

4. Methods

“The nature of African states, and the opposition they encountered, has to be inferred from problematic and incomplete sources.”¹

This chapter focuses on the methodological considerations and reflects on the processes of data collection and analysis. It will show how archival research can enrich theoretical discussions within the study of International Relations and connect security studies with postcolonial theory by means of a historical perspective. Chapter 4.1 introduces the general constructivist perspective employed in this study, emphasising of socially constructed nature of (in)security and history, and its implications. This section also comments on the comparative perspective of this study regarding French and British Togoland. Chapter 4.2 will delve into the details of the archival field research, including reflections on analysing records *along* or *against* the archival grain. Furthermore, this section will provide an overview of the archives visited along with addressing the associated challenges. It concludes with a presentation of the research and evaluation procedure that was followed to operationalise the used securitisation framework.

4.1 Research Design

4.1.1 A Constructivist Study

This study takes a constructivist perspective. As an epistemological stance within the social sciences, constructivist approaches now form a broad field of research, yet, the minimal consensus is that the social world(s) around us (and thus all objects of research) are socially constructed through actions, shared ideas, expectations, and the production of

1 Skinner, *The Fruits of Freedom in British Togoland*, p. 211.