

sedition.<sup>91</sup> Two months later, on 21 March 2023, the Accra High Court finally convicted the five arrested in the aftermath of the September 2020 attacks.<sup>92</sup> Although the trial implicated the accused in the attacks, they were not charged for the attack and the policeman's murder *per se*, but each received the maximum sentence of five years in prison in hard labour for violations of the *Prohibited Organisations Act*. Although the WTRF was unknown until the attacks, the *Prohibited Organisations Act* (which was passed in 1976 when Ghana was under military rule) banned the National Liberation Movement of Western Togoland (Tolimo) and thus also “any other organisation howsoever called, whose objects include advocating and promoting the succession from Ghana of the former British mandated territory of Togoland or part thereof.”<sup>93</sup>

## 1.2 Research Puzzle & Goal

The events and debates following the declaration of independence of ‘Western Togoland’ are exemplary of many speech-acts collected in the course of this work, demonstrating that the conflicts once considered resolved after the termination of United Nations trusteeship over Togoland are flaring up again. By reviving a language of threat and security in the conflict over ‘Western Togoland,’ the Ghanaian state and the secessionists entered a discursive exchange of blows in which one side is portrayed as an existential threat for the other – a dynamic which eventually led to bloodshed. Inspired by this empirical observation, this dissertation traces the history of Togoland’s internationally supervised decolonisation process to solve the puzzle of how (re)awakenings of a dormant Ewe and (“Western”) Togoland nationalism became a matter of security.

Over 60 years ago, ‘Western Togoland’ was hailed as the first territory to achieve independence under the international supervision of the United Nations Trusteeship System. Against the backdrop of the internationalisation of global governance, an emerging anti-colonialism as well as a right for the inhabitants of trusteeship territories to petition directly to the United Nations, Ewe and Togoland unificationists continuously petitioned against French and British rule and for sovereign statehood before United Nations venues. Their claims for unification, self-determination, statehood, and independence were similarly negotiated through a language of threat and security, influencing international opinion in a way that hardly any other independence movement in Africa had managed before. Yet, as Claude Welch put it in 1967,<sup>94</sup> the institutions of international

91 United Nations, “Opinion No. 47/2022 concerning George Nyakpo (Ghana)” A/HRC/WGAD/2022/47 (Human Rights Council, 2023), available from <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/detention-wg/opinions/session94/2023-01-30/A-HRC-WGAD-2022-47-Ghana-ADVANCE-EDITED-VERSION.pdf>.

92 *GhanaWeb*, “Western Togoland Case: High Court Sentences 5 Secessionists to a Total of 25 Years in Prison,” 22 March 2023; *GhanaWeb*, “Western Togoland Attacks: Five More Arrested for Stealing AK 47 Rifles,” 04 October 2020.

93 Prohibited Organisations Act, Supreme Military Council Decree 20 at Section 1(1)(b) (1976), accessed 22 March 2023, available from [https://lawsghana.com/pre\\_1992\\_legislation/SMC%20Decree/PROHIBITED%20ORGANISATIONS%20ACT,%201976%20\(SMCD%202020\)/118](https://lawsghana.com/pre_1992_legislation/SMC%20Decree/PROHIBITED%20ORGANISATIONS%20ACT,%201976%20(SMCD%202020)/118).

94 Welch, *Dream of Unity*.

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.<sup>95</sup>

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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).