5.1.2 Ewe Heterogeneity

Both older and current literature emphasize the historical heterogeneity of the Ewe – the trusteeship powers argued all the way to the point that the Ewe-speaking population cannot be considered as a distinct people at all. According to the traditional history of the Ewe people, following their migration from the Niger Valley, they settled in Notsé. In the 17th century, Ewe[6] and Ané settled in the coastal region between the Volta and the mouth of the Mono river. Fleeing from Asante slave hunting campaigns on Elmina, the Ané are commonly called "Mina." European cartographers and missionaries in the pre-colonial era used the term 'Mina Republics' to denote the decentralized polities along the Aného coast and its hinterland, though, the entities were neither always Mina nor politically republican.[7] Though ethnically distinct from the Ewe, they eventually adopted the Ouatchi-Ewe dialect. Although described as a single language group, the variation in Ewe dialects signifies that mutual intelligibility proved to be exceedingly difficult at times.

According to a myth later popularised by German missionaries,[8] the Ewe migrated from Notsé to the south around 1720 due to the excesses and insistence of King Agokoli III (1670–1720) to build earthen walls around the royal capital of Notsé. Allegedly, the painful memories of Agokoli's brutal and autocratic rule contributed to the Ewe's later aversion to centralised monarchical rule and tendency toward political fragmentation.[9] Although the accuracy of the myth is widely disputed,[10] the fact remains that at the beginning of the 20th century the Ewe were not a politically unified people but remained instead a series of some 120 clans ("dou" or "states"), each governed by a chief or a paramount chief.[11] This is where the securitisation of Ewe cultural history diverges from Jutila's assumptions about nation-building projects: instead of putting a securitised origin story in the service of achieving national cohesion, the effect of the securitising Notsé myth led to the opposite.

The political fragmentation is substantiated by instances of Ewe states fighting one another in concert with non-Ewe allies in 1750, 1767, 1776 and 1784.[12] Thus, while the Notsé myth is able to explain that the political fragmentation of the Ewe was due to fear of the *internal* threat posed by a dominant central state, such as Agokoli's rule, it also explains the Ewe states' vulnerability to *external* threats, such as slave raids by larger neighbouring and more centralized kingdoms like Asante to the west.

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6 Around 1720, Ewe founded the village "Alome," which means "in the Alo bushes" and later became Lomé.

7 Samuel Decalo, *Historical dictionary of Togo*, 3rd ed., African historical dictionaries 9 (London: Scarecrow Press, 1996), p. 212.

8 Skinner, *The Fruits of Freedom in British Togoland*, p. 38; Greene, "Notsie Narratives"; Nugent, *Smugglers, secessionists & loyal citizens on the Ghana-Togo frontier*, p. 161; Keese, *Ethnicity and the Colonial State*, p. 233.

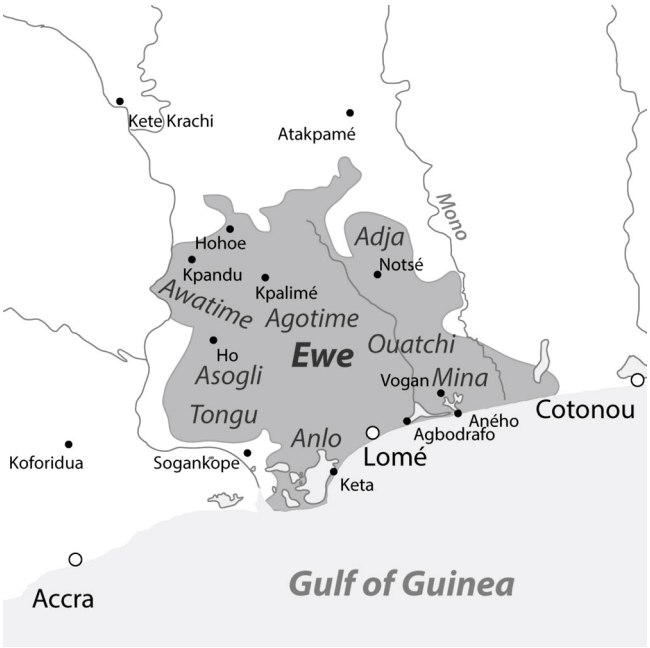
9 The Notsé dispersal is a major annual Ewe celebration commemorated in the *Hogbetsotso* ("Hogbechocho") festival.

10 Keese, *Ethnicity and the Colonial State*, p. 223.

11 Lawrance, *Locality, Mobility, and "Nation"*, p. 27.

12 Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement*, p. 3.

Map 4: Ewe Settlements



Source: Own creation.

In the 19th century, the demand in slaves led in part to an alliance between the Asante and the chiefdom of the Anlo-Ewe for slave raiding campaigns east of the Volta against the Krepi-Ewe,[13] who in turn fought alongside the Buems and Guans.[14] As Jutila also argued, that history plays a role in the securitisation of the other,[15] Skinner notes that the Togolese Ewe unificationists pressed history and past experiences of invasions and raids by neighbouring Ewe groups in their service.[16] For example, the Anlo, a faction of the Ewe who would later fall within the boundaries of the British Gold Coast colony, were opposed by many Ewe from Togoland not only because of their higher levels of education and elevated status. The association of the Anlos' past with the slave trade and the memory of their role in smuggling Ashanti armies into the Ewe hinterland in the 19th century were securitised in a way that reinforced a distinctly Togolese Ewe identity. In absence of a unifying precolonial Ewe identity, Keese notes that "[i]n all the warring after 1860s Ewe solidarity didn't play a role,"[17] which bears witness to the political fragmentation of the Ewe.[18] Skinner, Nugent and Keese stress the absence of any ethnic nationalism amongst

13 The Ewe settlements near the coast joined together to form an Ewe state, which became known as Anlo. Europeans remained in the dark about the nature of the Ewe-speaking interior, which they referred to as the "Krepe." See Skinner, *The Fruits of Freedom in British Togoland*, 5–7.

14 Keese, *Ethnicity and the Colonial State*, pp. 235–36.

15 Jutila, "Securitization, history, and identity"

16 Skinner, *The Fruits of Freedom in British Togoland*, p. 26.

17 Keese, *Ethnicity and the Colonial State*, p. 239.

18 Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement*, p. 3.

the Ewe while the label "Ewe" in itself has to be regarded rather as a colonial invention.[19] According to Brown, the political agitation for and emergence of an Ewe identity is phenomenon of the late 19th century that was rather due to "the adjustment of boundaries in the interest of sub-ethnic collectivities."[20]

5.1.3 The Emergence of 'Eweness'

In fact, Enlightenment ideas such as that of the "Ewe-nation," were brought in from outside by a yet-to-be-formed Ewe-elite that was no longer entirely autochthonous in nature. The background for this development was the industrialisation of Britain, the number one maritime power, which changed the structure of Atlantic trade in West Africa.

Britain's need for new liberal type of 19th century Atlantic trade no longer required slave labour and the traditional coastal forts. The British banned the transatlantic slave trade in 1807, yet, since slavery had not yet been banned in the southern United States before 1863, there was still an extensive slave trade to North America, but also to cash crop producing states such as Cuba or Brazil.[21] British warships patrolled West African ports, such as Porto Seguro (today Agbodrafo). Testimony to the once Portuguese influence in the slave trade still bears on the naming of Porto Seguro ("safe haven"), which did not refer to the ability to dock safely at the harbour (the surf was just as dangerous as anywhere else on the coastal strip), but "safe haven" referred to the safety from the pursuit from British warships for illegal slave trade. British naval predominance slowly changed the balance of power on the coast,[22] monopolizing Britain's presence after 350 years of competition between various European powers. While British warships were spoiling business for Portuguese slave traders, Napoleon's campaign in Europe forced the Portuguese royal family to flee to Brazil.

The signs of the Portuguese empire's decline significantly set the stage for Brazil's independence in 1822 and several subsequent upheavals that were to become important for a forming Ewe elite. At the beginning of the 19th century, there were several slave revolts in Bahia, Brazil, to which the Brazilian state responded with violent repression and restrictions: free blacks were denied owning property and were subjected to strict taxation. When in the mid-19th century, the US-sponsored establishment of the Republic of Liberia (1847) gave rise to the repatriation wave of former slaves to West Africa, the 17-year-old Francisco Olympio da Silva, a mestizo of mixed Portuguese, indigenous and African descent, went along and migrated from Bahia, Brazil, to Keta, east of the Volta Delta in search of economic opportunities. Francisco Olympio dropped the "da Silva" part of his name, under which he had been a slave in Brazil, worked for a decade in the slave trade in various places along the coast east of Volta until he settled and founded the Olympio

19 Paul Nugent, "Putting the History Back into Ethnicity," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50, no. 4 (2008), available from https://www.jstor.org/stable/27563713; Skinner, *The Fruits of Freedom in British Togoland*, p. 12; Keese, *Ethnicity and the Colonial State*, p. 233.

20 Brown, "Borderline Politics in Ghana," p. 579.

21 Sebald, *Die deutsche Kolonie Togo 1884 – 1914*, p. 15.

22 The British administration of the Gold Coast Colony (now Ghana) was able to buy out the Danish coastal forts in 1850 and the Dutch coastal forts in 1870.