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‘9th May 2017 is OUR DAY’: The Homeland Study Group Foundation and contested national imaginaries in postindependence Ghana

Edem Adotey^{1,2} 

¹Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana

²Research Fellow at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana

Correspondence

Edem Adotey, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana.
Email: eadotey@ug.edu.gh

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Abstract

Ghana has been held up as an oasis of stability in a highly volatile region of Africa due to its peaceful decolonisation process, absence of serious civil conflict and successful change of governments. However, in Ghana as in parts of postindependence Africa, there are lingering secessionist movements that are a legacy of colonialism. The latest comes from the Homeland Study Group Foundation (HSGF) which declared the former British Togoland, a former United Nations trust territory administered by the United Kingdom, as an independent state called Western Togoland. Through the prism of competing or alternative national imaginaries rather than the weak and dysfunctional state paradigm, this article seeks to explain the roots of a form of Togoland nationalism in Ghana in events of 1956 that remains relevant today. The paper argues that an apparently successful integration can stimulate/give sustenance to alternative nationalist imaginaries.

KEYWORDS

British Togoland, Homeland Study Group Foundation, nationalism, postindependence Ghana

1 | INTRODUCTION

Ghana has been held up as an oasis of stability in a highly volatile region of Africa due to its peaceful decolonisation process, absence of serious civil conflict and successful change of governments since 1992 when it returned to

multiparty democracy (Arthur, 2010; Charbonneau, 2017; Odukoya, 2007; Vines, 2013). Yet beneath this calm are tensions that threaten to tear the nation apart. The postindependence period has witnessed secessionist demands by the former British Togoland, a former United Nations (UN) trust territory administered by the United Kingdom which joined the British colony of the Gold Coast to become Ghana at independence in 1957.

The latest of these calls come from the Homeland Study Group Foundation (HSGF) whose leader on 16 November 2019 declared an independent Western Togoland state.¹ The HSGF came to public attention when on 6 March 2017, a member of the group, Martin Asiana Agbenu, was arrested by the police at Tokokoe, a village near Ho for selling T-shirts with the inscription '9th May 2017 is OUR DAY Western Togoland' (Figure 1). '9th May' means 9 May 1956. It refers to the date of the plebiscite in Togoland under UK administration to decide whether it wanted to join the Gold Coast or remain separate. That the T-shirts were being sold on 6 March, Ghana's Independence Day from Britain was significant because it symbolised the independence of Western Togoland from Ghana's 'colonisation' just as Ghana's from Britain.

This article links the very recent past to the historical past to examine the persistence of Togoland nationalism in postindependence Ghana. It seeks to understand conflicts in the postindependence state through the prism of competing or alternative national imaginaries rather than the failed or weak state paradigm in state-building.

The nation as Anderson (1991) argues is an imagined political community. Scholarly studies on Ghana have acknowledged competing national imaginaries during decolonisation and in different forms after independence. These include Allman (1993) on Asante nationalism and Amenumey (1989), Brown (1980), Nugent (2002) and Skinner (2015) on Ewe/Togoland nationalism. While this work builds on the works of Brown, Nugent and Skinner on the Togoland plebiscite and the subsequent nationalist movements, it departs from them in significant ways, not only because (except for a brief treatment of HSGF by Skinner) they do not examine the HSGF but also because the paper takes a contrary view regarding the arguments posited by these scholars for the ending or persistence of Togoland nationalism. For example, commenting on the National Liberation Movement (NLM) of Western Togoland (TOLIMO) which sprang up in the 1970s, Nugent (2002, p. 230) affirms that 'The winding up of TOLIMO around 1977 signalled the final coup de grace for the unificationist project'. He adds, 'As far as the politics of unificationism is concerned, therefore, this really is the end of the story'. This is, however, not the case; the issue of the Togoland nationalism continues to agitate some elements of the former trust territory not only in Ghana but also abroad. In 2001, Skinner (2010) met with members of a group calling itself Movement for a Resurgent Togoland (MORETO) in



FIGURE 1 T-shirt with the inscription '9th May 2017 is OUR DAY Western Togoland'. Source: <http://www.radiogold905.com/?p=15874> [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

London. What then accounts for the persistence of these demands across time and space? Remarking on the persistence of Togoland nationalism Brown notes that:

The appeal and persistence of German-Togo nationalism as the dominant reference point for opposition to the existing border amongst Ghanaian Ewes, as well as the Buem, derives not so much from the degree of integration which had been achieved by the time of that state's dissolution in 1914. (Brown, 1980, pp. 594–595)

Making the same point about the failure of TOLIMO, Nugent (2002, pp. 147–198) notes as one of the reasons the integration of the former trust territory into Ghana through improved access to educational opportunities and the emergence of an educated elite whose careers were launched in Ghana. Béland et al. (2018, p. 29) also note the importance of the social policies in building national identity and nation-building in postindependence Ghana, 'One can therefore infer that the feedback effect from the design and pursuit of social policies may have helped to weaken pre-existing ethnocentrism and presumably redirected loyalties and sentiments towards the new nation-state that had funded free access to the social programs'.

Skinner (2015, p. 140) on the one hand argues that to understand the persistence of Togoland nationalism in postindependence Ghana this 'requires us to pay more attention to the post-independence era, and to find out how former *Ablode* activists understood and experienced the failure of their movement to effect the reunification and joint independence of British and French Togolands'.²

This article first takes a contrary view on the impact of the integration of the former trust territory on the nationalist agitations; it posits that rather than ending it, it is precisely the cause. In other words, sometimes an apparently 'successful' integration of a smaller political unit into a nation-state heightens rather than diminishes alternative nationalist imaginaries. The HSGF and other groups and individuals have argued that the postindependence relationship should have been an equal partner in a union equivalent to a federation and as such it is this 'successful' integration which it calls colonisation that underlies its demands.³

This study further contends that understanding the persistence of Togoland nationalism in postindependence Ghana goes beyond interrogating the meaning and experiences of former *Ablode* activists. This is because the HSGF differs in its composition and objectives from the Togoland Congress (TC). For instance, neither is the leader of the group a former *Ablode* activist nor is the HSGF's demands the same as those of *Ablode*. Therefore, one should look for other explanations. The paper suggests looking at the meaning and form of nationhood for the postindependence governments. In other words, one ought to examine the responses of the successive governments to the claims of these nationalist groups and individuals regarding the 1956 plebiscite as legitimate concerns.

This article comprises five sections. The first addresses the conceptual and methodological issues underpinning the study while the second outlines the historical and political context of the 1956 plebiscite in the trust territory to understand the various contestations over its status which is examined in the third section. The fourth and fifth sections examine the background of the HSGF, its goals, methods and how it has drawn on the past to make claims in the present.

2 | CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODS

This study is based on both secondary and primary data. The former includes a review of relevant literature on nationalism and state-building which informs the conceptual framework of the study. This article draws on Larmer and Lecocq's (2018, p. 894) concept of competing or alternative nationalisms which stresses the 'continuities of African nationalist dynamics beyond the state before and after political "independence"' for a historical analysis of nationalism in postindependence Ghana. As they note:

While the importance of the independence moment in the study of nationalism cannot be denied, it is a moment that, rather than functioning as a taken-for-granted boundary between historical periods, needs to be studied to understand the impact of this caesura actually had on various African political imaginations and actions. (Larmer & Lecocq, 2018, p. 911)

This framework provides a context-based historical analysis of the persistence of Togoland nationalism in post-independence Ghana and challenges the notion that such internal conflicts are a result of state weakness or failure. Failed states according to Rotberg (2002, p. 85) are 'tense, deeply conflicted, dangerous, and bitterly contested by warring factions'. As he further notes regarding state failure:

The absolute intensity of violence does not define a failed state. Rather, it is the enduring character of that violence (as in Angola, Burundi, and Sudan), the direction of such violence against the existing government or regime, and the vigorous character of the political or geographical demands for shared power or autonomy that rationalize or justify that violence that identifies the failed state. (Rotberg, 2002, pp. 85–86)

Call (2008, p. 1494) however rightly argues that the 'failed state' concept in state-building 'contains culturally specific assumptions about what a "successful" state should look like and groups together disparate sorts of states with diverse problems'. Nay (2013, p. 338) also correctly points out that 'The concepts of "fragile" and "failed states" have inherent conceptual limitations and flawed assumptions that obscure their utility for research. They are shallow, confusing and imprecise policy-oriented labels. They are based on a state-centric, ahistorical and decontextualized perspective'.⁴

On the other hand, the concept of competing or alternative national imaginaries defined as different visions of the 'form and meaning of nationhood' which continues beyond independence—a federation of equal partners between the Gold Coast and Togoland under British administration or the restoration of Togoland under British administration or the German colony of Togo in Ghana—enables the excavation of the underlying factors and persistence of Togoland nationalism (Larmer & Lecocq, 2018, p. 894).

Primary data for the study included the collection of oral histories, interviews and archival searches. On the HSGF, there were interviews with the founder of the HSGF, leading officials of the group and sympathisers of the group. These were complemented by published books on the HSGF, speeches and some pamphlets by the founder. It is however important to state that some members and sympathisers did not openly admit association with the group for fear of being charged with treason felony which is a crime punishable by life imprisonment. Thus, besides the formal interviews, information on the group was sought through informal conversations in chiefs' palaces, individual homes and beer bars as the informality made people express their views without feeling they were being recorded which could be used to incriminate them. Another useful source of information on the views of the members/sympathisers of the group was social media platforms such as WhatsApp because of the perceived anonymity it offered. The author received several messages regarding the group on some WhatsApp group platforms. Additional information on the activities of the group was sourced from the print and electronic media as their activities were widely reported in the Ghanaian press.

Archival materials in the regional and national archives of Ghana, that is the Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD) in Ho and Accra, respectively, on the construction of the Ghana–Togo border and earlier nationalist agitations filled important gaps in oral histories on the 1956 plebiscite and the immediate postindependence period. However, some of these archival materials had to be cross-referenced with UN publications on the Togoland because of the sometimes-partisan account of the administering authority.

This combination of data collection approaches was important in providing clarity on the subject because of both its historical and contemporary nature as well as the security issues involved.

3 | THE 1956 PLEBISCITE: HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

Modern Ghana as noted above comprises the British colony of the Gold Coast and the UN trust territory administered by the British. The latter joined the Gold Coast after a majority voted in a plebiscite in 1956 to become Ghana at independence in 1957. In other words, the latter was not added after Ghana was created; both the Gold Coast colony and the UN trust territory were put together to create a new country, Ghana.

Before we delve into the details of the plebiscite, it is first imperative to examine the underlying factors which culminated in the 1956 plebiscite. The trust territory under the British was part of the German colony of Togo. In 1914, it came under the British and the French when their forces occupied it during the 'First World War' and in 1919, the Anglo-French agreement gave about two thirds of the territory to the French and the rest to the British. Like the previous Anglo-German boundary, the Anglo-French boundary both divided some ethnic groups and brought some together, thereby underlying differing responses to the boundary culminating in the 1956 plebiscite. For instance, the Ewe, like the Konkomba, Dagomba and B'moba, were separated by the Anglo-German boundary. However, while the Anglo-French boundary brought together the Dagomba under one colonial administration, some of the Ewe were again divided between these territories, thus further splitting the Ewe in Togoland under British and French administrations.

The former German colony was officially declared a League of Nations Class B mandate on 20 July 1922 with the United Kingdom and France given the mandate to administer the parts under them with the supervision of the League of Nations Mandate Commission.⁵ In 1946, the UN Trusteeship System replaced the League of Nations Mandate System and the two Togolands became UN trust territories under the United Kingdom and France.⁶

The United Kingdom administered its portion of the trust territory as part of its Gold Coast colony until 1956, when it informed the UN that it would be unable to administer the territory after the independence of the Gold Coast. By Resolution 944(X), the UN General Assembly on 15 December 1955 recommended that a plebiscite be conducted to determine the wishes of the people otherwise known as the 'Togoland Problem' or the 'Ewe Problem'. These are separate but interrelated problems; the former basically refers to demands for the unification of the former German territory of Togo while the latter was for the unification of the Ewe ethnic group in the two Togolands and the Gold Coast. The origins of both Togoland and Ewe nationalism have been extensively discussed so it need not detain us here (Adotey, 2013; Amenumey, 1989; Austin, 1963; Bening, 1983; Meyer, 2002; Nugent, 2002; Skinner, 2015). Suffice to say they largely stemmed from opposition to the international boundary which had divided these related peoples.

It was within the context of these complex and competing interests that the UN sent a mission to the territory to examine the nature and conduct of the proposed plebiscite. The mission recommended that the results of the plebiscite be determined separately on four units, namely, Northern Section, Kpandu and Ho, Buem-Krachi North and Buem-Krachi South. The UN General Assembly, however, rejected interpreting it along these lines and rather reserved the right to interpret the results in consultation with the administering authority.⁷

On 9 May 1956, the people of Togoland under UK administration voted in a plebiscite organised by the British administering authority under the supervision of the UN. The electorate was to decide: '(a) the union of their Territory with an independent Gold Coast; or (b) the separation of Togoland under British administration from the Gold Coast and its continuance under trusteeship pending the ultimate determination of its political future'.⁸

The campaign in the trust territory did not only involve parties in the trust territory but the Gold Coast as well. The Convention People's Party (CPP) led by Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah actively campaigned in the area for union with the Gold Coast. It became the main opponent of TC in the intense and acrimonious contest. In some communities, families were pitted against families resulting in portions of the communities becoming no-go areas for those from opposing camps.⁹ Arguably, the CPP with the state machinery behind it and the support of the British colonial administration helped tipped the results in its favour (Table 1).

Administratively the British Togoland was divided into halves, namely, the southern and northern sections, and the plebiscite was conducted based on these two halves. The two areas that voted overwhelmingly against union with the Gold Coast—Kpandu and Ho—were predominantly Ewe areas. However, it is important as Nugent argues to look to other explanations other than ethnicity since some of the local councils such as Anfoega and Anyigbe within

TABLE 1 Results of the 1956 plebiscite in Togoland under UK administration

Local council	Union	Separation
Southern section		
Ho District	7217	18,981
Kpandu District	8581	17,029
Buem District	9875	9077
Akan-Krachi District	18,303	9698
Subtotal	43,976	54,785
Northern section		
Nanumba-Gonja District	11,004	4216
South Dagomba District	11,534	2166
North Dagomba District	8671	2896
South Mamprusi District	3439	3035
Kusasi District	14,431	394
Subtotal	49,119	12,707
Total	93,095 (58%)	67,492 (42%)

Source: Report of the United Nations plebiscite commissioner for the trust territory of Togoland under British administration.

the Ewe districts of Kpandu and Ho in the Southern Section voted for union with the Gold Coast. (For interpretation of results, see Amenumey, 1989, pp. 266–268; Bening, 1983, p. 206; Nugent, 2002, pp. 188–197).

On 13 December 1956, the UN General Assembly passed General Assembly Resolution 1044(XI) on ‘The future of Togoland under British Administration’ which interpreted the results not along the voting districts but rather the whole of the trust territory. It expressed its ‘approval of the union of the Territory of Togoland under British administration with an independent Gold Coast and accordingly invited the Administering Authority to take such steps as are necessary to this end’.¹⁰ How did the people respond to the interpretation of the results of the 1956 plebiscite?

4 | CONTESTED NATIONAL IMAGINARIES IN POSTINDEPENDENCE GHANA

At independence, the state inherited the opposition to the boundary and its resolution by the 1956 plebiscite that united the former trust territory with the Gold Coast. This section examines how Togoland nationalist projects evolved after independence particularly how the various civilian and military regimes engaged with the claims and actions of organisations like TC, Volta Youth Association (VYA) and TOLIMO.

The first major shots were fired during the country’s independence celebrations in 1957 when attacks were launched in Alavanyo in the former trust territory (Bening, 1983, p. 207). The CPP government clamped down on TC activists. Some of its leaders were imprisoned, and those who managed to avoid imprisonment either fled into exile or joined the CPP (Skinner, 2015). Besides the action taken against these activists, the Nkrumah government also closed the Ghana–Togo border between November 1960 and February 1963 for not only what was perceived as Togo’s uncooperative attitude towards unification but also providing refuge for Togoland activists (Brown, 1980, p. 583). By the time of Nkrumah’s overthrow in 1966, the TC had all but died.

Between 1966 and 1971, the country enjoyed relative calm regarding Togoland nationalism. This, as Brown and Skinner point out, was due to the experience of the *Ablode* activists under Nkrumah (Brown, 1980; Skinner, 2015). Besides, some of the leading figures in the TC were active in the governments before the National Redemption Council (NRC) junta take over in 1972.¹¹

The VYA took up the mantle of pursuing the Togoland cause. It petitioned the Busia government before its overthrow by the NRC and followed it up with the NRC asking the government to revise the relationship with the former trust territory as that there was no legal justification for its 'integration (and subordination) in Ghana since 1957' because according to them, 'this had been intended to signify a federal-type union between equal partners' (Brown, 1980, p. 602).

Interestingly, a year earlier, a group calling itself the Former British Togoland Youth (FBTY) which claimed to have 'no trouble being called Ghanaians' also called for a specified agreement between the former trust territory within Ghana (Skinner, 2015, p. 230). The VYA also demanded from the government the legal documents regarding the relationship between British Togoland and Ghana.

The government responded by sending the VYA copies of the pre-1957 UK Orders in Council (Brown, 1980, p. 602). Later, it hardened its stance against the group and its leader, C. K. Denyo, was dismissed from one of the national security agencies, the Border Guards Service in 1972. In the same year, a rival group VOYA was also formed to counter the VYA (Brown, 1980: 603).

The emergence of TOLIMO in 1972 took the Togoland problem to a different level. TOLIMO which was dominated by former TC activists and VYA members operated from Togo with the alleged support of the Togolese government (Brown, 1980). It demanded not only the secession of Western Togoland but its unification with Togo. In a petition to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), it demanded, 'let the people go to join their kith and kin in the Republic of Togo. That is our home. We all have our roots there. We belong to that place' (quoted in Brown, 1980, p. 584).

The NLC regime's response to TOLIMO was the typical no-nonsense military approach. Some of its activists were arrested in 1973 when they returned from a rally in Palime in Togo. But as Brown notes, the government did not prosecute them in order not to make 'martyrs' of them. In pursuance of this policy, the government in August 1975 announced a 3-month amnesty for TOLIMO activists who returned to Ghana (Brown, 1980, p. 590). However, later in 1976, more drastic measures were taken against the group. A large-scale security campaign dubbed 'Operation Counterpoint' aimed at the group was initiated. The group was banned in March 1976, and in September 1976, the death penalty was announced for those advocating secession (Brown, 1980, p. 591). The government's actions might have been influenced not only by TOLIMO's threats of use of force against the 'Ghanaian neo-colonialist yoke' but also rumours of the formation of a guerrilla group to achieve its objective (quoted in Brown, 1980, p. 592). By 1977, TOLIMO's activities had slackened off due to government repression and lack of support from the Togolese government and this marked the end of any serious Togoland nationalist agitations.

Since a return to multiparty democracy in 1992 some individuals like Kosi Kedem, a former member of parliament, in several publications and at public fora such as the National Reconciliation Commission and the Constitutional Review Commission pointed to the historic injustice perpetrated by the British colonial government against the former trust territory because of its unique status leading to it losing its 'sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity' (Kedem, 2007, p. 7). He called for as the preferred option a '**thorough review, regularisation and rectification**' of the relationship between British Togoland and Ghana (Kedem, 2007, p. 21, emphasis in original). His views have been ignored. This, however, has not prevented other groups from making other demands based on the same premise. The next sections discuss the HSGF and how it differs from the other groups that have challenged the conduct, results and interpretation of the 1956 plebiscite and governments' responses to their demands.

5 | THE HSGF

While the HSGF shares some ideas and objectives of the above groups and individuals, it differs from them in three major respects. First, while the HSGF like TOLIMO regards Western Togoland as a 'colony' of Ghana, unlike TOLIMO, it is not calling for the unification of the former trust territory with the Republic of Togo. Second, it also goes further than TOLIMO in its demands for the area of secession. HSGF is calling not only for the secession of

former British Togoland but also Ewe portions of the former Gold Coast. What it seeks then is a restoration of an independent British Togoland plus the Ewe portions of Ghana. Third, while it shares the position of individuals like Kedem who claim that the relationship between the trust territory and Gold Coast is illegal, the HSGF claims that there was some arrangement between the Gold Coast and the trust territory to be in union for only 50 years that has since expired. Kedem (2007, xiv, pp. 58–59) has also raised the question of an agreement lasting for a fixed term though he is uncertain if this exists but has called on Britain to release the 'hidden Union Agreement'.

The HSGF was formed by Charles Kormi Kudzordzi alias Papa Hogbedetor.¹² Born in about 1935, he comes from Alakple in the Volta Region which was part of the former Gold Coast colony. He is a retired educationist who retired at the rank of Director of Education. He is a popular figure on the radio in Ho where he addresses issues of Ewe history and culture.

According to Kudzordzi (2016), the background to establishing the HSGF was his interest in Ewe history which was ignited while working with Prof. Francis Agbodeka and Prof. Noah Komla Dzobo, both of whom are authorities on Ewe culture and history.¹³ This was further developed when Prof. W. von Zizendoff, an anthropologist from Germany, came to the area in the late 1970s to research the Ewe and Kudzordzi was assigned to him by Agbodeka and Dzobo. This research took him to various Ewe chiefs in Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria and South Sudan. After this, he pursued distance education and received a master's degree in social anthropology. He has authored a couple of books on the Ewe and Togoland. These include *History of Eweland: A Resource Document for Ewe Socio-Political Studies* and *A Stolen Nation and Her Deprived Nationals: Franco-British Atrocities in Togoland*.¹⁴

The HSGF was formally launched on the evening of 5 July 1994, at Kadjebi in the Oti Region.¹⁵ Before then, it had existed informally as a study group. According to Kudzordzi, there were over a hundred people present at the launch. They came from the non-Ewe areas of the former Togoland under UK Trusteeship such as Jasikan, Kadjebi, Bowiri, Akpafu, Nkwanta, Dodo Tamale, Dodo Amanfo, Dapa, Pampamwie and Borada. Among the founding members were Messrs Awuku, Avokpo, Doyi, Atali, Mawuli, Akraasi, Avega, Agbo and Adinyra.¹⁶

The purpose of the HSGF when it was first formed was to 'shed light on the long-lost history of the Ewe people because our history has not been written down'.¹⁷ The first task was to discover facts and historical truths regarding the Ewe and thereafter to interrogate why the Ewe spoke German at one point then French and English and why the Ewe were divided between the British and French. Having now found 'all the facts supported by documents under certain circumstances', the political objective is 'to become our own country, the main objective is to get the sovereignty of our land'.¹⁸

The specific demand of the HSGF is not clear. While it describes itself on its website as 'an independent organization dedicated to free the Western Togoland of Ghana', what is freedom and for whom is unclear.¹⁹ First, they have claimed that what it wants are structural reforms to allow Togoland to be considered an equal partner in a union equivalent to a federation. For instance, as late as 2016, it was calling for a semi-autonomous region for Western Togoland. As its leader pointed out 'The Homeland Study Group Foundation is not calling for Western Togoland to break away; it's not even a secession'.²⁰ However, they are now demanding secession from Ghana to be an independent country and have gone ahead to declare an 'independent' state as noted earlier. A careful assessment, however, suggests that the first is their preferred option and the second is being used to get the first demand. It is worth noting that even after attacks in September 2020 by some groups, it issued a press release part of which stated: 'We said it time without numbers that the campaign for our rights of citizenship which is being questioned continuously by some section of Ghanaians will be without violence'.²¹

Underlying these demands are claims of 'maltreatment, humiliation and dehumanising activities' against those from Western Togoland particularly the Ewe in postindependence Ghana.²² However, this marginalisation claim is difficult to sustain regarding developments within the broader socio-economic and political environment in the country. Data from the Ghana Statistical Service in its latest poverty mapping report shows that the Volta Region is far from being the most deprived region in Ghana.²³ Besides, the Ewe have been influential at the highest levels of Ghana's politics since independence, particularly under the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government (1981–1992) and since the establishment of Ghana's Fourth Republic in 1992. Of the two dominant political

parties in the Fourth Republic, namely, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the latter (which has served the longest) is seen as having the support of the Ewe community. Indeed, the Volta Region that is predominantly inhabited by the Ewe is referred to as its 'World Bank'. The claim of Ewe marginalisation notwithstanding, the HSGF claims that it is not looking for an Ewe nation. Rather, it wants the restoration of the nation that the Germans built which for them also include the Ewe areas of the Gold Coast.

The organisation has its headquarters in Ho with several branches in the districts and regions of Ghana including areas that were not part of the Western Togoland such as Kumasi. It used to meet monthly for its study meetings before its confrontations with the security agencies. Among its tactics is the well-trodden path of earlier groups such as sending petitions to the UN.²⁴ It also includes lobbying chiefs and traditional elders²⁵ Its activities include press briefings and protest marches²⁶ and the use of social media platforms particularly Facebook and WhatsApp to propagate its message. It has also applied and been accepted since June 2017 as a member of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO).²⁷ It claims to abhor violence and will use all legitimate peaceful means to achieve its aim.²⁸

It is difficult to gauge the support for the aims of the group because of the charges of treason felony that have been levelled against those arrested. Koter's (2021, p. 863) recent study on national identification in Ghana points to a 'robust national attachment'. Nonetheless, there seems to be a high level of awareness about the group among the people in many communities in the former trust territory and the Volta Region as a whole and the willingness of some people to use violent means to achieve their aims.²⁹ However, as Skinner notes concerning earlier activists which are also true for the HSGF,

The efforts of these activists do not, in and of themselves, prove that the Togoland question is of still pressing importance to the majority or secession is imminent. What the efforts of these activists certainly do indicate, however, is that the Togoland question has surprisingly long post-colonial tail, and of a persistence which has hitherto gone unremarked by historians. (Skinner, 2015, p. 168)

Again, while it is difficult to get a full sense of the diversity of opinions in the HSGF because of, as noted earlier, the silence of its members and sympathisers, not all members and sympathisers agree with the idea of secession. Some see the protest movement as a means of putting pressure on the government to rectify the neglect of the area in terms of development such as bad roads, hospitals and schools, among others.³⁰

The responses of the various governments to the group since its founding have been varied. The HSGF was ignored by the NDC and NPP governments until the first arrests under the NPP in 2017. The attitude of the governments might be because its earlier demands were less militant and its engagements with previous Ghanaian governments had been less confrontational. However, in early 2016, a Ghanaian academic had cause to warn the NDC government to pay serious attention to the group in an open letter to the President.³¹

In the latter part of 2016, the group served notice that it will declare its independence the following year.³² The arrest of Agbenu in 2017 noted at the beginning of the paper opened a new phase in the government's response to the HSGF. The leader and some of the members were arraigned before a court charged with treason felony. After months of court appearances, the seven were discharged on 19 July 2017 following a motion filed by the Attorney General to drop the charges against them. They were bonded to be of good behaviour for 6 months.³³

On 5 May 2019, in an American movie-like fashion, the octogenarian Kudzordzi and some members of the HSGF were arrested by a combined team of heavily armed military and police personnel. They were flown in a military helicopter from Ho to Accra, the national capital, where they were placed in the custody of the dreaded Bureau of National Investigations (BNI) and charged with 'conspiracy to commit treason felony, abetment of unlawful training, unlawful assembly and offensive conduct conducive to the breach of peace'.³⁴ In a follow-up joint military-police swoop, another 81 members were also arrested.³⁵ The charges against the leaders were once again dropped.³⁶

On 16 November 2019, the leader of the HSGF declared an independent state called Western Togoland (Figure 2) at a public gathering in Ho.³⁷ He stated, 'from midnight today November 16 2019 entering tomorrow, We're now Western Togoland state'.³⁸



FIGURE 2 Map of the State of Western Togoland. At the top right corner is its flag. Source: <https://web.facebook.com/westerntogolandstate/photos/a.155994814918733/155996968251851/?type=1%26theater> [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

The government responded in a statement issued by the Minister of Information. It stated:

Ghana remains a sovereign state which has not ceded any part of its territory to any person or group of persons. While admonishing the public to disregard the claims by the group, the general public is hereby informed that state security agencies are taking the necessary measures to ensure that persons involved with the illegal act, are dealt with in accordance with the law.³⁹

Several members of the group were arrested and the leader who managed to escape was declared wanted by the Ghanaian security agencies.⁴⁰ The declaration of independence by the HSGF marked a watershed moment in these nationalist agitations. The fact that it declared its independence not from outside the country but at a public space not too far from the Volta Regional Police Training Academy showed how it had become more brazen in its approach.

The press and social media have played a role in shaping the narratives and articulation of these contestations. For instance, the wanted leader of the HSGF took to social media in his hideout to state the conditions under which he will hand over himself to the security authorities. It has also provided an opportunity for people to express diverse opinions on how to manage the issue. Some have called for the involvement of state institutions such as the National Peace Council to dialogue with the group.⁴¹ Others, on the other hand, have called on the government of Ghana to 'waste no time in dealing with the group as a covert home-grown terrorists'.⁴² The next section examines how its present claims are historicised in its campaign for the secession of Western Togoland.

6 | THE HSGF AND THE 1956 PLEBISCITE

The HSGF in its campaign for the secession of Western Togoland has built its case around the 1956 plebiscite, specifically the fairness of the 1956 plebiscite and the nature of the postplebiscite relationship between Togoland under British administration and the Gold Coast.

6.1 | Free and fair?

First, the HSGF takes issue with the organisation of the election particularly the organising body for the plebiscite. It asserts that the election was organised by the British Administration which was an interested party in the outcome of the elections and so the elections could not have been free and fair. It is indeed true that the election was organised by the British administration in the Gold Coast though it was supervised by the UN.⁴³ However, the British oversaw the planning and the execution of the elections.⁴⁴ This included recruiting staff for the elections, providing accommodation and transport for staff as well as publicity for the elections which left the door open to the charge of bias or rigging. As one former TC activist told Skinner,

The plebiscite too, that vote was rigged in the North. The Togoland Congress did not have enough staff. They could not send agents to all the polling stations, so there was rigging. [...] Long after the results, they [the CPP] admitted that they had cheated. (Skinner, 2010, p. 145)

The second charge regarding the elections has to do with the electorate in the plebiscite. The HSGF argues that the Ewe areas in the Gold Coast such as the coastal Anlo, riverine Tongu and inland Peki which it claims are part of Western Togoland who should have participated in the plebiscite were not allowed to and this affected the outcome of the results. The HSGF's position is premised partly on the British administering their portion of the trust territory as part of its colony, the Gold Coast. The Trans-Volta Togoland region created in 1952 included the Ewe areas of the Gold Coast and southern section of the trust territory.

The issue with 'administrative unions' was a very controversial one even within the UN although Article 5 (a) of the Trusteeship Agreement gave the British the right to administer 'in accordance with the Authority's own laws as an integral part of its territory'.⁴⁵ This was because as some argued it not only blurred the boundaries of the trust territory but also compromised its distinctive status. Skinner (2015, p. 84) notes that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) boycotted the Trusteeship Council partly because it felt the agreement did not provide adequate protection against annexation to neighbouring countries. In a similar vein, the All-Ewe Conference (AEC) which was campaigning for Ewe unification across the three territories—British Gold Coast, British Togoland and French Togo—also protested the establishment of the Trans-Volta/Togoland (TVT) Council.⁴⁶

It is also instructive to note that in 1948, there were protests against the election of Ephraim Amu, an Ewe from Peki in the Gold Coast as a member of the Standing Consultative Commission for Togoland because some from British Togoland argued that the Gold Coast was a separate entity, and the Ewe from the Gold Coast had no business getting involved in Togoland affairs.⁴⁷ He was later replaced by F. Y. Asare from Buem in British Togoland (Nugent, 2002, p. 173).

The issue of administrative unions notwithstanding, the Ewe sections of the Gold Coast did not vote in the plebiscite in Western Togoland because they were not part of Western Togoland. There is however some merit in the argument that the use of residence rather than birth as the criteria for the qualification to vote meant that people not from the trust territory under the British voted and so also could the other Ewe areas in an administrative union with Togoland should have had a say in its future. Nonetheless, the above protests by the AEC and the Togoland Union (TU), a precursor to the TC, point to a recognition by the Ewe/Togo nationalists of a distinction between the Gold Coast and British Togoland which the HSGF ignores.

Beyond the administrative union, the HSGF makes some historical claims to buttress its point that all Ewe parts of Ghana are part of Western Togoland. It claims these were part of the German colony of Togo because not only were the Germans, specifically the Bremen missionaries, the first Europeans to evangelise, build schools and provide other social amenities in parts of these areas such as in Keta, Peki and Anyako, but they also developed the Ewe language into writing. Thus, like TC's definition of a 'we' based on German experience noted by Skinner, they argued that 'Bremen mission institutions and churches were there; they provided social amenities and that is colonisation'.⁴⁸ It further justifies its claim that all Ewe territories were part of German Togo with a map entitled 'Evenyigba'

(Eweland) purportedly drawn by the Germans. As Kudzordzi pointed out, 'if it belonged to some other people there would have been some disagreement'.⁴⁹ Not only was the map proof that the Ewe territories were not part of the British Gold Coast he argued, but this was also borne out by the fact that the Ewe did not sign the Bond of 1844.⁵⁰ The treaties the British signed with chiefs of the Ewe states in the Gold Coast to formally bring them under their rule he claimed were bogus.

Regarding the map, it is unclear when it was drawn and by whom. It is therefore difficult to ascertain whether the map just indicated Ewe settlements, or it was referring to Ewe territories under German colonial rule. Nonetheless, Anglo-German boundary agreements in 1887, 1890 and 1899 indicate that the Ewe territories of Anlo, Peki and Tongu were not part of the German colony.⁵¹ Similarly, the map of Togoland excludes these areas (Figure 3).

The third charge regarding the elections regards the interpretation of the results. The HSGF argues that the election deprived those who did not want union with the Gold Coast of their rights. The results, it argues, should have been interpreted separately in the four counting zones that had once been proposed by the UN Trusteeship Council Visiting Mission. As the results showed, of the two sections of the Togoland under UK Trusteeship, that is, the Northern section and the Southern section, the former voted for union with the Gold Coast while the latter voted for separation.

One can understand the difficulty of the HSGF in accepting that the results were interpreted as a whole when the north and south sections of the trust territory had been administered separately under different ordinances as part of the Gold Coast colony. However, it is important to note that even in the Southern section, it was not a straightforward affair. As noted earlier, some local councils such as Anfoega and Anyigbe voted for union with the Gold Coast. This thus complicates the HSGF's demands for the interpretation of the results along geographical and ethnic lines, especially so when its demands are not for just the secession of the areas of Western Togoland which voted against union with the Gold Coast but rather the whole Togoland under UK Trusteeship including areas that voted overwhelmingly for union with the Gold Coast.

In the unlikely event that the plebiscite was acceptable to the HSGF because of the above flaws, the HSGF points to a more fundamental issue regarding its claims for secession, namely, the postplebiscite relationship to which we now turn.

6.2 | Union or integration?

The HSGF argues that the relationship between the Gold Coast and trust territory should have been one of union and not integration. Union refers to 'two equal parties agreeing to be in association with each other like that between Tanganyika and Zanzibar to form Tanzania'.⁵² What rather has happened, the leader of the HSGF argues, is Togoland under UK Trusteeship being 'colonised' by Ghana. The call for secession, he contends, has therefore become necessary because 'with many years of colonization under the Republic of Ghana, it's time for us to decide of our future'.⁵³

This position of 'colonisation' can be traced to the wording of the plebiscite question. The questions for the 1956 plebiscite did state a 'union'; that is whether Togoland wanted '(a) the union of their Territory with an independent Gold Coast'. Skinner (2015, pp. 154–155) notes the controversial nature of the use of the term 'union' at the time where there was a dispute over the translation of the plebiscite question, and the term 'union', into Ewe.

Events before independence in the Gold Coast about the political constitution of postindependence Ghana which nearly derailed independence muddied the waters further. There were two opposing positions, one that favoured a unitary state led by Kwame Nkrumah's CPP and a federal state championed by the NLM with support from the Northern People's Party (NPP) and the TC (see Allman, 1993 on Asante; Skinner, 2015 on Ewe). Since the Gold Coast elections of 1956 which was to decide the nature of the postindependence state were not held until July, it meant that at the time of the plebiscite in May, it was not clear to the British government, the Gold Coast administration, the political parties' leaderships or the voters that the Gold Coast would become independent under a unitary constitution.

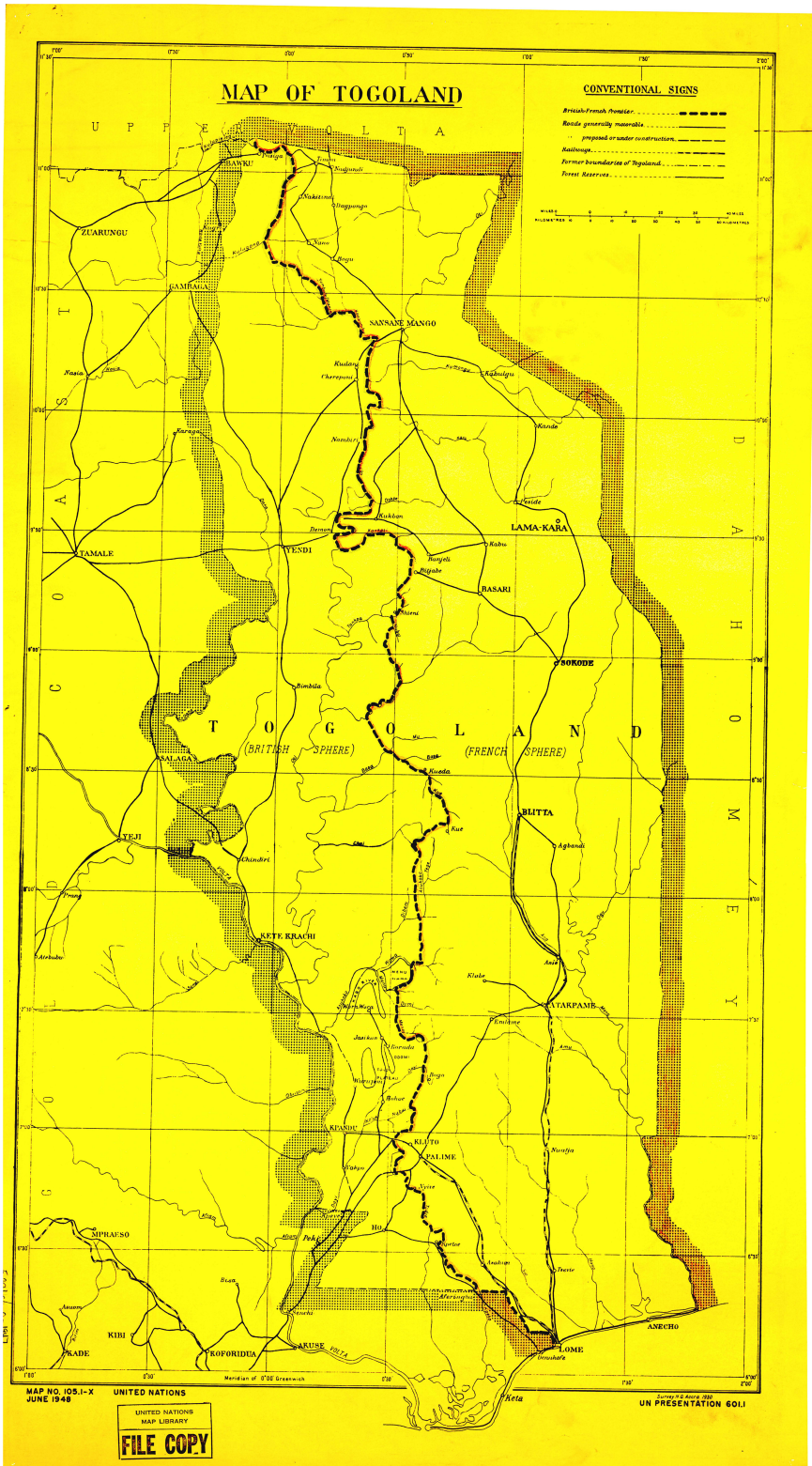


FIGURE 3 Map of the Togoland. Source: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1649559?ln=en> [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

This controversy over 'union' was carried over into what it meant in practical terms after the plebiscite between the former trust territory and the Gold Coast. While Resolution 1044(XI) on 'The Future of Togoland Under British Administration' talked about 'union', there were contestations about whether it meant a federal state or unitary state. At the UN General Assembly, some members argued that 'neither the plebiscite nor the subsequent general election had made it plain whether the people of British Togoland wished to be united with the Gold Coast in a unitary State'.⁵⁴ It was also pointed out that 'it was premature to agree to the incorporation of Togoland under British administration in the Gold Coast while there was no agreed constitution for that future state'.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the resolution was adopted by a majority.

The position of the HSGF and other groups and individuals who object to the 'integration' of Togoland under British administration into the Gold Coast is based on its status as a UN trust territory and thus a distinct 'nation' from the Gold Coast. This is reflected in the titles of Kudzordzi's *A Stolen Nation* and Kedem's *British Togoland: an Orphan or the Death of a Nation*. Similarly, the 'liberation' in the NLM of Western Togoland speaks to the idea of a separate nation. However, what constitutes this 'nation' is a contested one among these groups and individuals. As indicated above the HSGF unlike the others conceives of this nation to comprise part of the former Gold Coast.

The HSGF has upped the ante by claiming that not only is the 'integration' of the Western Togoland into Ghana one of 'colonisation' but also asserts that the relationship was not perpetual but for a fixed term. According to it, there was an agreement between the Gold Coast and Western Togoland for a union of 50 years; hence, the independence of Western Togoland being a legitimate separation since the union expired in 2007.⁵⁶ Interestingly, they are yet to produce any such document.⁵⁷

These two issues underpin not only the HSGF's demands but other nationalist groups as well. Obviously, the CPP's overwhelming victory in 1956 and its position on a unitary state did not bring other alternative imaginaries to a close.

7 | CONCLUSION

In parts of postindependence Africa, there are lingering nationalist agitations or secessionist movements that are legacies of colonialism in Africa (de Vries et al., 2019). An interesting contemporary example is Ambazonia, that is, the successor state to the UN trust territory of Southern Cameroons under UK administration (Awasom, 2020; Eyoh, 1998; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997). Thus, the Ghana case is instructive for the analysis of nationalist agitations and secessionist movements in postcolonial Africa.

The HSGF claims to be seeking the restoration of former Western Togoland (which includes part of the Gold Coast) that it claims has been colonised by Ghana. Its arguments are largely premised on the conduct and interpretation of the 1956 plebiscite and the postplebiscite relationship between the former trust territory and the British colony within an independent Ghana. According to it besides the flawed plebiscite, the nature of the relationship was to be a 'union' and not 'integration'. This union was a temporary one that was to end after 50 years.

This article attempts to understand the persistence of Togoland nationalism in Ghana through the framework of competing or alternative imaginaries rather than a weak or failed state and related concepts. It affirms Larmer and Lecocq's position that independence did not truncate alternative national imaginaries and nationalist dynamics that emerged in the late colonial period.

In Ghana, the 1956 plebiscite did not end competing or alternative imaginings of the form and meaning of the postindependence state. While the HSGF like many of those before it opposed to the status of the former trust territory within Ghana felt that the plebiscite had not granted a mandate for integration under a unitary constitution but rather for regional autonomy within a federal Ghana, the postindependence governments hold a contrary view. Indeed, these governments, whether military or civilian, have shown that they will not countenance such arguments. In 1977, Major-General E. K. Utuka, a Guan from Likpe in the former British Togoland and a member of the NRC military regime then battling TOLIMO, said regarding the 1956 plebiscite, 'the results of the plebiscite, meticulously

conducted and supervised by the UN, have settled the issue forever and are non-negotiable and irreversible' (quoted in Bening, 1983, p. 207). Clearly, this story is far from over!

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ORCID

Edem Adotey  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8007-7950>

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Togoland under UK Trusteeship or British Togoland is also known as Western Togoland by the secessionists.
- ² *Ablode* activists refer to Togoland Congress activists. *Ablode*, which means freedom in Ewe, was the slogan for the Togoland Congress
- ³ The contested concept of integration is discussed in depth in the later sections.
- ⁴ On the confusing criteria for failed state, see Rotberg (2002, pp. 91–93).
- ⁵ On League of Nations Mandates, see Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.
- ⁶ 'Resolutions Adopted on the Reports of the Fourth Committee' [http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/63%20\(I\)](http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/63%20(I)). Accessed 3 November 2020.
- ⁷ Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD), Ho, SOG/1/4, Ewe Togoland Affairs, Press Release No. 802/56, Memorandum by the Government of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, The Future of the Trust Territory of Togoland under United Kingdom Administration, 19 July 1956.
- ⁸ PRAAD, Ho, SOG/1/4, Ewe Togoland Affairs, Press Release No. 802/56, Memorandum by the Government of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, The Future of the Trust Territory of Togoland under United Kingdom Administration, 19 July 1956.
- ⁹ Interview with Togbe Agbitsu, Wli-Afegame, 23 October 2017.
- ¹⁰ 'The Future of Togoland under British Administration'. file:///C:/Users/hp/Downloads/A_RES_1044(XI)-EN.pdf. Accessed 3 November 2020.
- ¹¹ S. G. Antor and Kofi Dumoga were appointed as ambassadors during the Progress Party government (1969–1972). The latter was also a member of the Political Committee of the National Liberation Council that overthrew Nkrumah's government.
- ¹² Kudzordzi, Kwami and Papa sometimes appear as Kudjordjie, Kormi and Papavi, respectively, in other documents. Kormi is the Ewe spelling of the Akan Saturday male day born for Kwame, and Papavi means small father in Ewe (vi: small; papa: father).
Interview with Charles Kormi Kudzordzi, founder and executive chairman of HSGF, Ho, 23 January 2018; 20 June 2018; Charles Kormi Kudzordzi, George Nyakpo, youth secretary, Ho branch, Bestway Zotor, chairman, South Tongu branch, and Francis Ahorgavi, chairman, Kumasi branch, Ho, 23 January 2018; Mr. Yao Gotthold Agra, vice-chairman of HSGF, Leklebi-Fiafe, 16 February 2018.
- ¹³ Interviews with Charles Kormi Kudzordzi. Prof. Dzobo was the moderator of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (formerly Ewe Presbyterian Church), and Prof. Agbodeka was a historian and former pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast.
- ¹⁴ Charles Kwami Kudzordzi (Papavi Hogbedetor), *History of Eweland: A Resource Document for Ewe Socio-Political Studies* (Ho: E.P. Church Publishing Limited, no date); Charles Kormi Kudzordzi (Papa Hogbedetor) *A Stolen Nation and Her Deprived Nationals: Franco-British Atrocities in Togoland* (Ho: Resource Centre for Ewe Socio-Cultural Studies, 2016).
- ¹⁵ The Oti Region was part of the former Volta Region until 2019 when six new administrative regions were created.
- ¹⁶ Attempts to locate the surviving members have proved difficult because of the lack of knowledge about their whereabouts.

- ¹⁷ Interviews with Charles Kormi Kudzordzi.
- ¹⁸ Interviews with Charles Kormi Kudzordzi.
- ¹⁹ https://homelandstudygroupfoundation.org/?page_id=8
- ²⁰ 'We want semi-autonomy, not secession'—V/R Group, <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/We-want-semi-autonomy-not-secession-V-R-Group-414574>, 11 February 2016, accessed 9 January 2020.
- ²¹ 'Attack on STC Yard In Ho' <https://web.facebook.com/BNCWTL/photos/a.102573338280465/105231011348031/?type=329>, September 2020, accessed 28 October 2020.
- ²² 'Why Western Togoland Goes Independent', Speech by Mr Charles Kormi Kudjordjie, Executive Chairman of the Homeland Study Group Foundation (HSGF) intended for delivery to African Union Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in November 2011; African Commission on People and Human Rights Conference in November 2011 in Banjul, Gambia; General Assembly on [of] the United Nations Organisation in November 2011. Copy in author's possession.
- ²³ See *Ghana Poverty Mapping Report*, Ghana Statistical Service, 2015.
- ²⁴ 'Independence of Western Togoland', <https://www.change.org/p/united-nations-independence-of-western-togoland>, accessed 20 January 2020.
- ²⁵ It claims to have met several chiefs. For example, on 7 July 2017, it met members of the Volta Region House of Chiefs (VRHC). The VRHC is one of the regional houses of chiefs mandated under the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana to address issues related to chieftaincy. Interview with Edmund Kwashie Nyavor, Wli, 21 October 2017. Nyavor was then acting secretary to the chief of Wli and attended the meeting on his behalf.
- ²⁶ https://web.facebook.com/pg/HSGFWTL/events/?ref=page_internal.
- ²⁷ On the UNPO see, <http://unpo.org/section/2>.
- ²⁸ Interviews with Charles Kormi Kudzordzi, George Nyakpo, Bestway Zotor, Francis Ahorgavi and Mr. Yao Gotthold Agra.
- ²⁹ 'Security personnel deployed to Western Togoland to ensure order' <https://www.myjoyonline.com/photo-story/security-personnel-deployed-to-western-togoland-to-ensure-order/>, 25 September 2020, accessed 28 October 2020; 'V/R: New Group 'Western Togoland Restoration Front' Claims Responsibility For Roadblock, Riot' <https://www.modernghana.com/news/1032006/vr-new-group-western-togoland-restoration-front.html>, 25 September 2020, accessed 28 October 2020; 'Suspected separatist group attacks Ho STC, burnt 1 bus and damaged another' <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/suspected-separatist-group-attacks-ho-stc-burnt-1-bus-and-damaged-another/>, 29 September 2020, accessed 28 October 2020.
- ³⁰ In some interviews, some pointed out how the independence of South Sudan from Sudan has not brought them the freedom and development they sought.
- ³¹ Kwame Botwe-Asamoah, 'The "Homeland Study Group Foundation" in the Volta Region', <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/The-Homeland-Study-Group-Foundation-in-the-Volta-Region-423393>, 15 March 2016, accessed 9 January 2020.
- ³² 'Group to declare V/R independent next year', https://web.facebook.com/pg/Accra100.5fm/posts/?ref=page_internal, 17 August 2016, accessed 10 January 2020.
- ³³ See the following media reports on the case, 'Police arrest three Volta secessionist group leaders for treason', <http://www.radiogold905.com/?p=15874>, 9 March 2017, accessed 5 April 2018; 'Ho Court declines jurisdiction in Volta breakaway case', <http://citifmonline.com/2017/03/09/ho-court-declines-jurisdiction-in-volta-breakaway-case/>, 9 March 2017, accessed 8 April 2018; 'V/R: Court Grants Bail To Separatist Advocates', <http://starrfmonline.com/2017/03/09/vr-court-grants-bail-separatist-advocates/>, 9 March 2017; accessed 5 April 2018; 'Ho High Court adjourns Western Togoland separatist's case', <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2017/march-14th/ho-high-court-adjourns-western-togoland-separatists-case.php>, 14 March 2017, accessed 5 April 2018; 'Ho Court Frees Volta Secessionists', <http://starrfmonline.com/2017/07/19/ho-court-frees-volta-secessionists/>, 19 July 2017, accessed 5 April 2018.
- ³⁴ 'Crusader of the Independence of the Volta Region, 8 others arrested', <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Crusader-of-the-Independence-of-the-Volta-Region-8-others-arrested-743999>, 6 May 2019, accessed 20 June 2019; 'Suspected secessionists leader Kudzordzi granted bail', <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/politics/ghana-news-suspected-secessionists-leader-kudzordzi-granted-bail.html>, 8 May 2019, accessed 20 June 2019.
- ³⁵ 'Over 20 More Homeland Study Group Arrested', <https://www.modernghana.com/news/931118/over-20-more-homeland-study-group-arrested.html>, 8 May 2019, accessed 20 May 2019; '81 arrested Western Togoland campaigners granted bail', <https://citinewsroom.com/2019/05/81-arrested-western-togoland-campaigners-granted-bail/>, 9 May 2019, accessed 20 June 2019.

- ³⁶ ‘AG drops charges against Western Togoland secessionists’, <https://citinewsroom.com/2019/07/ag-drops-charges-against-western-togoland-secessionists/>, 8 July 2019, accessed 15 July 2019.
- ³⁷ [VIDEO] Volta Separatist Group Declares ‘Western Togoland Independence’, <https://voltaonlinegh.com/2019/11/16/volta-separatist-group-declares-western-togoland-independence/> 16 November 2019, accessed 10 January 2020.
- ³⁸ [VIDEO] Volta Separatist Group Declares ‘Western Togoland’ Independence’, <https://voltaonlinegh.com/2019/11/16/volta-separatist-group-declares-western-togoland-independence/> 16 November 2019, accessed 10 January 2020.
- ³⁹ ‘Statement’, <https://web.facebook.com/moi.gov.gh/photos/a.1279963482038815/2502944196407398/?type=3>, 18 November 2019, accessed 10 January 2020.
- ⁴⁰ ‘Leader of Western-Togoland separatist group, one other declared wanted’, <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Leader-of-Western-Togoland-separatist-group-one-other-declared-wanted-824428>, 27 December 2019, accessed 15 January 2020; ‘“Western Togoland”: Police pick up 10 more members of Volta secessionist group’, <https://www.myjoyonline.com/politics/2019/December-1st/western-togoland-police-pick-up-10-more-members-of-volta-secessionist-group.php>, 1 December 2019, accessed 16 January 2020.
- ⁴¹ ‘Engage with leaders of Homeland Study Group—Lawyer to Peace Council’, <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Engage-with-leaders-of-Homeland-Study-Group-Lawyer-to-Peace-Council-800521>, 19 November 2019, accessed 20 January 2020.
- ⁴² ‘The “Homeland Study Group Foundation” in the Volta Region’, <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/The-Homeland-Study-Group-Foundation-in-the-Volta-Region-423393>, 15 March 2016, accessed 9 January 2020.
- ⁴³ The Gold Coast government then composed of the British colonial administration and CPP with Kwame Nkrumah as Prime Minister. Both though had a common interest in the outcome of the plebiscite which was the integration of British Togoland into the Gold Coast.
- ⁴⁴ PRAAD, Ho, D/DA/374, Togoland Plebiscite.
- ⁴⁵ United Nations, ‘Trusteeship Agreement for the Territory of Togoland under British administration: as approved by the General Assembly on 13 December 1946’ (New York, 1947).
- ⁴⁶ The TVT Council was the administrative body for the TVT region.
- ⁴⁷ The Standing Consultative Commission was a joint British and French body for Togoland to address Ewe complaints against the inconveniences of the border. Members of the Commission included Ewe from the Gold Coast as well the British Togoland and French Togo.
- ⁴⁸ Interviews with Charles Kormi Kudzordzi. On the construction of identity in Western Togoland, see Kate Skinner, ‘Reading, Writing and Rallies: The Politics of “Freedom” in Southern British 1953–1956’, *Journal of African History* 48 (2007), 130.
- ⁴⁹ Interviews with Charles Kormi Kudzordzi.
- ⁵⁰ The Bond of 1844 was a treaty between the British and some chiefs in Gold Coast which gave it a foothold in the administration of the affairs of the traditional states before the declaration of formal colonial rule in 1874. While it did not cede these areas to the British, this is seen as the beginning of British colonial rule.
- ⁵¹ Gold Coast Correspondence (1 February 1899 to 29 March 1901) relating to the Anglo-German boundaries. PRAAD, Accra, MFA 4/26; Gold Coast Further Correspondence (April 1901 to December 1904) relating to the Anglo-German boundaries. PRAAD, Accra, MFA 4/27.
- ⁵² Interviews with Charles Kormi Kudzordzi.
- ⁵³ https://homelandstudygroupfoundation.org/?page_id=8.
- ⁵⁴ ‘Article 76’, 220. https://legal.un.org/repertory/art76/english/rep_supp2_vol3_art76.pdf. Accessed 3 November 2020.
- ⁵⁵ ‘Article 76’, 220. https://legal.un.org/repertory/art76/english/rep_supp2_vol3_art76.pdf. Accessed 3 November 2020.
- ⁵⁶ Interviews with Charles Kormi Kudzordzi.
- ⁵⁷ The author’s archival searches have not yielded any such results.

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