

of the unificationists' securitisation efforts by the Administering Authorities should be regarded as even more significant.

Statements in the archival records do not make it easy to always distinguish clearly between *illocutionary frustration* and *illocutionary disablement*, that is, whether actors within the colonial administrators understood the petitioners' securitisation moves but deliberately frustrated them (*illocutionary frustration*), or whether the disabling frames of their colonial mindsets did not allow them to understand the petitioners' securitised demands at all (*illocutionary disablement*). None of this would have mattered to the unificationists, however, because in practice it made no difference whether the trusteeship powers acted in good faith or bad faith. Yet, on a theoretical side, it would substantiate, on the one hand, the need for a context-focused, that is, *perlocution*-focused approach that considers the consequences and effects of securitisation and, on the other hand, that the subaltern can indeed securitise if colonial power structures such as *disabling frames* are sufficiently eroded.

The Administering Authorities certainly made use of these *illocutionary disabling frames*. Figuratively speaking, the Administering Authorities emitted jamming signals to disrupt the expressed securitising arguments of the unificationists. The Administering Authorities tried to discredit the unificationists by portraying them as troublemakers, who used overly radical language. Complaints were regularly made about the language of the unificationists and about their mobilization methods, which allegedly threatened public order in the territories. Furthermore, the Administering Authorities sought to securitise their policy not only as a warranty of peace and order in the trusteeship territories, but also as responsibility for the post-trusteeship period, arguing that meeting the demands of the unification movement would lead to a possible domino effect in other colonial territories, threatening a balkanization of the African continent, which could not be in the interest of the United Nations. The Administrative Authorities did not succeed in misleading the Fourth Committee in general with these *disabling frames*, but at key moments during the negotiations over resolutions they were certainly able to wrest strategically important concessions by their use.

## 7.2.2 Sub-Question 2: Securitisation by the Petitioners

In 1956, James Coleman noted: "The Togolands have not commanded the international spotlight because of their size or international importance. They are among the smaller of the eleven areas under trusteeship, and they are geographically rather far removed from any direct involvement in the 'cold war.' Nor has the 'colonial crisis' been more acute there than elsewhere."<sup>2</sup> In deciding to achieve its goals by peaceful and largely constitutional means, the unification movement limited its only chance of success by persuading the bodies with the necessary power, namely the British and French governments and the United Nations, through petitions. Notably, Togolese unificationists commanded the international spotlight because they were the first who appeared before the new 'world organisation' and, by imbuing early debates with a securitising language, they were able to ensure for more than a decade that the reunification of Togoland remained the only

<sup>2</sup> Coleman, *Togoland*, p. 3.

concrete item on the agenda of the Trusteeship System. It was the remarkable perseverance of the AEC, the CUT, and the Togoland Congress, led by men like Sylvanus Olympio and Senyo G. Antor, that had kept unification alive. The United Nations provided the unificationists with a platform. Initially still restrained from 1951 onwards the unification parties dragged their case before the General Assembly, using it not only as a stage to make their case heard internationally but to securitise their demands and thus influence world opinion.

In their endeavour to achieve unification, they securitised the Administering Authorities' reluctance to unify Ewe and Togoland, presenting it as a threat to the territory's identity. Moreover, they securitised that the way popular consultations were conducted threatened not only democratic principles but ultimately the principles of trusteeship itself. Also, the harsh repression of the French administration was securitised to discredit the French regime's fitness to rule and its intentions to integrate French Togoland into the French Union. While it may have been somewhat daring, the unificationists, upon their appearance before the General Assembly, progressively employed securitisation as appeasement, strategically emphasizing the risk of violent escalation. It is worth noting how in their attempts at securitisation the petitioners showcased themselves, the residents of the territories, and the United Nations, always emphasizing that they basically wanted to pursue a peaceful agenda. The recourse to violence would not be a result of deliberate planned action but rather of a 'loss of levelheadedness.'

Notably, petitioners from other trusteeship territories followed suit. For example, Ruben Um Nyobe, the figurehead of the Cameroon independence movement, never appeared before the Trusteeship Council, but like the unificationists from Togoland two years earlier, he appeared directly before the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly. The Togolese thus set an example for other trusteeship territories.

For over a decade, almost a hundred appearances in oral hearings before the Trusteeship Council and the Fourth Committee, including 1,015 officially recorded written petitions,<sup>3</sup> kept the unification issue as the only concrete item on the agenda of the Trusteeship System. The hearings before the Trusteeship Council and the Fourth Committee, the enquiries made by the Visiting Missions, the 'pressure' exerted by the General Assembly on the Administering Authorities, in short, all the attention given to the movement greatly encouraged it. In this respect the movement was vocal. James Coleman assesses this performance as follows:

"One of the striking features of the Trusteeship System – characteristic perhaps of other systems of supervision – is that aggrieved elements not only command special attention; they also tend to become endowed with a higher legitimacy than those elements which are *silent*, indifferent, or content with the *status quo*. Of course, in any political situation recognition and rewards accrue to the activists. Moreover, in situations of doubt, there is frequently the presumption that articulate elements are genuinely representative of the inarticulate, at least until the contrary is proved."<sup>4</sup>

3 United Nations, "Art. 87," in *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*, 1955–1959, Vol. III, ed. United Nations (UN), 333–48 Supplement No. 2, available from [legal.un.org/repertory/art87/english/rep\\_supp2\\_vol3\\_art87.pdf](http://legal.un.org/repertory/art87/english/rep_supp2_vol3_art87.pdf), p. 345.

4 Coleman, *Togoland*, p. 49.

Does that conclude that the unificationists have broken through the silence dilemma developed in this work? It is worth recalling Sarah Bertrand's pointedly formulated consideration that one can be silent while screaming loudly. Thus, since unification never came about, the answer seems to be an obvious 'no.' The unification movement had achieved at best a partial success: the Administering Authorities never intended to hold referenda in the territories. The petitioner's securitization of the "Most Secret" document played a pivotal role in compelling the Administering Authorities to acknowledge that without a referendum the General Assembly would vehemently oppose the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement. But unificationists failed to ensure that the referenda would be held under the conditions they saw fit. However, the 1958 UN-supervised Legislative Assembly elections brought the unificationists back to electoral power. In this way, the petitioners not only contributed to French Togoland's accession to full independence outside the French Union, but also to the latter's disintegration.

Yet, after independence, the unification issue took on a new character as it was subsumed under the conflictual relations between the Nkrumah-government and the Olympio-government, which were increasingly hostile to each other. The latter's desire to preserve the newly won independence and the reluctance to form a Togo-Ghana union exemplifies that the demand for unification was ultimately (though not only, but certainly also) an argument to merely oust the colonial powers.

### 7.2.3 Sub-Question 3: The United Nations as an Audience of Securitisation

Was the United Nations able to bend the Administering Authorities under the influence of world opinion? As mentioned before, since Ewe and Togoland unification was not achieved and the destiny of French and British Togoland went separate ways, the obvious answer is 'no.'

The reason dates to the creation of the Trusteeship System. At the San Francisco and London negotiations, the future Administering Authorities would not have agreed to United Nations supervision without the power to limit it. The United Nations was forced to respect the sovereignty of its member states and without being given any real means of sanctions, the United Nations could do little to prevent the Administering Authorities from treating their trusteeship territories as they saw fit. To most member states it was clear that the Trusteeship System was voluntary and accepting a flawed Trusteeship System was better than none.

Thus, given the composition of the Trusteeship Council, an Administering Authority could for the most part rely on the solidarity of the other Administering Authorities. That is why in 1951 the Ewe and Togoland unificationists dragged their case before the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly and increasingly resorted to a securitising language. Since the Trusteeship System was a window through which the General Assembly, and extension, world opinion could see whether the interests of the inhabitants of the trusteeship territories were not being violated (thus, representing the colonial powers' greater responsibility towards the inhabitants the other so-called Non-Self-Governing Territories), the colonial powers did their utmost to prevent the General Assembly from becoming a 'court of appeal.' Yet, before the Fourth Committee they were ultimately obliged to justify and account for their own attitudes and policies.