.18>.

phonoteque, collections of musical instruments, etc.<sup>93</sup> I visited this heritage institution so I could look at their workflow model and strategies for digitization with the goal of providing accessibility that could be adopted by the Ghanaian heritage organizations. They came up with a project called *Nový Fonograf* (New Phonograph) to protect the phonograph music by digitization. Thus, the aim of the project was to address the problem of heritage institutions that lacked standardized procedures for long-term protection and access to sound recording that could not be reproduced by modern technologies, but which form part of the national cultural heritage of the Czech Republic.

What is common to these both the Ghanaian and Czech heritage institutions were self-developed strategies that were in accordance with archival and international standards for preserving and safeguarding the audio-visual heritage. Some of these set standards include the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA) standardized manuals for digitization, the technical committee standards, practices, and strategies, International Guidelines for Safeguarding and Electronic Access, etc. These standards are being used by the JHK Nketia Archives, which was developed by a team of audio-visual experts in IASA from various countries. The Head of the Archives and Project Manager at the Czech Museum of Music (*České muzeum hudby*) are members of this international body.

The materials to be safeguarded must be identified and decisions of which materials get priority are made based on surveys designed and developed for that purpose. The variables necessary for digitization are discovered while the metadata are one of important things to note and add to digitized information. This metadata in the Ghanaian context involved information provided

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<sup>93</sup> Národní Muzeum, 'Czech Museum of Music', National Museum, 2021, <https://www.nm.cz/en/rents/rent-our-building/czech-museum-of-music>.



by the performers and researchers in addition to the audio-visual content such as the name, unique identifiers, place, type of performance, location, ethnic group, among others. Using the case of the Borborbo Dance, there has been other work carried out on this dance form produced by other researchers in the past. There were some similarities to my field work in the Kpando Town such as the dance type, name and, ethnic group but the purpose of these dances varied depending on the nature of the gathering and the group performing. This ever-changing cultural context has important implications for the kind of metadata used for each file or material in the archives.

One of the key things I identified and recommended is the building of a customized workflow or business process, something to be performed by both the Ghanaian and Czech institutions as a way of handling original analogue materials and transforming them into accessible and useful digital content. This is based on what suits the heritage organization based on the kind of the materials or items they hold. Through that, a strong symbol like a brand can be built to promote the materials and create awareness.

There is a need in the Ghanaian context for certain key experts to be involved in the process of digitization in audio-visual archives including a sound engineer, conservators, or technology conservationist, etc bringing their diverse knowledge and expertise to support the movement. This is because in the Ghanaian archives, these experts are lacking, and certain level of damages and handling of archival materials can be avoided by letting experts handle these fragile materials. For example, in the interview with the head of the archive, there were some old materials and formats that had to be sent to certain developed countries because there were no local experts or certain technical equipment to retrieve vital content to be digitised which would otherwise would have had to be left to be destroyed or abandoned.

In providing accessibility, ethical and copyright issues must be taken into consideration. To help in easy identification and accessibility in the JHK Nketia Archive and other Ghanaian heritage institutions, QR Codes can be generated for the items, together with online public access through websites and mobile apps that have been accepted and developed to a point by the Museum of Music in Prague.

These recommendations can be materialised when the government and key stakeholders make provisions in policies and provide sufficient funds and resources. It must be understood that such audio-visual represents our heritage, a heritage that should be accessible to the public including researchers, students, etc for educational purposes.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

The digital safeguarding of intangible heritage in Ghanaian context is fragile relative to the preservation and transmission of these heritage values for future generations.

This study has shown that Ghana is at a disadvantage because of the lack of a digital transformative framework for the preservation and safeguarding of its traditional audio-visual heritage as a form of ICH. Additionally, archival institutions have generally experienced difficulties in managing their collection due limited staff with relevant expertise, proper tools, storage facilities and equipment to manage large collections, etc. Together with the lack of appropriate and up-to-date governmental cultural policies explaining and highlighting the importance of digitization or digital safeguarding and its accessibility, these audio-visual collections are placed in even greater danger of loss of information from physical deterioration.

In this thesis, I have sought to identify the challenges to the digitization of materials in Ghana as acknowledged by the archives and heritage institutions themselves. The findings revealed that the JHK Nketia Archives has striven to attain international recognition in the preservation, safeguarding, and accessibility of their materials by following a self-designed standardized workflow system for digitization. Regardless of this effort, there were notable bureaucratic challenges between the management and the government in addition to the difficulties caused by equipment breakdown, huge financial burdens, and the tropical climate. Heritage institutions and professionals have a major role to play in championing an effective national policy towards the safeguarding of audio-visual materials through digitization by specifying technical parameters. Thus, there is a need for change and updating of certain existing national and cultural policies with digitization as the foundation for long-term preservation and accessibility of heritage materials.

That said, there is no one size fits all strategy for all archival institutions in Ghana. The nature of the materials being stored, and their condition connected to the media they were recorded in must also dictate the strategy that will work best. The JHK Nketia Archives and Czech Museum of Music are both good examples. These heritage organizations have self-developed standardized procedures that helps to facilitate their work regardless of a variety of pressing challenges.

With relation to accessibility issues, the use of online tools such as websites, mobile apps, etc will be a good road to take for bringing these materials to the attention of the public although not everything and all material can be made widely public for ethical reasons. Indeed, some materials that infringe on personal privacy issues of living people or their direct descendants must be kept private. Cultural policy needs to define the limits of this accessibility within the

cultural confines of modern Ghanaian social norms. Much thought, work, cooperation, and partnership will be needed to safeguard heritage, especially intangible heritage, so future generations can still benefit from it.

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# Appendices

## Appendix1.1 - Interview used for the Borborbo Dance Performers and Kpando Community

### Interview Guide

I am Nana Twumasi-Ntiamoah, a MA Cultural Heritage Studies student at the Central European University (CEU). I am embarking on a study about **Digital Transformations within Safeguarding of heritage in Ghana: A Case of The JHK Nketia Archives**. The research will respect the anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent of all participants and interviewees.

Questions:

#### *Introduction*

1. Can you kindly introduce yourself (Background information: name where applicable; age, gender/sex; educational background; profession)?
2. How long have you practiced the Borborbo performance?
3. What age did you start?
4. Under what circumstances?
5. Who taught you the dance or where did you learn the dance?

#### *History*

6. Can you give any historical background about the performance?
7. Where did Borborbo originate; who were the people, village or community that first created the dance?
8. Is this dance performed in certain particular places or anywhere according to traditions (festivals, palace, ceremonies, events, etc.)?
9. Was this a practice that was passed on to you by your ancestors or elderly people in the community?
10. Has there been changes when it comes to the performance in modern times as compared to previous times you have known of the performance, or your ancestors passed on to you?

11. Do you think these changes have impacted or had any effect on the performance?

*Safeguarding, Accessibility, and ethical issues*

12. What do you think can be done to preserve the real content or performance that was passed on?

13. Do you think that when such performance is digitized or positively affected by technology can safeguard it or otherwise?

14. Would you object to making the film accessible if deceased relatives or you personally appear in it?

15. Do you think traditional Borborbo would be threaten by digitization or by being made easily accessible?

16. What is the role of institutions or performers in championing national policy for such heritage?

17. Are there any other ethical issues that should be considered with regard to safeguarding and accessibility?

18. What role do institutions or performers play in ensuring that these ethical issues are looked at?

19. Do you have any recommendations to promote this performance or heritage in Ghana?

## Appendix 1.2 - Interview used for the JHK Archives, Researchers and Students

Interview Guide for JHK Nketia Archives

I am Nana Twumasi-Ntiamoah, a MA Cultural Heritage Studies student at the Central European University (CEU). I am embarking on a study about **Digital Transformations within Safeguarding of heritage in Ghana: A Case of The JHK Nketia Archives**. The research will respect the anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent of all participants and interviewees.

Questions:

1. Can you kindly introduce yourself (Background information: name where applicable; age, gender/sex; educational background; profession)?
2. How long have you been working in the archives, which section are you with?
3. What role do you play in the archives, can you give some information about your nature of work?
4. Has there been any challenges with regards to your work?
5. What kind of materials do you have in the archives, has any of them gone through deterioration and how is it handled by the institutions?
6. Do you know of any policies, laws, conventions set up by the government in with regards to handling of archival material especially, audio-visual materials?
7. How are materials preserved in the archives?
8. Are there any considerations for digitization, what do you understand by digitization?
9. Do you have any policies, laws as an institution for handling audio-visual materials, preservation and digitization?
10. How is the process of digitization performed and what kind of digitization is undertaken?
11. What are the challenges you have faced with regards to the digitization?
12. Do you know of any other organization interested and concerned with digitization in Ghana?
13. What is the role of institutions or performers in championing national policy for such heritage?
14. Are there any other ethical issues that should be considered with regard to safeguarding and accessibility?
15. Has there been issues concerning deceased performers on digitised materials?

## Interview Guide for Researcher/Performers and Student

1. Can you kindly introduce yourself (Background information: name where applicable; age, gender/sex; educational background; profession)?
2. What do you understand by digitization?
3. What do you think can be done to preserve the real content or performance that was passed on?
4. Do you think that when such performance is digitized or positively affected by technology can safeguard it or otherwise?
5. Would you object to making the film accessible if deceased relatives or you personally appear in it?
6. What is the role of institutions or performers in championing national policy for such heritage?
7. Are there any other ethical issues that should be considered with regard to safeguarding and accessibility?
8. What role do institutions or performers play in ensuring that these ethical issues are looked at?
9. Do you have any recommendations to promote this performance or heritage in Ghana?

## **Appendix1.3 - Transcription data used in the discussions within the Thesis based on the various Interviews**

**Based on the interview with JHK Nketia Audio-visual Archives**

Key things to note

Challenges

Managing materials that are analogue and contain magnetic tapes, they are also obsolete

Fight against obsolescence, think about how to migration the content on older format to newer formats and more accessible formats, audio, and video formats

Photography, trying to digitize this too

They have problems with adequate staffing, or they are understaffed. They train national service personnel who leave once they are trained.

Funding is also an issue; the budget is current insufficient to help with the work they want to

Physical deterioration and how the audio-visual recordings are: the materials are kept in a climate-controlled room. The magnetic tapes are in quite good conditions; there are very few magnetic tape recordings which have deteriorated

Of 2000 tapes, circa 10 must be sent to Austria because the content was not accessible, they were too deteriorated for the JH Nketia archives to deal with and special preservation practices needed to unlock the content.

*Policies, Laws, and convention in handling audio-visuals by the government*

PRAAD have an ACT 535 1997 or so that talks about the PRAAD as the organization that overseer of smaller archives and see to it that there are good conditions within these institutions.

This institution is not proactive and don't follow up on these archives and how they do their work.

ACT is not effective and probably does not function. Within the ACT, there is nothing that addresses audio-visuals. It deals more with paper-based heritage. This makes the work in the archives very difficult and leads to inconsistency in workflow between archives. Within the UG, there is a working online database set up for the library with lots of centralised libraries. The catalogue is based on the Balme Library or centralized library standards or policies. The main archival system in Ghana lacks such laws and conventions making work connected to management and preservation of audio-visual recordings very difficult. The archives must struggle to find their own means to provide open access platforms to place their data and database on. PRAAD government policy does not account for open access or preservation issues surrounding audio-visuals and there are no task forces to enforce or check on these institutions.

The Acts need to be update and upgrade or there are certain challenges at their centre, and they have not been exposed to audio-visuals and photos, but they may be doing well with the paper, but they don't follow up. In view of this challenge, the archive is following their mission statement of collecting, preserving, and making accessible by which the collection is made available and accessible. So, they go by these set policies and standards.

Aside the PRAAD Act, there are not any other set up by the government, this shows that there is a major gap in addressing these issues.

One of the main objectives of the research is to draw the attention of key stakeholders to look at such policies that can preserve audio-visual materials or heritage.

*How are materials preserved within the JH Nketia Archives*

They use a self-designed standard or workflow that can be adopted by other Ghanaian institutions.

They collect, preserve, and make accessible the materials they hold. They rely on the Institute of African Studies (IAS), they talk with researchers about submitting their research field data documented in the field, they process them and keep the raw data there and the researchers refer their students and other researchers there to have access for other purposes.

Beyond that, staff at the archives go to the field as a proactive institution to record and collect audio-visual materials. They liaison with other people to record present-day festivals, funerals, etc. They receive permissions and documents before they gather material in the field. The materials are from various categories such as religion, media and visual acts, history, and politics (rituals of chieftaincy), society and cultures, music, and dance. Staffers document living heritage and receive analogue materials. They have also created archives of other researchers on a project called the archive on archives project. They produce more audio digitization and are yet to go to video digitization.

, They have a lot of advanced technological equipment for digitization of photos, and they also carry out onsite accessible work.



When it comes to digitization one of the things you need to think about is prioritization, to decide what needs to be digitized now and is pressing. What decisions inform this part of the workflow? Staffers look at cultural traditions that are disappearing and changing gradually with the tendency to lose the heritage altogether. Thus there is an urgent need to safeguard such recordings and deal with the issue of obsolete machines that are hard to find and may not work any longer.

The staff in the JH Nketia archives decided to work on audio reel to reel (3/4 inch). With video there is a need for proper set ups, lots of work entailed such as cleaning the recording materials and machines and setting up certain playback systems before the material is transformed from analogue to digital format.

#### *Policies and laws within the institution in handling audio-visual materials for digitization*

The JH Nketia and Czech archives have their own self-designed workflows based on standardized workflow setups at other international organizations and partners. One of these is used by the IASA standardized manuals for digitization. IASA defines the technical committee standards, practices and strategies. Title: *Handling of audio and video carriers*.

The JH Nketia and Czech archives each work with internal policies which must be approved by a committee on how to handle accessibility issues, including degrees of accessibility for different kinds of recordings.

#### *Challenges with regards to digitization*

The issue of the need for extremely large storage facilities and servers.

### *Equipment breakdown.*

Procurement of new equipment is very bureaucratic slowing down and delaying the digitization of materials. This is an administrative issue that presents a major challenge. The university also came out with a policy that anything that is purchased must be signed-off on by the head of the university-VC who must approve the purchase. This makes work particularly time-consuming and tedious.

Serious increases in funding would be needed to make work more efficient all the while taking the needs of all the other stakeholders on board.

### *Limited staff*

Most of the organizations in Ghana are concerned with digitizing paper formats.

There are lots of unique materials listed in the UNESCO intangible heritage and audio-visual heritage/Memory of the World program register. What role or steps is Ghana as a nation taking to partake and benefit from these avenues. There are no avenue/actions to take care of recording materials and slowly disappearing cultural content they contain. The ICH recorded and held in Ghanaian archives will gradually lose all cultural value if they are not preserved and made accessible even if UNESCO lists them. ICH recording materials are scattered in various institutions around the county and no one institution is responsible for its protection overall. Institutions such as GBC (Ghana Broadcasting Corporation), the Information Service Centre, a lot of older recordings connected to Ghanaian history and all have been destroyed. NAFTI(National Film and Television Institute) is not using the too standardised procedures in handling digitization.

The JHK Nketia Archives can become a model organization those other institutions can look up to and follow in its steps. There should be governmental policy enacted or revised to provide details of the proper procedures in storing, handling and preserving older audio-visual materials.

*The role of institutions in championing policies*

There should be an update and revision of existing policies to incorporate audio-visual recordings in this way. Good policy will help in the development of useful regulations.

Individual institutions must be proactive. Time is running out and the audio-visual materials, depending on their format also have a limited life span. There is a need to quickly migrate the most fragile recordings into more accessible digital formats and find ways of preserving the originals.

When the materials are digitized, these institutions can come together in collective efforts and find ways to network and work together for create public accessibility.

*Ethical issues in safeguarding the heritage and accessibility.*

As professionals there is the need to be ethically sensitive.

With regards to working with these audio-visual materials, one of the issues that popped up is copyright issues since the archives contain lots of materials that are copyrighted such as Ghanaian commercial music from artists such as Ghanaian Highlife, Hiplife, etc. The fact that they are being made accessible does not mean everything is available to the public. There are many restrictions and controls already in place.

Access to materials of researchers that are yet to be published and represent primary data gathered from the field and kept in the archives is an issue. Access to this data is determined by the researcher in terms of what can be accessible or not.

The specified access policies for each kind of material is documented in files attached to the materials.

*Collection of materials on the field: ethical issues to be considered and followed*

*Issues of deceased performers or researchers*

Digitization is carried regardless of whether the person shown or performing is alive or not but restrictions and rules come into play in relation to accessibility. There are examples of such material in the recordings made by Professor Nketia in the field. The towns people asked that materials from between 1950s to 1954 be restricted to only educational purposes as agreed upon local populations. The people put restrictions on these materials being used for commercial purposes and those standards are followed strictly.

Thus, if the institution goes against it or any of the locals or their relatives should find out that these guidelines have not been followed there could be other repercussions and legal actions.

Magnetic tapes have a short life span of about 15 years before they need to be digitized. These valuable materials are slowly losing any economic, educational, creativity and innovation values they might have provided. Inaction means these magnetic tapes will further deteriorate. There is an urgent need to digitize them and make them accessible.

Important that heritage institutions should appoint heritage experts or professionals with knowledge and experience to handle such activities or materials of heritage to make decisions

and policies to reflect these needs. Then we will be able to preserve our heritage and not lose it.

When these are done, a lot of opportunities will be created from that.

Finally, she said, Audio-visuals are my best kind of archival materials and I love them.

Thank you.

### **Key Items in the interview with the Odikroo (Traditional Head) of the Kpando Traditional Area.**

This was an interview session with the Traditional Head of the Kpando Traditional Area about the Borborbo Dance and its historical background and its place in the political heritage of Ghana.

The man began to talk about some of the traditional drums and dance used in his early childhood days which today no longer exist. Especially with regard to the drums, the trees used in their making are no longer available. The Borborbo dance is performed based drums and the Kpando Borborbo was the first of its kind that was created. This transformation took place during the time of the Trans-Volta-Togoland when the international body brought held a plebiscite in 1956 to see whether the various groups at the time in the present-day Ghana Volta region would join either Ghana (then the Gold Coast) or they be by themselves or join Togoland(current day Togo) the separation among these nations under the supervision of the United Nations and other international bodies. The trans Volta Togoland was ruled by the

Germans, while Gold Coast was under the leadership of British after the war between the British, French and Germans. This was part of the journey to independence from the British and the time when the nation's name changed from the Gold Coast changed to Ghana.

He acknowledges that the dance was performed without a name. The term Borborbo was derived from the humility of the members in the group and the styles and way of performing the dance. So, the bending down and performing in the dance was how the name was derived. After a while, during the campaign of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah to help Ghana gain independence and as he toured the country, he took this dance form with him after his group visited the town and seeing their style of performance. He loved the music and style and adopted them as part of his team. Before then the dance was called the Kpando Borborbo International. Hence, it became known as the Osagyefo Borborbo and the focus of the group now was towards supporting the drive for independence and the political journey. Now most of the songs and dance style became a form of communication about unity, morality and promoting Ghanaian culture. Additionally, it promoted and advertised the freedom of Ghana and the need to fight together to achieve independence and the importance of having Dr. Kwame Nkrumah as the president.

These were transcribed information from the interviews.