

governance did not grant the unificationists their *Dream of Unity*, thus allowing the seeds of conflict to grow. The question arises why, despite all these favourable conditions, did the unificationists not have the upper hand in deciding the shaping of their future statehood? An answer to this question, which at first glance seems to be purely historical and only about Ghana, touches on broader, intersecting themes of decolonisation history, such as debates on national belonging, statehood, self-determination, but also international responses to security threats – in short, it informs current debates of international concern from a historical perspective.

To this end, the dissertation analyses a security-specific mode of communication from a historicising state-building perspective in the context of the United Nations trusteeship over Togoland under British and French administration (1947–1960). With a research agenda that looks at discursively negotiated constructions of threat and security, the research is guided by the question: “How have constructions of threat and (in)security influenced the decolonisation of Togoland, and to what extent is the recent conflict over the attempted secession of ‘Western Togoland’ rooted in these constructions?” This question will be broken down into three sub-questions, each focussing on a specific actor within the trilateral constellation of the United Nations Trusteeship System:

1. How did the French and British trustees (de)securitise their administration over French and British Togoland?
2. How did the unificationist petitioners securitise the trusteeship administration in Togoland, what agency is revealed in relation to it, and why did their attempts to securitise the (re)unification of Ewe- and Togoland not succeed?
3. What role did the United Nations, and the influence of world opinion more broadly, have in this dynamic of security constructions?

1.3 Argument & Approach

Security plays a significant role in international administrations as it is one of the core tasks named in the respective mandate agreements, thus representing a key point of reference for the legitimisation of international rule. In the introductory account of events, security emerged, on the one hand, as an object of conflict: the central purpose of state intervention is to ensure security and prevent serious threats, both internal and external, regarding previous violent conflicts or foreign domination. On the other hand, the events demonstrate that security also turned out to be a strategic mode of communication by which actors tried to make their political decisions, opposition, or resistance plausible to an audience and thus influenced a contested attempt at secession. Security communication can thus paradoxically not only ensure peace and public order, but also suppress oppositional forces.⁹⁵

95 Thorsten Bonacker, “Internationales Statebuilding Und Die Liberale Politik Des Schutzes,” in *Vorsicht Sicherheit! Legitimationsprobleme der Ordnung von Freiheit*, ed. Gabriele Abels, Nomos eLibrary Politikwissenschaft (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2016).

The research explores security constructions in and around decolonisation. Using Togoland as a case study, it delves into security dynamics under French and British administration, examining conflicts around the Ewe and Togoland unification movement. The study identifies threat constructions, analyses argumentation patterns, and explains mechanisms of action. Overarching all of this lingers the political science question of how to decide what security threats do and, what it says about the actors involved.

Drawing from Critical Security Studies (CSS),⁹⁵^F⁹⁶ the struggle over Togoland's decolonisation will be decoded primarily via a postcolonial reading of CSS' *securitisation* framework. This framework explains how 'security issues' are an important vehicle for negotiating political power. Securitisation conceptualises security as a social process that classifies an issue as so significant that it is lifted out of normal everyday politics and makes extraordinary measures possible. Thus, at the centre of a securitisation process is a speech act, that is, an empirical object, which is not a threat *per se* but is only discursively made into one.

With approaches to securitisation, it is possible to address security speech acts and threat communication as well as macro-constellations, which link the international scene with local events in the territories themselves. This is what is special about Togoland's internationally supervised decolonisation process, where a conflict developed over the conditions of independence. Petitioners from Togoland agitated before the United Nations Trusteeship Council and General Assembly for the reunification of once colonially divided territories. In doing so, they took on the role of anti-colonial securitising actors. In the case of Togoland, France and Britain assumed responsibility for the administration in the trusteeship territories, and in doing so, they fulfilled virtually all government functions. The trustees were monitored through the Trusteeship Council and General Assembly, with regular debates, reporting, and Visiting Missions to the trusteeship territories. This distinguished trusteeship *de jure* from colonial rule, yet *de facto* Togoland and other trusteeship territories were still under control of colonial powers. The ruling trusteeship powers, so-called Administering Authorities, demonstrated this through a continuity in colonial practice and discourse, enacting before the UN *disabling frames* to thwart the Ewe and Togoland unificationists' securitising moves. Ultimately, their *Dream of Unity*⁹⁷ failed to materialise because the structures supposed to ensure the "just treatment,"⁹⁸ "well-being,"⁹⁹ and "freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned,"¹⁰⁰ were used to limit the scope for protest. Thus, the failure of the Togolese petitioners was due to silencing effects originating from the colonial constellation of international supervision.

This study analyses these actors' constructions of security and threat perceptions, their ruptures, and dilemmas in a historical perspective. This historical study of the de-

⁹⁶ The term originally referred to the approach of Ken Booth. However, the term has come to refer to security research that simply distinguishes itself from realism; see Columba Peoples and Nick Vaughan-Williams, *Critical Security Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 18..

⁹⁷ Welch, *Dream of Unity*.

⁹⁸ League of Nations, Covenant, Art. 22.

⁹⁹ United Nations, Charter, Art. 73.

¹⁰⁰ United Nations, Charter, Art. 77.

bates around the trusteeship territories of British and French Togoland addresses the tripartite constellation of African, colonial, and UN actors, that is, the various levels of influence that legitimised political measures and interests during the period of decolonisation. The empirical analysis will show that constructions of (in)security were influential for the negotiation of trusteeship rule.

1.4 Relevance & Contribution

The study aims to contribute to literature in three key areas: historical Togoland research, statebuilding literature, and postcolonial perspectives in International Relations.

Regarding Togoland, the research delves into its significance as a site of historical precedents for postcolonial African states, such as being the location of the first UN-led independence referendum.¹⁰¹ The study emphasizes the lack of comprehensive theory-driven perspectives on Togoland's decolonisation, highlighting its unique circumstances and the role it played in the international spotlight due to the reunification movement. In the realm of statebuilding literature, the research critiques the prevailing notion that deficits in statehood, often observed in postcolonial African states, pose direct threats to international security. It challenges the colonial continuity in contemporary state-building missions and emphasizes the need for a nuanced examination of securitisation moves and accountability bottlenecks in international statebuilding.

From a postcolonial perspective on International Relations and Critical Security Studies, the study explores the historical context of the UN Trusteeship System within 20th-century decolonisation. It advocates for incorporating postcolonial theory into Critical Security Studies, examining the conditions for success and failure in securitization moves and addressing the colonial legacy in the Togo-Ghana region. The study aims to bridge the gap between discourse approaches and sociological practices by analysing articulations of colonial fears and threat constructions in both public and behind-the-scenes forums. As this work is ultimately about a history of exclusion, it draws on guidance on how to promote more inclusion, both in ways that would expand the circle of who is speaking International Relations and Critical Security Studies,¹⁰² as well as the inclusion of marginalized security speech.¹⁰³

1.5 Outline

The work is structured as follows: After this introduction, Chapter 2 outlines not only the current state of research on but also the course of the academic debate on state- and peacebuilding as well as Critical Security Studies. This is followed by the state of research

¹⁰¹ Julius Heise, "United Nations Colonial Complicity in Decolonization Referenda," *Topos*, no. 1 (2021), available from journals.ehu.lt/index.php/topos/article/view/1048.

¹⁰² Meera Sabaratnam, "IR in Dialogue ... but Can We Change the Subjects?," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 3 (2011), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829811404270>.

¹⁰³ Sarah Bertrand, "Can the Subaltern Securitize?," *European Journal of International Security* 3, no. 03 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2018.3>.