

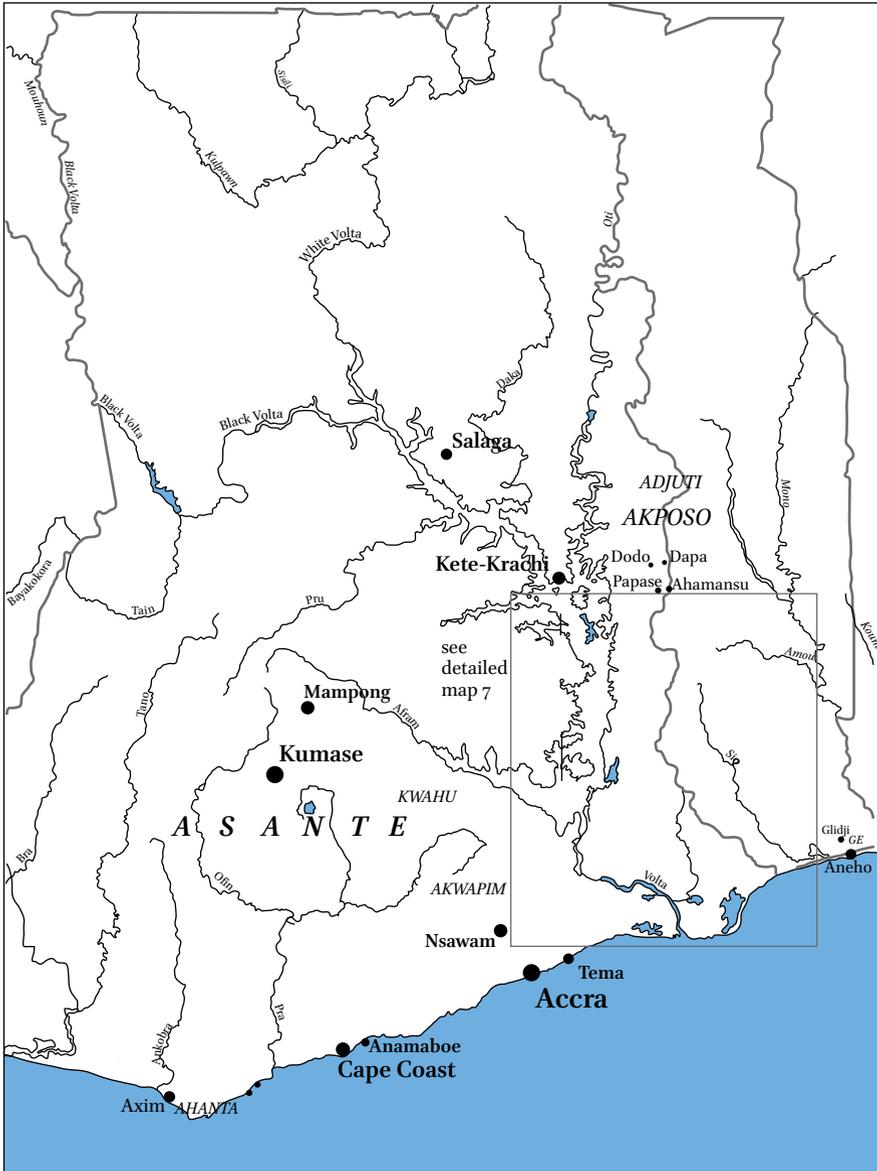
'Ethnic Identity' as an Anti-colonial Weapon? Ewe Mobilisation from the Late Nineteenth Century to the 1960s

The Ewe: A Case of Aggressive Solidarity

Unlike for Wolof-speakers or Temne-speakers, the ethnic identity of 'the Ewe' was an issue of public and even international debate from the 1940s. Their spokesmen won some fame as the first case of an African political movement attempting to use the stage of the United Nations.¹ The Ewe unity movement seemed to be an institution with ancient roots, defined through identification with a common ethnicity.² However, for the Ewe-speakers like for the Wolof and Temne, the interrelations of the different layers of identifications are complex and it is crucial to understand how they 'sold' themselves to European residents and colonisers over the decades.

The relation between Ewe identification and Avatime identification is reminiscent of the complex relationship between the categories of 'Wolof' and 'Sereer' in coastal Senegambia. Today, the Avatime speak both the Central Togo minority language of the same name and Ewe. Their historical vision regards the Avatime as second-comers in an area having been inhabited by a quasi-mythical older population, the so-called 'Bayas', and as having arrived before any Ewe-speakers. However, the more significant event in this respect is the Asante invasion of the late 1860s.³ During these struggles, the Avatime presented their relationship to other Ewe-speakers as a military

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- 1 The broad context appears in Welch, Claude E., *Dream of Unity: Pan-Africanism and Political Unification in West Africa* (Ithaca/NY: Cornell University Press, 1966), 42–73.
 - 2 This was first formulated by Amenumey, D.E.K., 'The pre-1947 background to the Ewe unification question: a preliminary sketch', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 10, 1969, 65–85, 65–6, 71.
 - 3 Brydon, Lynne, 'Rice, Yams and Chiefs in Avatime: Speculations on the Development of a Social Order', *Africa* 51(2), 1981, 659–77, 659–60; Brydon, Lynne, 'Constructing Avatime: Questions of History and Identity in a West African Polity, c. 1690s to the Twentieth Century', *Journal of African History* 49(1), 2008, 23–42, 32–4.



MAP 6 Gold coast (Ghana) and Togo

brotherhood. A century later, the ruling family of Fume describe themselves as victims of the 'anti-Ewe policy' of the Nkrumah regime at the end of the 1950s.⁴

4 Interview with Kwame Asiah, Regent of Fume on behalf of his brother, Fia Togbe Adzesi Iv, Fume, 17 August 2007.



MAP 7 The Togo-Ghana borderlands

The Avatime thus had a continuous relation with the larger ensemble of ‘the Ewe’ in the late nineteenth century and the twentieth century.

At first glance, Ewe group mobilisation seems exceptional, and the experience of the group has attracted much interest in scholarly research on sub-Saharan Africa. Their activity appears to be an impressive protest against artificial division by a colonial border (Maps 6 and 7).⁵ As Togo became, from 1919, a League of Nations trusteeship territory, then a United Nations mandate administered by the French and British colonial powers, the question of Ewe

5 Callaway, Barbara, ‘Local politics in Ho and Aba’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 4(1), 1970, 121–44, 129.

unification also allowed nationalist Asian governments and the Soviet Union to launch attacks against colonial rule. But the Ewe movement of the late 1940s was in the end unsuccessful. It could not prevent the incorporation of the trusteeship territory of British Togoland, as the main settlement zone of Ewe-speakers under British rule, into the independent state of Ghana (it was later renamed as the 'Volta Region'). The French mandate became the independent Republic of Togo, but in 1957 – at the moment of the creation of Ghana and Togo – scholars still believed that the issue of 'Ewe identity' was significant. Indeed, Ewe irredentism remained a constant preoccupation of the governments of Ghana and of Togo through much of the 1960s and into the 1970s, leading to unfriendly border regulations, mutual accusations, and short-lived separatist movements.⁶

In post-colonial Ghana, the Ewe seem to have followed a distinctive voting pattern. They were opponents of various Ghanaian presidents before 1979. In the 1980s, they turned into staunch supporters of Flight-Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings and his successors under the National Democratic Congress (NDC).⁷

In the more authoritarian post-colonial country of Togo under Gbassinje Eyadéma, the military ruler in power since his coup d'état of 1967, the role of Ewe-ness in politics has been more severely limited. While local populations in the south of Togo continue to regard themselves as 'Ewe', ethnic identification has receded as a factor of political group behaviour. Before Eyadéma's introduction of single-party rule in the late 1960s, both dominant parties – the Comité d'Union Togolaise (CUT) and the Parti Togolais du Progrès (PTP) – were

6 Pauvert, Jean-Claude, 'L'évolution politique des Ewe', *Cahiers des Etudes Africaines* 1(2), 1960, 161–92, 161; Austin, 'Frontier', 144–5; Nugent, *Smugglers*, 202–30; Brown, David, 'Borderline Politics in Ghana: The National Liberation Movement of Western Togoland', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 18(4), 1980, 575–609, 586–90.

7 Ametewee, Victor K., 'Ethnicity and Ethnic Relations in Ghana', in Steve Tonah (ed.), *Ethnicity, Conflicts and Consensus in Ghana* (Accra: Woeli Publishing Services, 2007), 25–41, 34, 38; Morrison, Minion K.C., and Jae Woo Hong, 'Ghana's political parties: how ethno/regional variations sustain the national two-party system', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 44(4), 2006, 623–47, 634; Brown, David, 'Sieges and Scapegoats: The Politics of Pluralism in Ghana and Togo', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 21(3), 1983, 431–60, 439–41; Brown, David, 'Who are the Tribalists? Social Pluralism and Political Ideology in Ghana', *African Affairs* 81(322), 37–69, *passim*; Chazan, Naomi, 'Ethnicity and Politics in Ghana', *Political Science Quarterly* 97(3), 1982, 461–85, 465, 475; Fridy, Kevin S., 'The Elephant, Umbrella, and Quarrelling Cocks: Disaggregating Partisanship in Ghana's Fourth Republic', *African Affairs*, 106(423), 2007, 281–305, 285, 292–4; Owusu, Maxwell, 'Rebellion, Revolution, and Tradition: Reinterpreting Coups in Ghana', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31(2), 1989, 372–97, 380–1; Nugent, Paul, 'Living in the past: Urban, Rural and Ethnic Themes in the 1992 and 1996 Elections in Ghana', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37(2), 1999, 287–319, 307.

similarly dominated by Ewe-speaking politicians, which precluded a tradition of 'ethnic voting'. In 1985, on the occasion of the second elections under the Eyadéma government, there was no sign of any ethnic mobilisation against the ruling party on an Ewe ticket, although Eyadéma's Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais (RTP) had the reputation of being a vehicle for non-Ewe-speaking northerners.⁸ Even so, the dominant approach in historical research takes information on the Ewe as an ethnic movement for granted, and does not analyse their dialogue with the colonial state in a long-term perspective.⁹

An additional problem is the question of whether particular communities belong ultimately to the group of Ewe-speakers or not. The community of Accra, under the rule of the Ga Manche, and the communities of Ada on the western side of the Volta River close to its mouth, and those of Krobo with the towns of Odumase and Kpong, form a western socio-geographic boundary of 'Eweland'. Those communities speak Gã or Adangme, which distinguishes them from the Ewe, although they actually claimed political influence over Ewe-speaking communities during the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ One particular Adangme-speaking group, the Agotime, live as a pocket among Ewe-speakers. Further to the north-west, Ewe-speakers bordered Twi-speaking groups. Akwamu, a small pre-colonial political entity, was the most immediate neighbour, but the relationship with the Asante was the crucial variable in the broader region. The Asante demanded tribute from a number of Ewe-speaking communities, and their invasions in the late 1860s were a traumatic experience for the latter.

8 Barbier, Jean-Claude, 'Jalons pour une sociologie électorale du Togo: 1958, 1985', *Politique Africaine* 27, 1987, 6–18, 14–15; Brown, 'Sieges', 437, 444–5.

9 Amenumey, D.E.K., *The Ewe in Pre-Colonial Times* (Accra: Sedco, 1986), 4–5; Gayibor, Nicoué Lodjou (ed.), *Histoire des Togolais. Vol. 2: De 1884 à 1960* (Lomé: Presses de l'Université du Bénin, 2005); Nugent, *Smugglers*; Lawrance, Benjamin N., *Locality, Mobility, and 'Nation': Periurban Colonialism in Togo's Eweland 1900–1960* (Rochester/NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006); Meyer, Birgit, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); Greene, Sandra, *Gender, Ethnicity and Social Change on the Slave Coast: A History of the Anlo-Ewe* (Portsmouth: Heinemann – London: James Currey, 1996); Amenumey, D.E.K., *The Ewe Unification Movement: a political history* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1989); Agbedor, Paul, and Assiba Johnson, 'Naming Practices', in Benjamin N. Lawrance (ed.), *A Handbook of Eweland: The Ewe of Togo and Benin* (Accra: Woeli Publishing Services, 2005), 161–82, 164–6.

10 European slave-traders in the early eighteenth century were largely unable to distinguish between Ewe-speakers and neighbouring groups speaking other languages, see Lohse, Russell, 'Slave-Trade Nomenclature and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Evidence from Early Eighteenth-Century Costa Rica', *Slavery & Abolition* 23(3), 2002, 73–92.

To the north, the region of Buem was dominated by Lefana-speakers, a smaller language group, and by the Akposo. The Avatime live in the region between Kpandu to the north and Ho, a second important town centre in the region, to the south. In the east, the regions of Agu, Kuma, and Be, and the area of Notsie, are clearly part of the Ewe-speaking ensemble, but it becomes more complicated with Ge on the coast. Here, the language employed is Guin or Mina, which has similarities to Ewe, but whose alleged origins from the Gã language of the Accra region allow this community to claim that it is distinct from the Ewe-speaking cultural ensemble. While the rulers of Aného, the major town centre of the Ge community, have sometimes presented themselves as overlords of all of southern Togo, it remains questionable whether they ever were in such a situation. The representatives of other communities in Togo's south-east, such as Glidji, are today unwilling to categorise themselves as 'Ewe', and refer to their manifold bonds in the eastward direction.¹¹ As a whole, it is, therefore, quite complicated even to give the current geographical limits of Ewe identifications.

Both Nugent and Lawrance treat the question of local group identifications as being at the heart of their particular perspectives. Nonetheless, while both approaches integrate several examples of conflicting layers of group identification, their implications do not point to the same problems that I intend to analyse from a comparative point of view. Nugent is interested, in particular, in how local populations made use of the colonial border, first between the British and the Germans, from 1884 to 1914, then between the British and the French from 1914 to 1957. Moreover, his study favours Likpe and the region of Buem over the Ewe-speaking areas to the south and south-east. Finally, Nugent does not concern himself with Ewe or non-Ewe group relations before the First World War.¹²

Lawrance focuses on a very particular perspective, which he calls the 'peri-urban' dimension of 'Ewe identity': he concentrates on Ewe-speakers as inhabitants of the surrounding towns of a large city – Lomé – where an exceptional network of roads and railroads would have created an extraordinary setting for political mobilisation.¹³ This approach is stimulating – and Nugent's even more so – but it does not question the basic principle of Ewe ethnic solidarity, nor does it discuss any alternative concepts to Ewe-ness. It is therefore challenging to focus on the engagement of the different groups and individuals

11 Information given during an audience at the palace of the royal family of Glidji, Togo, 8 August 2009.

12 Nugent, *Smugglers*, 18, 96, 132–46.

13 Lawrance, *Locality*, 13–8.

that are potentially concerned with Ewe identification and Ewe mobilisation, with pre-colonial diplomacy and cultural relations, and with the colonial system.

Sandra Greene regards Ewe identification as a principle mainly formulated in the 1930s, as a weapon in the struggle for resources in the Gold Coast, which was on its way towards modernisation. For the Wifeme group in Anlo – a pre-colonial state ruled by Ewe-speakers – Greene has shown that the view of the Wifeme as ‘strangers’ was increasingly questioned over the years, as members of the group tended more and more to appeal to a joint ‘Ewe identity’ that connected them to the other clans and kinship groups within the state.¹⁴

Ewe-speaking groups had contact with the Atlantic world through their early participation in the slave trade. Many of the local traditions collected by British anthropologists, above all in the 1920s, point to a strong engagement of different local groups in the trade.¹⁵ Aného (‘Little Popo’) was the largest of the small ports of the immediate coastline of the later colony of Togo.¹⁶ Far more important, however, was the port of Ouidah with its three European fortresses, in present-day Benin, which was linked to the Ewe-speaking areas further westwards. This also brought the Ewe-speakers into indirect contact with the Kingdom of Dahomey, although Dahomean political activity was oriented eastwards.¹⁷ On the western side of the coastline, Keta was the most important slaving port for communities living close to the Volta River.

After colonial conquest, the different European powers drew borderlines that had an impact above all on the viability of trade networks in the region. They also proceeded with a rationalisation of power structures, and modified the latter through the organisation of ‘indirect rule’. German officials had a tendency to weaken rather than to strengthen existing political structures, while the French gave part of the local power back to the *chefs de canton*, but held them on a short leash.¹⁸ In contrast, British administrators believed, long before the protest movement of Ewe spokesmen in the 1940s, in the prior

14 Greene, *Gender*, 147–51.

15 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/1624, Rattray, *Report by Mr. R.S. Rattray* (without number), without date, 42 (Vakpos); 44 (Tafi about Avatime).

16 Strickrodt, Silke, ‘Afro-European Trade Relations on the Western Slave Coast, 16th to 19th Centuries’ (unpublished PhD thesis, Univ. of Stirling, 2002).

17 Gayibor, Nicoué Lodjou, *Le Genyi: Un Royaume oublié de la Côte de Guinée au Temps de la Traite des Noirs* (Lomé: Haho – Paris: Karthala, 1990), 176–82; Law, Robin, *Ouidah: The Social History of a West African Slaving ‘Port’ 1727–1892* (Athens/OH: Ohio University Press – Oxford: James Currey, 2004), 19.

18 Amegan, Francis Kwassivi, ‘Les administrateurs allemands de la ville de Lomé (1884–1914)’, in Nicoué Lodjou Gayibor, Yves Marguerat, and Gabriel K. Nyassogbo (eds.), *Le Centenaire*

existence of larger political structures, that is chiefdoms, which had lost power through the twists and turns of history. In this logic, paramount chiefs were strengthened as rulers of 'states', political entities created by 'amalgamation' of 'divisions', on normally entirely ahistorical grounds, and frequently against the passive resistance of the locals.¹⁹

Today, the Ewe-speakers – if we exclude Adangme-speakers and Guin-Mina-speakers – are a community of roughly one million individuals.²⁰ According to Jakob Spieth, missionary of the Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft (or Bremen Mission) and author of a monumental account on the 'Ewe tribes' based on interviews conducted in the early twentieth century, the Ewe-speakers were proud of their language, and used it strongly for their self-definition.²¹ Nevertheless, we have to take into account the bilingualism of many individuals in the region, which makes the definition of one single 'Ewe' identification through language alone rather complicated. Also, concrete regulations for marriage and family structure seemed to vary 'from tribe to tribe'.²²

This problem was again expressed, in 1968, by B.W. Hodder who held that 'the area in which the Ewe call themselves Ewe for purposes of political action is not the same as the area inhabited by the Ewe "tribe"'.²³

de Lomé, Capitale du Togo (1897–1997): Actes du colloque de Lomé (3–6 mars 1997) (Lomé: Presses de l'Université du Bénin, 1998), 95–109, 104–7.

- 19 Nugent, Paul, "A few lesser peoples": the Central Togo minorities and their Ewe neighbours', in Carola Lentz and Paul Nugent (eds.), *Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limits of Invention* (London – New York: Macmillan – Saint Martin's Press, 2000), 163–82, 167–8. The 'native states' were Akpini, Asogli, Awatime (written as such), and Buem, joined by the Tongu Confederacy after 1945. On criticisms coming from local rulers, see PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/458, V.M. Kofi II., *Howusu* of Ho, to Rooke, District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 24 Dec. 1951.
- 20 This concerns the Ewe-speaking Watchi groups, or the populations of Atakpamé. Part of the confusion becomes visible in Robert Cornevin's response to D.E.K. Amenumey's attempts to draw a map of 'Eweland', see Cornevin, Robert, 'Note au Sujet Des Limites de L'Eweland', *Journal of African History* 9(3), 1968, 501–2. On the Watchi, see Lovell, Nadia, 'The Watchi-Ewe: Histories and Origins', in Benjamin N. Lawrance (ed.), *A Handbook of Eweland: The Ewe of Togo and Benin* (Accra: Woeli Publishing Services, 2005), 90–114, 95–8.
- 21 Spieth, Jakob, *Die Ewe-Stämme: Material zur Kunde des Ewe-Volkes in Deutsch-Togo* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer (Ernst Vohsen), 1906), 57*.
- 22 Spieth, *Ewe-Stämme*, 62*.
- 23 Hodder, B.W., 'The Ewe problem: a reassessment', in Charles A. Fisher (ed.), *Essays in Political Geography* (London: Methuen, 1968), 271–83, 276.

In the last four decades, we have not really come closer to a profound analysis of these contradictions and to a definition of Ewe claims for a collective identity. These complications go back to interpretations of testimonies from as early as 1912.²⁴ It is unsurprising that European officials were frequently quite confused about local genealogies and conflicting claims to chieftaincies. Regents were nominated by the communities and often constituted an additional force, as did stool fathers, often being the authority to nominate the candidates, and *Mankradowo*, i.e. leading political councillors.²⁵ 'Amalgamation' of divisions in British Togoland led to even more confusion – in extreme cases, such as Nkonya, a divisional chieftaincy could remain vacant for eight years.²⁶

At the heart of these struggles, we find references to a certain notion of Eweness. This is related to the idea, uncritically reiterated in some of the literature, that 'the Ewe' relied on 'decentralised' institutions, expressed through the role of the *dufia* (chief), with restricted powers, and under the obligation to cooperate with a council of elders representing the important lineages, the *fomewo*.²⁷ A certain political language was connected to such institutions, as different contenders argued about 'the customs of Eweland'.²⁸ In such cases, European officials were frequently only too ready to accept such references to customs, and to attack what was presented to them as 'most unusual in an Ewe tribe and [that] should be regarded with suspicion'.²⁹ However, states whose rulers claimed to be at the core of 'Ewe identity' had political institutions that were very similar to those of neighbouring 'Akan' or 'Adangme' states. Thus, Anlo was, from the eighteenth century onwards, organised with a ruling chief with his 'wing chiefs', similar to those of Twi-speaking communities like Akwamu or even Asante.³⁰

24 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/1068, Crowther, Secretary of Native Affairs of the Gold Coast, *Extract from Notes of Evidence given before a Commission of Inquiry held in the Quittah District by Francis Crowther, Esquire...* (without number), 13 April 1912.

25 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/569, Acting Senior District Commissioner of Ho to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Nkonya Native Affairs* (n° S.0046/8.), 19 Dec. 1947, 2.

26 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/96, Senior District Commissioner of Ho to Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, *Election and Installation of Chiefs*. (n° S.0062/11012.), 12 Sep. 1951.

27 Verdon, Michael, *The Abutia Ewe of West Africa: A Chieftom that Never Was* (Berlin – New York – Amsterdam: Mouton, 1983), 37–74; Laumann, 'History', 18–9.

28 Pauvert, 'Evolution', 167–8; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/460, S.K. Afege, *Asafoatse* of Atsiati, to District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 14 Nov. 1946.

29 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/460, District Commissioner of Ho to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Akoepo Native Affairs*. (n° 0106/S.F.1/7.), 4 Dec. 1946.

30 TNA, PRO, CO/96/738/6, Warrington, Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Annual Report for the Eastern Province for the Year 1936–1937* (without number), without date, 10.

Moreover, the political map in the southern region of the Volta River was not dominated by any larger pre-colonial states, in contrast to the case of northern Senegambia: small political units were the rule, superseded in some cases by the few existing states. Only on occasions of massive external threats – as had become obvious during the Akwamu and Asante invasions in the Volta River Region – would the other communities seek military alliances with the paramount rulers of Peki or Anlo, the largest entities with Ewe-speaking rulers, and accepted for a *transitory* period the payment of tributes.³¹ Apart from that, 'localism' ruled in Togoland, much to the regret of the British:

Patriotism here is extremely local, and very strong: The natural psychological tendency of the Togoland people is not to unite to create greater groups, but to split up into ever smaller ones. I once reported that the people of the Akpini State, for instance, do not call themselves by the name of their State, Akpinis, but rather by the names of their divisions – Kpandus, Sovies, Alavanyos etcetera [sic] in fact the process is more extreme than that; even inside a division people will call themselves by the names of their own towns and think primarily of the interests of their towns before they think of the interests of their division, – thus in the Gbi division they call themselves Wegbes, Attabus, Kpoetas, Blas etcetera, before they call themselves Gbis. And it does not stop there; every week a Captain in some Sub-Chief's town collects his people together and they go off to form a new town elsewhere; having set up on a new site he will call himself a Sub-Chief with Captains or Asafohenes of his own.³²

Local divisional chiefs who were pressured to become part of larger politico-administrative entities were not at all happy with such developments. British administrators were certain that most chiefs would have preferred simply to continue with the 'German situation', where hundreds of so-called 'divisions' had had their autonomous jurisdiction. In 1942, 96 so-called sub-chiefs even petitioned to reinstate the system existing before 1931, in which each group had had its own native court.³³

31 Amenumey holds, on the contrary, that only an 'unfortunate' eighteenth-century rivalry between Anlo and Ge accounts for the non-emergence of an Ewe state, see Amenumey, *Ewe*, 27.

32 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/288, Mead, Acting District Commissioner of Kpandu, to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n^o 1755/165/1931), 27 Nov. 1942, 1–2.

33 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/288, W.R. Gaskell, Commissioner of the Eastern Province to Secretary of Native Affairs (without number), 1 Dec. 1942, 1.

While in the 1920s the different populations of the Ewe-speaking zones of the Gold Coast and the Togolands would intermittently mention their Ewe identification, this is difficult to corroborate as being a long-standing tradition. In the eighteenth century, Danish and British residents at Accra and Keta had had early contacts with the rulers of Akwamu, then a pre-colonial state in the interior, but they knew nothing of any 'Ewe' category.³⁴ British and German officials, or missionaries from the Basle Mission or the Bremen Mission, were active in carving out this identification. There is nothing to indicate that Ewe-speakers defined themselves as a homogeneous group; only later, did the idea of Ewe unity become fashionable, and linguistic studies seemed to sustain it.³⁵

Moreover, pre-colonial states like Anlo and Peki had a complicated relation to Ewe culture, whether or not we take it as a historical construct. The 'traditional ruler' of Peki, the *Pekihene* (or *Deiga* in Ewe), who later claimed the overlordship of much of the Volta Area, stood, during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, in a close relationship to the very efficient military state of Akwamu; only around 1833 did the rulers of Peki finally break this bond. By then the *Pekihene* was attempting to profit from close cooperation with Ewe-speaking rulers further eastwards. The case of Anlo is even more complex and needs to be studied with caution.³⁶ The *Awoame Fiawo* (the 'traditional rulers') of Anlo were long-standing allies of the *Akwamuhene*, in spite of 'the sharp cultural, social and linguistic differences between the two states'.³⁷ Although in Anlo oral traditions from the 1980s, elders had an

34 Amenumey, *Ewe*, 32–6. Harnæs, Per, 'African Power Struggle and European Opportunity: Danish Expansion on the Early 18th-Century Gold Coast', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, New Series* 7, 2003, 1–92, 2–13; Wilson, Louis E., 'The "Bloodless Conquest" in Southeastern Ghana: the Huza and Territorial Expansion of the Krobo in the 19th Century', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 23(2), 1990, 269–97, 274, 290; Hair, 'Continuity', 261; Rupp-Eisenreich, Britta, 'L'ethnicité, critère descriptif au XVIII^e siècle: le cas de la traite danoise', in Jean-Pierre Chrétien and Gérard Prunier (eds.), *Les ethnies ont une histoire* (second edition, Paris: Karthala, 2003), 49–60, 55–6.

35 Spieth, *Ewe-Stämme*, II*.

36 Rosenthal, Judy, 'Religious Traditions of the Togo and Benin Ewe', in Benjamin N. Lawrance (ed.), *A Handbook of Eweland: The Ewe of Togo and Benin* (Accra: Woeli Publishing Services, 2005), 183–96, 193–4.

37 Kea, Ray, 'Akwamu-Anlo relations, c. 1750–1813', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 10, 1969, 29–63, 29. The central account of Anlo origins emphasised the participation and leading role in the mythical flight from Notsie, but also presented the forefathers of the Anlo communities as relatives of many local groups, not only the Ewe-speakers. See ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 331, *A Brief Ethnographic Account of the Ewes of the Anlo State. The Common 'Ewe' Origin and the Central Group of Royal Authority* (without number), without date [dated by French Administration of Togo as '1918'].

obvious tendency to understate the power of the Anlo ruler – they forgot that it was not until the 1930s that Togbe Sri II was affected by sickness and became a weak leader – Anlo was a crucial political entity but much less important as a cultural centre.³⁸

We find a dispute amongst Ewe-speakers during the colonial period as to which were the 'traditionally' important Ewe states. Most traditions emphasised the role of the *Pekihene*, Kwadzo De IV, and of his successor, built up in the wars against the Anlo and the Asante, and which gave a pre-eminence to the Peki stool (the 'traditional' throne). However, even these claims were challenged. In 1946 Adai Kwasi Adem IX of Awudome – then belonging to the administrative Native Authority of Peki State – demanded Awudome's separation from Peki on the grounds that both 'states' had only once formed a military alliance against the Asante, and that Awudome had by far been a larger territory than Peki. The British district commissioners were unable to verify this argument: hereditary rights seemed unclear.³⁹

Questions of language were also complex. The German Ewe mission, undertaken by the Bremen Mission and the Catholic Mission of Steyl, and continued, after the First World War, by the Ewe Presbyterian Church, was decisive when it came to standardisation and promotion of Ewe as a common language. Local populations, who only became part of the Ewe-speaking linguistic community through these efforts, are a conceptual problem, much like groups becoming Wolof-speakers in Senegal during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁴⁰ Colonial administrations took it for granted that a common language united populations, which was often a simplistic perception. Speakers of 'minority

38 Greene, Sandra E., 'The Past and Present of an Anlo-Ewe Oral Tradition', *History in Africa* 12, 1985, 73–87, 74; TNA, PRO, CO/96/738/6, Warrington, *Annual Report for the Eastern Province for the Year 1936–1937* (without number), without date, 69.

39 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 302 (also contained in DA/D 307), Adai Kwasi Adem IX, *Fia* of Awudome, *Petition of the Fiaga and People of Awudome* (without number), 7 May 1946, 1, 9; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 307, Acting District Commissioner of Akuse to Provincial Commissioner (n° 1141/190/1920.), 28 May 1946, 1; Amenumey, *Ewe*, 81.

40 Meyer, Birgit, 'Christianity and the Ewe Nation: German Pietist Missionaries, Ewe Converts and the Politics of Culture', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 32(2), 2002, 167–99, 176–80; Lawrance, Benjamin N., 'The History of the Ewe Language and Ewe Language Education', in Benjamin N. Lawrance (ed.), *A Handbook of Eweland: The Ewe of Togo and Benin* (Accra: Woeli Publishing Services, 2005), 215–29, 218–20; Alsheimer, Rainer, *Zwischen Sklaverei und christlicher Ethnogenese: Die vorkoloniale Missionierung der Ewe in Westafrika (1847–ca. 1890)* (Münster etc.: Waxmann, 2007), 231–45, 270–1; Azamede, Kokou, *Transkulturelation? Ewe-Christen zwischen Deutschland and Westafrika, 1884–1939* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2010).

languages' at the margins of the Ewe-speaking zone were thereby forcibly integrated into administrative units. A good example is that of the Lefana-speakers of Buem. In 1967, administrative officers in the Volta Region of independent Ghana were astonished by the campaign of the Kudje Head Chief, Akuamoah IV, to break away from the Buem Traditional Area, in spite of speaking the same language and allegedly belonging to the 'same culture' as the 'traditional rulers' of Buem:

Why then has Nana Akuamoah IV, whose people could be said to belong to the same stock and speak the same language of Lefana as the Buems of Jasikan, Borada, Guaman and Nsuta, found it necessary to declare himself independent of Nana Akpandja [the paramount chief of Buem]?⁴¹

The Kudje Chief held that it was erroneous to see all the Lefana-speakers as belonging to the same group – and he argued that the same 'mistake' had often been made for their 'Ewe' neighbours:

The two different groups of people, the Kedjeomas (Kudjes) and the Boradas and others, were total strangers to each other and although they all spoke (and still speak) the same Lefana dialect yet that, in itself alone, is no ground for any assumption that all of them were one and the same people similarly as all the Ewe-speaking peoples of the Volta Region or the Nkonyas, Anums and Bosos or the Akims and Akwamus, for instance, do not, besides their common citizenship of the Republic of Ghana, claim a common origin because they all speak Ewe or Guan or Twi, respectively.⁴²

Occasionally, however, local authorities and elders formulated clear antagonisms based on language. In the founding legend of the Ewe-speaking Anfoega community, the Asante war of the 1860s was explicitly explained as a conflict between language groups: the Twi-speakers from the west of the Volta, led by the Asante, battling the Ewe-speakers.⁴³ The idea of solidarity between

41 PRAAD (Ho Branch), NA/47 (dossier not classified), S.G. Okraku, District Administrative Officer in Jasikan, to Regional Administration Officer, Ho, *Buem Traditional Council* (SA.1/164), 28 Sep. 1967, 1.

42 PRAAD (Ho Branch), NA/47 (dossier not classified), Nana Akuamoah IV, *Nifahene* of Buem Traditional Area and Chief of Kudje, to Clerk of Volta Region House of Chiefs, *Buem Traditional Affairs* (without number), 10 May 1965, 4.

43 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/216, *Abstract of Anfoaga Traditional History* (without number), without date, 1.

Ewe-speakers thus existed in the nineteenth century, as a *potential* category of identification and of mobilisation.

Founding legends helped to sustain this possibility. The famous Notsie myth was a principal point of reference for Ewe-ness; and it appeared indeed in many of the local histories collected by Europeans in the first decades of the twentieth century. A number of allegedly Ewe-speaking groups were said to have escaped from the cruel methods of government of a legendary ruler of Notsie, Agokoli III. The myth appears within the account on the history of Ho by Spieth, and in the early anthropological work of the British scholar-administrator, John Sutherland Rattray, in the 1920s; it was also told to the British officials in the Keta Lagoon Area. The myth is ever-present as a symbol of a broader group experience.⁴⁴ Even so, a number of non-Ewe communities also claimed to have been in Notsie; details of the myth changed over the decades; and we do not have sufficient archaeological data to confirm elements of the legend.⁴⁵

The accounts of scholar-administrators such as Captain C.C. Lilley and John Sutherland Rattray were well known to literate persons in Togoland communities, who re-employed these British attempts at classification. Thus, in a succession dispute, the elders of the small community of Tokokoe criticised Lilley for describing their group as not having come from Akwapim sixty years before, but having migrated over hundreds of years.⁴⁶ These elders held that they knew the community's history better than any outsider! Like many other examples, this incident points to the flexibility of information on group origins. At best, an Ewe ethnic identification existed in principle in the late nineteenth century, but perhaps only as a latent possibility in competition with

44 Spieth, *Ewe-Stämme*, 1 (for 'Togoland'); Akyeampong, Emmanuel Kwaku, *Between the Sea & the Lagoon: An Eco-social History of the Anlo of Southeastern Ghana c. 1850 to Recent Times* (Oxford: James Currey – Athens/OH: Ohio University Press, 2001), 24–6 (for the Keta Lagoon area).

45 Gayibor, Nicoue Lodjou, 'Agokoli et la dispersion de Notsé', in François de Medeiros (ed.), 'Peuples du golfe du Bénin – aja-éwé: colloque de Cotonou' (Paris: Karthala, 1985), 21–34, 33; Greene, Sandra, 'Notsie Narratives: History, Memory, and Meaning in West Africa', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101(4), 2002, 1015–41, 1019–20, 1032–4; Gayibor, Nicoue Lodjou, and Angèle Aguihah, 'Early Settlements and Archaeology of the Adja-Tado Cultural Zone', in Benjamin N. Lawrance (ed.), *A Handbook of Eweland: The Ewe of Togo and Benin* (Accra: Woeli Publishing Services, 2005), 1–13, 9–10. This is erroneously taken by D.E.K. Amenumey (*Ewe*, 2–6) and Benjamin Lawrance (*Locality*, 27–8) as corroborated.

46 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/296, Peteprebi Danyi (of Avenyi); and others, to District Commissioner of Ho, *Ref: Tokokoe Dispute, Buankrah vrs Agama*. (without number), 12 April 1934.

other more local (or 'divisional') experiences. The narratives were often substantiated by recourse to the European interpretation.

European administrative information was subject to a number of changes. After the slow disappearance of the Danish presence by 1850, the British showed only lukewarm interest in territorial control over regions close to the Volta River. Until the 1880s, the British were mainly focused on neutralising the power of the Asante State in the west and north-west, and their alliances in the Volta Region were subsidiary to campaigns financed from Accra by the local community. The British interpretation of events east of the Volta River was therefore clearly biased through an 'Accran' perspective.

The sudden German interference in political issues on the 'Slave Coast' changed the whole picture. The protectorate agreement signed in Aného in 1884 consigned large parts of the coastline between Keta and Ouidah to German administration; it provoked a more aggressive competition and led both the British and the Germans to hastily collect information on the local communities. In 1890, the colonial border was finally negotiated, allowing both colonial powers to establish their own style of rule. British administration adhered to the principle of indirect rule and wished to take the cultural and political structures of the 'divisions' of Peki and Anlo, which had become part of the colony, as a model. The 1912 report of the Secretary of Native Affairs, Francis Crowther, reflected this bias in favour of claims coming from the rulers of Anlo and Peki, which continued well into the 1920s. In the 1930s and 1940s, the British administration remained generally interested in 'traditional' issues, which, they felt, had to be addressed in the regular reports to the League of Nations in Geneva.

The German version of colonialism, on the other hand, was far less attentive to the formulation of local identifications.⁴⁷ While the Bremen missionaries were quite active in 'research' on Ewe culture, the interest of administrators in these issues was limited. The French, who occupied a part of the German colony in 1914, and received Lomé and large parts of the Ewe-speaking zone around the town centres of Kpalimé and Notsie at the end of the decade, shared these attitudes, and concentrated on the economic exploitation of the colony and on taxation. Only with the outbreak of a spectacular revolt at the heart of the Ewe-speaking zone under French rule, did these attitudes begin to change. On 24 and 25 January 1933, Lomé, now the capital of the French mandate in Togo, was the scene of an immense tax revolt, which led to widespread violence and a brutal reaction from the colonial government. As a consequence

47 Zurstrassen, Bettina, *Ein Stück deutscher Erde schaffen': koloniale Beamte in Togo 1884–1914* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2008), 29–39.

of these events, French officials improved their system of information-gathering, and French Governor Robert de Guise pressured officials to keep in closer contact with village authorities.⁴⁸ Even with the very technocratic style of modernisation that was *en vogue* in Togo under the French mandate from 1945, officials remained inclined to converse with Ewe-speakers concerning their particular group identification. Under these circumstances, the perspective of the interaction of Ewe-speakers with the British administration is the most informative one, but can be contrasted with reports from German missionaries for the period before the First World War, and information from French sources mainly after 1933.

Apocalypse Now: The Test for a Larger Ewe Community, 1867–1914

The label 'Ewe' is not a colonial creation. Paul Nugent's claim that 'Ewe' as a category probably appeared for the first time in 1884 does not take into account the missionary activities of the Basle Mission and, in particular, of the Bremen Mission in the Volta area.⁴⁹ As early as 1858, Reverend J. Bernhard Schlegel wrote an article on the history of the 'Eweer', based on local sources.⁵⁰ However, it is plausible that this broader label was only reactivated during the traumatic incursion by armies coming into the region from the exterior, that is, in the late 1860s. In that sense, Nugent would be right.

The Asante campaign of the 1860s polarised the whole region.⁵¹ Asante commanders and individual Asante war-gang leaders cooperated with some local communities to attack villages and political units on the eastern side of the Volta River. Asante was allied with the Twi-speaking Akwamus – a small

48 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Lomé, 18, De Guise, Governor of Togo, to District Commissioner of Lomé, *Visite à Tsévié du 20 Février* (n° 173), 8 March 1933, 1.

49 Nugent, Paul, 'Putting the History Back into Ethnicity: Enslavement, Religion, and Cultural Brokerage in the Construction of Mandinka/Jola and Ewe/Agotime Identities in West Africa, c. 1650–1930', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50(4), 2008, 920–48, 939. Elsewhere, Nugent holds that the term is 'not in common currency before 1920', which seems more adequate, see Nugent, Paul, 'A Regional Melting Pot: The Ewe and Their Neighbours in the Ghana-Togo Borderlands', in Benjamin N. Lawrance (ed.), *A Handbook of Eweland: The Ewe of Togo and Benin* (Accra: Woeli Publishing Services, 2005), 29–43, 29.

50 Schlegel, J. Bernhard, 'Beitrag zur Geschichte, Welt- und Religionsanschauung des Westafrikaners, namentlich des Eweers', *Monatsblatt der norddeutschen Missionsgesellschaft* 8(94), 1858, 406–8.

51 Johnson, Marion, 'Ashanti East of the Volta', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 8, 1965, 33–59, 44–7.

but well-organised community – but also with the rulers of Anlo, an Ewe-speaking community.⁵² Anlo had entered into a protracted war with the neighbouring, politically stratified, communities of Accra and Ada through the instigation of Attehogbe, otherwise known as Geraldo Lima, the ex-companion of a Portuguese slave trader active on the coast, who was soon described by the British as the main ‘villain’ in the region.⁵³

During these conflicts, the alliances in the region bridged linguistic differences between the groups and complicated the picture: for instance, the Ewe-speaking communities of Volo and Dufor sided with Akwamu and were active as pirates on the Volta River; the Ewe-speaking state of Anlo remained allied to Akwamu and Asante; the Gã-speaking community of Accra, and the ruler of Ada, were opposed to the raiders, and allies of the majority of Ewe-speaking groups east of the Volta River. Among the latter groups, Peki was the most prominent of the groups in the anti-Asante coalition. The British only had more detailed information from the areas close to Accra and Keta, and from Basle and Bremen missionaries who at the end of the 1860s lived in Keta, in Odumase in the pre-colonial state of Krobo, and in Ho. This distorts our picture of political activities, because the missionaries were not very interested in political matters and gave only a minimal amount of information. Mounting pressure on them by Asante raids increased their activity in information-gathering.

Anlo, Akwamu, and Asante invasions have a particular role in ‘traditions’ amongst Ewe-speakers and other neighbours. For the Avatime, Lynne Brydon described the experience of the invasion of the late 1860s as a ‘cataclysm’ shaking the very fundamentals of the group – which was anchored in collective memory – and this seems to have been also the case for other communities.⁵⁴ The different groups regarded as ‘Ewe’ and interviewed by Rattray in the 1920s integrated these events into their accounts: the Akwamu wars and the Asante incursions appear as traumatic incidents, which could be reinterpreted as a common ‘Ewe experience’.⁵⁵

52 TNA, PRO, CO/96/88, *Memo embracing a brief sketch of the facts connected with the existing disturbances in the Volta District from the commencement in March 1865 to the present date, drawn up for the information of His Excellency the Governor General.* (without number), without date, 32–3; Amenumey, D.E.K., ‘The extension of British rule to Anlo (South-east Ghana), 1850–1890’, *Journal of African History* 9(1), 1968, 99–117, 103–4.

53 TNA, PRO, CO/96/88, Lozogbagba, (*Awoame Fia*); and others, to Kennedy (without number), 10 May 1871, 1.

54 Brydon, ‘Constructing’, 28; Interview with Kwame Asiah, 17 August 2007. Spieth’s knowledge of the same event must come from a different version, see Spieth, *Ewe-Stämme*, 19*.

55 See Rattray’s decisive remarks on the ‘Ewe’ in the 1920s in PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/1624, Rattray, *Report by Mr. R.S. Rattray* (without number), without date, 46–7.

For European officials, the 1860s brought the very first experience in the interior of Voltaland. From 1869, British administrators and military officers were active in battling 'pirates' on the Volta River. Thereby, they met Ewe-speaking communities in the hinterland of the Volta Estuary, such as those of Volo and Dufor. In the late 1870s and the first half of the 1880s, the British enlarged their control of the coastline to include Anlo. In 1888, British troops initiated a campaign to support the pre-colonial state of Peki against groups that had, two decades before, sided with the Asante invaders.

This latter operation made it possible to mark out territory against German activities. It also represented an attempt to avenge the murder of a British envoy in the Volta River Area, who had been assassinated by the followers of the ruler of Taviefe, a small Ewe-speaking community in the vicinity of Ho. For many of the local groups, this British campaign was quickly identified as a chance to take revenge against the few communities who had sided with the Asante and the Akwamu, to which Taviefe notably belonged.⁵⁶ Local communities participated strongly in 'informing' about group relations, as they bombarded the British with a huge number of narrations and petitions. The same participation by Ewe-speaking informants happened on the German side and featured in Spieth's account.⁵⁷

Some of the early British views are influenced by the Accra *Ga Manche* (the highest 'traditional ruler'), Tackie, who claimed the overlordship of the south of the territories in the Volta River Region, including Anlo.⁵⁸ Informants from Accra described the 'Volloes and Doffors' as 'part of the Aquamboe tribe', and thus 'tribally' juxtaposed with the other groups in the Volta Region.⁵⁹ This does not go together with the regional pattern of linguistic groups, but it did not matter: the populations in question were often simply referred to as 'eastern tribes'. The Accra leaders only had rudimentary ideas about the political organisation of the respective groups. The same applies to the coastal region beyond Anlo, where the Accra dignitaries had contacts with allies in the region of

56 Louis, Wm. Roger, *Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies, 1914–1919* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 20–3.

57 Spieth, *Ewe-Stämme*, 76*–7*.

58 Akurang-Parry, Kwabena O., 'The administration of the abolition laws, African responses, and post-proclamation slavery in the gold coast, 1874–1940', *Slavery & Abolition*, 19(2), 1998, 149–66, 154.

59 TNA, PRO, CO/96/84, King Cudjoe of Accra; and others, to Ussher, *The Petition...to His Excellency Herbert Taylor Ussher Administrator of the Gold Coast* (without number), 11 Feb. 1870, 1; TNA, PRO, CO/96/81, Lutterodt; Hesse; and others, to Russell, British Chief Commandant in Accra (without number), 14 Aug. 1869, 4.

Lomé.⁶⁰ Before the creation of the German protectorate, European knowledge about the coastline was limited. Basle missionaries based in the Krobo capital, Odumase, provided some information on the Lomé region.⁶¹ With regard to Ewe-speaking political entities, it was equally difficult for the British to make out details of the relationships of different groups with one another.⁶² The Akyem war chief Dompri was one source for British officials that was independent from their Accra connection, as he was directly involved as an ally of the Ewe-speakers fighting incoming Asante and Akwamu troops. In August 1869, Dompri operated in the Avatime hills, where most of the Ewe-speakers had sought refuge under the command of the *Pekihene* (which contradicts oral accounts from the 1920s, in which the Avatime themselves attempted to give the most outstanding role to their own efforts, and in which other groups claimed they had not sided with Peki). At the same time, Anlo troops, in cooperation with units from Mlamfi and Volo, attacked the Agotime, burnt the city of Ho that had according to Dompri previously been under Agotime control, and also destroyed Sokode, another important settlement in the Ho area.⁶³

In 1869, the *Ada Manche* took the role of the advocate of the Agotime populations in dealings with the British authorities, and accused the Anlo of banditry and treason. In Agotime, the situation was obviously critical at the beginning of the dry season. The Ada ruler insisted that he was particularly concerned by the events in Agotime; he named the Agotime his 'brothers' and strongly solicited a British intervention in the matter.⁶⁴ This behaviour strengthened local claims of difference from their local neighbours and set the emphasis on language. Agotime informants confirmed this allegiance in 1888, insisting that the Agotime, while now being under 'Krepi rule', 'belong to the Adangme tribe', and 'to Mr. W.N. Ocansey, of Addah [the *Ada Manche*]'.⁶⁵

60 TNA, PRO, CO/96/81, King Dosu Okanzie; King Oklu; and others to Acting Administrator in Cape Coast (without number), 28 Aug. 1869, 3; TNA, PRO, CO/96/81, Simpson to Chief Administrator of Sierra Leone (n° 108), 3 Sep. 1869, 3.

61 TNA, PRO, CO/96/81, Simpson to Chief Administrator of Sierra Leone (n° 108), 3 Oct. 1869, 2–4; TNA, PRO, CO/96/81, Saketi, *Krobohene*, to Lees (without number), 24 Aug. 1869, 2.

62 TNA, PRO, CO/96/81, Simpson to Lees (without number), 21 Aug. 1869, 4.

63 TNA, PRO, CO/96/81, Dompri to Addo (without number), 27 Aug. 1869, 1, 3. The later Ho tradition excludes such a dependency of the city from Agotime, perhaps due to the quest for historical primacy by the *Howusu* of Ho; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/1624, Rattray, *Report by Mr. R.S. Rattray* (without number), without date, 33.

64 TNA, PRO, CO/96/81, Dosu, *Ada Manche*, to Simpson (without number), 7 Oct. 1869.

65 TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Williams, British District Commissioner of Volta District, *Statement taken by C. Riby Williams, District Commissioner, Volta District* (without number), 2 July 1888, 144bis (1 of 1).

However, in later accounts the Agotime changed their mind about the identification of their group – in this way, Ada traditions were no longer reflected afterwards in Agotime accounts of the war and of the history of the group in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁶⁶ While the language difference between them and their neighbours remained, of course, an existing fact for the Agotime, their legend of migration, which declares them distinct from the bulk of the Ewe-speakers, can also be found in a number of other communities. According to Spieth, the populations of Ge – in the area between the River Haho and the River Mono – presented themselves in an analogous way, as former inhabitants of Accra, who had had to flee an Akwamu invasion.⁶⁷

For the Asante incursions, Spieth believes that 'while this war brought few advantages to the Ewe, it had nonetheless as its consequence that they began to get an understanding of their common tasks, tasks that would lead them to a slow but gradual sense of unity'.⁶⁸ In the British documents discussed above, however, the question of Ewe solidarity – so prominent also in retrospect in the interviews held with community leaders and chiefs in the 1920s – did not play the slightest role. On the contrary, one of the conflicts in which British troops and auxiliaries from Accra were most involved, the conflict between the small constituency of Bator and the warriors of Volo and Dufor, and a second that involved the Mafi and the ruler of Anlo – the latter four being allied to the Akwamu – was exactly a military conflict *between* different Ewe-speaking communities.⁶⁹ The *Fiawo* of Volo still commemorated the lost battle against British troops more than 80 years later, as the employment of a British warship left Volo populations with traumatic memories, but without remembering the

66 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/216, *The Preliminary History of the Agotime*. (without number), without date; this account taken in the 1920s is strongly negative to any Agotime connection with Ada; in a probably earlier account, the Agotime claim they have in the past been *erroneously* regarded as Adas, see PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/1624, Rattray, *Report by Mr. R.S. Rattray* (without number), without date, 39. However, in the early 1960s, Agotime was confirmed to be primarily Adangme-speaking, with Ewe as an important, but only secondary language. See Sprigge, R.G.S., 'Eweland's Adangbe: An Enquiry into an Oral Tradition', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 10, 1969, 87–123, 92–3; which stands in contrast to the assertion of Spieth, who regarded the Adangme language as disappearing, while Ewe was taking over; see Spieth, *Ewe-Stämme*, 41*.

67 Spieth, *Ewe-Stämme*, 38*.

68 *Ibid.*, 55*.

69 TNA, PRO, CO/96/85, Ussher to Kennedy (n° 80), 22 June 1870, 7; TNA, PRO, CO/96/85, Glover to Kennedy (without number), 22 June 1870, 5; TNA, PRO, CO/96/84, Cleland to Lees (without number), 11 Dec. 1869, 1; TNA, PRO, CO/96/85, Kennedy to Granville (n° 71), 4 July 1870, 2–3.

ancient enmity between Ewe-speaking communities.⁷⁰ In the discussions about the creation of a Tongu Confederacy – a new ‘Native Authority’ organised in the 1940s – the *Fia*wo of Volo and of Bator were close allies in diplomatic campaigns, as leaders of two ‘Ewe communities’ with long-standing friendly links.⁷¹ Notably, both the *Fia* of Volo and of Bator now attempted to characterise the Akwamu as distinct from the ‘Ewe’ of ‘Voltaland’, and thus demanded the separation of their villages from Akwamu, and their admission into the Tongu Confederacy.

The role of the Agbosome, a coastal Ewe-speaking community east of Keta, which had built up, in the bights of Lomé and Ve, a sort of free harbour for contraband trade into the territory of the British colony, was another apparently complex case.⁷² The British became increasingly interested in this community after the German intrusion and during the partition of the Volta Region between Berlin and London. The Agbosome were active as raiders on Anlo territory, the territory of the mighty Ewe-speaking *Awoame Fia*, and were long-standing enemies of an Anlo sub-group, the Anyako. Once again, cultural identification was not the principal motive for solidarity here.⁷³

The British tested the coherence of communities on the coast during their conflict with Anlo.⁷⁴ In January 1885, Assistant Inspector Stewart was sent to Keta and Anloga to obtain information about the prospective enemy. Based on oral reports of his Keta informants, Stewart described ‘the Awoonahs and the Anyakos’ as the two major distinct groups, ‘with many tribes who pay them feudal allegiance’.⁷⁵ With such terminology, Stewart managed to point out the

70 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 311, *Togbe Kwasi Abliza III, Dufiaga* of Volo State, Tongu Confederacy Council, to Dixon, Senior District Commissioner of Ho (n° KA 275/SP30/50), 27 Feb. 1950, 1–2.

71 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/108, *Togbe Kwasi Abliza III* to Senior District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 30 April 1949, 1.

72 TNA, PRO, CO/96/157, Young, Governor of the Gold Coast, to Derby (n° 255), 29 April 1884, 34–8.

73 TNA, PRO, CO/96/157, Firminger, Inspector of Gold Coast Colony in Keta, to Acting Colonial Secretary (without number), 26 March 1884, 4–7, 12–13; TNA, PRO, CO/879/21, African Confidential Print No. 268, Assistant Inspector Stewart to Colonial Secretary of the Gold Coast (without number, Enclosure 3 in No. 86), 30 Jan. 1885, 2.

74 TNA, PRO, CO/96/166, Captain Brydon to Colonial Secretary of the Gold Coast (n° 190), 4 Oct. 1876, 2–3.

75 TNA, PRO, CO/879/21, African Confidential Print No. 268, Assistant Inspector Stewart to Colonial Secretary of the Gold Coast (without number, Enclosure 3 in No. 86), 30 Jan. 1885, 1.

nature of Anlo as a pre-colonial state, while Bremen missionaries described it as a chaotic, 'republican tribe'.⁷⁶ The state was segmented and obviously rather weak, and many of its different communities operated autonomously: the Anyako were very probably acting without any control on the part of the *Awoame Fia*.⁷⁷ When, after intensive British shelling of the coastline, the different villages gave up the war, they offered their capitulation on individual terms.⁷⁸

Still more interesting for our analysis is the fact that informants from the interior described community relations in the region in the sense of a clear difference between Anlo and 'the Crippies' (Krepis). However, for years it remained uncertain what exactly 'Krepi' meant.⁷⁹ This label for an imagined community in the interior of the coastal region practically ceased to exist at the moment of the final Anglo-German partition of the Volta Region.⁸⁰ The British claimed that they had bought the right of protection over a community named 'Krepi' from the Danish residents in Keta in 1850, but, once again, this was a label without concrete meaning!⁸¹ In 1858, Thomas Birch Freeman in his report of a journey into the interior described Kwadzo De IV as 'Paramount Chief of the Krepis'. Even so, afterwards he commented that the *Pekihene* only ruled over his 'subject towns', while neighbouring 'divisions' such as Sokode

76 TNA, PRO, CO/96/88, Binder, Bremen missionary in Keta, to Kennedy (without number), 6 May 1871, 1; TNA, PRO, CO/96/85, Ussher to Kennedy (n° 90), 8 July 1870, 17–8; Meyer, *Translating*, 5.

77 TNA, PRO, CO/879/21, African Confidential Print No. 268, Chase Parr, Commander of HMS Frolic, to Young (without number, Enclosure 1 in No. 86.), 5 Feb. 1885.

78 TNA, PRO, CO/879/21, African Confidential Print No. 268, Dudley, Acting Inspector-General, to Colonial Secretary of the Gold Coast (without number, Enclosure 2 in No. 86), 5 Feb. 1885, 2.

79 TNA, PRO, CO/96/166, *Information collected from Mr. W.A. Blavo, about the police Station* (without number), without date, 1, 3. European eighteenth-century accounts had described that, according to local usage, 'Krepi' was 'all the land lying east of River Volta and north of this lake [east of Ada], as well as several hundred miles up river', see Rømer, Ludewig Ferdinand, *A Reliable Account of the Coast of Guinea (1760)*, translated and edited by Selena Axelrod Winsnes (Oxford etc.: Oxford University Press, 2000 [originally 1756 and 1760]), 129. On the vagueness of the term see also Amenumey, *Ewe*, 66–7.

80 In 1888, British administrators were still convinced that Krepi was a political institution in its own right, including nearly 500,000 inhabitants. See TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 356, Williams, District Commissioner of Volta District, to Griffith, British Governor of the Gold Coast (n° 1), 2 January 1888, 451 (1 of 1).

81 ANT, Fonds Allemand, FA1/196, *no title* (without number), 11 Feb. 1887, 1–2; ANT, Fonds Allemand, FA1/196, British Embassy in Berlin, *Memorandum on British and German Claims with Respect to the Crepee or Peki Country* (n° 15585.), 18 Dec. 1887, 2–4.

were perfectly autonomous. During Freeman's negotiations with the 'Krepi' chiefs for the introduction of a poll tax as compensation for British protection, Adzatekpor of Avatime, Dagadu of Kpandu, and most other leading chiefs of the area were apparently present. However, none of them accepted the *Pekihene's* overlordship and none suggested that his community was part of a larger identity group.⁸²

Thirty years later, most observers regarded 'Krepi' as the name of the territory dominated by Peki. Basle missionaries who visited Kpandu and Peki in the 1880s were convinced that the *Pekihene* was the ruler of a federation over 'the Efe' (including Kpandu), referring to the alliance against the Asante. The *Pekihene*, Kwadzo De VI, did his best to give credence to this view, claiming 'Krepi' to be his territory.⁸³ However, most of the other communities involved on the side of Peki and Ho in the Taviefe war, were not at all amused by such discourses of the *Pekihene*. They resisted accepting Peki's lasting overrule, although Kwadzo De initially had British support, as the British hoped to use his 'rights' as an argument against German territorial claims. The German Commissioner of Togo, Jesko von Puttkamer, in June 1888, obtained information on the western parts of the German protectorate, mainly on Agotime and Ylo, and described 'Krepi' as an ancient 'federation', which had included Peki, Akwamu, Avatime, Agotime and others of the Volta Region communities and had ceased to exist sometime before 1850.⁸⁴

The Avatime made a competing claim. In 1888, Adzatekpor of Vane, the ruler (and later paramount chief) of Avatime, had still been virtually unknown to British officials.⁸⁵ However, in 1894 the Avatime received a British confirmation that *they* were the rulers of the former state of Krepi (although they were

82 TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 356, Freeman, *Extract of Report of Mr. Freeman to Major H. Bird, dated 7th July 1858* (without number), without date, 1, 3.

83 [Christaller, J.C.], 'Recent Explorations in the Basin of the Volta (Gold Coast) by Missionaries of the Basel Missionary Society', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography, New Monthly Series* 8(4), 1886, 246–56, 253, 256; TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Bennett, District Commissioner of Akuse, to Griffith, Governor of the Gold Coast (n° 219., as Enclosure 1 in No. 18), 4 April 1888; TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Kwadzo De 'of Krepe' to Bennett (without number), 3 April 1888, 1.

84 TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 356, von Puttkammer, (*Extract.*) [*Memorandum on Peki*] (without number, Enclosure 2 in No. 44), 30 June 1888, 1–2.

85 TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Akers, British Assistant Inspector in Gold Coast, *List of Countries for which English Flags are required* (without number), 3 July 1888, 146bis.

now situated on German territory).⁸⁶ Based on this confirmation, the Avatime demanded in the 1920s to hold the leading role in a new 'state' created through 'amalgamation'.⁸⁷ The role of the ruler of Kpandu, whose territory finally came under German rule, was equally contested.⁸⁸

In 1888, the Taviefe War, starting with the murder of British Assistant Inspector John Scott Dalrymple on 11 May 1888, again allowed for a refinement of local identifications and regional solidarities between the British conquerors and Ewe-speaking groups.⁸⁹ Dalrymple's mission had been to discipline Taviefe, Matse, and Adaklu, former allies of the Asante and Akwamu in 1870 and opponents of Peki between 1875 and 1877 – information on their 'behaviour' had come from Kwadzo De VI and the ruler (*Howusu*) of Ho, and they were described as 'traitors' to the Ewe-speaking community.⁹⁰ The British inspector had defined Kwadzo De VI as legitimate king 'of all of Krepi' threatened by unruly subjects. The British neither understood the interest of the Peki ruler in presenting the facts in a particular way, nor did they see that the alliance of the *Pekihene* included a number of Twi-speakers, in particular from Boso and Anum.⁹¹

After the failure of a planned peace conference with the Taviefe ruler, Bele Kobina, and Dalrymple's death, an alliance organised by the British district

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- 86 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/253, Griffith, District Commissioner of Keta, to Adzatekpor I of Vane, Avatime (as 'King Adjatekpor of Crepe' [sic]) (n° 462/413), 9 Nov. 1894.
- 87 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/238, Adzatekpor I, Paramount Chief of Avatime, to District Commissioner of Ho (without number), without date [1927].
- 88 Bundesarchiv, Berlin (BArch), R1001, 4310, Zimmerer, Acting Governor of Cameroon, to Bismarck, German Imperial Chancellor (n° 158), 6 Oct. 1887.
- 89 TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Griffith; Evans, Colonial Secretary of the Gold Coast; Charles Pike, Treasurer, *Minutes of the Proceedings of a Meeting of the Executive Council, held at Christiansborg Castle, on Monday the 28th day of May 1888* (without number, enclosure in No. 17), without date, 54.
- 90 TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Dalrymple, Colonial Inspector, to Griffith (without number, enclosure in n° 11), 30 April 1888, 46 (1 of 2); TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Kwadjo De VI, *Pekihene*, to Bennett, District Commissioner of Akuse (without number), 3 April 1888, 76 (1 of 1); TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Evans to Dalrymple (without number, Enclosure 3 in No. 18), 9 April 1888, 76bis (1 of 2); TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Dalrymple to Evans (without number, Enclosure 8 in No. 18), 20 April 1888, 78 (1 of 2). The nineteenth-century 'tradition' collected by Spieth in Ho, describes the Taviefe as classic robbers and 'highwaymen', Spieth, *Ewe-Stämme*, 12–4.
- 91 TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Dalrymple, [*Conversation with Kwadjo Dei in Savie, 18 April 1888*] (without number), without date, 78bis (1 of 2); TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Dalrymple to Evans (without number, Enclosure 12 in No. 18), 24 April 1888, 80bis (2 of 2).

commissioner of Akuse, Akers, with the *Sakiti* of Krobo and the *Pekihene*, quickly conquered Taviefe and Matse. After atrocities by British Hausa mercenaries and in view of the stern positions taken by the *Pekihene*, Taviefe, Matse, Adaklu, and Waya again took up arms and were again defeated. The *Pekihene* and the *Howusu* also accused the communities of Anlo of sympathising with and supporting their opponents. The campaign changed the balance in favour of Kwadzo De: even messengers from Agotime, Avatime, and Twi-speaking Anum, who before had fiercely insisted on their autonomy, now claimed that their area had always been a 'portion of Crepee', and that they belonged to Peki rule. In 1888, these claims nearly provoked a diplomatic conflict between the British and the Germans.⁹² German diplomats were angry about the alleged British prerogatives in 'Krepi', and British officials loudly demanded the acquisition of the Ve Country including Lomé, in order to stop the contraband trade via this coast.⁹³ The British were more concerned to find an 'authentic' solution. This may explain why they retreated in the end, being uncertain if they had understood the territorial dimensions of 'Krepi'. They also gave up their

- 92 TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Bennett, District Commissioner of Ho, to Evans (n° 277), 11 May 1888, 87bis (1 of 2); TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Bennett to Evans (n° 280), 14 May 1888, 89 (1 of 2); TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Evans to Brennan, Assistant Inspector, Gold Coast Constabulary (n° 2406), 17 May 1888, 86 (2 of 2); TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Akers to Evans (without number, Enclosure in No. 22), 5 June 1888, 98 (2 of 3); TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Bennett to Evans (n° 329), 6 June 1888, 110bis; TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Akers, *Interview with Taviefe Messengers* (without number), 23 June 1888; TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Akers to Evans, *Report on Taviefe Expedition* (without number, Enclosure 1 in No. 34), 29 June 1888, 135–6; TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Griffith to Knutsford (n° 237), 7 July 1888, 129bis; TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Agbovi, Head Chief of Potoi; Akakpwaley, Head Chief of Mawlu Agotime, and others, [*Declaration*] (without number), 3 July 1888, 143bis (1 of 1); TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Riby Williams, District Commissioner, to Akers (without number), 2 July 1888, 144 (1 of 2); TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Williams, *Statement taken by C. Riby Williams, District Commissioner, Volta District* (without number), 2 July 1888, 144bis (1 of 1); TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Bogbi, Chief of Adaklu; Adzatekor I, Chief of Avatime; Yaw Chei, Chief of Taviefe; and others, [*Declaration*] (without number), 3 July 1888, 143bis–144; TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 351, Kumi, 'Chief of Anum and Head Chief of Buem', [*Declaration*] (without number), 3 July 1888, 144.
- 93 TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 356, Maurice Burt to Griffith (without number, Enclosure in No. 6), 3 March 1888, 446bis–447 (1 and 2 of 2).

claim for Agotime, in spite of earlier assurances given to the rulers of the Agotime villages who were abandoned to the Germans; and Kwadzo De was unsuccessful with his protest. The *Pekihene* was implicitly acknowledged by the British as formal paramount ruler over Agotime, but this gave him no political prerogative – and the colonial border effectively separated Peki from Agotime territory.⁹⁴

Buem, further to the north and at the margins of the Ewe-speaking area, had interested the British because of its strategic position for inland trade. The British had also (quite erroneously) concluded that the inhabitants of Buem spoke a language similar to the Ewe-speakers and were thus 'naturally' members of a British protectorate.⁹⁵ Further south, the German and the British governments continued to discuss the 'possession rights' over Kpandu, Ho, Avatime, and Adaklu, until the border was fixed in 1890, with most of these 'divisions' remaining in German territory, and the Adaklu villages divided between the Keta District of the Gold Coast and the Misahöhe District of German Togo.⁹⁶

As British officials struggled to come to an 'authentic' organisation of local political units, many participants from the African side used their chance to sell themselves as rulers of their respective community. Issues of being an ethnolinguistic group did not play a role in that process. Smaller communities, such as Taviefe, Adaklu, or Ho, and pre-colonial states with Ewe-speaking rulers, such as Anlo and Peki, dominated questions of group identification. However, the hardening of the colonial border had an impact on categories, as had missionaries of the Bremen Mission in defining Ewe culture and politics. These missionaries and some linguists and early anthropologists, showed a

94 TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 356, Evans to Akers (without number, Enclosure 1 in No. 23), 13 July 1888, 459 (2 of 2); TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 356, Evans to 'Chiefs of Agotime' (without number, Enclosure 2 in No. 23), 13 July 1888; TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 356, Evans to Kwadzo De VI, 'King of Krepí' (without number, Enclosure 3 in No. 23), 459 (1 of 1).

95 TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 356, *Extract from Mr. Firminger's Report of the 20th March 1888* (without number, Enclosure 1 in No. 7), without date, 447–447bis (1 and 2 of 2); TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 356, Williams to Griffith (n° 2), 25 July 1888, 465 (1 of 1); TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 356, *Notes of Statement made by King of Buem, July 25, 1888* (without number), without date, 465–465bis (1 and 2 of 2).

96 TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 356, Puttkamer, German Commissioner of Togo, to Griffith (without number, translation, Enclosure 1 in No. 14), 31 May 1888, 452bis–453 (1 to 2 of 2); TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 356, Griffith to Puttkamer (n° 351), 9 June 1888, 453 (1 of 1).

marked curiosity for the structure of the *Eweer-Stämme* (the Ewe tribes), but the German administration in districts such as Lomé-Land and Misahöhe was relatively uninterested in the 'tribal structure' of Togo and focused on taxes and forced labour without a classification through a census.⁹⁷ It appears that only the Bremen Mission and the Catholic Steyl Mission in the German colony vigorously attempted to understand what they regarded as 'Ewe group identity', in their attempts at setting up a rudimentary education system.⁹⁸

It is very easy to claim, with hindsight, that the different Ewe-speaking communities had already had a strong feeling of unity under German rule.⁹⁹ However, there is no proof for such a hypothesis. German administrators were very much focused on labour issues, and attempts at engaging with community structures were mainly to be found where the ever-present problem of labour and labour evasion was particularly acute, as in the region of Sukpe. In this region, the administrator defined local populations as being members of the 'Aveno tribe', who had settled in the region only in 1850. These 'Avenos' would have bought land from the Ave, Agotime, and Adaklu communities, earlier settlers in the region.¹⁰⁰ However, while in these concrete cases the Germans commented on the existence of different 'divisions', we find little inclination (and information) to point out larger solidarities or to install

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- 97 ANT, Fonds Allemand, FA3/3079, District Administrator of Lomé-Land, [*Jahresbericht Lomé-Land 1908/09*] (without number), 3 Oct. 1909, 4–8; ANT, Fonds Allemand, FA3/3079, District Administrator of Lomé-Land, *Berichtsjahr 1909/10* (without number), 2a–f, 5; ANT, Fonds Allemand, FA3/3079, *Bezirksamt Lomé-Land to Von Zech, Governor of Togo, Berichtsjahr 1910/11* (n° 805/14), 10 May 1911, 2–2(1), 4–5; ANT, Fonds Allemand, FA3/3079, *Bezirksamt Lomé-Land to Brückner, Governor of Togo, Berichtsjahr 1910/11 [sic!]* (n° 991/12), 19 May 1912, 2–2a, 5; ANT, Fonds Allemand, FA3/2123, Gruner, District Administrator of Misahöhe, *Jahresbericht 1907/08*. (without number), without date, 4–5; [Zöller, H.], 'Togo-Land, the German Protectorate on the Slave Coast', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography, New Monthly Series* 7(6), 1885, 377–80, *passim*; Jehle, A., 'Soul, Spirit, Fate: According to the Notions of the Tshi and Ewe Tribes (Gold Coast and Togo, W. Africa)', *Journal of the Royal African Society* 6(24), 1907, 405–15, 414; Smith, Woodruff D., 'The Ideology of German Colonialism, 1840–1906', *Journal of Modern History* 46(4), 1974, 641–62, 657–9.
- 98 Vischer, Hanns, 'Native Education in German Africa', *Journal of the Royal African Society* 14(54), 1915, 123–42, 124–30; Ustorf, Werner, "'Survival of the Fittest": German Protestant Missions, Nazism and Neocolonialism, 1933–1945', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28(1), 1998, 93–114, 101–2.
- 99 Schuerkens, Ulrike, *Du Togo allemand aux Togo et Ghana indépendants: Changement social sous régime colonial* (Paris: Harmattan, 2001), 37–8, 52, 58.
- 100 ANT, Fonds Allemand, FA1/92, Schlettwein, Acting District Administrator of Misahöhe, [*Bereisung von Sokpe*] (n° 527/12), 24 April 1912, 1–2.

'authentic chiefs'.¹⁰¹ The German approach ultimately remained extremely pragmatic: it focused on success in tax collection and labour recruitment, and checks for more ambitious local leaders.

In contrast, the British (as in the Gambia or in Sierra Leone) wished to create a chieftaincy based on 'traditional rules' – which in Togoland opened the gate to constant disputes. In Ewe-speaking communities, a typical cause of disputes was the previously mentioned role of the 'stool father' (the *zikpuito*), whose function was unclear to the colonial rulers.¹⁰² With their agenda, the British had a clear objective of classifying populations according to their imagined larger affiliation. After 1915, the British imported these patterns into the western part of former German Togo, based on some established models. At the same time, not only British rule but also the Ewe language expanded. Ewe entered in the 1890s into regions such as South Akposo; in 1900, the Bremen Mission station official at Amedzofe, Ernst Bürgi, also reported a spectacular rise in the use of the language.¹⁰³ This process started with an influx of refugees from the area between Lomé and Kpalimé, fleeing northwards from the reprisals of German soldiers and their auxiliaries. Other local populations also discovered the language to be useful.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, German Catholic and Protestant missionaries contributed to this process by using Ewe as the principal language in education and codifying it, which was grudgingly accepted by the German colonial government. From 1904 onwards, an Ewe-speaking elite formulated its own interests, including in language politics.¹⁰⁵ These elites were very vocal after the British conquest in 1914.

However, European rulers remained unsure as to how to employ 'Ewe' as a group label. In geographic terms, the Germans called the area of Asome,

101 See Lawrance, Benjamin N., 'Bankoe V. Dome: Traditions and Petitions in the Ho-Asogli Amalgamation, British Mandated Togoland, 1919–39', *Journal of African History* 46(2), 2005, 243–67, 250.

102 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/301, *Memorandum on Kpandu Native Affairs*. (without number), without date, 13.

103 Staatsarchiv Bremen, 7, 1025 (Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft), 5/3, Bürgi, Mission Station principal at Amedzofe, Avatime, to Mission Inspector (without number), 28 April 1901, 2.

104 Staatsarchiv Bremen, 7, 1025 (Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft), 6/1, Bürgi to Mission Inspector (without number), 27 October 1901, 2.

105 Staatsarchiv Bremen, 7, 1025 (Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft), 6/2, Bürgi to Mission Inspector (without number), 29 Sept. 1904, 2; Erbar, Ralph, *Ein 'Platz an der Sonne': die Verwaltungs- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte der deutschen Kolonie Togo 1884–1914* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1991), 285–302; Crabtree, W.A., 'Togoland', *Journal of the Royal African Society* 14(54), 1915, 168–84, 176–8.

Dalave, Tsévié and Gbli 'Ewe' (or 'Evhe') in the 1890s, and its populations 'Evheer' – without referring to language.¹⁰⁶ At the same time, the category of 'Ewe' was also occasionally utilised as a larger group name referring mostly to the language, such as for the Waya, Ve, and Akposo.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the effects of immigration within the Trans-Volta region exacerbated the question of belonging, as 'strangers' were often mistreated by local rulers with regard to tax payments, forced labour, and physical punishment.¹⁰⁸ 'Strangers' attempted to use the European obsession with 'tribal' groups to protect themselves. In particular, Twi-speakers in the region started to define themselves as persecuted 'Akan' and to demand rights as a homogeneous immigrant group.

In general, the experiences after colonial conquest do not confirm the hypothesis of a strong and continuous pan-Ewe sentiment that challenged colonial boundaries. Many locals attempted to obtain improved positions by reference to former allegiances and dependencies. 'Ewe-ness' was a marginal part of this picture at best – in spite of the linguistic efforts of the missionaries.

The New Border and the Quest for 'Authentic' Arrangements: British and French Readjustments of 'Ewe' Institutions after the First World War, 1914–1945

The French and British invasions of the German colony of Togo led to an extension, and, eventually, to an exacerbation of the administrative separation of different groups of Ewe-speakers. Local elites attempted, however, to 'choose' what they regarded as the more benign European power of tutelage; and to improve trade contacts, as Lomé merchants hoped for free access to the port of Keta. Important spokesmen of the coastal elite, such as Octaviano Olympio, actively lobbied for British rule over Lomé. However, it has to be asked how far these actions were motivated by a feeling of Ewe-ness, as was suggested by D.E.K. Amenumey.¹⁰⁹

106 Staatsarchiv Bremen, 7, 1025 (Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft), 19/6, Bürgi, *Errichtung einer zweiten Küstenstation in Lome* (without number), 22 Aug. 1891, 3, 6.

107 Staatsarchiv Bremen, 7, 1025 (Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft), 19/6, *Kommentar zum Stationsbau* (without number), without date [1898].

108 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/296, Taifota Tahuma to District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 6 April 1933.

109 Louis, 'Great Britain', 56–8; Nugent, *Smugglers*, 31–5; Lawrance, Benjamin N., 'Petitioners, "Bush Lawyers," and Letter Writers: Court Access in British-Occupied Lomé, 1914–1920', in Benjamin N. Lawrance, Emily Lynn Osborn, and Richard L. Roberts (eds.), *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Madison:

Two examples show the complexity of this interpretation. During the First World War, the *Awoame Fia, Togbe* Sri II, continued with the claims of overlordship of the eastern Volta Region, which Anlo rulers had already been formulated in the 1860s and 1870s. This explains the Anlo war effort in favour of the British side. Further east, the Lawson family in Aného appears to have claimed in 1922, under French rule, overlordship of populations in the south of Togo. However, again the label of 'Ewe' is nowhere employed in the evidence.¹¹⁰ From a broader perspective, it is also significant that we find no attempt by local populations to bring the question of the perils of the 'Ewe community' before the League of Nations. European officials would have been sensitive to identifying what they saw as correct 'tribal' settings. 'The Ewe', however, did not play a prominent role in European reports on the Togoland mandate written in the 1920s. In the British 1927 report on the Togoland mandate sent to the League of Nations, the authors, while briefly mentioning the Ewe language, recommended installing 'Akan' structures of local government wherever possible!¹¹¹ Even in the anthropological work of the famous scholar-administrator John S. Rattray, who interviewed communities about their Notsie experience, the fact of 'Ewe-ness' and wish for Ewe unity do not at all appear.¹¹²

After the British conquest of western and southern Togo in 1914/15, claimants from the Gold Coast Colony and the Gold Coast Protectorate demanded their rights of political rule over 'natives from Togoland'. The 'Togoland communities' themselves were more interested in revising local hierarchies installed by the Germans, like of the Adele paramount chief over the Adjuti. The other goal was to prevent a return of the German administration. In Ho, Noepe, Adame, Aflao, and Lomé, the chiefs petitioned for the continuation of British rule, pointing to German atrocities with regard to forced labour, violent tax requisition, and corporal punishment; and the Anfoega tried to free themselves from the Kpandu authority, imposed on them by the

University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 94–114, 108–9; Akyeampong, *Sea*, 191–2; Alsheimer, *Sklaverei*, 12–3, 269.

110 Lawrance, *Locality*, 45, 48, and 52–3 (in the latter pages, Lawrance interprets a respective song text).

111 *Report by his Britannic Majesty's Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Togoland under British Mandate for the Year 1927*, 6, in TNA, PRO, CO/96/681/13.

112 On Rattray's work in Asante, see Von Laue, Theodore H., 'Anthropology and Power: R.S. Rattray among the Ashanti', *African Affairs* 75(298), 1976, 33–54, 52–3; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/1624, Rattray, *Report by Mr. R.S. Rattray* (without number), without date, 21–2, 24, 28, 33–42, 46–7.

Germans. Moreover, there was also little enthusiasm for coming under the French mandate.¹¹³

Contrary to Amenumey's assumptions, local populations did not mention any idea of Ewe cohesion, and although some held that they 'do not want the Krepe tribe again split up between two separate European Governments'; others, like the Agotime, now insisted that they had nothing to do with 'Krepi'.¹¹⁴ Indeed, communities in Togoland under British mandate were content to see the power of Anlo and Peki curtailed. The British obsession with the creation of 'native states' generated new tensions, as many chiefs refused any participation in that. To give one representative example: when the 'Divisional Chief' of Taingbe applied to exert a levy to improve the infrastructure of Taingbe Town, he learned he was no longer the legal authority entitled to charge such a levy.¹¹⁵ In British administrative politics, 'native jurisdiction' and 'native treasury' became the privilege of 'states' that had been a product of 'amalgamated divisions', which only created more problems. The French officials, while choosing a less elaborate terminology, basically attempted the same: local communities were put into *chefferies de canton*, without consultation.

In subsequent community conflicts before the 1940s, previous struggles between pre-colonial states were much more a point of reference than ethnic solidarity. One good example for British Togoland is the land conflict between the inhabitants of Taingbe and Tokokoe (in the zone north-east of Ho). Both sides mobilised historical 'tradition', but did not refer at all to their common 'Ewe past'. During a stool dispute within Tokokoe, between Agamah and Buankrah II, which remained a constant problem through the whole of the

113 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/572, Hobs, District Commissioner of Mpraeso, Kwahu, to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n° K./30/14.), 26 May 1915; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/572, Messum, British District Political Officer, to British Senior Political Officer in Lomé (n° 29/1/14), 15 Nov. 1914, 4; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/1621, Furley, [*Report of a Tour through the districts of Togoland*] (without number), 17 April 1918, 5–8; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/1622, Furley, *Notes of Statements taken before the Secretary of Native Affairs on his Tour in Togoland* (without number), without date [1918], 10–3; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/1620, Nani Hode, Head Chief of Anfoega, *An extract of the manuscript of the History of Anfoe* (without number, Enclosure VI in Report), 9 Feb. 1918, 2; Crabtree, W.A., 'The Conquest of Togoland', *Journal of the Royal African Society* 14(56), 1915, 386–91, 390.

114 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/1621, Furley, [*Report of a Tour through the districts of Togoland*] (without number), 17 April 1918, 14.

115 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/292, Assistant District Commissioner in Ho, to Divisional Chief of Taingbe, *Collection of Levy* (n° 288/28/1929.), 15 March 1930.

1930s, both sides based claims on accusations that the others had collaborated with the Asante invaders.¹¹⁶

The question of the new border and its effects were another obvious problem. Most extreme was the situation of Agotime, where 29 villages became part of the French zone, while two villages, including the village of Kpetoe of the Agotime head chief, remained under the British.¹¹⁷ Another difficulty was the continuous importance of the former border between German Togo and the British Gold Coast Colony, now translated into an administrative border between Gold Coast and Togoland under British mandate. Some chiefs wished to settle old scores, as in the case of Agbosome, which continued its aggressive politics from the nineteenth century. The chief of Agbosome laid claim to the towns of Some and Have and thereby challenged Anlo rule.¹¹⁸ In all these conflicts, demands of the former pre-colonial states and the interests of smaller communities were far more important than any idea of larger (ethnic) group solidarity.

On the French side of the mandate, the situation was similar. In a 1930 report on the situation in the *Cercle* of Klouto, with the administrative centres of Kpalimé and Misahöhe, the French dealt with the 'Ewe problem' in a very ambivalent way. The district commissioner argued that even in view of the common Notsie legend, the 'Ewe race' did not seem to know any more sustained solidarity. 'The village is the true ethnic group', the French commented on the fragmentation of political solidarity in the area. The same comment applied to the border regions of Mission Tové and Akoviepe.¹¹⁹

116 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/292, Kwaku Agama, Divisional Chief of Tokokoe, to District Commissioner in Ho, *Re: Anka Yawoe vs. Amedume Apomah* (without number), 3 May 1934; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/292, Anku Yawoe, resident of Taingbe Dzafe, to District Commissioner in Ho, *Anku Yawoe vs. Amedume Apomah* (without number), 26 Sept. 1934, 1; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/296, Kwashikuma Peteprebi Dzogu to District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 30 Oct. 1934, 2; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/296, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho to District Commissioner of Kpandu, *Tokokoe Stool Dispute* (n° 521/14/1929.), 31 July 1933, 4.

117 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/199, Jackson, Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Memorandum on Anglo-French Togoland Boundary* (without number), without date, 1–2; Nugent, Paul, 'The Historicity of Ethnicity: Mandinka/Jola and Ewe/Agotime Identities in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in Alexander Keese (ed.), *Ethnicity and the long-term perspective: the African experience* (Berne etc.: Peter Lang, 2010), 127–53, 141–2.

118 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/199, Adamah II, *Fia* of Agbosome, to District Commissioner of Keta (n° 014/31), 26 Dec. 1930, 1.

119 ANT, 1APA/1, *Monographie: Cercle de Klouto* (without number), without date [1930], 7–8; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Tsévié, 2, Nativel, Administrator of Subdivision of Lomé, *Rapport de la tournée effectuée par l'Administrateur-Adjoint des Colonies Nativel, Chef de la Subdivision*

The main pressures of the interwar period came, once again, from the 'traditional states' in the region, Anlo and Peki. In particular, the *Pekihene* hoped after 1915 for the creation of a larger regional paramountcy and reminded the British of earlier promises. The chiefs of Anfoega, Hlefi, Dsocho, Goviefe and Akrofu, Adaklu, Agotime, Dakpa, Zofe, Logba, and Botoku were all against any such paramountcy; the inhabitants of Akuope and Taingbe were even more explicit about the historical background, and they accused Peki of passiveness during their 1860s conflict with Anlo; and even in Abutia, which was initially positive, integration into Peki State was complicated.¹²⁰

In the latter case, the *Pekihene* demanded the integration of Abutia into the state between the early 1920s and 1945, until the final refusal of the head chief of Abutia in July 1945 and Abutia's admission into the newly created Asogli State in Togoland. The Asogli solution helped to favourably solve land conflicts with neighbours.¹²¹ Within Abutia, the sub-chief of Abutia Kloe – one of Abutia's communities – tried to obtain Peki's help against his own paramount chief and nearly provoked a Peki intervention under Kwadzo De X. This initiative was brought down with British support.¹²² The ruler of the second largest community in the Abutia 'division', the *Dufiaga* (sub-chief) of Agove, Adja Dra V, had long been uninterested in the Peki initiatives. However, in 1933, he suddenly decided to back the petitions coming from Peki, and sent representatives into the Peki State Council. The conflicts with the paramount chief of

de Lomé dans les cantons d'Akoviépé et de Mission-Tové du 25 Janvier au 27 Janvier et du 5 Février au 8 Février 1934 (without number), without date.

- 120 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/238, Ellershaw, District Commissioner of Ho, to Commissioner of Eastern Province in Koforidua (n° 542/725/28.), 5 Sep. 1928, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/238, District Commissioner of Ho to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n° 548/166./27.), 15 March 1927, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/238, District Commissioner of Ho to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n° 48/240/27.), 30 April 1927; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/238, Dalton, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho, to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n° 545/212/27.), 14 April 1927.
- 121 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, Abutia Kusadjo Gidi II, *Fiaga* of Abutia, to Acting District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 10 July 1945.
- 122 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho to District Commissioner of Kpandu, *Abutia Kloe Stool Dispute* (without number), 27 July 1930; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, Martin Yawo substituting Samuel Kofi, Stoolfather of Abutia Kloe, to District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 27 April 1931; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, Kwadzo De X, Paramount Chief of Peki, to Abutia Kwadzo XII (n° 331/24/29.), 1 Sep. 1930; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, *Fiaga* Abutia Kwadzo XII of Abutia to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 2 Sep. 1930; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, T.A. Mead, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho, to District Commissioner of Kpandu, *Abutia Native Affairs*. (without number), 13 July [1944].

Abutia were reason enough for such a change of opinion; however, when the Agove headmen realised that the British would not concede to them even a loose federation with Peki, they came to terms with the Asogli solution.¹²³

In 1945, in a last-minute attempt, the Agove sub-chief, S.K. Kumah, and the *asafohene* (military society leader) of Teti (the central division), Okai Debra, allied to call for integration of Abutia into Peki. The situation was little favourable for such an attempt: the Peki Ruler, Kwadzo De X, was seriously ill, and the British were not eager to change their established line of politics.¹²⁴ Even so, Kumah and Debra mobilised part of the local populations, and organised a showdown at a divisional meeting of Abutia, where the Regent of Peki, Ayim V, and the *Howusu* of Ho as President of Asogli State, explained their claims. Even so, the attempt did not win a majority except in Agove, and in spite of the massive protests of the Peki authorities, the British urged Ayim V and his successor as regent, Donko, to renounce their claims. In the end, the Peki initiative remained fruitless.¹²⁵

We have discussed the Peki-Abutia affair in so much detail because it was exemplary for many similar cases of the interwar period. Against their earlier preferences before 1914, in which the British had favoured a regrouping of

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- 123 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, Adja Dra V, *Dufiaga* of Agove Abutia; and subchiefs of Agove, to Dufia Abutia Kwadzo XII, of Teti-Abutia, *In the Meeting held at Agove-Abutia Before Togbe Adja Dra V Fiaga. His subchiefs. Amanklatos. Stoolfathers. Linguists and Elders on the 17th day of March 1932* (without number), without date, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho to District Commissioner of Kpandu, *Abutia Division*. (n° 152/4/1929), 28 March 1933, 1–2; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho to District Commissioner of Kpandu, *Abutia Affairs* (n° 1112/4/1929.), 18 Dec. 1943.
- 124 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, S.K. Kumah, *Fiaga* of Agove; and others, to Kwadzo De X, *Pekihene* (without number), 12 May 1945; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho to District Commissioner of Kpandu, *Abutia Divisional Affairs* (n° 725/4/29.), 20 June 1945, 1.
- 125 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, Tsagbey, Peki Native Administration Secretary, *Report on Abutia Amalgamation Meeting held at Abutia-Teti on the 27th October, 1945, to the District Commissioner, Volta River District, Akuse*. (without number), 31 Oct. 1945, 1–2; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, Tsagbey, *Minutes of the Peki and Abutia Re-Union Meeting held at Agove-Abutia on Thursday the 15th. November, 1945*. (without number), without date, 1–2; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, Duncan, District Commissioner of Ho, to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Proposed Amalgamation of Abutia Division with the Asogli State*. (n° 20/4/1929.), 31 Oct. 1945, 1–2; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, McDevitt, Acting District Commissioner of Akuse, to Donko, Regent of Peki State, *Abutia-Asogli Amalgamation*. (n° 2320/183/43.), 26 Nov. 1945; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, Donko to McDevitt, *Abutia-Asogli Amalgamation*. (n° 312/25/37.), 7 Dec. 1945, 1.

different groups – ‘Evhe-speaking tribes...from Nuatja’ who had allied against the Asante under Peki leadership – under Peki authority the British had to concede in the interwar period that voices from Nkonya, Ve, Fodome, Liati, Sokode, Abutia or Kpeve, while seeing the Gold Coast-Togoland border as negative, had no inclination to accept the paramountcy of Peki.¹²⁶

The experience of the Anlo rulers was similar: after their engagement for a larger political unit with common cultural characteristics during the First World War, they were unable even to create stronger relations with the Adaklu chiefs as a neighbouring community. Both groups were Ewe-speakers, adherent to a common version of the Notsie legend, and had been allies of the Asante in the late 1860s. However, this was insufficient.¹²⁷ Discord between the two communities was expressed in an ‘oral tradition’ centred on an attack of Anlo units against Adaklu villages shortly after 1870, which had forced the Adaklu to flee into their strongholds near Adaklu Mountain. The respective tradition was rebuilt in the 1920s against attempts at integrating Adaklu villages into Anlo State.¹²⁸ In a second oral tradition, reinterpreting events during the mythical exodus from Notsie, the Adaklu founding father, Foli Kuma, was described as equal of the founder of Anlo, Wenya. This tradition thus refused Anlo any pre-eminence.¹²⁹

Thus Adaklu elites moulded their own, independent politics in the region, and refused integration into Anlo, but also into the new Asogli State around Ho. With regard to the latter, the Adaklu spokesmen claimed that subjects of the *Howusu* had regularly stolen land from them and were therefore long-standing enemies.¹³⁰ When British pressure on Adaklu community leaders became stronger, the Adaklu adapted their traditions: they now held that their

126 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/238, District Commissioner of Ho to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n° 479/116./27.), 18 Feb. 1927, 1–3; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/238, Secretary for Native Affairs of Gold Coast to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Unification of Tribes separated by the old Anglo-German Boundary*. (n° ...1713/1924.), 23 Nov. 1929, 1.

127 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/254, Gbogbi III, Headchief of Adaklu, to District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 30 Sep. 1929.

128 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/254, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho, *Adaklu Affairs*. (without number), 11 Feb. 1944, 4.

129 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/254, *An Account of the Adaklus as from the Ancient Times – Our Origin and our Travels* (without number, attached n° 2), without date, 2–3.

130 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/254, Gbogbi III, *Fiaga* of Adaklu; Lablulu, *Asafohenega* of Waya; and others, to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (without number), 26 July 1946, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/254, Gbogbi III and others, to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 17 Feb. 1938, 1.

community had always been isolated from other 'Ewes', already during the mythic settlement phase in Notsie, and that they originally spoke a different language (an argument that was strongly disputed by the British authorities). They commented that they even preferred Anlo rule to overlordship from Ho.¹³¹ At the same time, the Adaklu community laid claims for control over land that had been alienated from them, in favour of the Mafi. *Fia* Gbogbi III attacked Mafi occupation of Adaklu land that had allegedly started since the First World War; and also demanded the removal of Mlefi and Avenor settlers, who retained allegiance to rulers further southward.¹³² To complicate matters, the inhabitants of Dakpa from the Gold Coast Colony side formulated a parallel claim, in which they demanded authority as paramount chiefs in Adaklu areas, in which, they said, they had traditionally ruled!¹³³

Both these conflicting goals of different communities, and the very existence of the territorial border between the Gold Coast Colony and Togoland, prevented a strengthening of Anlo State as a genuine Ewe-speaking political unit. British officials believed that it was easier first to tackle the question of Ewe-speaking groups that stood under the rule of the *Ada Manche* – also situated in the Gold Coast Colony – and to profit in this context from the circumstance that the paramount chief of Ada State had been suspended.¹³⁴ The district commissioners of Keta and Ada assembled the 'Ewe chiefs' of Ada State in Tefle and inquired whether they wished to leave Ada overlordship. Most of those chiefs indeed claimed they would prefer to belong to Anlo, as they said 'for reasons of tribal links' – using the British 'tribal' argument. Some chiefs, such as of Sukpe and Bator, who had been suspended and expected to be destooled before the British initiative took shape, used the development to save their position.¹³⁵ Thus, the divisions of Agave, Sukpe, Tefle, Vume, Bakpa, Bator, and Mepe – 'the Ewe Divisions' – within Ada State, made a 'request for

131 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/254, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n° 888/32/29.), 7 Oct. 1943, 1–2.

132 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/254, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho to District Commissioner of Kpandu, *Adaklu Divisional Affairs*. (n° 550/32/1929.), 17 May 1945; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/238, District Commissioner of Ho to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Adaklu Villages in Keta District*. (n° 29/469/27), 6 Oct. 1927.

133 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/238, Guteh, Assistant District Commissioner, *Report on the Tribes separated by the old Anglo German Boundary*. (without number), without date, 2.

134 TNA, PRO, CO/96/738/6, Warrington, Provincial Commissioner, *Annual Report for the Eastern Province for the Year 1936–1937* (without number), without date, 62.

135 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/303, Lilley, District Commissioner of Keta, to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Report on the Keta-Ada District for the March Quarter 1942*. (n° 810/4/31.), 6 May 1942, 3.

independence', in spite of, or rather because of the chaotic internal situation that was so characteristic of most of them.¹³⁶

Agave is the best illustrated of these cases. The Agave did not argue with questions of 'Ewe identity', but focused on relations between political entities: they claimed they had fought constant wars with Anlo, and that they had been the overlords of the *Ada Manche* and were thus on the same level as the *Awoame Fia!* Language was only an additional argument, with the Agave pointing out that as Ewe-speakers they were distinct from Ada's Adangme-speakers. It is remarkable that they styled themselves with Ewe titles on this particular occasion, but relied elsewhere on a political terminology, the 'wing system', that was normally defined as 'Akan'.¹³⁷ As a whole, the demand of Ewe-speaking rulers from Ada State was pending for a period, and then merged into the large current of Ewe activities of the immediate post-Second World War years, which I will analyse below.

In Anlo State itself, the rhetorics of power also became increasingly confused, as the *Awoame Fia* lost control over the state council based in Anloga, which many chiefs of the neighbouring 'divisions' did not attend anymore. In 1943, the 'Ewe Union', a nascent pan-Ewe institution counting in its ranks many 'intellectuals' and a good part of the less influential chiefs of the state, showed its strength. The *Awoame Fia's* tax policy had enraged many of the local chiefs even further, and had provoked the opposition of the Ewe Union.¹³⁸ However, the main thrust of resistance against any more centralised politics came from the old Anlo capital of Anloga, whose headmen, in 1944/45, virtually paralysed Anlo State.¹³⁹

136 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/303, District Commissioner of Keta to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Report on Keta – Ada District for Quarter ending 31st December, 1942*. (without number), without date, 3.

137 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 311, Togbe Hlitabo II, 'Fiaga of Agave', and others, *Petition addressed to His Excellency Sir Charles Noble Arden-Clarke K.C.M.G. ...* (without number), without date, 2–3. See Stahl, Ann B., 'Ethnic Style and Ethnic Boundaries: A Diachronic Case Study from West-Central Ghana', *Ethnohistory* 38(3), 1991, 250–75, 255, 262–3.

138 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/303, District Commissioner of Keta to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Report on Keta – Ada District. Quarter ending 30th June 1943*. (without number), 24 July 1943, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/303, District Commissioner of Keta to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Report on Keta – Ada District. Quarter ending 30th September 1943*. (n° 2519/4/31), 28 Sep. 1943, 1.

139 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/303, Mead, *Report on Native Affairs – Keta District. Quarter Ending December 31st, 1945*. (without number), without date, 3; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/469, Elder Seshie Zodanu Kwashie, 'Head of Chief James Ocloo III. of Keta Stool Family', to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Petition of Elder Seshie Zodanu Kwashie, etc.* (without number), without date, 2.

Doubtless, the colonial border between German and British, then between French and British possessions, created its own dynamics that had an effect on identifications. Illicit commerce and seizures of cattle and even land were typical.¹⁴⁰ In Kuma on French territory, villagers complained about the confiscation of their lands lying in the now-British zone by Togoland villagers, with the alleged tacit support of the administration; in the opposite direction, villagers of Bogo Achlo in the French zone had occupied land belonging to peasants of Baglo, who were now living in British Togoland.¹⁴¹ Such acts, started first during the general instability of the war years, created new, long-lasting enmities.

Migration from the French into the British mandate also became typical. Those migrants were described by the inhabitants of the Volta area as 'natives of the French zone' and became the occasional victims of xenophobic rhetoric from a 'proto-national' perspective, even if they were Ewe-speaking. Therefore, aside from local discourses, and before the idea of Ewe unity became important, the image of the 'proto-national' stranger, with reference to the colonial territory of origin, already had an impact.¹⁴² There were some more 'ethnically' oriented exceptions to this rule. An early example was given by the political evolution of Buem in the British zone, where the populations were, in their large majority, not Ewe-speakers and did not share in the Notsie tradition.¹⁴³ As in the cases of Asogli and Awatime States, British administrators wanted to

140 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 10, Administrator of Subdivision of Klouto, *Cercle du Centre, 1937 – 2^{ème} Trimestre: Main d'Œuvre* (n° 10), 13 Oct. 1938; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/241, District Commissioner of Ho to Administrator of *cercle* of Klouto, French Togo (without number), 17 Jan. 1927, 1–2.

141 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 10, Administrator of Subdivision of Klouto, *Cercle de Centre, Subdivision de Klouto: Rapport Trimestriel, Année 1938 – 4^{ème} Trimestre* (without number), 23 Jan. 1939, 5.

142 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/212, Ellershaw, District Commissioner of Kpandu, to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Krachi – Kpandu District Boundary*. (n° 147/82A/1921.), 17 Feb. 1937, 2; ANT, 8APA/3/37, District Commissioner of Klouto in Misahöhe, *Rapport Trimestriel pour le 2^{ème} Trimestre 1922* (without number), without date, 1; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Tsévié, 2, Perret, *Rapport de la tournée effectuée du 19–20 et 29 Février 1936 dans le Canton de Dalavé par l'Adjoint des S.[ervices] C.[oloniaux] Perret*. (without number), without date, 4–5.

143 See, for example, PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/212, *A Short History of Dodi*. (without number), without date. See, also, Fred-Mensah, Ben K., 'Bases of traditional conflict management among the Buems of the Ghana border', in William Zartman (ed.), *Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts: African Conflict 'Medicine'* (Boulder – London: Lynne Rienner, 2000), 31–47, 32–3.

create a 'native state'.¹⁴⁴ 'Divisions' dominated by Twi-speakers, like Worawora, Kadjebi, Ahamansu, Asatu, and Apesokubi, campaigned under these circumstances for their separation from Borada; the tone in this conflict only became very sharp after the Second World War. The chiefs of these communities argued that the Lefana wished to destroy their identity 'as a Twi tribe'. In the 1950s, the Twi-speakers were followed by the Lolobi community, who also demanded separation from Buem State, and the leading role in the Akpafu Division.¹⁴⁵ The spokesmen regretted, with regard to the Lolobi and the Akpafu, 'the mere and casual accident of speaking the same dialect'; on historical grounds, the two communities were separated by the traumatic Asante invasion, in which the 'bold resistance' of Lolobi Chief Kekerebesi, and the 'betrayal' of Akpafu Chief Kwahu Kadiabe had underlined the difference and created a long-lasting enmity.¹⁴⁶ In these conflicts, Buem showed a way of using historical, linguistic, or ethnic difference when that was suitable to obtain political advantages. This was a clear model for Togoland Ewe-speakers.

Hence, we do not find an ethnic Ewe movement in the interwar period, and Ewe identifications were weak if they existed. The question is whether, as Amenumey suggests, such solidarities were simply implicit, or if incidents like the tax revolt in Lomé on 23 January 1933 can be read as expression of Ewe unity, as is held by Benjamin Lawrance. We do not have the slightest evidence in that regard, to say the least.¹⁴⁷ As exemplified by the Bund der

144 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/212, Nana Kwaku Ntim Gyakari, *Omanhene* of Tapa State, and others, *Reference Tapa State, and Buem State Amalgamation* (without number, from Tapa Ahenekrom), 2 Aug. 1935; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/268, Nana Yaw Nyarko II, *Ohene* of Worawora, and others, *To the President and Members of the Buem State Council: Memorandum of the Akan Section of Buem State*. (without number, from Buem-Kadjebi), 20 May 1944, 1, 4; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 309, Nana Akuamoaa II, Acting President, Buem State Council, and others to District Commissioner of Ho (without number), August 1946, 2; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 309, Nana Yaw Nyarko II, *Omanhene* of Worawora, and others, *Reminder Petition of the Akan Section of Buem State to His Excellency Sir Alan Cuthbert Maxwell Burns...* (without number), 1 Aug. 1946, 2.

145 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/299, Mackay, Provincial Commissioner of the Eastern Province, to Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony (n^o 1308/2009/45-), 27 March 1946, 1.

146 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/299, Sub-Chief Jacob Akoteh; Sub-Chief Marious Gymanos; and others to Burns (without number), without date, 2–3 and 7–8.

147 Amenumey, *Movement*, 22–7; Pauvert, 'Evolution', 178; Lawrance, Benjamin, 'La Révolte des Femmes: Economic Upheaval and the Gender of Political Authority in Lomé, Togo, 1931–33', *African Studies Review* 46(1), 2003, 43–67, 58–60; with the argument being more limited in Lawrance, *Locality*, 69–89. See PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/1624, *Lome Disturbances* (without number), without date [1933], 1–2.

Deutsch-Togolaender, an association led by German-trained Lomé traders and clerks, it is possible to find a curious initiative to get back under German colonial rule, but this initiative did not involve any ethnocultural visions.¹⁴⁸

Succession conflicts under the French mandate were similar to situations in British Togoland – and frequent in the rural constituencies, in particular those close to Kpalimé, even with the theoretically stricter French control of African authorities. In Agu-Nyogbo, one of the large districts, the death of the paramount chief, Kofi Pebi, in 1939, led to weeks-long troubles.¹⁴⁹ In the case of Danyi, historical 'traditions' were mobilised: Paramount Chief Bassa having been replaced by Gabla, there was an intense production of evidence relating to the dispute, promoted by an Ewe Presbyterian Church (EPC) preacher from Kete-Krachi, Reverend Wampah. This 'tradition' separated two groups in the region, the Daye Kakpa and the Daye Atigba, which both had Ewe origins and had been in Notsie before migration. According to this 'tradition' it had always been the first-comer of the two groups that had had the right to the paramountcy.¹⁵⁰

148 TNA, PRO, CO/96/758/2, Fisher, Brigade Major, Gold Coast Regiment, Royal West African Frontier Force, *Intelligence Report for Period ending 30th June, 1939*. (without number), without date, 1–2; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 10, Administrator of Subdivision of Klouto, *Cercle de Centre, Subdivision de Klouto: Rapport Trimestriel, Année 1938 – 3^{ème} Trimestre* (without number), 13 Oct. 1938, 3; ANT, 8APA/3/37, *Renseignements: a/s. Togo Bund* (n° 491/BC), 22 Dec. 1949, 1; Amenumey, D.E.K., 'German Administration in Southern Togo', *Journal of African History* 10(4), 1969, 623–39; Nugent, *Smugglers*, 63; Kwaku, Ken, 'Tradition, Colonialism and Politics in Rural Ghana: Local Politics in Have, Volta Region', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 10(1), 1976, 71–86, 77–8; Blackshire-Belay, Carol Aisha, 'German Imperialism in Africa: The Distorted Images of Cameroon, Namibia, Tanzania, and Togo', *Journal of Black Studies* 23(2), 1992, 235–46, 237–8; Ekoko, A. Edho, 'The British Attitude towards Germany's Colonial Irredentism in Africa in the Inter-War Years', *Journal of Contemporary History* 14(2), 1979, 287–307, 299–300.

149 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 10, Orly, Administrator of Subdivision of Klouto, *Cercle de Centre (Subdivision de Klouto): Rapport Trimestriel, Année 1939 – 4^{ème} Trimestre* (without number), 5 Jan. 1940, 3.

150 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 330, Wampah, Teacher of the Ewe Presbyterian Church in Kete Krachi, to Bourguine, Commissioner of Togo (without number), 4 Sep. 1934; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 330, Mary, District Commissioner of Klouto, to Bourguine, *Canton d'Atigba (Daye)* (without number), 1st Oct. 1934, 1, 4; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 330, Bassah III, *Chef de Canton* of Daye-Atigba, and Seth Akrodou, Secretary of the Paramount Chieftaincy, *Lettre de permission à Monsieur le Commandant, Chef de la Subdivision de Klouto (Palimé)* (without number), 2 Feb. 1945, 1–3; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 18 add., Goujon, *Rapport Concernant les Tournées Effectuées par l'Administrateur des Colonies Goujon, Commandant de Cercle de Klouto Dans les régions de Daye Kakpa et Daye Atigba. Pendant le mois de Mars 1935*. (without number), without date, 2–3.

In other cases, land was at stake: such as between the two Kpele villages of Goudève and Elé, or Woame and Mayondi. Issues were complicated if the land in question was to be found between two villages lying in different *cantons*, such as between Bogo Achlo and Daye.¹⁵¹ Only rarely did the creation of 'traditional histories' to be used in land disputes have to do with Ewe myths. Finally, even the immigration of Muslim populations from the north into the *zongos* ('Muslim quarters') of Lomé and Kpalimé failed to trigger a discourse on 'otherness' directed against northerners on the part of the Ewe-speakers.¹⁵² Thus mobilisation under ethnic banners never became a particularity of the Ewe-speaking communities of Lomé, Kpalimé, and Tsévié, at least not before 1945.

As regards urban environments, Ewe identifications were discussed in the urban diaspora in the Gold Coast Colony, notably in Accra. However, categories of identification for these immigrants varied. In 1934, the *Ga Manche*, as the most important 'traditional ruler' in the capital, wished to install one Sotomy as elected 'by a large section of the Ewe speaking people'. Immigrants from the French mandate, referring to themselves as 'Ganyi' or 'people from French Togoland' asked for the nomination of Akalamakpe Ansa, as their own headman. Organised in an association called the Glidji Union, their spokesmen exerted pressure. The petitioners were Guin-Mina speakers (a language similar to Ewe, but that was not exactly Ewe) who attempted to enlist the help of *Fia Agbano* of Genyi, in the French part of Togo, and even of the Commissioner of Togo, de Guise.¹⁵³ According to their discourse, distinctions were far more important than language unity:

151 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 10, Administrator of Subdivision of Misahöhe, *Cercle de Centre: Rapport Trimestriel, Année 1938 – 2^{ème} Trimestre* (without number), 18 July 1938, 3; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 10, Administrator of Subdivision of Klouto, *Cercle du Centre: Rapport Trimestriel, Année 1937 – 4^{ème} Trimestre* (without number), without date, 3; Nugent, *Smugglers*, 64–72; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 10, Administrator of Subdivision of Klouto, *Cercle de Centre, Subdivision de Klouto: Rapport Trimestriel, Année 1938 – 4^{ème} Trimestre* (without number), 23 Jan. 1939, 5.

152 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 10, Administrator of Subdivision of Misahöhe, *Cercle de Centre: Rapport Trimestriel, Année 1938 – 2^{ème} Trimestre* (without number), 18 July 1938, 4.

153 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/295, Rutherford, District Commissioner of Accra, to Johnson, known as Ansah (n° 1463/87/34.), 4 Oct. 1934, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/295, Ansah to Rutherford (without number), 6 Oct. 1934; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/295, Commissioner of the Eastern Province to Secretary for Native Affairs of Gold Coast, *Headman of the Ewe speaking People and the French Togoland Community in Accra.* (n° 3916/2223/34), 21 Nov. 1934; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/295, District Commissioner of Accra, to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n° 1652/87/34.), 31 Oct. 1934, 1–3; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/295, John Feliga Adeku and others ('Tomb 11 A'Nuk Pa we'); Abraham Kpakpo Akueson, Secretary of 'French Togoland Community', to Northcote, Acting Governor of the Gold

We are Natives of that part of Togoland known as the French Togoland and we are called and styled 'Ganyi' by all the people who are described by the Gold Coast Government as the Ewe speaking people. We are entirely a race or tribe different and distinct from the rest of the Ewe speaking people. We have different customs and ceremonies. Our ceremonial rites are entirely different. Our names are distinct from the rest of the Ewe People and thus you see, we do not form part of either the Anlos and the Pekis who are known as the Ewe speaking people.¹⁵⁴

Exaggerations abounded during this power struggle between different Ewe-speaking or related groups in Accra. However, whenever such groups felt threatened, as by Paramount Chief Keami Osaabo in the Akwapim town of Nsawam, they eventually applied to the British authorities pointing to their common 'Ewe nationality'.¹⁵⁵

Even so, in the British-controlled territories, most conflicts and discussions between Ewe-speakers tended towards rather 'regular' land conflicts, and were unrelated to any questions of Ewe solidarity. The relations between the settlements of Ziavi and Klepe (west of Ho) are typical for such conflicts.¹⁵⁶ Sometimes, these land conflicts were reported upon in connection to histories of loyalty and betrayal, such as in the conflicts between the Fiervier community and the chief of Sukpe, both Ewe-speaking units within Ada State before 1945. Each side claimed that the other had immigrated into the land and had been sheltered by their own group, with the Fiervier suggesting that the Sukpe had illegally taken over power. This conflict went on in the 1940s when both entities belonged to the Tongu Confederacy, with the Sukpe paramountcy finally being confirmed through the intervention of the colonial power.¹⁵⁷

Coast (without number), 16 Oct. 1934, 3–4, 7. See Sanjek, Roger, 'Cognitive Maps of the Ethnic Domain in Urban Ghana: Reflections on Variability and Change', *American Ethnologist* 4(4), 1977, 603–22, 610–4.

154 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/295, John Feliga Adeku and others...to Northcote (without number), 16 Oct. 1934, 5.

155 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/295, Gbekor, Secretary of 'Ewe Community' of settlers in Nsawam; J.A. Darku, Headman of the 'Ewe Community'; and others, to District Commissioner of Kpandu (without number), 8 Aug. 1936, 1–2; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/295, Gbekor to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (without number), 8 Aug. 1936.

156 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/35, Togbe Anku Saklie VI to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 1 Jan. 1934; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/39, Adja Mensa Ado, Chief of Klepe Achatime, to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho District, *The Rueful Ill-Humour in Klepe-Achatime and its Desistance of*. (without number), 11 Jan. 1944.

157 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/294, Commissioner of the Eastern Province to District Commissioner of Ada (n^o 2220/34.), *Tongu Confederacy: Sukpe – Fiervier Dispute*,

In Sokode Division, smaller communities also mobilised history to escape from the allegedly abusive Sokode paramount chief. Thus the Hoviepe elders complained they had once, in the battles against Asante, Akwamu, and Taviefe, accepted the *Fia* of Sokode, Ampim Danku II, as leader in a war alliance. Now, the current Sokode chief, Tenkloe Koku II, had created a false myth of the Hoviepe settlers coming from Klepe. Gbogame, another 'subdivision' of Sokode, followed the Hoviepe initiative and also claimed 'independence' from a false political dependency.¹⁵⁸

Finally, we need to come back to identifications in Agotime during the inter-war period. The *Dufia* of Agotime living in Kpetoe, Hene Hoe Keteku II, was subject to opposition in the 1920s, as he was challenged by a legal complaint from the Chief of Agotime Afegame, Mahumasro, before the Supreme Court of the Gold Coast. The latter claimed that the paramount chiefs of 'the Agotime nation' had 'always' come from Afegame and that the preference for Kpetoe had been a product of German misunderstandings and manipulation by one Mati Sukpor. After Keteku's destoolment, i.e. his removal, the Afegame claim was again intensified in the early 1940s, with the *mankrado* in Afegame also advocating Agotime's integration into Asogli.¹⁵⁹ Again, an opposition between rightful

December 1945; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/294, Captain Ahoklo II of Fiervier, Ada District, to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (without number), 28 Jan. 1938, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/137, Togbe Kwami Hajor II, *Fiaga* of Bakpa, President of Tongu Confederacy Native Administration, and A.A. Dugbazeh, Secretary, *Report on Enquiry of Fervier and Sokpoe Native Affairs* (without number), 9 April 1949, 5.

158 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 290, Acloo, and others of Sokode Gbogame, to District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 23 April 1940, 3; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 290, Elders of Hoviepe, Ho District, Asogli State, to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho (without number), without date; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 290, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho to District Commissioner of Kpandu, *Sokode Native Affairs* (without number), 30 Aug. 1940; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 290, E.K. Adintsriju, and others, all Sub-Chiefs; 'Elders' of Sokode Gbogame, to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 4 June 1942 [?], 1.

159 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 288, Hene Hoe Keteku II, Divisional Chief of Kpetoe Agotime, to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho, *Mankralo Dza & others vs: Adonu & others*. (without number), 25 June 1926; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 288, Supreme Court of the Gold Coast Colony, Eastern Province, *Affidavit of Mahumansro the Head Chief of Agotime Afegame* (without number), 10 Nov. 1930; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 288, Mahumasro, Chief of Agotime Afegame, to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 8 July 1932; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 288, Ahoto Legba to District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 13 Dec. 1937; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 288, Elvert, District Commissioner of Kpandu, to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho, *Kpetoe Native Affairs*. (n° 425/108A/1930.), 18 May 1937; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 288, Regent of Kpetoe

rulers and outsiders was invented to win the case, to build a divisive argument against the tradition of rule from Kpetoe. However, it became obvious that no one knew how to define a 'stranger' in Agotime during the interwar period. 'Anlos' and 'Kwahus' were counted as such, but also 'Nigerians'. These different groups tried to nominate headmen to defend their interests, selecting in 1943 one Christoph Mensah Kefe as representative of the entire 'stranger community', while the settlers from Anlo later attempted to have their own headman. Hene Hoe Keteku II even feared that the ruler of Anlo could attempt to get leverage over the migrants from Avenor and other populations living in Agotime.¹⁶⁰

All in all, the British may have hoped, in the interwar period, for a pan-Ewe 'tribal' feeling that would have allowed them to better control the territory. As Anlo or Peki were too weak to be used for political matters in Togoland, some British authorities had indeed hoped in the 1930s that 'an Ewe Confederacy will in due course settle this matter'. This did not seem to happen.¹⁶¹ Ironically, however, the category of Ewe unity suddenly enjoyed unexpected successes after 1945, and the British would in the end be forced to fight this idea of unity.

The International Agenda: Ewe-ness as an Anti-colonial Weapon, 1945–1957

The panorama of group mobilisation in the Trans-Volta region, which in the interwar period gave little room for discussions of Ewe community sentiment, changed completely in the 1940s. In 1945, the question of Ewe unification seemed easily to overshadow all the other political problems. A strong lobby group of so-called Ewe 'unificationists' had a clear intuition for the French political and military weakness after the war, and its members started an impressive campaign.¹⁶² The transition of the official administration of the

Agotime to District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 20 March 1938, 1. PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 288, Hene Hoe Keteku II to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 15 Feb. 1943, 1–2; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 288, Klu Fiagbedzi and others to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho, *Agotime Chieftaincy Dispute* (without number), 22 July 1943; Nugent, 'Historicity', 137–9.

160 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 288, Azasu Kafe and others ('elders') to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 18 Dec. 1942, 1; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 288, Hene Hoe Keteku II to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho, *The Installation of the Anlo Headman* (without number), 7 Dec. 1944.

161 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, McDevitt to 'John' (n^o 2140/183/43.), 5 Nov. 1945, 2.

162 Kent, John, *The internationalization of colonialism: Britain, France, and Black Africa, 1939–1956* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 119–26, 239–62; Michel, Marc, 'Le Togo dans les relations

former German colonies to United Nations control raised these hopes.¹⁶³ First resolutions for Ewe unity appeared quite rapidly, and parts of the pan-Ewe movement, notably its leader in the French-mandated part of Togo, Sylvanus Olympio, also hoped for British support.¹⁶⁴

The pan-Ewe movement operated, during its roughly two decades of existence, under different labels, but the All Ewe Conference (AEC) was the most famous of all those groups. AEC leaders initially enjoyed enormous prestige at the local level, instead of being just an elitist movement: from 1945 to 1947, the offspring of the AEC as a political party, the Comité d'Union Togolaise (CUT), won the elections in Togo under the French mandate; Sylvanus Olympio became a deputy in the French National Assembly, and the CUT dominated the Territorial Assembly in Lomé. By 1948, the party could count on a considerable grass-roots support in southern Togo. This was followed by a period of decline, which was due both to French repression and to disappointment of party members with the apparent failure of the rather ambitious unification plans. The Parti Togolais du Progrès (PTP), the main competitor party, also had its strongest base among Ewe-speakers, but distanced itself from any pan-Ewe programme.¹⁶⁵

In British Togoland, the All-Ewe Conference was also influential, but it soon lost out against the Togo Union (TU), later transformed into the Togoland Congress. As AEC activists appeared too radically ethnicist, the non Ewe-speakers of the Volta Region refrained from taking part in their initiatives. The TU easily captured these voters and the more moderate Ewe-speaking electorate.

internationales au lendemain de la Guerre: prodrome de la décolonisation ou "petite mésentente cordiale"? (1945–1951)', in Institut de l'Histoire du Temps Présent (ed.), *Les Chemins de la Décolonisation de l'Empire Colonial Français* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 1986), 95–107, 100–4; Michel, Marc, 'The Decolonization of French Africa and the United States and Great Britain, 1945–1958', in Roy Bridges (ed.), *Imperialism, Decolonization and Africa: Studies Presented to John Hargreaves* (London – New York: Macmillan, 2000), 153–77, 160–2.

163 Lawrance, *Locality*, 43.

164 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/339, A.K. Amegashie; A.K. Anku; D.A. Chapman; and others, *A Resolution on Eweland* (without number), 31 Dec. 1945; see also Fieldhouse, David K., 'British Merchants and French Decolonization: UAC in Francophone Africa (1945–1960)', in Charles-Robert Ageron and Marc Michel (eds.), *L'Afrique noire française: l'heure des Indépendances* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 1992), 489–98, 491–2.

165 Keese, Alexander, 'Rigged elections? Democracy and manipulation in the late colonial state in French West Africa and Togo, 1944–1958', in Martin Thomas (ed.), *The French Colonial Mind Vol. 1* (Lincoln – London: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 324–46, 335–6; Amenumey, *Movement*, 156–61.

In its early phase the pan-Ewe movement sought a particular 'Ewe tradition', which was both reinvented and popularised through the effort of Ewe-speaking journalism. An important role in this context was played by the *Ewe News-Letter*, a journal edited by the Anlo-born activist Daniel Chapman. Chapman and his collaborators greatly extended the length and scope of the 'tradition', stretching 'Ewe legends' beyond the Notsie myth back to Oyo and the Nigerian city-states. The authors of the *Ewe News-Letter* also tended to use an inclusive approach that involved all the communities of southern Togoland, whether they were in the end Ewe-speaking or not.¹⁶⁶ Chapman also came to the (rather problematic) conclusion that the 'pure' Ewe groups had been 'Peki', 'Anlo', and 'Tongu', in spite of the fact that the creation of the Tongu Confederacy after the Second World War was mainly a colonial idea.¹⁶⁷

British and French officials attempted to formulate a joint position with regard to the Ewe claim, but this was complicated, given that the French regarded this claim as subversive and invented by Communists, and did not have much interest in discussing the 'truth' behind the ethnic arguments.¹⁶⁸ Inside the British administration, the position was more ambiguous. In June 1945, the French commissioner of Togo, Jean Noutary, turned the Ewe argument against them: if a 'majority' of the Ewe lived under French rule, this was all the better for them. To prove their point, the French counted all speakers of languages related to Ewe as ethnic Ewe, changing their older categorisations, according to which not more than 14.4 per cent of their mandate was to be seen as 'Ewe'. It was a particularly weak point of the AEC that the movement had no response to these claims.¹⁶⁹

166 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/339, Daniel A. Chapman; A.K. Mensah; G. Ameche, *The Ewe News-Letter* 1, 21 May 1945, 1–2; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/339, Daniel A. Chapman, *The Ewe News-Letter* 3, July 1945, 3.

167 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/339, Daniel A. Chapman, *The Ewe News-Letter* 4, August 1945, 3. The idea of a 'Tongu identity' is, however, referred to in Amenumey, *Ewe*, 16.

168 Keese, Alexander, 'A Culture of Panic: "Communist" Scapegoats and Decolonization in French West Africa and French Polynesia (1945–1957)', *French Colonial History* 9, 2008, 131–45, 138. The leaders of the PTP, as the major rival of Olympio's CUT, increasingly served up this argument in their electoral propaganda. See, for example, ANT, 5APA/16, Parti Togolais du Progrès, [*pamphlète sans titre*] (without number), 2 June 1951.

169 ANT, 8APA/3/37, District Commissioner of Klouto, *Rapport: Cercle de Klouto* 1951 (without number), without date, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/303, Mead, *Report on Native Affairs – Keta District. Quarter Ending September 30th, 1945*. (without number), without date, 3. On the questions of categories such as 'Minas', 'Watchi', and 'Ewe', compare the early historical account on Togo by the scholar-administrator Robert Cornevin, who only distinguishes the 'Adangme-Ga' from the 'Ewe', in Cornevin, Robert, *Histoire du Togo* (Paris: Editions Berger-Levrault, 1962), 76–7.

For British officials, it was seemingly easier to accept the basic assumption that ‘the Ewe’ as defined by the activists, were indeed a single unit and that there had previously been ‘Ewe states’, such as Peki and Anlo.¹⁷⁰ ‘Ewe identity’ now became an issue in the Togoland Reports to the United Nations committee, where the British authors claimed that ‘Ewe’ was the majority culture in all of the southern section of Togoland, with the single exception of Buem State, where ‘Akan’ was said to be dominant. Smaller, non Ewe-speaking groups were said to be totally ‘eclipsed’ by ‘the Ewe or the Akan’. British officials had thus entirely bought the story of ‘Ewe unity’: the Central Togo minorities, or the Lefana in Buem, no longer counted.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, British officials argued that the two mandates could not be integrated into the Gold Coast – although they sympathised with Ewe ‘tribal’ sentiment.

Officials on both sides of the colonial border were in agreement about seeing a ‘strong national feeling’ among Ewe-speaking populations. When Ewe-speakers from Anlo went to clinics recently built in the nearby Lomé area, British officials held that ‘the Ewe people do not consider themselves French and British, but simply Ewe’.¹⁷² Even so, these observations frequently overlooked the other, parallel, discourses. One of those favoured Togoland identifications over Ewe identifications, and drove some of the All-Ewe Conference activists under British rule into the arms of Kwame Nkrumah’s Convention People’s Party (CPP). The latter benefited from these contradictions by winning a part of the Ewe-speaking electorate of the southern section of Togoland, during the Legislative Assembly Elections of the 1950s and during the Togoland Referendum of 1956. Togolese politicians in French institutions also played on both concepts, that is Togolese versus Ewe identifications.¹⁷³ Some of the former sympathisers of the Ewe reunification idea

170 TNA, PRO, CO/96/790/3, *Extract from the Report of the Committee on Constitutional Reform in the Gold Coast*. (without number, as Annex 11), without date.

171 Colonial Office, *Report... to the General Assembly of the United Nations on the Administration of Togoland under United Kingdom Trusteeship for the Year 1948* (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1949), 5, to be found in TNA, PRO, CO/96/790/3.

172 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/668, Jas Turner, Director of Medical Services, Medical Department in Accra, to Colonial Secretary of the Gold Coast (n° 1560/13), 28 Aug. 1948; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/668, J.C. Murphy, Medical Officer, Medical Department, Keta, to Turner, *French Medical Authorities – Medical Treatment to Gold Coast Citizens*. (n° K128/48–9.), 18 Aug. 1948.

173 Marguerat, Yves, “‘Nous ne sommes pas des AOFiens’: Les difficiles relations du Togo et de l’AOF”, in Charles Becker, Saliou Mbaye, and Ibrahima Thioub (eds.), *AOF: réalités et héritages: Sociétés ouest-africaines et ordre colonial, 1895–1960* (Dakar: Direction des Archives du Sénégal, 1997), 273–82, 280.

amongst the chiefs, like Léléklélé I of Agu-Agbetiko, became supporters of the 'Togoland idea'.¹⁷⁴

British administrators accepted the claim for an ethnic 'Ewe identity', but worried from the outset about the 'chauvinism' of 'the Ewes' who wished to marginalise other southern Togoland populations, as for example in Buem.¹⁷⁵ However, during the peak of pan-Ewe militancy, in the late 1940s, we even find a conflict within the movement about the definition of 'Ewe-ness'. The activists did not want to see a Peki or Anlo dominance within the movement, as those communities were not original 'Togoland'.¹⁷⁶ The meetings of the chiefs of the four existing 'native states' on Togoland territory under British mandate, Akpini, Asogli, Awatime, and Buem – officially discussing the nomination of a delegate of the southern section of Togoland to the Legislative Council in Accra – had indeed an ambiguous position towards pan-Ewe statements. The Togo Union rapidly dominated these occasions, and most chiefs lost their sympathies for the more radical positions of the All-Ewe Conference. Therefore, 'Ewe unification' disappeared from the agenda by the late 1940s.¹⁷⁷

Between 1944 and 1949, however, the question of 'Ewe identity' also became part of a generational conflict. In Anlo, the younger literate populations supporting the Ewe Union campaigned for pan-Ewe activist Daniel Chapman of Achimota as future 'Ewe representative' for the Gold Coast Legislative Council in January 1945, against the candidate of the *Awoame Fia*, Julius Tamakloe.¹⁷⁸ In British Togoland, young activists rebelled against their limited rights under 'Ewe customs', which subordinated them in political communication to their *asafotawo* (age set leaders) and their stool fathers. Under the cover of Ewe

174 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 350, District Commissioner of Klouto to Cédile, French Commissioner of Togo, *a/s chefferie du Canton d'Agou-Nyongbo: examen des requêtes en date du 14 et du 21 Novembre 1949 du Chef Léléklélé, du village indépendant d'Agou-Agbétiko* (n° 305.), 25 Feb. 1950, 3.

175 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/94, Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, *Note: [Situation in Southern Togoland]* (without number), 30 April 1949.

176 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/446, District Commissioner of Kpandu, *Quarterly Report on the Kpandu Area of the Ho/Kpandu District for the Quarter ending 30th June, 1946*. (without number), without date, 1; Callaway, 'Politics', 127.

177 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/94, Dixon, Senior District Commissioner of Ho, to Mangin, Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony (n° S.0167/16), 21 Dec. 1948; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/94, Dixon to Mangin, *Representation of the Southern Section of Togoland in the Legislative Council* (n° S.0167/25), 11 Jan. 1949, 1.

178 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/303, Assistant District Commissioner of Keta, *Keta District Native Affairs Report 1st Quarter, 1945*. (without number), without date, 1.

activism, they attacked 'traditional' structures and what they described as autocratic rule.¹⁷⁹

The Togo Union and the Togoland Youth Association pushed the Ewe issue increasingly into the background in favour of the joint Togoland discourse – which turned against the 'Gold Coast Ewes' organised first in the AEC, and, later on, in the CPP. The inhabitants of southern Togoland complained that 'foreigners' were attempting to take over political power in 'their country'.¹⁸⁰ In French Togo, the political competition between two 'Ewe' leaders pursuing distinct programmes lowered the interest in the Ewe issue from the late 1940s. The colonial administration believed in 'Ewe propaganda' as a conspiracy by the Nkrumah government in Accra to annex the French-mandated territory.¹⁸¹ This was a misinterpretation. While Sylvanus Olympio and the CUT achieved unexpected political success in 1958 and took over political power in the mandate, the Ewe issue had by then long disappeared from the CUT's agenda.

In British Togoland, we find until 1953 an odd parallelism between local demands and British belief in the amalgamation of divisions that followed the strategies of the interwar period. This became obvious during a 1949 meeting of representatives of the four 'native states' and of delegates from the 'unamalgamated divisions' in Sovie. The Ewe issue had disappeared; the All-Ewe Conference was not present; and Ewe-speakers from the Gold Coast Colony were excluded from the discussions.¹⁸² In local conflicts, some 'Ewe

179 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/446, Hammerhurst, District Commissioner of Ho, *Quarterly Report on Ho District for the Period 1st January, 1946 to 31st March, 1946*. (without number), without date, 1.

180 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/94, Michael Batse, Secretary-General of the Togo Union, to Trygve Lie, Secretary-General of the United Nations, *Togoland Affairs* (without number), 11 May 1951, 3; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/94, Andrews S.K. Ekpey, Secretary of Togoland Youth Association, to Trygve Lie, *Togoland Affairs and Urgent Demand*. (without number), 31 July 1951, 2; see Skinner, Kate, 'Writing and Rallies: The Politics of "Freedom" in Southern British Togoland, 1953–1956', *Journal of African History* 48(1), 2007, 123–47, 132; and the brand-new Skinner, Kate, *The Fruits of Freedom in British Togoland: Literacy, Politics and Nationalism, 1914–2014* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 122–53.

181 See ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 10, District Commissioner of Klouto to Péchoux, Commissioner of Togo (n° 97/CK), 18 Sep. 1952; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 10, *Procès-Verbal – Introduction sur le Territoire du Togo du Journal « Motabiabia » publié en langue indigène (Ewe), par le nommé Alfred Kpedu, de Kpedze* (n° 227), without date, 1; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 23, *Examen du Plan Secret du Gouvernement du Gold-Coast Relatif à l'Annexion du Togo sous Tutelle Britannique – Divulgué en Juillet 1953 – Traduction in extenso* (without number), without date, 2, 5.

182 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/94, Dixon, Senior District Commissioner of Ho, to Mangin, *Representation of the Southern Section of Togoland in the Legislative Council* (n° S.0167/25),

divisions' wished to break away from Peki State (belonging to the Gold Coast) and ultimately to enter Togoland. Apparently – according to observers from Nkrumah's CPP – Ewe-speaking groups of Togoland and Ewe-speaking groups of the Gold Coast Colony did not seem to feel many sympathies for one another. Electoral violence in the Anlo region added to the antagonism.¹⁸³

In 1951, in Togoland under British mandate, the pan-Ewe idea had lost its impetus. The question now was whether Togoland could become an independent territory outside of the Gold Coast, and leaders of the Togo Union now accused the Gold Coast CPP of 'subverting' the region and lobbied for a common territory for all 'Togoland'.¹⁸⁴ Nevertheless, Nkrumah's CPP made inroads in parts of the populations of Voltaland's southern section and won the support of discontented populations of several smaller areas. This was not sufficient to win the referendum for integration into the Gold Coast in the southern part of the trusteeship territory – they received the necessary votes through an overwhelming CPP majority in the north – but the regionalist 'Togolander' sentiment, even in the south, only had a narrow majority. As the votes were counted as a single regional block, British Togoland finally became Ghana's Trans-Volta Togoland District in 1957.¹⁸⁵

In French Togo, the CUT's 1958 electoral victory made Olympio the Prime Minister of a now autonomous state, and brought about the country's independence in 1960. This could have brought the unification issue back onto the agenda of the larger region, but it did not. Leaders of Olympio's party were content to establish CUT rule in the 'recalcitrant' parts of the country and to punish PTP supporters through levies for having voted for the 'wrong party'.¹⁸⁶

11 Jan. 1949, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/94, Chief Commissioner of the Colony, *Note: [Situation in Southern Togoland]* (without number), 30 April 1949.

183 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 307, *Copy: Draft Statement by the Minister of Justice* (without number), without date; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/120, President of Ewe Youth Movement in Keta, to Arden-Clarke, Governor of Gold Coast, *The Shooting Incident at Suipe in Avenor, Anlo State* (without number), 10 Nov. 1950, 1.

184 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/94, Michael Batse, Secretary-General of Togo Union, to Trygve Lie, Secretary-General of the United Nations, *Togoland Affairs* (without number), 11 May 1951, 2; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/94, Andrews S.K. Ekpey, Secretary of Togoland Youth Association, to Trygve Lie, *Togoland Affairs and Urgent Demand*. (without number), 31 July 1951, 1.

185 Nugent, *Smugglers*, 189–92.

186 These *règlements de comptes* become visible in a number of documents, see ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 23, Kokevi to District Commissioner of Klouto-Kpalimé (without number), 22 Dec. 1958; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 23, *Aff. Sowonou Antonio* (without number), 27 Dec. 1958; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 23, *Adjoint du Chef de Circonscription* of

This settlement of scores went on at the regional level until the assassination of Olympio in 1963: former important advocates of the Ewe issue such as Paramount Chief Pebi IV of Agou Nyogbo took an active part in persecuting local PTP politicians as henchmen of 'French oppression'.¹⁸⁷ Far from being resurrected, the pan-Ewe project was buried. Sylvanus Olympio was not at all ready to give up any of his power, and the unification idea only remained a source of irritation between the two independent governments.

'The Bigmen Get Small; The Small Ones Big':¹⁸⁸ *The Regional Scope of the Battle for Autonomy and Resource Allocation*

Apart from the international discussion, the reorganisation of Togoland in the British-mandated part, and communal reform on the French side, created a hidden local dimension of conflict and change, in which 'Ewe mobilisation' had a different sense.¹⁸⁹ Some local struggles involved established paramount rulers and sub-chiefs, others mobilised so-called 'youngmen'.¹⁹⁰ These conflicts appeared, above all, in Anlo and the Tongu Confederacy: they led to the creation of militias – such as by the *fiawo* of Tefle, Sukpe, and Vume – and to violent clashes in the first half of the 1950s.¹⁹¹ Everyone referred to United Nations trusteeship: in September 1945, the divisional chiefs of the mainly Ewe-speaking communities of Liati, Fudome, and Vli refused to pay

 Klouto, *Etat des sommes perçues par les dirigeants du C.U.T. après les élections du 27-4-1958 et 9-4-61 dans les villages Agou Nyongbo Dalave et Agou Nyongbo Agbetiko* (without number), 28 Oct. 1963; Nieuwaal, E. Adriaan B. van Rouveroy van, 'Ewe Chiefs and Ewe Legal Traditions in Togo and Benin: The Evolution of Traditional Authority, 1940–1990', in Benjamin Lawrance (ed.), *A Handbook of Eweland: The Ewe of Togo and Benin* (Accra: Woeli Publishing Services, 2005), 145–60, 157.

187 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 350, E.K. Peby IV, Paramount Chief of *canton* of Agou Nyogbo; Hilaire Biem, President of CUT section of Agou Nyogbo, and others, to Administrator of Subdivision of Klouto (without number), 24 March 1962, 1.

188 Quote is from Interview with *Togbe* Kutumua VIII, Village Chief of Agou Kebo Dzigbe, Agou Region, Togo, 22 March 2009.

189 For the example of Have, see Kwaku, 'Tradition', 79–80.

190 See, on these generational conflicts, Waller, Richard, 'Rebellious Youth in Colonial Africa', *Journal of African History* 47(1), 2006, 77–92, 89.

191 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/712, Caldwell, Assistant District Commissioner of Keta, *Quarterly Report – Keta District January – March, 1951*. (without number), 13 April 1951, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/342, Gardner, Assistant District Commissioner of Keta, to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Dabala Riot* (without number), 4 Feb. 1947, 2.

the taxes that the Akpini State Council had introduced with reference to New York!¹⁹²

Anlo in the 1940s was a particularly violent case. The nobility of Anloga was annoyed that *Togbe Sri II* preferred to live in Keta, close to the office of the British district commissioner.¹⁹³ The issue of 'Ewe-ness' was strategically used to impress the colonial power: the Anloga headmen claimed that the *Awoame Fia*'s 'absence' damaged the administration of taxes, which led to a lack of funds for the New Africa College, according to them the best such institution 'in the entire area occupied by the Ewe speaking tribes'.¹⁹⁴ Also, during the internal debates in Anlo before 1949, representatives of the 'Ewe parties' were duly invited to boost the prestige of the chiefs.¹⁹⁵ Reference to Ewe-ness was, however, most useful when it came to excluding groups on 'traditional grounds'. In 1946, the *Awoame Fia* of Anlo withdrew authority from the Atiavi Council, and defined the Lostofi clan as autonomous from the Atiavi. Furious, the Atiavi chiefs first tried to convince the *Awoame Fia* of his 'error'. Then, in a long petition to the British authorities, they explained that they were the descendants of the respective Ewe groups coming from Notsie and settling in Anlo, and that the Lostofi were former slaves coming from somewhere else. Thereby, the Atiavi managed to bring ethnic matters to the fore against a local decision regarded as unfair.¹⁹⁶ The second issue involved discussions about pre-eminence amongst clans within the states: the members of the kinship group

192 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/301, Asafoche Gavi, Chief of Liati Division, Akpini State, to Goldsworthy, Governor of the Gold Coast, *The Petition of the People of Laiti [sic], Fudome and Vli* (without number), 25 Sep. 1945, 1.

193 Greene, Sandra E., 'Sacred Terrain: Religion, Politics and Place in the History of Anloga (Ghana)', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 30(1), 1997, 1–22, 12–5.

194 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/120, Kotsikui II, *Asafohene* in Tsiamé, Ve Division; Sogbe II, *Asafohene* in Tsiamé; Senu II, *Asafohene* in Tsiamé, all from the vicinity of Anloga, Anlo State, to Burns, Governor of Gold Coast (without number), 13 Nov. 1944.

195 See PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/120, Sri II, *Awoame Fia* of Anlo, as president; and other *asafohenewa*, and S.E. Akrobotu, Councillor and President of the Ewe Union in Keta, *Anlo State Council Resolution – No. 3 of 1943: Resolution passed by the Anlo State Council in Regard to the Appointment of Finance Board Members*. (n° 3), 4 March 1943; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/120, District Commissioner of Keta to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n° 207/35/S.F.g.), 30 April 1945.

196 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/120, Atiavishi, Fetish Priest, self-declared Descendant of 'Ancestor Dzoglamate'; Chief Adia II, President of the Town Council of Atiavi; and others, *Petition from all the Chiefs and the Members of Atiavi Addressed to His Excellency the Governor Sir Alan Burns, K.C.M.G etc. against Encroachment upon the National Rights of the People and the Continuous Injustice meted out to them by Hon. Togbi Sri II, C.B.E.* (without number), 15 March 1946.

of Adzovia, regarding themselves as the 'Paramount Ruling Tribe' of Anlo, protested against the particularly powerful position of the Anlo *Awadada*, Awusu Katsriku II, holding that in Peki such deviations from the 'customary rules' would be impossible.¹⁹⁷ In 1952 the state council even suspended the *Awoame Fia*, which meant the end of de facto power of Anlo institutions over neighbouring communities. This was not what young protesters in Keta or Anloga had wanted, and it provoked new riots, now in favour of a strongly conservative cause.¹⁹⁸ These activities seriously disturbed the creation of a newly elected body, the South Anlo Local Council. The Nkrumah government employed police forces against rioters, as this government was hostile to the sympathisers of *Togbe* Sri II and feared for its own party members as victims of the riots. In 1953, a 'mob' of 'youngmen' plundered the houses of 'separatists', leading to the murder of the councillor of Avevor and the disappearance of Chief Adjorlolo of Atorkor. Many voters from the other constituencies in the region went straight over to the CPP in fear of these riots; the uproar on the Keta Peninsula only calmed down around the 1956 election.¹⁹⁹ In this context, it is absolutely remarkable that the 'traditional authorities' in Anloga and Keta did very little to reactivate the question of Ewe solidarity during this particular conflict. Quite obviously, the principle of Ewe unity was no longer seen as appealing enough to be mentioned in local conflicts – even in Anlo.

The *Pekihene* encountered a period of similar difficulties in the 1940s and the rest of his power eroded. The *Fia* of Awudome and *Benkumhene* of Peki State, *Togbe* Adai Kwasi Adom IX, withdrew from this native state, challenging the 'traditional paramountcy' of Kwadzo De X of Peki. The Awudome supported this decision with alleged 'historical tradition', claiming that their community had been the first to revolt against Akwamu rule, back in 1829. They also demanded, repeatedly, a United Nations inquiry into the matter. However, the British, who at this point were still convinced that the future lay in Ewe

197 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/120, Agotelor to Mangin, Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony (without number), 10 June 1949, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/712, Peake, Assistant District Commissioner of Keta, *Quarterly Report – Keta District. October – December, 1950*. (without number), 17 Jan. 1951, 2.

198 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/712, Cowley, Government Agent in Keta, *Quarterly Report – Keta District April – June, 1952*. (without number), 14 July 1952, 3; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/712, Cowley, *Quarterly Report – Keta District July – September, 1952*. (without number), 14 Oct. 1952, 1, 3.

199 Callaway, Barbara J., 'Transitional Local Politics: Tradition in Local Government Elections in Aba, Nigeria; Keta, Ghana', *African Studies Review* 15(3), 1972, 403–12, 406–8.

unity, ignored these pledges.²⁰⁰ While in the end the paramount chief of Peki and the district commissioner of Akuse managed to convince the Regent of Awudome, Etiku, to accept continued allegiance to the Peki Native State, the *Fia* and other chiefs refused to pay taxes and to participate in state organisations.²⁰¹ In 1952, Peki technically became a part of the Volta District, under the administration of the Government Agent (former district commissioner) in Ho, but even this did not bolster the *Pekihene's* lost reputation. The members of the Awudome State Council again demanded their independence from Peki, relying on a relatively sterile 'Eweland' argumentation, which insisted on an 'Ewe custom' that favoured divisions over 'native states'.²⁰²

In the 'amalgamated states', problems were similar, and the power of the paramount chiefs waned. In the case of Akpini, the state council in Kpandu failed to intervene in the struggle for the chieftaincy of Wusuta, which had become increasingly violent.²⁰³ In Alavanyo, the Akpini State Council also attempted to press the reinstallation of formerly destooled ex-chief Godwin Anku as Atakora V, but failed as much as in Tsrukpe.²⁰⁴ As no established mechanisms had been created for conflict resolution, 'native states' such as

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- 200 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 302, Togbe Adai Kwasi Adom IX, *Fia* of Awudome; Togbe Adzesi Dzago VI, *Fia* of Avenui; and others, *Resolution* (without number), without date; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 307, Acting District Commissioner of Akuse to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n° 1141/190/1920.), 28 May 1946, 1; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 302, Acting Provincial Commissioner of the Eastern Province to Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, *Awudome-Peki Relation* (without number), 24 June 1946, 1–2; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 302, Adai Kwasi Adem IX, *Fia* of Awudome, *Petition of the Fiaga and People of Awudome* (without number), 7 May 1946, 4–5.
- 201 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 302, District Commissioner of Akuse to Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, *Awudome Affairs*. (n° 0141/SF.5/56), 29 May 1951.
- 202 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/529, Crawford for Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, to Government Agent in Akuse (n° 554/13), 27 May 1952; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/529, Saka Vume, Secretary of Awudome State Council, *Address of Welcome by the People of Awudome to the Government Agent Ho on 1st Official Visit*. (without number), 29 July 1952.
- 203 PRAAD (Accra), Ho Branch, DA/D/301, John Green, Assistant District Commissioner of Kpandu, to Acting Senior District Commissioner of Ho, *Wusuta Native Affairs* (n° 0019/S.F.1/2), 18 June 1947, 1–2; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/673, *Togbe Abiu Gedodoe, Adontenhene* of Wusuta Division, Akpini State, to Assistant District Commissioner of Kpandu, *Wusuta Constitutional Dispute* (without number), 13 Oct. 1951.
- 204 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/301, Senior District Commissioner of Ho to Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, *Alavanyo Native Affairs* (n° S.010/SF.3/26.), 24 April 1948, 1; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/301, Senior District Commissioner of Ho to Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, *Amalgamation of the Tsrukpe Division with the Akpini State* (n° S.0097/23.), 21 May 1948, 1.

Akpini were very vulnerable to conflicts in their key division: when in Kpandu, after the death of Dagadu IV, a stool conflict broke out between stool father Charles Agbodra and self-installed Paramount Chief Dionisius Yao Nyavor, this paralysed not only Kpandu but the whole 'native state'.²⁰⁵

In these internal conflicts, the attention was focused on hostilities between the 'central division' of the 'native states', and groups in other 'divisions', which led to memoranda and reflections on pre-colonial history. The asset of 'Ewe unity', and the related 'traditions', seemed useful for a short time. Even so, very quickly after the peak of international pan-Ewe campaigns, the Ewe issue disappeared as an argument. In 1953, divisional chiefs within the Tongu Confederacy even demanded the deletion of the reference to 'Ewe states' in the State Councils (Colony and Southern Togoland) Ordinance No. 8, to the astonishment of the British administrators.²⁰⁶

Many Togoland communities believed nonetheless that they needed legal protection against future interventions of the *Pekihene* or of the *Awoame Fia*: the fear of the 'classical' states lingered on. This was in part irrational, but chiefs such as in the Tongu Confederacy tried to shut out the *Awoame Fia* and the *Pekihene* from Trans-Volta Togoland regional entities forever. Local chiefs feared historical prerogatives of these 'traditional Ewe rulers'. Even so, most local rulers did not refrain from strategic alliances with Anlo and Peki, whenever they were politically advantageous.²⁰⁷

A good example of the manoeuvres of population groups between states are the Mafi, who were divided between Anlo and Ada, and later the Tongu Confederacy. In 1912, the British had described this separation as 'traditional'. This idea was based on Mafi behaviour in an 1865 war, and indeed supported by the Anlo Mafi Union – an association that included many local dignitaries.²⁰⁸ In the 1940s, however, many leaders of Mafi villages wished to bring the

205 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/301, *Memorandum on Kpandu Native Affairs*. (without number), without date, 16–7.

206 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/697, Acting Senior District Commissioner of Ho to Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, *Tongu Confederacy Resolution*. (n° S.0114/10.), 23 April 1948; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 311, *Togbe C.K. Ruipah III, Fiaga of Mepe*, President of the Tongu Confederacy; *Togbe Hlitabo II, Fiaga of Agave*; and others, *Tongu Confederacy Resolutions*. (without number), without date, 1.

207 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/712, Caldwell, Assistant District Commissioner of Keta, *Quarterly Report – Keta District October – December, 1951*. (without number), 28 Jan. 1952, 1, 3; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/712, Caldwell, *Quarterly Report – Keta District January – March, 1952* (without number), 8 April 1952, 1.

208 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/300, *Appendix 'C': Summary of the Historical Background to the Division of the Mafis*. (without number), without date [1950?].

whole of the group into the Tongu Confederacy, as taxes were lower than in Anlo, and prospects of political influence greater. As a 'traditional' narrative, these Mafi petitioners argued they had a 'natural heritage' that made them 'Tongus', which was 'et[h]nologically' proven and involved 'common dialectical, cultural, religious and industrial characteristics'; thus they were members of a 'Tongu race' that was 'ethnical[ly] homogenous'. All groups in question spoke Ewe – there was thus no particular advantage in referring to Ewe identification, in particular because Anlo was a principal 'Ewe state'.²⁰⁹ However, the petitioners claimed that as part of the 'Ewe nation' they could better understand the injustice of refusing to allow people of one stock to live together in one country!²¹⁰

In a pending case whose resolution remained unclear until 1953, representatives of Mafi communities from both sides of the Gold Coast-Togoland border employed the Notsie myth of 'all Ewe tribes' and the joint exodus.²¹¹ A minority part of the communities on Gold Coast territory refused the new arrangement

209 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/300, Kwazi Abliza III, *Fia* of Volo and President of Tongu Confederacy Council; Hadjor II, *Fia* of Bakpe and Vice-president; J.K. Zogah, *Fia* of Sukpe; C.K. Asipati III, *Fia* of Mepe; *Tongu Group Council Meeting – Fifth Session at Mafi Abidome on Wednesday the 17th of January, 1945*. (without number), without date; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/300, Assem III, *Fia* of Mafi; J.K. Asafo III, *Makralo* of Mafi; and others, *Petition passed by the Mafi Divisional Council held at Adidome on the 14th Day of June, 1950, under the Presidency of Togbe Assem III, of Mafi and the following members...* (without number), 14 June 1950, 1; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/300, Togbe Assim III, *Fia* of Mafi; E.K. Awittor-Bedi, Secretary of Mafi Division, to Chairman of Select Committee on Local Government and Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, *Re Unification of Mafi Divisions and Joining of Tongu Confederacy Council*. (without number), 13 Sep. 1950, 1.

210 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/300, Assem III and others, *Petition passed by the Mafi Divisional Council held at Adidome on the 14th Day of June, 1950 ...*, 2.

211 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/300, 'People of Northern Side Mafi', including Assem III, *Fiaga* of Mafi and others; to Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony (without number), 7 Sep. 1951, 2; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/300, Asafo III of Mafi to Gbedemah, Minister of Local Government of Gold Coast, *Resolution passed by the Mafi State Council held at Adidome this 27th Day of July under the Chairmanship of Mankralo J.K. Asafo III., of Mafi.: Resolution of the Unification of North/South of Mafi*. (without number), 27 July 1951, 1; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/300, Kwasinyi Agyeman III, Chief of Adidome, *Copy: Declaration* (without number), 17 Oct. 1948, 1; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/300, Assem III, *Fiaga* of Mafi State; Mankralo Akpafo VI; and others, to Arden-Clarke, Governor of the Gold Coast, *Resolution of the People of Anlo Mafi and Mafi Dugame for Reunion*. (without number), 12 June 1953, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/712, Assistant District Commissioner of Keta, *Quarterly Report – Keta District – July – September, 1950*. (without number), 4 Oct. 1950, 2.

of a joint Mafi division under *Fia* Assem III, and argued from the standpoint of their own historical 'tradition'. Most of the new Voltaland administration installed by the Nkrumah government favoured Assem's position, but the complaint caused endless inquiries.²¹²

In some more marginal communities, the use of the Ewe argument in local conflict was even more attractive. We have already seen this for rulers of 'Ewe' communities which had previously been part of Ada State, who knew how, when it suited them, to play on the concept of Ewe unification to further their interests. In January 1945, spokesmen of these communities had convinced the district commissioner that '56,000 Ewes being controlled by the Ada Manche' needed to be liberated. It was unclear how this was supposed to happen. The chief of Agrave, one of those 'Ewe units', refused to become a future member of a joint division of the eight communities as he feared Anlo interference.²¹³ Other chiefs agreed with this critique.

Another issue was the relationship of the communities of the Volta Region to the state of Akwamu. The relations between Ewe-speaking locals and the Akwamu authorities – descendants of the 'plunderers' of the 1870s – were particularly interesting. In the 1940s, the region of Volo, now a small *fiagadom* (rulership), had been exempted from Akwamu rule and become part of the newly created Tongu Confederacy.²¹⁴ After some violence in 1937, the *Akwamuhene* also accepted that Dufor would leave Akwamu rule.²¹⁵ However, the Akwamu Native Authority reserved for itself a part of its rights

212 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/712, Caldwell, Assistant District Commissioner of Keta, *Quarterly Report – Keta District April – June, 1951*. (without number), 20 July 1951, 4; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/300, Thomas, Government Agent in Sogakope, to Regional Officer of Trans-Volta Togoland Region, *Report on Mafi Unification and the possible Reorganisation of the Central Tongu Local Council* (n° TO.4/55), 17 Nov. 1952, 1–2; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/300, G.K. Dordoye, Councillor of Mafi State; A. Die-Dordoye, Secretary-General of Mafi Youth Association (MYA); J.K. Nutakor, Chairman of Central Tongu Local Council, and others, to Arden-Clarke, *Unification of Mafi*. (without number), 20 Aug. 1953, 1; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/300, J.A. Cowley, Acting Regional Officer of Volta Region, to Secretary of Governor of the Gold Coast, *Mafi Unification* (0020/SF.4/Vol.2/315), 15 Oct. 1953, 1; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/300, *Appendix 'A': Mafi Unification – Villages visited in Mafi Dugame Division* (without number), without date.

213 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/303, Assistant District Commissioner of Keta to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Native Affairs Report [for Keta] – 4th Quarter, 1944*. (n° 116/4/31.), 13 Jan. 1945, 3.

214 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/295, District Commissioner of Keta to Commissioner of the Eastern Province in Koforidua, *Duffor Native Affairs* (n° 0010/35), 26 Nov. 1946.

215 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/250, Abutia Kwadzo XII, Chief of Abutia Teti, to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 21 Dec. 1937.

in some of the particularly rich villages and towns, which continued to cause problems.

Frankadua, a small town but with an important market, was a test case. Kwasi Abliza III, the *Fia* of Volo, claimed rights over this town.²¹⁶ The British administrators east of the Volta intended to solve the issue, but their colleagues in the Gold Coast Colony were more interested in maintaining the prestige of the *Akwamuhene*.²¹⁷ For a period of five years, the situation of Frankadua thus remained unclear: tax payments were suspended; police forces from both Akwamu and the Tongu Confederacy occasionally entered the town and several inhabitants were shot.²¹⁸ The 'Volos' in Frankadua produced numerous pages of 'traditional claims', explaining why the town had to be separated from Akwamu. The Akwamu councils argued with 'traditional rights'.²¹⁹ Kwasi Abliza III accused 'the Akwamus' of having usurped the land Volo had been given in 1873.²²⁰ Part of Abliza's interest was in improving his own position in Dufor, where he was a contested ruler, through success in the Frankadua issue and the hereditary conflict with Akwamu.²²¹ In the 1950s, the debate became even more heated. The Volo headmen pointed to a census in which 607 inhabitants of the market town defined themselves as 'Ewe' (and, oddly, 50 more as 'Ewe-Volo'), while only 12 had identified themselves as 'Akwamu'.²²² Volo rulers were now insistent that the inhabitants of Frankadua were 'Ewe' who wished to live with their 'kinsmen'

- 216 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/108, P. Gardner, Acting District Commissioner of Keta, to Kwasi Abliza III, *Fia* of Volo (n° 1881/SAD/45.), 24 Oct. 1946; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/108, Acting Senior District Commissioner of Keta to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Volo-Akwamu Dispute over Frankadua* (n° EO.S.0073/4.), 31 Oct. 1947.
- 217 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/108, T.R.O. Mangin, Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, to Colonial Secretary of Gold Coast, *Frankadua (Akwamu State) Native Affairs*. (n° 025/SF.12/33.), 5 Feb. 1948, 2; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/108, Senior District Commissioner of Ho to Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, *Volta River – Ada Districts Boundary – Akwamu – Tongu Affairs* (n° 0409/41), 30 Aug. 1950.
- 218 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/108, Senior District Commissioner of Ho to Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, *Frankadua Affairs* (n° 0409/33), 31 July 1950.
- 219 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/108, Senior District Commissioner of Ho to Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, *Akwamu – Tongu Native Affairs* (n° 0409/47), Sept. 1950, 1–2.
- 220 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/108, Kwasi Abliza III, *Fiaga* of Volo, to Creasy, Governor of the Gold Coast, *Volo – Akwamu Dispute: Petition of Kwasi Abliza III Dufiaga of Volo State for and on behalf of the Duffor-Volo Native Authority* (without number), 11 Oct. 1948, 1.
- 221 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/713, Acting District Commissioner of Keta to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n° 2070/94/96), 14 Nov. 1946.
- 222 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/108, *Frankadua (Extracted from file 300&4PS124-125)* (without number), without date.

in the Tongu Confederacy. Although many Ewe-speakers had had functions in the Akwamu State, the claim had the sympathies of most British administrators in Togoland who agreed that ‘those places with a preponderance of Ewes should be administered by Tongu.’²²³

In 1953, the village chief of Frankadua, Kofi Tulasi II, and a number of the community’s leaders won over the deputy of the Volta Region in the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly, P.D. Adjani, to their cause. They complained bitterly in Keta that ‘from time memorial [*sic*] we the inhabitants of Frankadua are Ewe speaking people’; that they felt like Ewe and were part of the ‘Tongu sub-group’ of their ethnic grouping; and that they wished to become part of a local council that only involved Ewe communities.²²⁴ British officials were sympathetic to the campaign, but the final decision was left to the Nkrumah government.²²⁵ Even nowadays, Frankadua retains its difficult legacy, after becoming a part of the Volta District in post-colonial Ghana. As recently as in 1999, ‘ethnic tensions’ provoked a near-battle between ‘Anlos’ (now meaning the Ewe-speakers of the town, which is somewhat curious) and ‘Akwamus’.²²⁶

Smaller groups like the Togome and Fodjoku followed the Volo and Dufor initiatives, and in November 1946 they obtained, after protests, the promise of the paramount chief of Akwamu to be integrated within the Tongu Confederacy. The question of symbolic allegiance to the *Akwamuhene* was, however, a problem.²²⁷ In a meeting before the Akwamu Native Authority, ‘traditions’ were mobilised. The *Wirempihene* challenged the Togome claim, criticising the group because they ‘speak Ewe, yet...stay on Akwamu land’. According to this

223 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/108, Dixon to Kerr, Senior District Commissioner in Akuse (n° 0068/SF.3/125), 5 Dec. 1950, 1.

224 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/108, Smeham, *Frankadua* (n° 0068/S.F.3), 14 Feb. 1953; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/108, Kofi Tulasi II, *Tefia*, and others; to Gbedemah, Minister of Local Government of the Gold Coast (without number), 12 Feb. 1953; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/108, District Commissioner of Keta to Adjani (n° S.0068/SF.3/149), 15 Feb. 1953.

225 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 311, George Sinclair, Regional Officer of Togoland, to Secretary of Government of the Gold Coast, *The Tongu Confederacy* (n° S.0114/117), 20 Oct. 1952, 2.

226 United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), *Reports submitted by States Parties under Article 9 of the Convention – Seventeenth Periodic Reports of States Parties due in 2002: Addendum Ghana, 31 May 2002* (Geneva: United Nations, 2002), 31; Khan, Naefa, ‘The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice in Ghana: Working in the micro and around the macro’, in Parlevliet, Michelle, Guy Lamb, and Victoria Maloka (eds.), *Defenders of Human Rights, Managers of Conflict, Builders of Peace?* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 2005), 64–82, 76–7.

227 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/713, District Commissioner of Akuse to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Togome and Forjoku Affairs*. (n° 2715/186/08 Vol.III.), 22 Nov. 1946.

version, the Togome were 'strangers' tolerated by the *Akwamuhene*, while the Togome described themselves as 'autochthons' on the land.²²⁸

British officials agreed that those groups 'are quite clearly Ewes' and 'should join their brothers in the Tongu Confederacy', but they struggled to understand the old Akwamu-Togome-Fodjoku alliance or the realities of local rule. Nkwanta, the *Fia* of Togome, insisted on the existence of a historical border with Akwamu; the Fodjoku added to the confusion by holding that the Togome were 'Anlos' and, hence, another type of 'Ewe'. Also, the accounts of behaviour during the Akwamu invasion were very contradictory.²²⁹ At the end of the 1940s, the senior district commissioner in Ho was desperate: the Togome and Fodjoku communities were 'Ewe speakers' and wanted to 'join their Ewe brethren', but had various claims against each other. This led colonial officials to fear the worst for other, larger cases.²³⁰

'Ewe' solidarity in times of the impressively large, ethnically expressed group mobilisation of the AEC and of similar organisations, was often only a part of the picture. Elsewhere, the old, local conflicts continued unaffected by the pan-Ewe idea. At the heart of the various 'native states', conflicts were often local: within the Tongu Confederacy, Tefle inhabitants claimed they had to defend themselves against Bakpa attempts at occupying their land; the paramountcy of the Ho Division – the central division of the Asogli Native State – was contested over decades between the villages of Dome and Bankoe.²³¹ In the latter case as in many, ethnic arguments were *sometimes* employed, when convenient: thus the contenders from Ho-Bankoe accused the *Howusu* of being a member of a 'stranger' group that had only learned its proficiency in the Ewe language after its arrival in the Ho region.²³²

228 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/713, *Discussion on Togome and Forjoku Affairs – during Akwamu Native Authority Meeting on Tuesday 12th November, 1946*. (without number), without date.

229 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/713, Gardner, District Commissioner of Keta, to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Togome and Forjoku Affairs*. (n° 0048/5), 2 Dec. 1946 [dated '2 Dec. 1936'], 1–2; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/713, Judd, Acting Commissioner of the Eastern Province, 23-10-33: *In the Supreme Court of the Gold Coast Colony, Eastern Province, held at Akuse on Monday the 23rd Day of October 1933, before his Worship Leonard Warner Judd, Acting Commissioner Eastern Province. – Chief Asamoah Nkwanta – Plaintiff Appellant vs: Agobodjo & Chief Afum Asare – Defendants – Respondents*. (without number), without date, 1, 6, 12, 15.

230 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/713, Senior District Commissioner of Ho to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (without number), without date [1948].

231 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/712, Caldwell, Assistant District Commissioner of Keta, *Quarterly Report – Keta District July – September, 1951*. (without number), 16 Oct. 1951, 5.

232 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/458, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho, *Comments on the Resolution of the Bankoe 'Divisional' Council dated the 2nd August 1951*. (without number), without date, 1.

As we have seen, in the Adaklu community the break with Anlo had been an obvious goal until the end of the Second World War. However, after 1945 the Adaklu suddenly wished for a 'return' to Anlo rule. They referred to the ancient political Anlo–Adaklu alliance formed against Ho and 'the other Ewe divisions' and their old cooperation with the Asante invaders.²³³

The debate on Ewe-ness could even be employed as argument for local debates in non-Ewe-speaking regions, such as Buem. It was used in the conflict about local education policy and the creation of schools in the first half of the 1950s. Buem elites refused to send their children to Ho Secondary School, as they feared compulsory education in the Ewe language. Under pressure, the British officials had to assure that 'no student is compelled to study Ewe'. However, as the conflict between Twi-speakers and Lefana-speakers escalated in the 1950s, the Ewe question faded into the background.²³⁴ In that respect, the *Omanhene* of Buem accused the Twi-speaking militants of 'tribalising' the conflict. Other, minority linguistic communities such as the Bowiri joined in the protest; and it also became connected to internal conflicts about the hierarchy of divisions and their leaders within the Buem Native State, but this was no longer about the Ewe.²³⁵

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- 233 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/254, Gbogbi III, *Fiaga* of Adaklu; Lablublu III of Waya; Agbi III of Goefe; Krakani III of Helekpe, and others, to Togbi Sri II, *Awoame Fia* of Anlo (without number), 20 Feb. 1945, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/254, Mead, District Commissioner of Ho, to Commissioner of the Eastern Province, *Adaklu Division (Ho/Kpandu and Keta Districts)* (n° 325/107/31.), 13 Feb. 1946, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/454, W.J. Caldwell, Assistant District Commissioner of Keta, to Senior District Commissioner of Ho, *Southern Adaklu Affairs*. (n° 0093/101.), 16 May 1951.
- 234 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 309, Mangin, Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n° .../9/38), 13 July 1945, 1–2; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/298, Nana Akuamoia IV, *Omanhene* of Buem, to Arden-Clarke, *Jasikan Native Affairs*. (without number), 8 May 1953; PRAAD (Ho Branch), File No. 2009/29, Sub-File No. 'A', *Omanhene* of Buem, *Petition to His Excellency the Governor, Sir Alan Cuthbert Maxwell Burns, K.C.M.G., etc. etc. on the Occasion of his Visit to the Buem State, Borada. 16th. February 1943*. (without number), without date, 2; Dickson, A.G., 'Mass Education in Togoland', *African Affairs* 49(195), 1950, 136–50, 137.
- 235 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/268, Nana Yaw Nyako II, *Ohene* of Worawora; Nana Akompi Firam III, *Ohene* of Kadjebi; Nana Kwasi Adu, and others, *Petition...* (without number), March 1945, 1; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 309, Nana Akuamoia IV, Acting President, Buem State Council, to District Commissioner of Ho, *Buem Native Authority Election of [sic]* (without number), 19 June 1946, 1; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 309, Nana K.O.Brantuo III, *Adontenhene* of Buem, Chief of Jasikan, and *asafohenes* and *stoolfathers*, *Petition...* (without number, translated from Lelemi), 11 Sep. 1946, 1; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 309, Nana Yaw Nyako II, *Woraworahene*, to District Commissioner of Kpandu (without number),

However, 'Ewe mobilisation' was used as a model outside of the Ewe-speaking areas. In the case of the tensions between the Lolobi and Akpafu in Buem, the Lolobi profited from their knowledge of the Ewe process to express political protest. Lolobi dignitaries argued that they should have been represented in the important debates at Lake Success in the United States, where the spokesmen 'of the Ewe' formulated their claims towards the trusteeship council of the United Nations. They claimed they did not, of course, have an 'Ewe identity', but they believed that even smaller ethnic groups should have the same right of mobilisation.²³⁶ Therefore, the Ewe example had an immense impact as a blueprint for local rhetorics.

The border continued to have its own dynamics. In 1943, the *Fiaga* of Bator had, in a land claim, described his opponents as 'Kpele strangers from Eve'; we find no solidarity between 'Ewe' when land rights and immigration were involved. Frequently, Ewe-speaking local councils voted for the expulsion of Ewe-speaking immigrants from community land, and if the latter came from the other side of the colonial border, they would often be insulted as 'French strangers'.²³⁷ By the same logic, in Agu Tafié, at the French side of the border in the Kpalimé region, the elders refused to accept the nephew of the retired paramount chief, Aboyo, as new 'traditional ruler', on the grounds that he had lived for the largest part of his life in the Gold Coast and thus adopted foreign manners!²³⁸ The colonial border could in that regard be exploited, in the perception of locals, beyond the ethnic solidarities.

In the region of Kpalimé, CUT leaders attempted to restore the popularity of their movement, which had come under mounting pressure in 1950, through

6 Oct. 1946; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/571, Duncan, Assistant District Commissioner of Kpandu, to District Commissioner of Ho, *Bowiri Affairs – Abdication of Divisional Chief* (n° 2729/85/1921.), 27 Nov. 1946; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/297, District Commissioner of Ho to Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, *Petition from the Natural Rulers and Elders of Worawora Division* (n° S. 0053/SF.2/Vol. 6/521.), 8 Dec. 1950, 2; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/298, Telegram from Nana Asafohene and Nana Ampeh Taphahene, 'on behalf of Akan group', Kadjebi, to Senior District Commissioner in Ho (n° S. 0109/Vol.3/246.), 23 July 1952.

236 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/299, Sub-Chief Jacob Akoteh, and others, to Burns (without number), without date, 2.

237 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/5, Kofi Djerekey, Acting *Mankralo* of Bator, and Kodjo Fiagbor Wusu Yao, to Colonial Secretary of the Gold Coast (without number), 12 October 1943; PRAAD (Ho Branch), NA/47, Nana Kataboa II, *Agesokubihene* and *Krontihene*; and elders, to Amanyagbe, and others, *A Letter of Warning* (n° AP3/1/56), 5 May 1956.

238 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 10, Administrator of Subdivision of Klouto, *Cercle de Centre, Subdivision de Klouto: Rapport Trimestriel, Année 1938 – 4^{ème} Trimestre* (without number), 23 Jan. 1939, 5.

their appearance as brokers in local conflicts involving parties from both the French and the British side of the border. In Baglo, P. Dogli offered the appropriate services to the paramount chief, Nana Buaka IV, in organising a meeting with the British district commissioner.²³⁹ This role of the CUT had nothing to do with the Ewe issue.

Most of the conflicts in the Kpalimé area remained on the strictly local level. They essentially reflected problems with decisions taken in the pre-colonial period, such as, in particular, fusions of villages in the Kuma region. The inhabitants of Totsi and Yokele complained that, during the confusions of the Asante incursions, the leader of Tsame had usurped the chieftaincy over the sub-region of the *canton*. This was then connected to longstanding land conflicts between Tsame and Totsi, which went on from the 1930s to 1970. Other, internal, conflicts as in Kuma-Apoti, or in Agu-Apegame, were also linked to the traumatic experience of the Asante invasions, but not the Ewe legends.²⁴⁰ Finally, the fate of the chiefs of Agu Nyogbo Agbetiko was discussed during the whole of the late colonial and the post-colonial phases: in the 1950s, this particular conflict was linked to the battles between the PTP (still in territorial power) and the CUT, hostilities that reappeared once again in 1970.²⁴¹ As in

239 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 23, District Commissioner of Klouto to Cédile, French Commissioner of Togo, *a/s requête du Chef Nana Buaka IV de Baglo* (n° 115/c.), 18 Sep. 1950, 1.

240 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 358, Kossi Fiasi, Planter, representative of *Collectivité Bokovi Asuka Edi* in Totsi, to District Commissioner of Klouto (without number), 25 Oct. 1951; ANT, 8APA/3/37, Tourot, District Commissioner of Klouto, to Péchoux, French Commissioner of Togo (n° 011/Cf.), 7 Feb. 1953, 1–2; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 358, Bokovi Emmanuel, Secretary of Chief Edi II of Kuma-Totsi, *Discours à Monsieur l'Administrateur de la F.O.M. Commandant le Cercle de Klouto; à l'occasion de l'Introduction de Joseph Koffi Edi II, Chef de Village de Kouma-Totsi – Le 6 Septembre 1958*. (without number), 6 Sep. 1958, 1; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 358, W.M. Kludea; Bassah Eben-Ezer, Secretary; Thomas Gbago; Fritz Komassi, *Jugement N° 35 du 27 Juillet 1959 du Tribunal Coutumier de Palimé: Affaire de Chefferie. Nyassem Assi Amoua Cultivateur à Kouma Apoti. Contre Gustave Amedome Chef du village Kouma Apoti*. (without number), 27 July 1959; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 358, CFF, *Note d'Information: Différend entre les villages de Kouma-Tsomé et Kouma-Totsi*. (n° 26.C/CFF), 6 Oct. 1969, 1.

241 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 350, Gidéon Avogan, notable; and others, all designed as 'Notables, Anciens et Le Chef Léléklélé I du village autonome d'Agou Agbétiko', to Commander of Brigade of the Gendarmerie Nationale, *Suppression inéluctable des faits rapports et plaintes injustes de notre village*. (without number), 15 Oct. 1953, 1, 3; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 350, K. Franklin West, Adjudant-Chief of the Gendarmerie Nationale; Gabriel Agbo, Gendarme, *Procès Verbal* (numbers illegible), 13 Oct. 1970, 1–5; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 350, Laurent Y. Agboyi, Secretary of Chief of Agou-Nyogbo-Agbetiko, to

most parts of British Togoland and of the Ewe-speaking regions of the Gold Coast Colony, ethnic mobilisation in French Togoland also had relatively little success. Under French rule, Ewe-speakers focused less on 'traditions' expressed through pre-colonial states, and more exclusively on village conflicts.

In rare situations, Ewe identification had importance as an argument in the French zone, but mainly with regard to local issues. An obvious example is the 'village' of Fongbe close to Tsévié, in the population centre of Lomé. In 1948, the *chef de quartier* (town ward headman) of Fongbe Apedome, Keïssou Abena, and his colleague in Fongbe Boeti, bitterly complained about the administrator of the subdivision of Tsévié, because the latter had confirmed the election of one Agama Dali, *chef de quartier* of Fongbe Zogbedji, to the position of chief of the whole 'independent village'. The claimants said they were extremely angry that, while the inhabitants of Apedome were 'Mina' originating from Ada, and those of Boeti 'Ewe' with their origins in Notsie, the colonial administration made a 'Fon' from Dahomey their chief. They cited the spokesmen of the All-Ewe Conference to make their point clear:

Here we refer to the notion of the Councillor of the French Union, Mr Savi de Tove, who defends a principle adopted as well by our representatives in the Local Assembly, which says the following: 'The nomination of the Ewe chiefs by the administration is not in line with the indigenous customs. *This is the reason for great troubles.* From this motive, it is necessary to abolish the decree [speaking of the text from 1st March 1945, about indigenous rule in Togo] and *leave the people their liberty to choose their chiefs to their convenience. This would be far more democratic*'.²⁴²

In spite of such threats coming from local elites, most local inhabitants, including the Ewe-speakers and Mina-speakers, were not at all interested in creating a real conflict. When the chief was elected, the 'stranger' Adama Dali managed to maintain, with support of a group of elders, that he was the 'traditional heir' of the ruling family, and he celebrated a crushing victory over his Ewe-speaking

F.D. Ali, Acting Togolese Minister of the Interior (without number), 19 Oct. 1970, 1; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 350, Antoine Agbenou, Attaché of the Administration, to Ministry of the Interior of Togo (n° 874/CK), 22 Oct. 1970.

242 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Tsévié, 4, Keïssou Abena, chief of ward of Fongbe Apedome; and others; Zotaé Torglo, chief of ward of Boeti; Goli Apenon; Sogbo Awli, notables of Fongbe Boeti; to District Commissioner of Lomé, *aff. des Fongbés* (without number), 3 Nov. 1948, 1–3. The citation is on pages 2–3, passages in italics are underlined in the original text.

contender. Again, under the stabilising conditions of colonial rule, local political traditions were stronger than any ethnic solidarity.²⁴³

Therefore, the reference to Ewe identifications was subject to rather strong limitations. First of all, it obviously needed an ‘otherness’ present on the spot that could be defined as ethnically different, as against a ‘Fon’ in Fongbe, or between Ewe-speakers and the linguistic groups of Buem. Reference to Ewe-ness did not serve as a language of reconciliation in matters of conflicts between different smaller Ewe-speaking communities. Even in the territory of Togo under French mandate, which lacked other larger political entities to rely on, ethnic mobilisation did not, in the local practice, become a particularly important principle.

Ewe from Outside: The Avatime and the Question of Ewe Solidarity

To illustrate these points through a local case over the decades, we will now go back to the Avatime communities. The Avatime as speakers of a Central Togo language are, of course, at first glance distinct from Ewe-speakers in linguistic terms.²⁴⁴ Nonetheless, in the late nineteenth century the community’s mastership of the Ewe language was so outstanding that German Governor Jesko von Puttkamer remarked that, in contrast to other Ewe-speakers, the people of ‘Awatimé have the pure Ewe dialect!’²⁴⁵ As in the mixed and fluent communities of Joal-Fadiouth and Port Loko, Avatime settlements thus represented a local view on different options and cleavages at different times.

In the 1920s, Avatime informants redefined ‘historical tradition’ into a more independent narrative: only some of them had come from Notsie, the rest from Ahanta in the Gold Coast (setting them apart from the majority of Ewe communities). Also, according to this version, the Avatime had formerly been Twi-speakers, and were linguistically part of the groups west of the Volta River. This version seems to be a clear invention and is particularly curious.²⁴⁶ Under

243 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Tsévié, 4, D. Videau, Administrator of Subdivision of Tsévié; J. Houessou, Interpreter, *Procès-Verbal de consultation coutumière pour la nomination du Chef de Village Indépendant de Fongbé*. – (without number), 28 Oct. 1949, 1–4.

244 [Christaller,] ‘Explorations’, 256.

245 TNA, PRO, CO/879/28, African Confidential Print No. 356, von Puttkamer, German Governor of Togo (*Extract*.) [*Memorandum on Peki*] (without number, Enclosure 2 in No. 44), 30 June 1888, 2.

246 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/1624, Rattray, *Report by Mr. R.S. Rattray* (without number), without date, 28.

German rule, the Avatime rulers had claimed to represent the 'lost state' of 'Krepi', a political entity. These claims were probably wrong – Kwadzo De IV was more influential in the Trans-Volta area of the 1870s than was Adzatekpor – but they show that the Avatime dignitaries had no difficulties in presenting their community as an Ewe-speaking political entity.

European residents helped with this idea, as German missionaries tended to treat the Avatime as an 'Ewe tribe'. African missionary personnel recruited for work in the area around Gebi Mountain were obliged to undergo training in Ewe, even if destined for the more isolated Avatime villages, such as Kolenin. Moreover, the growing group of Christian converts was, in this early phase, rather eager to accept an all-embracing Ewe culture (including the Notsie founding legend).²⁴⁷ Missionary attitudes in the 1900s were ambivalent and mixed with very practical issues. Consequently, as one example, the Bremen Mission recruited local recruits from Avatime, such as Godwin Banimanve, who were installed as auxiliary teachers in places like Amedzofe, because they were able to teach undergraduates in the local language. In 1890, Andreas Aku, a Bremen Mission catechist from Keta, described villages such as Amedzofe and Gbadzeme as bilingual. In Spieth's account, the Avatime are implicitly considered to be one of the 'Eweland tribes'. Around 1900, the Avatime thus had the two options of ethnic identification in their repertoire.²⁴⁸

After the First World War, the Avatime populations attempted to maintain the image of being a particularly 'independent' community, and as especially anti-German. They accused their neighbours, the Tafi, of having been the first to 'defect' to the Germans in the 1890s, and described them and the Logba as 'weak' as opposed to the fierce cruelty of their own warrior community; the Agotime and the Adangbe north-east of Lomé have the same origin legend that emphasises cruel acts during wars. It makes good sense that three Trans-Volta communities thereby underline their

247 Staatsarchiv Bremen, 7,1025 (Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft), 6/2, Schosser to Härtter (without number), 5 Aug. 1904, 1; Staatsarchiv Bremen, 7,1025 (Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft), 6/2, Schröder, missionary at Amedzofe, to Ohly, Mission Inspector (without number), without date, 2.

248 Staatsarchiv Bremen, 7,1025 (Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft), 19/6, Andreas Aku, Bremen Mission catechist in Keta, to Mission Inspector, *Eine Ferienreisebeschreibung* (without number), 20 to 25 Feb. 1890, 10; Staatsarchiv Bremen, 7,1025 (Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft), 6/2, *Stations-Konferenz: Besetzung des Amedzowe-Bezirks 1907* (without number), 4 July 1906, 3; Spieth, *Ewe-Stämme*, 49*, 65*. According to Avatime legends, the community once had a female chief for the female population – a tradition that is, if I am not mistaken, not found anywhere else in the Trans-Volta region.

autonomous group identification at the margin of the Ewe-speaking pre-colonial divisions.²⁴⁹

The British 'amalgamation' project of the late 1920s brought the Avatime under stronger pressure to define their group identification in relation to neighbouring communities. They continued to reject Peki's leading role, as the Peki had been, from that perspective, a weaker ally during the Akwamu and Asante incursions.²⁵⁰ Their discussion with British administrators did not yet touch on the question of 'Ewe identity'. With regard to Anlo, the Avatime claimed that there had never been any tributary arrangements, but only trade relations between partner 'states' on equal terms.²⁵¹

In the 1920s, Adzatekpor nevertheless became nominated an arbitrator in stool disputes within 'Ewe' communities. For the Wadze Stool Dispute, he also claimed to have 'knowledge of the native customs' of the Ewe.²⁵² The Avatime chief managed to impress the British so much that in 1931 he was exclusively spared from confiscations to enforce the payment of debts. However, this relative success made the head chiefs of neighbouring divisions strongly suspicious of Avatime intentions: the divisional chiefs of Honuta, and, obviously, of Tafi were hostile to the creation of an 'amalgamated state'. The Avatime reputation for violence did not help. In early 1928, Avatime warriors from Dzokpe destroyed the village of Tafi Atome, which antagonised not only the Tafi but also the Logba, and poisoned the atmosphere in the region.²⁵³

249 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/1621, Furley, [*Report of a Tour through the districts of Togoland*] (without number), 17 April 1918, 12; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/235, *History of Avatime Division*. (without number), without date, 1, 3; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/1624, Rattray, *Report by Mr. R.S. Rattray* (without number), without date, 38; ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Lomé, 9, Nativel, Assistant District Commissioner of Lomé, *Tournée effectuée par l'Administrateur-Adjoint Nativel au cours du mois de Septembre 1930 dans les cantons d'Adangbé, Gati, Kodjo et Haavé* – (without number), without date [October 1930], 3–4; Nugent, 'Historicity', 131–2.

250 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/238, District Commissioner of Ho to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n° 479/116./27.), 18 Feb. 1927, 2.

251 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/253, Adzatekpor, Head Chief of Avatime; and others; to District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 12 Sep. 1927, 1.

252 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/253, Ellershaw, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho, to Adzatekpor, *Fiaga of Avatime* (n° 665/536/28.), 23 July 1928.

253 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/253, Lilley to Adzatekpor (n° 380/30/1929.), 11 Oct. 1929; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/258, *Avatime Djokpo – Tafi Atomo disturbances*. (without number), 1 Nov. 1927, 6–7; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/258, V.W. Bratton, Assistant District Commissioner of Kpandu, to District Commissioner of Ho (n° 769/2/20), 19 Nov. 1927; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/258, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho to Commissioner of the Eastern Province in Koforidua (n° 794/13/28.), 11 Jan. 1928, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM

While Avatime informants presented the Tafi as spoilers of peace agreements, the rulers of the other communities were infuriated by the Avatime attack and refused any future cooperation. In June 1930, Adzatekpor V finally gave in and agreed to the restitution of pillaged Tafi possessions and to legal arbitration from Accra. This also opened discussions on identifications. The villagers of Tafi stated that they were the autochthons on the land in question, and the Avatime held that their Dzokpe branch had 'spear-won' the same land. Some reference was made to the Notsie legend, but none to 'Ewe' identity.²⁵⁴

In 1932, 'Avatime State' nonetheless became created as a larger political unit; this new 'native state' promoted by the British was an entity that included many Ewe-speaking communities including former adversaries. In the 1930s, the new State Council began to engage in questions of infrastructure, land use and heritage in Ewe-speaking places like Dudome or Izola. However, Adzatekpor, as president of the 'native state', was regularly shunned by the *fiawo* of the different Ewe-speaking communities in the state who preferred to apply directly to the British authorities.²⁵⁵ Avatime State remained a loose alliance of practically equal partners, in which the rulers of Avatime did not really manage to mark any dominance.

With regard to group identifications, the Avatime and other members of the 'native state' were hostile to immigrants regarded as 'Peki'. The question of making Philip Tekedu the headman of the 'Pekis' of Honuta was thus controversially discussed; the communities feared that this headman would act as a

39/1/258, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n° 791/346/28.), 10 May 1928, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/501, Wimshurst, Acting Commissioner of the Eastern Province, to Chief Commissioner of Gold Coast Colony, *Logba Division (Akpini State) Affairs*. (n° 0179/S.F.5/4.), 6 Oct. 1947.

254 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/258, *An account of incidents on 24th October, 1927*. (without number), without date, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/253, District Commissioner of Kpanduo to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n° 651/2/20), 15 Oct. 1929, 2; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/216, District Commissioner of Kpanduo to Adfa Kodadia, Head Chief of Tafi in Atome, *Tafi-Avatime Land Dispute*. (n° 491/65/1920.), 14 June 1930, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/216, *Adfa Kodadia, Headchief of Tafi Adome vs: Adodome Kpondolo, Dufia of Avatime Djokpe and others* (n° 24/28), without date, 1, 3, 4, 12, 14.

255 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/280, Maniye Gbagbo, Acting Adzatekpor V, Avatime State, *Adja Tekpo V's Hearty Address to the Gathering of Today, 16th June, 1932* (without number), 16 June 1932, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/66, *Talafan-Dodome State Meeting* (without number), 27 Nov. 1931; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/66, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho to Paramount Chief of Avatime (n° 773/193/1932.), 24 Nov. 1932, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/66, Adzatekpor V to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho (without number), 24 Oct. 1942, 2, 4.

vassal of the *Pekihene*.²⁵⁶ The paramount chief of Avatime wished to integrate these 'Pekis' into the native state and satisfy some of their wishes, given that they included an economically important group of cocoa planters. By contrast, the *Pekihene* demanded that Tedeku was to be installed as headman for all the 'Ewe' in Avatime State. Kwadzo De used the terms of 'Peki' and 'Ewe' as interchangeable, which was seen as a clear provocation by many Ewe-speakers in Avatime State. However, Adzatekpor did not challenge this claim in his correspondence with the other divisional chiefs, and with the British administration: instead, he described the 'Ewe' as a *tribe* of 'strangers' living in Avatime (and Avatime State) and being different from Avatime residents.²⁵⁷ Therefore, we find an interplay between linguistic elements, political prerogatives, and vague ethnic notions.

During the 1930s, Adzatekpor's rule over the core lands of Avatime became shaky. The paramount chief had reached a peak of unpopularity by introducing the head tax, which was attacked by many elders and other opponents as a return to practices from German times.²⁵⁸ The resistance of the 'youngmen' with open and outspoken support by many elders became in the end untenable, and the stool father, Traugott Tekpe, even called for the destoolment of Adzatekpor in November 1937.²⁵⁹ In 1938, the Avatime chief was no longer being invited to the court sessions of his own State Tribunal, and he was replaced there by the chief of Amedzofe. However, neither the British nor the members of the other 'divisions', agreed to Adzatekpor's destoolment. In 1939, an uneasy peace was brokered between Adzatekpor V and the 'youngmen' engaged in a symbolic cleaning procedure of the Vane-Dzolo-Kpoeta road.

256 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/293, Tachi Agble, Stool Father, in Hanvigba Station; to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho, *Petitional Grounds of the Recidental [sic] Pekis for the Election of a headman at Luvudo* (without number), 15 Oct. 1931, 1.

257 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/293, Adzatekpor to District Commissioner of Ho, *Election – Luvudo* (without number), 15 Oct. 1931; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/293, Assistant District Commissioner of Ho to *Fiaga* of Avatime, *Election of Luvudo* (n° 941/571929), 23 Oct. 1931; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D/293, Adzatekpor to Assistant District Commissioner of Ho, *Re Headman Appointment for Luvudo Community*. (without number), 2 Oct. 1931.

258 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/280, Obia, Adaimsa; Stool Father Dako Tekpe substituting Traugott Tekpe, and others, to Lilley (without number), 21 Sep. 1937, 1.

259 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/280, Heads of *Sohes* (*youngmen*), Lawrence K. Adzoto and others, to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (without number), 29 July 1937, 1–3; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/280, Fr. Traugott Adobo, Stool Father of Vane Avatime, to District Commissioner of Kpandu, *Deposition and Installation Reports*. (without number), 6 Nov. 1937, 1–2.

However, the prestige of the Avatime ruler was seriously damaged.²⁶⁰ Adzatekpor reacted with a kind of publicity campaign, in which he demanded support for more moderate tax policies and investment in secondary schools from the colonial power.²⁶¹

The emergence of the pan-Ewe campaign, in 1942, came at the right time. It gave a new opportunity to Adzatekpor to change the odds, and the tone of the Avatime paramount chief became different. He appeared at the forefront of the Ewe unity adherents, where he emphasised the necessity of Ewe reunification. After seven decades of a discourse insisting on Avatime's distinctiveness, this community was suddenly no longer different from the 'Ewe'. Adzatekpor V demanded Ewe unification on the grounds that the borderline 'deprives us, the Ewe from our privileges for trade as due to the effects of the war of 1914' and he wished 'that we the Ewes enjoy our former privilege for harmony of our works in Togoland'.²⁶² The ruler obviously tried to satisfy some of the divisional chiefs inside Awatime State, but also to profit from the widespread enthusiasm. The British official in charge in Ho commented in 1945 that Awatime State as an entity was indeed 'entirely Ewe'!²⁶³ Over

260 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/280, S.W. Atsridom IV, Divisional Chief of Kpedze Awlime, to District Commissioner of Kpandu (without number), 9 May 1938, 1–2; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/280, District Commissioner of Ho to District Commissioner of Kpandu (without number), unclear date, 1; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/288, Assistant District Commissioner of Kpandu to District Commissioner of Ho (without number), without date, 1–2; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/280, Adzatekpor V, *Fiaga* of Avatime; and Avatime chiefs, to District Commissioner of Kpandu and Commissioner of the Eastern Province (without number), 27 May 1939, 1; PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 309, *Handing over Notes from Mr. John Green – Ag. District Commissioner, to Mr. R.W. Woolley – District Commissioner* (without number), without date, 7.

261 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/288, Duncan-Johnston, Acting Commissioner of the Eastern Province in Koforidua, to Captain D.C. Walker, District Commissioner of Kpandu (n° 3730/2186/32.), 5 Sep. 1939; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/288, Secretary of Native Affairs, Accra, to Commissioner of the Eastern Province (n° 444/34/11.), 27 June 1939; PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/343, Adzatekpor V, Paramount Chief of Avatime, to Chairman of District Education Committee, *Petition from Adzatekpo V. for the Opening of a Senior School at Vane* (without number), 15 Jan. 1947.

262 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/288, Adzatekpor V, *An Address and Petition of Felix Kwami Adza Tekpo V. during his Visit to Wane Awatime on the 17th Day of February, 1943*. (without number), 17 Feb. 1943, 1. Italics are by the author.

263 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 309, *Handing over Notes from Mr. John Green – Ag. District Commissioner, to Mr. R.W. Woolley – District Commissioner* (without number), without date [1945], 3; Colonial Office, *Report...to the General Assembly of the United Nations on the Administration of Togoland under United Kingdom Trusteeship for the Year 1948*

decades, Avatime leaders had refused such a view, but with the ruling dynasty under pressure, the pan-Ewe issue had now become attractive. Moreover, seasonal labour migration into other parts of Togoland during the 1940s helped to cement this perception among a larger group of the Avatime populations.²⁶⁴ Thereby, Avatime easily and quite successfully blended into the mass of pan-Ewe demands!

This surprising flexibility of 'tradition' – which demonstrates the particular usefulness of our approach of 'colonial history on the ground' through written accounts – can notably be compared with Agotime. Like the Avatime, the members of this community normally presented themselves as non-Ewe, but could appear as part of 'the Ewe' whenever this was useful. In the 1920s, 'traditions' showed a clear sense of flexibility with regard to relations between Agotime and Ewe-speakers.²⁶⁵ Some of these 'traditions' insisted there had been Ewe settlers as part of the original Agotime community foundation, and argued that the schism between the Agotime and the *Howusu* of Ho had appeared through a misunderstanding during the Asante war. Mahumasro as a chief and candidate for the stool of the head chief in 1932 probably had his own reasons in promoting such a version, which became accepted.²⁶⁶

Therefore, members of the so-called Central Togo Minorities or the Adangme-speaking Agotime were quite capable of managing their identifications according to the regional necessities. In the late nineteenth century, the political entity was the central point of reference. However, these entities suffered under the German intrusion, and the Avatime Native State was only a shadow of the pre-colonial states. During the Ewe unification campaign, these chiefs supported the grand project, although their communities had over the years quite often insisted that they were not Ewe. Where the interest of the ruling dynasty was at stake, flexibility in identification was very possible.

(London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1949), 5, to be found in TNA, PRO, CO/96/790/3.

- 264 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 11/1/1624, Rattray, *Report by Mr. R.S. Rattray* (without number), without date, 38; Ward, Barbara, 'Some Notes on Migration from Togoland', *African Affairs* 49(195), 1950, 129–35, 131; Ward, Barbara, 'An Analysis of the Distribution of Population in a Town in British Togoland', *Man* 55, 1955, 35–9, 35–6.
- 265 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/216, Commissioner of the Eastern Province to Secretary for Native Affairs of Gold Coast, *Preliminary History of Agotime* (without number), 15 Feb. 1932, 1–2; Nugent, 'Putting', 939.
- 266 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/216, *The Preliminary History of the Agotime*. (without number), without date, 1–2.

Outlook: Political Ewe-ness in the Ghana Volta Region, Neutralised Ewe-ness in Togo

British Togoland lost its status as a separate territorial unit in 1957. In spite of more than twelve years of Ewe unification campaigns, and of some ten years of Togoland reunification propaganda, the CPP was successful against the programme of the Togoland Congress (TC). Some of the local chiefs participated actively in the defeat of the TC, such as in the case of Anfoega where *Togbe Tepre Hodo* intimidated TC activists and organised riots against TC electoral campaign meetings.²⁶⁷

After the CPP victory in the Trans-Volta Togoland Region, the Nkrumah government started to become more relaxed about Ewe issues in its rhetoric, and even to invoke 'Ewe solidarity' whenever this was useful. With regard to communities like Mafi, Awudome, Fodjoku, and Togome, Nkrumah's cabinet members urged politicians and chiefs from Togoland to consider more cooperation with 'Ewes in the Gold Coast'. This could now easily be used as an argument to refuse political reform.²⁶⁸ Nevertheless, and in spite of the electoral victories of the CPP in the TVT Region, the representatives of the new Ghanaian administration remained distrustful. In Ho, in the first half of the 1960s, the majority of civil servants in place were deliberately not taken from the group of Ewe-speakers.²⁶⁹ Such decisions alienated former supporters in the area from the CPP politics. The idea that particular 'forces' in the region worked for secession and armed resistance existed over decades.

In Togo, there was a similar uneasiness about a possible arms trade and a possible Ghanaian invasion in the region of Kpalimé.²⁷⁰ However, the post-colonial centralised state focused on controlling the local communities and their chiefs through the *préfets* (district commissioners), and on local distribution of resources. These conditions played *against* ethnic allegiance. In the *canton* of Agu, the seat of the paramount chief was removed from Kebo Dzigbe to Toubadji.²⁷¹ In the neighbouring *canton* of Kuma, the long-standing

267 PRAAD (Ho Branch), RAO G 1035, Animdi, Assistant Regional Secretary of Togoland Congress, to Registration Officer of Jasikan, *Registration & Revision for Legislative Assembly and Local Council Elections, 1956*. (without number), 1 June 1956; Rathbone, *Nkrumah*, 152–3; Nugent, *Smugglers*, 212–3.

268 PRAAD (Ho Branch), DA/D 307, *Copy: Draft Statement by the Minister of Justice* (without number), without date, 1.

269 Callaway, 'Politics', 141.

270 ANT, 2APA, Cercle de Klouto, 358, Habel Akpama, Inspection Group of the Ministry of Finance, to 'Fofu' (without number), 12 Dec. 1961, 1.

271 Interview with Togbe Kutumua VIII, Village Chief of Kebo Dzigbe, Agu Region, Togo, 22 March 2009.