

HOME AWAY FROM HOME: A STUDY OF THE EWE UNIFICATION MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This master's thesis attempts to identify the reasons and causes for strong Ewe identity among those in the contemporary African Diaspora in the United States. An important debate among African nationalists and academics argues that ethnic belonging is a response to colonialism instigated by Western-educated African elites for their own political gain. Based on my observation of Ewe political discourses of discontent with the Ghana and Togolese governments, and through my exploratory interviews with Ewe immigrants in the United States; I argue that the formation of ethnic belonging and consciousness cannot be reduced to its explanation as a colonial project. Ewe politics whether in the diaspora, Ghana or Togo is due to two factors: the Ewe ethnonational consciousness in the period before independence; and the political marginalization of Ewes in the post-independence period of Ghana and Togo. Moreover, within the United States discrimination and racial prejudice against African Americans contribute to Ewe ethnic consciousness beyond their Togo or Ghana formal national belongings towards the formation of the Ewe associations in the United States. To understand the strong sense of Ewe identity among those living in the United States, I focus on the historical questions of ethnicity, regionalism and politics in Ghana and Togo. I contextualize this experience within the broader literature on contemporary African migration to the United States and how migration affects notions of Ewe ethnonational consciousness.

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This research began in the fall of 2008, when I was awarded the Ronald E. McNair fellowship to conduct an ethnographic field study on the experiences of Togolese refugees in the United States. However, after conducting several interviews with Togolese refugees, many of whom are ethnic Ewes, I decided to pursue research into the cause of these refugees discontent with the Togolese government. By the summer of 2009, I decided to study the ways in which the Ewe people of Togo and Ghana are constructing and maintaining their identities in the United States. Throughout the summer of 2009 and the rest of my academic career at St. Lawrence University, Dr. Matthew Carotenuto, a history professor at that university, worked with me tirelessly to write the research question as well as the questionnaire for my interviews.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In the 1980s, Samoral Machel, the first president of Mozambique, stated in a speech in that for the African state to survive, the tribe must die. The ethnic conflicts that engulfed Nigeria and many African countries in the immediate post-colonial era led some African politicians, intellectuals and scholars to believe that for the newly independent African states to succeed in their national development endeavor, the multinational African states they inherited must be rid of any ethnonational sentiments. The “tribe” must be killed in order for the nation to survive. That concept has survived today in the African context and within the New African Diaspora in the Global North. The common argument against the “tribe” in African scholarship is that it was a creation of Europeans during colonization. Thus any feeling of ethnonationalism is a threat to the contemporary African states.

However, based on my observation of Ewe rhetoric of expressing discontent with the Ghanaian and Togolese governments, and lived experiences as an Ewe and as an Ewe scholar, I hypothesize that while ethnic groups such as the Ewe may be a social construct, the formation of an African ethnic associations in the United States requires a careful analysis of the role ethnicity plays in Africa as well as in the Diaspora. The formation of ethnic associations illustrates the emergence of ethnonationalism in the contemporary African Diaspora. The works of Rachel Reynolds and Joe Amoako on the Igbo and Asante associations in the United States illustrate this phenomenon as the medium through which African ethnic communities in the United States are

negotiating their identities and maintaining links with their ethnic communities within the United States and in Ghana and Nigeria.¹

Despite this trend, contemporary scholarship on new African immigrants' experiences in the United States focus solely on the national origins of the African immigrants, for example Nigerian, Ghanaian, Tanzanian and Ethiopian religious, professional and hometown associations, and ignore the ethnic associations such as the Ewe and Asante associations in the United States and Western Europe. Why is this? The answers lie within the attempt by Africanists and African scholars to dismiss ethnicity as a social construction, a response to colonialism during the anti-colonial movement.² This proves to Africanists, African scholars, intellectuals and politicians that ethnic-based nationalism is a primordial feeling which would undermine the modern African states. In doing so, they dismissed E.J Hobsbawm and Basil Davidson theses that the creation of the African states had undermined the ethnonational movements in the 1960s.³

Among those who believe ethnicity is an impediment to the modern African states is the perception that through urbanization, education and employment, primordial feelings of ethnicity or tribalism would be eradicated, because inter-ethnic integration in the urban areas would shift ethnic allegiance from the ethnonationalism to state patriotism.⁴ However, that theory was dismissed by the research on strong ethnic consciousness among urbanites.⁵ The rise of ethnic associations among the Ghanaian population in Greater Cincinnati, Ohio due to the changing

¹ Rachel Reynolds, "Igbo Professional Migratory Order, Hometown Associations and Ethnicity in the USA," *Global Network* 9, no. 2 (2009): 209-206; Joe Amoako, "Ethnic Identity, Conflict construction in the New World: The Case of Asante in North America," in *The New African Diaspora in North America*, ed. Kwadwo Akyemang-Konadu, Baffour K. Takyi and John Arthur (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2006): 107-119.

² Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo: Decolonization and Independence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965).

³ E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Basil Davidson, *The Blackman's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Time Books, 1992).

⁴ Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 35.

⁵ Michael Amoah, *Reconstructing the Nation in Africa* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007), 6.

Ghanaian ethnic demographics illustrates that even in the Diaspora ethnic consciousness persists.⁶ After five decades of the independence by many African countries, why is it that Ewe ethnic consciousness is still prevalent, as illustrated by the formation of political parties based on ethnicity in West Africa and ethnic association in the Diaspora?

Historiography

Ethnicity has been a matter of debate among scholars for a long time now. For scholars of Africa, this controversy is due to the complexity in giving ethnicity an agreeable definition that all scholars would accept and thus far this task has proven to be difficult. While the primordialists argue that ethnicity is an ancient and a natural phenomenon, their counterpart, the constructivists argue that ethnicity maybe a natural phenomenon. However, the fact that ethnicity continuously being reconstructed in contemporary time and space cannot be overlooked. Currently in academia, scholars such as Marcus Banks and Thomas Hylland Eriksen continue to debate the notion of ethnicity.⁷

The case of defining the Ewe ethnicity is not much different, in the early works of the primordialist scholars of Ewe ethnicity such as Amenumey, Asamoah and Hall,⁸ the Ewe-speaking people's identity has been based on their immigration from present day southwestern Nigeria to Notsie, Togo and their eventual settlement in southeastern Ghana and southern Togo or Eweland.

⁶ See Chapter 3 in Ian E.A. Yeboah, *Black African Neo-Diaspora: Ghanaian Immigrant Experiences in the Greater Cincinnati, Ohio Area* (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2008).

⁷ Marcus Banks, *Ethnicity: Anthropology Construction* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 2002); Patrick Harries, "The Roots of Ethnicity: Discourse and the Politics of Language Constructions in Southeast Africa," *African Affairs* 87, no. 346 (1988): 25-52; John Iliffe, "The Creation of Tribe," In *A History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

⁸ D.E.K. Amenumey, *The Ewe in Pre-Colonial Times: A Political History with Special Emphasis on the Anlo, Ge and Krepí* (Accra: Sedco Publishing Limited, 1986); Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement: A Political History* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1989); Amenumey, "The Pre-1947 Background to the Ewe Unification Question: A Preliminary Sketch," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* X (1969):65-85; K. B. Gavua, *A Survey of the Prehistory of Wusuta*. B.A. Long-Essay, (University of Ghana: Department of Archeology, 1980); Ansa Asamoah, *The Ewe of Southeastern Ghana and Togo on the Eve of Colonialism* (Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1986); Gwendolyn Mildo Hall, "African Ethnicities and the Meanings of 'Mina' in Trans-Atlantic Dimension of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora," ed. Paul E. Lovejoy and David V. Trotman (New York: Continuum, 2003).

However, in the recent works of the constructivist scholars such as Greene, Meyer and Lawrance, the Ewe-speaking people's identity has been described as being constructed by German missionaries during the German colonial rule.⁹

During the colonial heydays throughout Africa, European colonial powers had divided the land of many cultural and ethnic groups, among them was Eweland, which was divided among the Germans (1884-1914) and British (1850-1957) and later re-divided among the British (1919-1956) and the French (1919-1960). The carving up of the Ewe people's land led to a movement among the British and French educated elite class of Ewes to stop what they saw as the balkanization of their people. Hence, Ewe nationalists such as Daniel Chapman and Sylvanus Olympio wrote letters to recount the Ewe migration story and the Notsie legend as a testament to the colonial governments that the Ewe people of the Gold Coast, British and French Togolands are one people with a common language, culture and custom. Based on this premise, the Ewe nationalist demanded that the Eweland which was divided into three territories should be united under a British trusteeship until independence is acquired.¹⁰ In the many petitions sent out by the nationalists to the United Nations, United States, the British and French governments the nationalists wrote that the Ewe people are an ethnic group.¹¹

⁹Sandra Greene, *Sacred Sites and the Colonial Encounter: A History of Meaning and Memory in Ghana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Birgit Meyer, "Christianity and the Ewe Nation: German Pietist Missionaries, Ewe Converts and the Politics of Culture," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 32 (2002): 167-199; Benjamin Nicholas Lawrance. "Language Between Powers, Power Between Language Further Discussion of Education and Policy in Togoland under the French Mandate, 1919-1945," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 41, no. 163/164 (2001): 517-539.

¹⁰Sylvanus Olympio and Daniel Chapman were both Ewe nationalists; Olympio was from the French Togoland and Chapman the British Gold Coast. Both nationalists were among many Ewe intellectuals and chiefs who argued in the period leading to independence of Ghana and Togo that the Eweland which was at that point divided into the Gold Coast, French and British Togoland be united under the British administration. See Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement: A Political History*; Dennis Austin, "The Uncertain Frontier: Ghana and Togo," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 1, no. 2 (1963): 141.

¹¹B.W. Hodder, "The Ewe Problem: A Reassessment," in *Essays in Political Geography*, ed. Charles A. Fisher (London, Butler and Tanner LTD, 1968), 277.

In the 1980s, writing on Ewe identity was dominated by primordial scholars such as Divine E.K. Amenumey. To scholars like Amenumey, Ewe identity is a natural phenomenon, an ancient identity based on a common language and history of the Ewe. The reason why the Ewe left their ancestral home in southwestern Nigeria is still up for debate, the common reason is often associated with the Ewe being members of a religious cult that was facing persecution from their neighbors, thus their migration was an attempt to seek religious haven in the west. Another theory is that the Yoruba Empire of Oyo was expanding, forcing the Ewe to seek sanctuary elsewhere. Therefore, their migration to Notsie became the hallmark of the primordial Ewe scholars that the Ewe identity reaches back to the eighth century in the time and place where the ancestors of the Ewe share a common home with their Yoruba brothers and sisters.¹²

The primordialists emphasize the migration of the Ewe from southwestern Nigeria in the late 16th or early 17th century and their eventual settlement in Notsie where they later dispersed in 1670 as the focal point in the contemporary Ewe identity.¹³ Amenumey's work is consistent with Ansa Asamoah work that describes the Ewe ethnic identity stemming from the fact that the Ewe people migrated from Nigeria and founded Notsie which became the capital of the Ewe kingdom. Shortly after the establishment of the city of Notsie, one of its rulers, Togbe Agokoli's regime entailed high levels of criminality, endless wars with the neighboring people and disappearance of political opponents. These actions resulted in the dispersal of the Ewes across the area that now encompasses the southern half of Togo and southeastern part of Ghana.¹⁴ The emphasize on the past by the primordial scholars has it bases on the fact that prior to the German

¹² Amenumey, *The Ewe in Pre-colonial Times: A Political History with Special Emphasis on the Anlo, Ge, and the Krepi*, 2.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Asamoah, *The Ewe of Southeastern Ghana and Togo on the Eve of Colonialism*; Nii Otokunor Quarcoopome, "Notsie's Ancient Kingship: Some Archeological and Art-Historical Considerations," *The African Archaeological Review* 11 (1993), 116.

colonial experience, there is no evidence of Ewe ethnic group, therefore, the stress on the migration story and the Notsie legend is an attempt to distinguish the Ewe ethnic group from the other groups of the Ewe- (Gbe) speaking peoples of West Africa, such as the Ge of Togo and Fon and the Adja of Benin.

Starting in the 1990s, literature on Ewe identity was primarily derived from the constructivists like Benjamin Lawrance and Sandra Greene. These scholars focused on the colonial period as focal point in the construction of contemporary Ewe identity. To the constructivists, the Ewe migration story from southwestern Nigeria to Notsie, Togo and Notsie legend is rooted in the German colonial narrative of nationhood. They argued that the story of the Ewe migration from the southwestern Nigeria to the establishment of Notsie is a romanticized story constructed by German colonialists in order to construct the Ewe identity during the German colonial administration (1884-1914) as a means of colonial rule.¹⁵ Thus, from the 1990s to the present time, works by the likes of Paul Nugent, Sandra Greene, and Benjamin Lawrance have illustrated that the Ewe ethnicity is a contemporary construction.¹⁶ However, Amenumey's asserts that the:

Ewe have long had a sense of themselves as a single person, which has been reinforced by the use of mutually intelligible dialectics and traditions of common origin at Notsie, from which they subsequently dispersed carrying their memories of past cooperation with them.¹⁷

¹⁵Meyer, "Christianity and the Ewe Nation: German Pietist Missionaries, Ewe Converts and the Politics of Culture," provides a detail account of how the German Bremen missionaries use of the Ewe language in promoting Ewe nationalism.

¹⁶*The Ewe of Togo and Benin*, ed. Benjamin N. Lawrance (Accra: Woeli Publishing Services, 2005); Sandra Greene, *Gender, Ethnicity and Social Change on the Upper Slave Coast: A History of the Anlo-Ewe* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1996); Lawrance, "Language Between Powers, Power Between Language Further Discussion of Education and Policy in Togoland under the French Mandate, 1919-1945 (La Langue entre des pouvoirs, les pouvoirs entre les langues: une conversation continuee a propos de l'education et de la polique educatrice du Togo sous le mandat francais (191-1945));" Meyer, "Christianity and the Ewe Nation: German Pietist Missionaries, Ewe Converts and the Politics of Culture."

¹⁷Amenumey, *The Ewe in Pre-Colonial Times: A Political History with Special Emphasis on the Anlo, Ge, and Krepi*.

Nugent argues that the term “Ewe” itself was not a common currency applied to a single group of people until recently. However, he added that although the ethnomym may be recent, the Ewe people may have had a long sense of themselves as people with common language, and origins from Notsie. However, the Ewe ethnicity itself is a modern construct.¹⁸

The migration story of the Ewe from Oyo, Nigeria to their present area is not subject of much debate in the Ewe scholars’ circle; it is rather the Notsie legend that has been a source of much debate among the primordialists and the constructivists. Paul Nugent and Sandra Greene have been in the forefront of this debate. Birgit Meyer argued that the Notsie legend is a construction of the German Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft (NMG) missionary who used the Ewe language as the foundation of Ewe ethnic identity.¹⁹ Sandra Greene noted Notsie was an important trading center and the home of an important Ewe deity call Mawu. However, during the German occupation Mawu was promoted to the status equal of the Christian God. Furthermore, Greene argued the German Bremen missionaries are the ones who promoted Notsie as the birthplace of the Ewe, and thus the cradle of the Ewe nation.²⁰ This argument is supported by Nugent who extended the debate to show that, the reason why the Ewe nationalists failed to unite the Ewe people is because Ewe ethnicity was constructed in the period of German colonial rule.²¹

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the ways in which Ewe immigrants from southeastern Ghana and southern Togo, living in the United States have used their political

¹⁸ Paul Nugent, “A Regional Melting Pot: The Ewe and their Neighbours in the Ghana-Togo Borderlands,” in *A Handbook of Eweland: The Ewe of Togo and Benin*, ed. Benjamin Lawrance (Accra, Woeli Publishing Services, 2005), 517-539.

¹⁹ Meyer, “Christianity and the Ewe Nation: German Pietist Missionaries, Ewe Converts and the Politics of Culture,”

²⁰ Greene, *Sacred Sites and the Colonial Encounter: A History of Meaning and Memory in Ghana*.

²¹ Nugent, “A Regional Melting Pot: The Ewe and their Neighbours in the Ghana-Togo Borderlands.”

history and culture to define their identities as Africans in America. I am particularly interested in this examination in the context of the ‘New’ African Diaspora immigrants’ experience. The question I am investigating is how have ethnic associations helped Ewes negotiate dynamics of place-differences between Eweland and the United States as they forge new identities in the process of migration? I will argue that the Ewes like other black immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean, understand their status as inferior (black) and minority (Ewe) and that status defines their low social stratification in all aspects of their social endeavor in the United States. I will argue the ethnic associations are a coping strategy to counter the racism and discrimination that the Ewe have faced in America, and they serve as a medium through which they can negotiate and ensure the continuity of the Ewe culture in the United States. Using the ethnic associations, the Ewes have carefully pursued limited integration and inclusion in the affairs of the United States. Furthermore, the ethnic associations are a forum through which the Ewe immigrants had coalesced Ewe and American cultures in order to adapt in the American society. To accomplish this, the Ewes have resorted to the nationalist rhetoric they used to pursue their unification in West Africa.

Furthermore, I will argue that it is not just experiences of racism and discrimination in the United States that have contributed to the emergence of Ewe nationalism in the diaspora. The history of the Ewe ethno-nationalist movement in the 1950s in West Africa, and the politics of regionalism and ethnicity in post-independence Ghana and Togo, which are visible among the Ghanaian and Togolese immigrant population in the United States, contributed to the emergence of Ewe ethnic consciousness in the United States.

Moreover, I like to note that this phenomenon is not unique to the Ewe, but to ethnic, religious and cultural groups throughout Africa and across the globe. Baser and Swain have

argued that today, “almost every country has a diaspora and almost every ethnic/religious/cultural group has a diaspora somewhere in the world,”²² a consequence of globalization. As Robertson has noted, as the world become increasingly globalize, the need for local identities among these groups has risen across the world.²³ While this thesis focuses on Ewe Diaspora in the US, its insights may apply to other ethnic, cultural and religious groups.

Need for Study

Based on my analysis of the scholarship on the contemporary African Diaspora in North America and Europe, there has been more focus on the national origins and the hometown associations of African immigrants in the Global North and not enough on the ethnic communities. For example, John A. Arthur and Ian E.A. Yeboah have written extensively on the Ghanaian immigrant experience in the United States. However, Ghana, like many African countries is pluralistic society of myriad linguistic, cultural and ethnic groups, whose immigrant experiences in the diaspora varies due to regional and ethnic cleavages in their homelands, which contributed to the push factor that had let to their emigration to the United Kingdom, France and the United States.

The formation of ethnic and hometown associations such as the Ewe Association of Georgia and Organization of Igbo People illustrates the mechanism of coping in the hostland of the United States that different ethnic communities from Ghana and Nigeria have adopted. Therefore, to fully comprehend the diverse experiences of African immigrants in the United States, the study of African immigrants should not be limited to their nationalities as Ghanaian or Nigerian; it must go further to the ethnic level. African nations are not culturally or linguistic

²² Bahar Baser and Ashok Swain, “Stateless Diaspora Groups and their Repertoires of Nationalist Activism in Host Countries,” *Journal of International Relations* 8, no. 1 (2010): 37.

²³ Ronald Robertson, Globalisation: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity,” in *Global Modernities*, ed. Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash and Ronald Robertson, (London, Sage Publications, 1995), 25-44,

homogeneous, thus their experiences are not homogenous. The experiences of Ghanaian Ewes are different from the Ghanaian Asantes, as much as the Nigerian Igbos experience is different from the Nigerian Yorubas, even though they come from the same countries. Therefore, I believe there is a need to study African immigrant experiences in the United States from the ethnic perspective.

Overview of Ewe Political History

In 1921, the Ewe people whose homeland was partitioned by the British and French governments into three territories (the British Gold Coast colony, the British Togoland and French Togoland shown in Figure 1) demanded the unification of their homeland under one colonial government. This is because the Ewe nationalists feared the separation of their people under two colonial powers would hinder their right of self-determination. In many petitions sent out by the nationalists to the United Nations, the United States and the British and French governments, Ewe nationalists like Sylvanus Olympio and Daniel Chapman, argued that the Ewe people are one people with a common language, culture and history of migration from Oyo, Nigeria to Notsie, Togo where they were united briefly under one monarchy in Notsie, Togo. However, the movement to unite Eweland failed in 1956 when British Togoland united with the Gold Coast, and became Ghana in 1957, and Togo (formerly French Togoland presented in Figure 1) gained her independence in 1960.

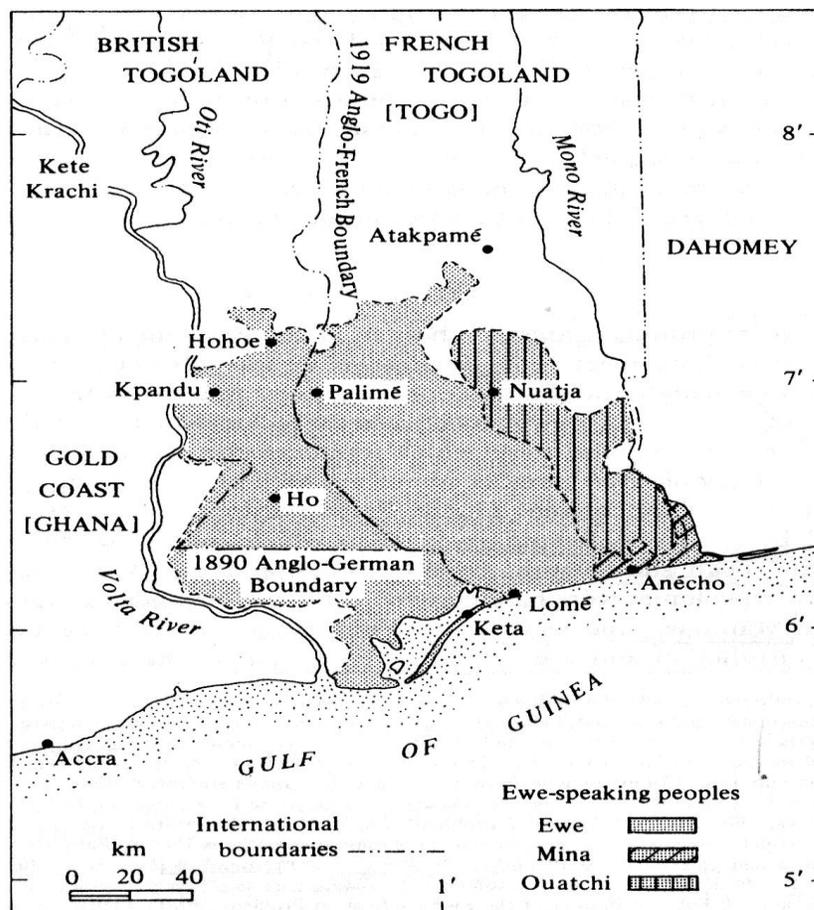


Figure 1: Eweland under colonial rule.²⁴

The Ewe Diaspora consisted of Ewes who immigrated to the United States in the late 20th century. Today, there are over thirteen chapters of Ewe ethnic association across the United States. Through these associations, the Ewes are participating in the cultural, social and economic affairs of Eweland (in Ghana and Togo). Like the Ewe nationalists in the 1950s, Ewe immigrants in the United States have used the Ewe migration story and Notsie legend to reconstruct Ewe identity in the diaspora. However, the reasons for the construction of Ewe identity in the United States are different from that of the Ewe nationalists of the 1950s in West

²⁴ David Brown, "Borderline Politics in Ghana: The National Liberation Movement of Western Togoland," *The Journal of African Studies* 18, no. 4 (1980): 577.

Africa. To understand the emergence of Ewe consciousness in 21th century America requires an understanding of how race, ethnicity and class have impacted the Ewe immigrants.

Methodology

The data for the research study are composed of the literature on the history of the Ewes in West Africa and from a field study I conducted during my McNair Research Fellowship at St. Lawrence University in the summer of 2009. The data obtained during the summer of 2009 was contextualized within the broader literature on the immigrant experiences of Sub-Saharan Africans.

During the course of that summer, I conducted ten interviews of Ewe immigrants and refugees in the northeastern region of the United States. The interviews were a constructivist study of the Ewes in the United States, in a sense that I collected information on the interviewees' general background (gender, age, nationality, citizenship status) in attempt to analyze the historical link between the Ewes of the diaspora and the homeland. Through the interviews I was also able to examine the response of Ewes to the political history in Ghana and Togo from the 1950s to the 1980s. However, the main objective of the interviews was to understand the Ewe perception of the politics in their home countries and how that affected their diasporic-identity formation. These interviews are not representative of the Ewe Diaspora, they are rather exploratory.

The interviews consisted of both formal in-depth interview sessions and informal Q&A surveys. Two of the interviewees are members of the United Volta Association in New York City. Of the two, one is also a member of the Council of Ewe Association of North America (CEANA) secretariat. The remaining eight are aware of the Ewe association and have attended some events but are not members. One of the eight is an international students who had been in the United

States (specifically in the Boston metropolitan area) for at least six years at the time of the interviews, and planed on living in the United States after the completion of her studies. The remaining seven are permanent residents or citizens in the Greater Rochester area of New York State and New York City. Out of the ten interviewees, five are men and five are women. By conducting these interviews, I was able to contextualize experiences of the Ewe immigrants within the broader literature on contemporary African migration to the United States.

Structure of the Study

This thesis consists of six chapters. The present chapter addresses the political and economic problems of Ghana and Togo in the post-independence era that contributed to the Ewe Diaspora to the United States. It explores how limited national integration of the Ewes in the post-independence Ghana and Togo contributed to the Ewe immigration to the Global North. Chapter 2 analyzes how the liberalization of U.S racist and discriminatory immigration policies in the 1960s contributed to the flow of Africans immigrants to the United States, with an emphasis on the Ewes. Chapter 3 examines the role of racism and discrimination in the settlement patterns of the Ewes in the United States and its impact on the formation of the Ewe associations. Chapter 4 analyzes the liberalization of the U.S immigration policies and how that contributed to increased African immigration. Moreover, how race and discrimination contribute to the settlement patterns of African immigrants in the US. Chapter 5 is an examination of the activities of the Ewe associations and how they contribute to the identity creation of first and second generation Ewe immigrants in the United States. Chapter 6 concludes the study by arguing that Ewe ethnonationalism in the United States is continuation of the Ewe unification movement that started in the late 19th century.

CHAPTER 2

ETHNO-NATIONALISM AND ETHNIC POLITICS IN GHANA AND TOGO: THE GENESIS OF THE DIASPORA

While the Ewe ethnonational movement for the unification of the Ewe territories failed to bring the Ewes under one state, the political history of the movement resulted in the Ewe's low level of integration into the Ghanaian and Togolese states and a heightened sense of Ewe consciousness. This is because the governments of Ghana and Togo had "gone out of their way to manipulate and exaggerate" the Ewe nationalist movement goal as tribalistic (in Togo) and secessionists (in Ghana).²⁵ In doing so, the Ewe regions of Volta in Ghana, Plateaux and Maritime in Togo experienced unequal distribution of national resources, which contributed to the Ewe Diaspora.²⁶

The genesis of the post-independence ethnic politics in Ghana and Togo began in 1940s with the United Nations decision to place the former German Togoland colony under a United Nations Trusteeship in 1946, which was under a League of Nations Permanent Mandate Commission administered by British and France until 1939. The decision resulted in a change of strategy by the Ewe nationalist parties such as the Comité de l'Unité Togolaise (CUT) in the French Togoland and the Togoland Congress (TC) in the British Togoland to favor the unification of the British and French Togolands and later a federation with the Gold Coast in order to achieve Ewe unification. However, Ghana's Convention People's Party (CPP) favored

²⁵ David Brown, "Sieges and Scapegoats: The Politics of Pluralism in Ghana and Togo," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 21, no. 3 (1983): 432.

²⁶ The Volta region is one of the ten administrative regions of Ghana. Plateaux and Maritime are two of the five administrative regions of Togo. The three regions form Eweland.

the integration of the British Togoland with the Gold Coast and a federation with the French Togoland.²⁷

After the integration of the British Togoland with Ghana post the 1956 plebiscite,²⁸ the Ewe who supported the TC rebelled in various towns and villages in the Volta Region in Ghana where most of the Ewes reside. The Convention People's Party government led by Kwame Nkrumah imprisoned many political leaders associated with the TC and threatened Ewes with imprisonment in order to crush the rebellion by the Ewes who supported unification with the French Togoland.²⁹ Donald Horowitz noted that the Ewes were "bitter at Nkrumah's punitive policy and the force with which he put down their rebellion, the Ewe never accommodated themselves to CPP rule. Nor did Nkrumah trust them."³⁰

The victory of the pro-Ewe party, CUT, led by Sylvanus Olympio in the 1958 election in the French Togoland, gave the Ewe nationalists control of the French Togoland once it became independent Togo in 1960.³¹ Relations between Ghana and Togo worsened as Ewe nationalists in Ghana sought refuge in Togo from Nkrumah's oppression.³²

²⁷ D.E.K Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement: a Political History* (Accra: Ghana University Press, 1989); Marc Michel, "The Independence of Togo," in *Decolonization and African Independence: The Transfers of Power, 1960-1980*, ed. Prosser Gifford and William Roger Louis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Claude E. Welch, "Conflict over Self-Determination in Togoland," Chapter 3 in *Dream of Unity: Pan-Africanism and Political Unification in West Africa*, (Ithaca; Cornell University Press, 1966) 82-147; John Kent, "The Ewé Question, 1945-1956: French and British Reactions to Nationalism in West Africa," in *Imperialism, the State and the Third World*, ed. by Michael Twaddle, (London: British Academic Press, 1992), 183-206; B.W. Hodder, "The Ewe Problem: A Reassessment," in *Essays in Political Geography*, ed. by Charles A. Fisher, (London: Methuen & Co LTD, 1968), 271-283.

²⁸ Amenumey, "The 1956 Plebiscite in Togoland under British Administration and Ewe Unification," *Universitas* 5, no. 2 (1976): 126-140; "Plebiscite Forthcoming in British Togoland," *Africa Today* 3, no. 2 (1956): 5-7.

²⁹ Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement: a Political History*, 275-77; Roberta E. Mapp, "Cross-National Dimensions of Ethnocentrism," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 6, no. 1 (1972): 81; Brown, "Who are the tribalists? Social Pluralism and Political Ideology in Ghana," *African Affairs* 81, no. 322 (1982): 54.

³⁰ Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1985), 510; Ken Kwaku, "Tradition, Colonialism and Politics in Rural in Ghana: Local Politics in Have, Volta Region," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 10, no. 1 (1976):83-4

³¹ "The Togo Elections," *Africa Today* 5, no. 4 (1958): 6-12.

The CPP and CUT governments continuously plotted against each other over the “Ewe Problem,” after it became clear that Olympio did not want to federate Togo with Ghana.³³ The CPP government punished the areas of the Volta Region that supported the TC.³⁴ In addition, the involvement of Ewe soldiers and politicians in attempts to overthrow the CPP government, led to the exclusion of Ewe soldiers from the officer corps, and Nkrumah’s decision to not appoint any Ewe into his cabinet after 1961.³⁵

In 1961, the CUT government under Sylvanus Olympio scheduled an election in which CUT was the only participating party. As a result, Togo became a one-party state after 1961. The austerity measures of the government and its Ewe favoritism at the expense of the northern Togolese resulted in the assassination of Olympio, thus the overthrow of the CUT government in 1963 by northern Kabre soldiers, who were veterans of the French Foreign Legion. The coup was inspired by the northerners’ resentment of the CUT government’s promotion of Ewe interest at their expense.³⁶

After the 1963 coup d’état, another Ewe-based regime again came to power led by Nicolas Grunitzsky who ruled Togo from 1963 to 1967. This period was described by David Brown as a period of “*immobilisme* and instability,” because of the political rivalry between the

³² Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement: a Political History*, 340; Ken Kwaku, “Tradition, Colonialism and Politics in Rural in Ghana: Local Politics in Have, Volta Region,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 10, no. 1 (1976): 83; George Shepherd, “Ghana’s ‘Good Neighbor’ Prospects,” *Africa Today* 10, no. 9 (1963): 35-27.

³³ David Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: Vision and tragedy* (Ghana: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007), 282, 298-9, 303-4; Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement: a Political History*, 337-45.

³⁴ David Brown, “Politics in the Kpandu Area of Ghana, 1925 to 1969: a Study of the Influence of Central Government and National Politics upon Location Factional Competition,” PhD dissertation, University of Birmingham (1977).

³⁵ Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 510; Brown, “Sieges and Scapegoats: The Politics of Pluralism in Ghana and Togo,” 442; Brown, “Who are the tribalists? Social Pluralism and Political Ideology in Ghana,” 54.

³⁶ Marc Michel, “The Independence of Togo,” 319; Samuel Decalo, “The Benevolent General: Military Rule in Togo,” Chapter 3 in *Coups and Army Rule in Africa: Studies in Military Style* (New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), 90; Brown, “Sieges and Scapegoats: The Politics of Pluralism in Ghana and Togo,” 442; Dirk Kohnert, “Togo: Thorny Transitions and Misguided Aid at the Roots of Economic Misery,” in *Elections and Democratization in West Africa, 1990-2009*, ed. Abdoulaye Sane and Mathurin Houngnikpo (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 183-4; Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 482.

two dominant ethnic groups: the Ewes of the South and the Kabre of the North. The political instability was coupled with economic unrest which led to an attempted coup by supporters of Olympio in 1966. A year after the attempted coup, Kabre soldiers who had participated in the 1963 coup overthrew the Grunitzsky government and established a strong northern (Kabre) military junta led by Gnassingbé Eyadema, thereby ending the southern Ewe domination of Togo since 1958.³⁷ The ethnic composition of the Togolese government dramatically changed. From 1960 to 1963 when Olympio was president, the Ewes made up 67 percent of the cabinet, while the Kabre made up 22 percent. The number of Ewes in Grunitzsky cabinet increased to 70 percent, while the Kabre percentage decreased to 20. In the aftermath of the 1967 coup, the Ewe number decreased to 25 percent, while the Kabre number increased from 20 percent to 42 percent.³⁸ In addition, Eyadema's Kabre regime has pursued a policy of developing the northern part of Togo.

Three years after Olympio's CUT government was overthrown, the CPP government also fell in February of 1966. The participation of Ewe police and military officers and their domination in the military junta after the coup led to the perception of Ewe domination in Ghanaian politics.³⁹ Thus in April of 1967, an aborted coup against the Ewe dominated military government resulted in the death of General Kotoka (who led the 1966 coup) and two other Ewe officers. The subsequent replacement of Ewe members of the military junta resulted in fear by

³⁷ S.N. Sangmpam, "The Overpoliticised State and International Politics: Nicaragua, Haiti, Cambodia, and Togo," *Third World Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1995): 628; Brown, "Sieges and Scapegoats: The Politics of Pluralism in Ghana and Togo," 442; Kohnert, "Togo: Thorny Transitions and Misguided Aid at the Roots of Economic Misery," 184; Samuel Decalo, "The Benevolent General: Military Rule in Togo," 95-108.

³⁸ Donald G. Morrison, et la., "Togo," in Donald G. Morrison, et la., *Black Africa: A Comparative Handbook* (New York, The Free Press, 1989), 668; U.S. Department of States, Office of Public Communication, *Background Notes, Togo, 1978* (Washington, D.C., 1978): 2; Decalo, "The Benevolent General: Military Rule in Togo," 109; Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 482-3.

³⁹ Bjorn Hettne, "Soldiers and Politics: The Case of Ghana," *Journal of Peace Research* 17, no. 2 (1980): 179; Brown, "Who are the tribalists? Social Pluralism and Political Ideology in Ghana," 54-6; Brown, "Sieges and Scapegoats: The Politics of Pluralism in Ghana and Togo," 442-3; Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 510.

the Ewes that they were under attack by the Asantes.⁴⁰ Consequently, in the 1969 general elections, the Ewes voted for the Ewe-based National Alliance of Liberals (NAL) and the Asante voted for the Asante-based Progressive Party (PP).⁴¹ The victory of the PP over the NAL resulted in the discrimination of Ewes in Ghanaian politics. “Ewes were excluded from all Cabinet and junior Ministerial posts; and they fared badly in appointments and promotions in the higher echelons of the police, armed forces, and civil service. The Volta Region appeared to be ‘Region number nine’ in terms of government’s regional resource allocations.”⁴²

The 1960s established the political behavior of both Ghana and Togo as Ewes versus Asantes in Ghana and Ewes versus Kabre in Togo. In Ghana, the Ewes are depicted as oppositionists and secessionists, due to their oppositionist stance against Ghana governments and support for the Togoland Congress. In Togo, the Ewes are depicted as tribalists due to the Olympio government’s discrimination against non-Ewe northerners. This political behavior exists today in both nations’ politics through the Ewe support for the National Democratic Congress in Ghana and Union of Forces for Change in Togo.

THE ECONOMIC HISTORY OF GHANA AND TOGO

This political behavior of Ewes is not limited to their national frontiers. It does not end once they leave their respective countries; it is part of their identity as immigrants in the United States. However, the decision of Africans like the Ewes of Ghana and Togo to leave their

⁴⁰ When Ghana achieved independence in 1957 it had eight regions, but 1959 it had nine regions. The Volta region was one of the those and because of the Ewes perceived secessionist sentiments, it received less of the state’s resources. A. Kaakyire Duku Frempong, “Ghana’s Election 2000: The Ethnic Under Current,” in *Deepening Democracy in Ghana: Politics of the 2000 Elections*, ed. Joseph R.A. Ayee (Legon, Ghana, Freedom Publication, 2001), 145; Morrison, et la., “Ghana,” in Donald G. Morrison, et la., *Black Africa: A Comparative Handbook* (New York, The Free Press, 1989), 476; Brown, “Who are the tribalists? Social Pluralism and Political Ideology in Ghana,” 57.

⁴¹ J.A. Craig, “Ghana’s General Election,” *The World Today* 25, no. 10 (1969); Brown, “Who are the tribalists? Social Pluralism and Political Ideology in Ghana,” *African Affairs* 81, no. 322 (1982): 57

⁴² Brown, “Who are the tribalists? Social Pluralism and Political Ideology in Ghana,” 59.

respective countries is not just political one, while it contributed to their identity creation in the diaspora, whether in the United States or a Western European countries, it is also economic one.

The 1960s was not only a period of political instabilities in both countries, but also one of economic decline. Thus, the economic conditions and the political instability of both countries are not independent variables. For example, from 1956 to 1965 “Togo had the lowest economic growth rate of all twelve French excolonies.”⁴³ However, by the 1970s Togo’s economy improved due to revenues from its “expanding phosphate industry” and illicit import and export trade of tobacco, perfumes and alcohol led to an improve economy by 1969. Thus, Togo’s economy grew at a rate of 5 percent in the years 1966-70 and 7 percent from 1971-75. The improved economy enabled the Kabre led northern dominated government of Eyadema “to wean away potential Ewe opposition elements.”⁴⁴

The economic conditions coupled with the political instabilities of both countries factors into the decision of Ghanaians and Togolese to leave their countries. The economic decline of Ghana since the fall of cocoa prices in 1958 was worsened by lack of private foreign investment and by political instability in the 1960s to the 1980s, resulting in a wave of Ghanaian immigration to the Global North.⁴⁵ Thus, Ghanaian Ewes came to the United States first because of Ghana’s weak economy during that period. However, in the same period, Togo’s economy grew because of the boom in it phosphate trade, illicit export and import trades, and by major international financial inflows. Then Togo was called the “Switzerland of Africa” because of its prosperity. That changed by the late 1980s as Togo’s economy was in decline.

⁴³ Decalo, “The Benevolent General: Military Rule in Togo,” 91.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 108-9.

⁴⁵ Emmanuel Akyeampong, “Africans in the Diaspora: The Diaspora and Africa,” *African Affairs* 99, (2000): 204-5.

Coupled with the political oppression that “had begun by about 1985,”⁴⁶ this contributed to the growth of the Togolese Ewe Diaspora across Europe and North America.

Ed Yao Hiheta noted that the Ewe Diaspora began late “20th and early 21ST century, [when] a record number of the Ewe people have voluntarily or forcibly left their country for a variety of social, economic or political reasons.” The Ewe diaspora can be divided into two. One group was composed of students pursuing higher education in Europe and North America, some of whom never return. The other was composed of refugees, retired or under-employed professionals, and skilled or unskilled Ewes who were “seeking better opportunities for their families.” The Togolese Ewe immigrants come from towns and cities in the southern regions of Maritime and La Plateaux, whereas the Ghanaian Ewe immigrants come from the Volta Region.⁴⁷

The Ewe nationalist movement for the unification of their homeland which was divided by French and British colonial administrations was not accomplished. It was not accomplished for many reasons, intra-Ewe rivalry between the Gold Coast Ewes who supported the CPP and the British Togoland Ewes who supported the TC. The latter believe the integration of the British Togoland with Ghana would result in their domination by the Gold Coast Ewes and thus supported the unification of the British and French Togoland and then formed an association with Ghana. However, the United Nations decision to not place the French Togoland under a British trusteeship led British Togoland Ewes to support Togoland unification as a prerequisite for Ewe unification.

The opposition of the TC against the CPP government and Ewe politicians and soldiers plot against the CPP government and their participation in the coup that overthrow the CPP

⁴⁶ Kohnert, “Togo: Thorny Transitions and Misguided Aid at the Roots of Economic Misery,” 184.

⁴⁷ Ed Yao Hiheta, “The Ewe Diaspora,” in *A Handbook of Eweland: The Ewe of Togo and Benin*, ed. Benjamin N. Lawrance (Accra, Woeli Publishing Services, 2005), 337.

government, in addition to their domination in the military government that came to power after 1966, led to the perception of Ewe plot for domination. The assassination of the Ewe military officers in 1967 led to the perception of the Ewes that they were under attack, which led to an ethnic consciousness of the Ewe subgroups that did not support the same political parties during Ghana's independence, which was illustrated in the Ewe support for the NAL in the 1969 election. The defeat of the NAL and the discrimination the Ewe experienced under the Progressive Party leader and their subsequent opposition against the Asante dominated government led to the perception that the Ewe are oppositionists and secessionists, because of some of their support for the TC and opposition.⁴⁸

In Togo, the Ewe nationalist position of the CUT government during the period before and after independence as Olympio and Nkrumah fought for control of Eweland had led to the perception of the Ewe tribalism that was developing the southern Ewe part of Togo at the expense of the underdeveloped north. The 1963 and 1967 coup d'états were northern attempts to check the Ewe domination of the country.

The political histories of both countries form the basis for the formation of Ewe ethnic associations in the United States. The formation of the Ghanaian and Togolese states prevented the development of Ewe nationalist demand for unification under one state, instead of Ghana and Togo. The economic conditions of both countries led to their dispersion to the United States and European countries, where they feel that will not be discriminated against due to their political stance against the ruling government of both countries as Ewes. Thus, in the diaspora where the powers of the Ghanaian and Togolese states are absent; there seems to be a rise in demand for the development of Eweland which crosses the international borders of Ghana and Togo.

⁴⁸ Brown, "Sieges and Scapegoats: The Politics of Pluralism in Ghana and Togo,"

CHAPTER 3

THE AFRICAN DIASPORA: POST-INDEPENDENCE POLITICS AND THE LIBERALIZATION OF AMERICAN IMMIGRATION POLICIES

The recent immigration of Ewes and their Ghanaian and Togolese countrymen/women as well as other Africans to the United States is not a recent phenomenon. It is however, a result of changes in the U.S immigration policies that had restricted the immigration of Africans since the abolition of slave trade and the implementation of restrictive immigration laws. So what account for the changes in American immigration laws that contributed to the admission of thousands of African immigrants to the United States after decades of restrictions? In addition, what are the factors that contributed to the emigration of thousands of Africans like the Ewes to the United States? Furthermore, how do the Ewes fit into the contemporary African diaspora in the United States?

The Ewe diaspora is part of what Paul Zeleza described as “contemporary diasporas” of Africans beginning in the 19th century. Zeleza divided the ‘contemporary diasporas’ into three waves; (1) the diaspora of colonization which consisted of African students who studied at North American and European countries during the colonization period of the Africa. Some of these students did not return once they had finished their education. (2) The diaspora of decolonization composed of Africans who immigrated to the Global North during the African independence struggles and settled there. (3) The diaspora of structural adjustment comprised of refugees, traders, professional elites who emigrated to North America and Europe due to the impact of the structural adjustment programs.⁴⁹ While “the first significant flow of African immigrants to the

⁴⁹ Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, “Diaspora Dialogues: Engagements between Africa and Its Diaspora,” In *The New African Diaspora*, ed. Isidore Opkewho and Nkiru Nzegwu (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2009), 36. The

U.S. began somewhere in the early 1970s” it was not until the 1980s and the 1990s that the flow of African immigrants surged.⁵⁰ Thus, while the Ewe diaspora has its origins in the opposition and dominant role the Ewe play in Ghanaian and Togolese politics in the immediate period after independence, the flow of Ewe immigrants to the United States further increased during the 1980s as a result of the worsening political and economic conditions.

As Hiheta pointed out Ewe diaspora involved two waves. The first wave falls into what Zeleza described as decolonization Diaspora, caused by the post-independence economic deterioration and ethnic politics in Ghana and Togo.⁵¹ The second wave falls into the diaspora of structural adjustment⁵² which is a result of the continued ethnic conflicts and worsening political problems in both countries in the 1970s, forcing both the Togolese and Ghanaian governments to enroll in the structural adjustment programs, which further worsened the economies of both countries.

Ghana: from 1960s to 1980s

Three years after the PP government of Ghana had assumed power in 1969; it was overthrown in a coup led by an Asante, Colonel Ignatius Acheampong in 1972. By the time of the coup, there was only one Ewe left in senior position in the army,⁵³ a consequence of the PP government policy of replacing Ewes in the army with Asante soldiers.⁵⁴ Thus, Colonel

structural adjustments were IMF and World Bank policies that were meant to save the economies of most Third World countries.

⁵⁰Baffour K. Takyi and Kwame Safo Boate, “Location and Settlement Patterns of African Immigrants in the U.S: Demographic and Spatial Context,” In *The New African Diaspora in North America: Trends, Community Building, and Adaption*, ed. Kwadwo Akyemang-Konadu, Baffour K. Takyi and John Arthur, (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2006), 52.

⁵¹ Ed Yao Hiheta, “The Ewe Diaspora,” in *A Handbook of Eweland: The Ewe of Togo and Benin*, ed. Benjamin N. Lawrance (Accra, Woeli Publishing Services, 2005), 337-351.

⁵² Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, “Diaspora Dialogues: Engagements between Africa and Its Diaspora,” 36.

⁵³ Bjorn Hettne, “Soldiers and Politics: The Case of Ghana,” *Journal of Peace Research* 17, no. 2 (1980): 173-193.

⁵⁴ Simon Baynham, “The Ghanaian Military: A Bibliographic Essay,” *The West African Journal of Sociology and Political Science* 1, no. 1, (1975): 83-96.

Acheampong was aided by Ewe soldiers in the coup.⁵⁵ The colonel stated that the coup was an attempt to stop the tribalistic politics of the PP government.⁵⁶ As a result, the military junta of Acheampong gave equal representation of four positions to the Ewes as well as the Asantes.⁵⁷ In the same year of the coup, Ghanaian Ewes formed the National Liberation Movement for Western Togoland or Tolimo. They sent a petition to the Organization of African Unity demanding that the Ewe people of Ghana be allowed “to join their kith and kin in the Republic of Togo.”⁵⁸

The activities of the Tolimo activists quickly changed the politics of Ghana; Colonel Acheampong removed the Ewe officers who had supported him during the 1972 coup, from the military junta, as a result of the secessionist activities of the Tolimo. In addition, the Ewe attempted coup in 1975 and 1976 of the Acheampong Government,⁵⁹ and the support of Tolimo by the Togolese Government almost led to an “armed confrontation [between the Ghanaian and Togolese governments] in September-October 1977.”⁶⁰

As a result, “the Ewe were right back where they were under the” PP government.⁶¹ Furthermore, the Acheampong government banned the movement, arrested its leaders and declared death penalty for those who advocated for secession. A military operation was launched in the Volta Region “to suppress and discredit Tolimo.”⁶²

⁵⁵ David Brown, “Who are the tribalists? Social Pluralism and Political Ideology in Ghana,” *African Affairs* 81, no. 322 (1982): 60.

⁵⁶ Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1985), 513.

⁵⁷ David Brown, “Who are the tribalists? Social Pluralism and Political Ideology in Ghana,” 60.

⁵⁸ Brown, “Borderline Politics in Ghana: The Liberation Movement of Western Togoland,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 18, no. 4 (1980): 583-4.

⁵⁹ Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 513.

⁶⁰ David Brown, “Borderline Politics in Ghana: The Liberation Movement of Western Togoland,”

⁶¹ Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 513.

⁶² Brown, “Borderline Politics in Ghana: The Liberation Movement of Western Togoland,” 591

On June 4, 1979, supporters of the Ewe, Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings overthrew the Ghanaian government and established a military junta dominated by Ewe and Ga soldiers. After elections Rawlings relinquished his power to a civilian government. However, the government's "campaign against Rawlings and leading Ewe members of his military junta fuel "Ewe discontent to new heights." As a result, in 1981, Rawlings staged a coup that replaced the civilian government, with the Ewe dominated Provincial National Defense Council (PNDC).⁶³ This ethnic politics in Ghana was taking place within a milieu of the country's economic decay. Two years after the PNDC had assumed power, the Ghanaian economy had collapsed. As a result, the PNDC government demanded the assistance of the World Bank. The World Bank responded by demanding the PNDC implements its Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), which was supposed to improve the economy. However, the austerity measures of the SAP worsened the economic and social condition of the country,⁶⁴ which contributed to Ghanaian Ewes diaspora in the United States.

Togo: From 1960s to the 1980s

In 1969, General Eyadema who had become president of Togo after the 1967 coup created the Rally of the Togolese People (RPT), in order to unite the ethnic groups of Togo and prevent the Ewe tribalistic policies of the previous administrations of Olympio and Grunitzsky. In 1970, the RPT government announced that there was attempted coup by Ewes supporters of CUT. Some of the conspirators were beaten to death, others were shot. Fear of a Ewe discontent led the RPT government to included Ewes in the regime.⁶⁵ "The nationalization of the Togolese phosphate mines in 1974" and the subsequent phosphate boom in 1975 contributed to an

⁶³ Naomi Chazan, "Ethnicity and Politics in Ghana," *Political Science Quarterly* 97, no. 3 (1982): 461, 474, 483; Ebenezer Babatope, *The Ghana Revolution*, (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co., LTD, 1982), 45, 75.

⁶⁴ Emmanuel Akyeampong, "Africans in the Diaspora: The Diaspora and Africa," *African Affairs* 99, (2000): 204.

⁶⁵ David Brown, "Sieges and Scapegoats: The Politics of Pluralism in Ghana and Togo," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 21, no. 3 (1983): 450.

economic prosperity and the country's relative stability.⁶⁶ However, discovery of Ewe plots in 1977,⁶⁷ and the collapse of the phosphate market in 1977⁶⁸ not only led to rising economic decay but also a political instability. The RPT government responded by arresting conspirators and blames the sons of Sylvanus Olympio for the attempted coup. In addition, the government introduced a new constitution and held elections in December of 1979, in which opposition was banned, resulting in 99 percent victory for the RPT.⁶⁹

As the economic condition of Togo continued to decay, the RPT government requested the Structural Adjustment loans in the 1980s to prevent the economy from collapsing. As a result of the loans conditionality for Structural Adjustments, the government was forced to embark on austerity measures that had further contributed to ethno-regional confrontation between the southern Ewes and the northern Kabre. While Ghanaian economy collapsed, Togo's economy was sustained by conditional loans and revenues from its cocoa and cotton exports.⁷⁰ While the economy did not collapse, the worsening living standard, due to the austerity measures, contributed to demands for political reforms in the 1990s by the southern Ewes against the Kabre dominated Togolese RPT government. The resistance of RPT government to introduced democratic reforms was followed by a civil war that led to the dispersal of 350,000 Togolese, mostly the Ewes who had opposed the government, to seek political refuge in Ghana and Benin.⁷¹ This political problem contributed to the Ewe diaspora in the United States.

⁶⁶ John R. Heilbrunn, "Commerce, politics and Business Associations in Benin and Togo," *Comparative Politics* 29, no. 4 (1997): 477.

⁶⁷ David Brown, "Sieges and Scapegoats: The Politics of Pluralism in Ghana and Togo," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 21, no. 3 (1983): 452-3.

⁶⁸ Heilbrunn, "Commerce, politics and Business Associations in Benin and Togo," 477.

⁶⁹ Brown, "Sieges and Scapegoats: The Politics of Pluralism in Ghana and Togo," 453.

⁷⁰ Heilbrunn, "Commerce, politics and Business Associations in Benin and Togo," 477.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 476; Heilbrunn, "Social Origins of National Conferences in Benin and Togo," *The Journal of African Studies* 31, no. 2 (1993): 277-299; Jennifer C. Seely, *The Legacies of Transition Government in Africa: The Cases of Benin and Togo* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), chapter 4.

Contemporary Black African Immigration to the United States

The immigration of the Sub-Sahara Africans like the Ewes to the United States is not a new phenomenon. As Konadu-Agyemang and Takyi noted “African presence in this region goes back further, and may have predated the era of the infamous slave trade when significant number African slaves were brought to the colonies of the ‘New World,’”⁷² which Zeleza described as the “historical diasporas.”⁷³ In fact, three centuries after the discovery of the Americas, African slaves constituted the principal source of immigrants to the region.⁷⁴

The abolition of the slavery trade, and the passage of the U.S immigration laws such as the Immigration Act of 1917, the Emergency Immigration Act of 1921, the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924,⁷⁵ and the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952,⁷⁶ all contributed to the decreased number of African immigration to the United States, thus dramatically decreased the black population. For example, between 1820 and 1841, only 71 African immigrates were admitted to the United States. While in the period of 1841 and 1960, the African immigration increased to 47,140, it only represented an average of 396 per annum.⁷⁷

The increased number of African immigrants like the Ewes in the United States since the 1960s is a result of the removal of the race-biased immigration statutes that were embedded within the pre-1960s immigration acts such as the Immigration Act of 1917, the Emergency

⁷² Kwado Akyemang-Konadu, and Baffour K. Takyi, “An Overview of African Immigration to U.S and Canada,” In *The New African Diaspora in North America: Trends, Community Building, and Adaption*, ed. Kwado Akyemang-Konadu, Baffour K. Takyi and John Arthur (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2006), 4.

⁷³ Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, “Diaspora Dialogues: Engagements between Africa and Its Diaspora,” In *The New African Diaspora*, ed. Isidore Opkewho and Nkiru Nzegwu (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2009), 35-6.

⁷⁴ David M. Kennedy, “Can we still afford to be a nation of immigrants? *Atlantic Monthly*, November Issues (1996): <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/96nov/immigrant/kennedy.htm>

⁷⁵ Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001): 96-7, 104, 109.

⁷⁶ David G. Gutierrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1995): 161.

⁷⁷ U.S Department of Justice, *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigrant and Naturalization Service*, (Washington, D.C, U.S Government Printing Office, 1997).

Immigration Act of 1921, the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924, and the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952. The 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, for example, abolished the restrictive immigration laws of the pre-1960s, by making it possible for African immigrants to sponsor their families to join them in the United States. The 1980 Refugee Act, “which broaden the qualification for entry as a refugee to make it possible for stateless and uprooted persons from non-communist countries to enter the USA for resettlement” contributed to the increased African immigrants from war-torn countries like Liberia and Ethiopia. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 legalized the immigration status of Africans who entered the United States prior to 1982.⁷⁸ In addition, the introduction of the U.S State Department’s Diversity Program in 1990 has also contributed to the increase number of African immigrants in the United States.⁷⁹ In the 1960s, there were 28,954 Africans admitted to the United States. That number increased to 80,779 in the 1970s, followed by 176,892 in the 1980s and another increased to 354,030 in the 1990s.⁸⁰

The changes in the United States immigration laws are result of the global labor dependence on educated workers regardless of their race, ethnicity and gender.⁸¹ Stanley Tambiah noted that the decreased growth rate in the Global North and increased growth rate in the Global South has resulted in demand for labor by the developed countries like the United States.⁸² For example, Okome argued that the political and economic policies of the Group of

⁷⁸ Douglas S. Massey, “The New Ethnicity in the U.S.A,” *Population and Development Review* 21, no. 3 (1995): 631-652; Hugo Kanya, “African Immigrants in the U.S.A.: The Challenges for Research and Practice,” *Social Work* 42, no.2 (1997): 154-165; John A. Arthur, *Invisible Sojourners: African Immigrant Diaspora in the United States* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000); John Arthur, *The African Diaspora in the United States and Europe* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), 2.

⁷⁹ Kwado Akyemang-Konadu, and Baffour K. Takyi, “African immigrants in the U.S.A.: Some reflections on their pre- and post-migration experiences,” *The Arab World Geographer* 4, no. 1 (2001): 31-47.

⁸⁰ Sam Roberts, “More Africans Enter the U.S than in Days of Slavery,” *New York Times* (February 2005): www.nytimes.com.

⁸¹ Chris Dwyer, “Migrations and Diaspora,” in *Introducing Human Geographies* ed. Paul Cloke, Philip Crang and Mark Goodwin (London, Arnold, 1999).

⁸² Stanley J. Tambiah, “Transnational Movements, Diaspora, and Multiple Modernities,” *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000): 163-194.

Eight countries like the United States have turned the developing countries of Africa into labor reserves for countries like United States. These policies such as the Structural Adjustment Programs by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and unfair trade policies by the World Trade Organization had worsened the political and economic conditions of African countries (such as Ghana and Togo) which caused the exits of many Africans to North America.⁸³

In addition to changes in U.S immigration laws, “innovations and advancements in international communication” and “relatively lower cost of international migration”⁸⁴ has contributed to a “dynamic, vibrant and extensive” Ewe community in the United States.⁸⁵ As James Clifford noted “airplanes, telephones, tape cassettes, camcorders, and mobile job markets reduce distances and facilitate two-way traffic, legal and illegal, between the world’s places” of diasporas.⁸⁶ Through those communication outlets and social media forum such as Facebook, Yahoo and news groups the Ewe maintain links with the Eweland and within the diaspora.

⁸³ Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome, “The Contradictions of Globalization: Causes of Contemporary African Immigration to the United States of America,” in *The New African Diaspora in North America: Trends, Community Building, and Adaption*, ed. Kwado Akyemang-Konadu, Baffour K. Takyi and John Arthur (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2006); Aderanti Adepoju, “Linkages between internal and international migration: the African Situation International,” *Social Science Journal* 50, no. 3 (1998): 387-395; Adebayo Adedeji, “Introduction,” in *The Human Dimension of Africa’s Persistent Economic Crisis* ed. Adebayo Adedeji, Melody Morrison and Sadig Rasheed (London, Hans Zell for the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 1990), 1-10.

⁸⁴ Okome, “The Contradictions of Globalization: Causes of Contemporary African Immigration to the United States of Africa,” 33,35.

⁸⁵ Hiheta, “The Ewe Diaspora,” 349.

⁸⁶ James Clifford, “Diaspora,” *Cultural Anthropology*, 9 no. 3 (1994), 304.

CHAPTER 4

HOME AWAY FROM HOME: SETTLEMENT PATTERNS OF EWES IN THE UNITED STATES

Like other African communities, the Ewes have settled across major cities throughout the United States as part of the contemporary African diaspora in the U.S. Political and economic problems in Ghana and Togo have prevented many Ewes from going back to their countries to permanently reside. But in the cities where the Ewes have settled in the United States discussion of uniting the Ewe people continues. In states and cities throughout America where there are major Ewe settlements, one can also find Ewe associations such as the Ewe Association of Georgia, the Ewe Association of Mississippi/Arkansas, the Volta Club in New York City, and the Milenovisi Harbor in Chicago. Most of the Ewe associations were formed in the 1980s. Today, these associations are member chapters of Council of Ewe Associations of North America (CEANA), since its inception in the 1990s.⁸⁷ CEANA is an organization dedicated “to promote and assist in the Socio-Economic and cultural development of our homeland; Eweland.”⁸⁸ These associations were created as a result of the need by Ewe immigrants to provide themselves social, financial and cultural supports in segregated America.

While the liberalization of immigration laws has opened American shores to African immigrants, one can still recognize “the persistent racial legacies expressed through institutional and individual White-majority behaviors” in the United States. The legacies have restricted equal access of African Americans, and Caribbean and African immigrants to basic resources, as illustrated through the settlement and residency of African Americans and Caribbean and African

⁸⁷ Interview with Kwodzo, New York, June 17, 2009. Kwodzo is a Ghanaian Ewe, a founding member of the United Volta Association and a former member of the Council of Ewe Associations of North America Secretariat.

⁸⁸ Council of Ewe Associations of North America (CEANA): <http://www.ceanaonline.org/>

immigrants.⁸⁹ Thus, “higher concentration of native-born and Caribbean blacks” and “readily available market, especially for those Africans employed in the secondary labor market” in the metropolitan areas like Minneapolis-St. Paul, New York, Washington, D.C, and Atlanta have attracted African immigrants.⁹⁰ Where do the Ewe (like other African) immigrants settle in the United States? What factors shape their decisions to settle where they have? To gain an insight into these questions, in the summer of 2009, I interviewed Ewe immigrants in New York State and Massachusetts to understand the factors that shape their settlement decision: the point I will turn to now.

Ethnographies of Ewe Immigrants and Refugees

Kwodzo, a Ghanaian Ewe, came to the United States in 1980s, as a result of his admission into a university in Philadelphia. After finishing his masters, he worked in Philadelphia. Later he decided to move to Chicago, after he was presented with a better job opportunity. After five years living in Chicago, he decided to move to New York City. His decision to move to New York City had to do with the large presence of African immigrants there, which he believes made his adjustment to the United States easier.⁹¹

Paul and his wife Juliette are Togolese Ewes who arrived in the United States with their family of six in 1999 as refugees, after having spent seven years in a refugee camp in Togo. They were sponsored by a Methodist Church in western New York. As a result, they lived in a town in Western New York for a period of three months. After which the family decided to move out of

⁸⁹ Norah F. Henry, Joe T. Darden and John W. Frazier, “An Introduction to the African Diaspora in the United States and Canada at the Dawn of the 21st Century,” In *The African Diaspora in the U.S. and Canada at the Dawn of the 21st Century*, ed. John W. Frazier, Joe T. Darden, and Nora F. Henry (Binghamton University, Global Academic Publishing, 2009), 1-2.

⁹⁰ Baffour K Takyi, and Kwame Safo Boate, “Location and Settlement Patterns of African Immigrants in the U.S: Demographic and Spatial Context,” In *The New African Diaspora in North America: Trends, Community Building, and Adaption*, ed. Kwadwo Akyemang-Konadu, Baffour K. Takyi and John Arthur (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2006), 55.

⁹¹ Interview with Kwodzo, New York , June 17, 2009.

that rural area for the urban area of western New York. Paul noted that he felt in the city he could find a job and had heard and known of other Ewe immigrants reside.⁹²

Paul and Juliette found jobs immediately after settling in the city. However, after four years of living in the city, they decided that the violence on the streets and the schools and poor education standards of the city schools were not beneficial to their children. As a result, they moved to a suburb where they now reside. Paul and Juliette acknowledged the high academic standard of the suburban schools and its contribution to the acceptance of two of their children into private colleges, from which one has graduated. While Paul and Juliette move from the city to the suburb, they continue to work in the city. However, the increasing violence in the metropolitan area had caused Juliette to want to move to cities like Omaha, Nebraska and Springfield, Illinois, where she believes the violence is lower and there is a large concentration of Ewe and African immigrants. At the time I interview her she said she had given up on moving because the social network that she believes Omaha and Springfield would offer her family was taking root in western New York due to increasing number of Ewe and African immigrants.⁹³ Akosua, another Togolese Ewe, a friend of Paul and Juliette, who also lives in western New York, expressed the same sentiment as Juliette, pointing to the increase presence of Ewe and African immigrants in the region as the reason why she decided not to move.⁹⁴

Akosua noted “we are far from home, when I first decide to go home [Togo] I have to take a flight to New York City, from there to de Gaulle [Paris, France] and then finally home. That’s when I realize we are from away from home.” Therefore, she believes that the support of the Ewe community is crucial to her survival. Thus, if it was not for the presence of the Togolese

⁹² Interview with Paul and Juliette, New York, June 21, 2009.

⁹³ Interview with Paul and Juliette, New York, June 21, 2009.

⁹⁴ Interview with Akosua, New York, June 22, 2009

and other African immigrants in the area, she stated that she would have moved with her family to New York City or Omaha, Nebraska where there are more African residents. Like Juliette, Akosua pointed to the high murder rate in the city as the primary reason why she wanted to move.⁹⁵ Paul, Juliette and Akosua all noted that the increased presence of Ewe immigrants in the city provided a strong community for social, financial and cultural support that changed their minds about leaving.⁹⁶ Since 2000, the interviewees noted that the number of Ewes in the region has tripled due to Diversity Lottery and the 1980 Refugee Act which has been bringing Togolese refugees who have settled there due to the presence of other Ewes and Togolese in the region.⁹⁷

When I asked the interviewees about their experiences with race and discrimination in the United States; Kwodzo, Paul and Juliette, three of whom moved from their original place of settlement noted that race and discrimination was a major factor in their decision to move. They noted over the years they have come to understand how race and discrimination impact their economic and social statuses in terms of acquiring jobs and being recognized as Americans, not as Blacks, but as Immigrants.⁹⁸

Paul and Juliette for example, noted that while some African Americans were friendly to them as they wanted to learn more about their African roots, they were not helpful to the couple's adjustment to the new place as immigrants. Paul noted that the high murder rate in the city which he attributed to "drug war" has made it difficult for him to want to build relationship with African Americans. On the other hand, they did not feel Whites liked Africans either. Juliette added "the whites helped us a lot when we first came to this country. They took us to

⁹⁵ Interview with Akosua, New York, June 22, 2009; unlike Paul and Juliette, Akosua did not leave the city for the suburbs, because she had an African braiding shops in the city that she said moving the suburb would be difficult to operate.

⁹⁶ Interview with Paul and Juliette, New York, June 21, 2009; Interview with Akosua, New York, June 22, 2009.

⁹⁷ Interview with Paul and Juliette, New York, June 21, 2009.

⁹⁸ Interview with Kwodzo, New York, June 17, 2009; Interview with Paul and Juliette, New York, June 21, 2009.

church and for about three years after we arrived they brought us turkeys for Thanksgiving and gifts on Christmas and New Year, because they knew we were struggling financially.” But over time the couple realized the paternalist attitudes of white church and so over time their church attendance decreased, because they did not feel like they belonged to the white dominated Catholic Church.⁹⁹

Kwodzo expressed the same sentiment about his experience as a student in Philadelphia and later Chicago, which is why he moved to New York City, a much more diverse city with plenty of economic opportunities and many Ghanaian and Ewe immigrants that he can socialize with. Kwodzo noted that it was through a network of Ghanaian Ewes in New York City that he was able to move to the city and find a job that he was then retiring from.¹⁰⁰ The social support network of other Ewe’s in the area becomes an important resource to Ewe immigrants not only for employment and economic opportunities but also for emotional and social support. A Ghanaian Ewe, Patricia, who was sponsored by her longtime boyfriend from Ghana, to join him in Chicago, Illinois, for example noted that for her it was the social support she received from Ewes and other Ghanaian immigrants that helped her go through divorce. Patricia after five years of the marriage was able to escape the abusive husband and move away to New York City thank to her Ewe support system in Chicago.¹⁰¹ These were social supports, the interviewees noted, that White and Black Americans did not offer them.

Residential Segregation and the Creation of the Ewe Associations

Just as white supremacy “ideology and historical legacy of slavery” has shaped the residence of African Americans in the United States, African and Caribbean immigrants’ settlement in the United States has been also shaped by residential segregation. Residential

⁹⁹ Interview with Paul and Juliette, New York, June 21, 2009.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Kwodzo, New York, June 17, 2009.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Patricia, New York, June 21, 2009.

segregation which has been enforced by “institutional actions in the housing market,” such as “real estate brokers [showing] prospective White and Black home buyers houses in different neighborhoods,” or “leading institutions [granting or denying] mortgages to Black and Whites differentially, regardless of creditworthiness criteria.” In addition, to “gatekeeping neighborhoods along racial lines, the differential incorporation concept also suggests that many Whites avoid neighborhoods with a certain percentage of minorities or a certain minority group.”¹⁰² These practices contribute to the factors that shape the settlement of Ewes and other Black immigrants in urban and suburban areas. However, this trend has been changing as African immigrants “have settled throughout the metropolis, with some by-passing the central cities completely for the suburbs.” In fact, two out of every five Africans reside in the suburbs, while “another third of Africans live in the central cities.”¹⁰³

John Arthur stated that “while some immigrant groups are able to gain acceptance and hence inclusion, especially those from Western European backgrounds, others such as people of Black African ancestry struggle to gain inclusion due to racism, discrimination, and having the status of ‘visible other.’”¹⁰⁴ It is a fact well understood among the Ewe immigrants in the United States, that due to their skin color their incorporation into the dominant white American society is impossible due to racism and discrimination that they have encountered in their everyday experiences as Black Africans. As a result, the Ewes join Ghanaian and Togolese associations to promote “positive images of black self-worth, strong traditional and moral anchors, and role models who affirm collective social norms based on respect for individuals and

¹⁰² Norah F. Henry, Joe T. Darden and John W. Frazier, “An Introduction to the African Diaspora in the United States and Canada at the Dawn of the 21st Century,” 1-6.

¹⁰³ Takyi, and Boate, “Location and Settlement Patterns of African Immigrants in the U.S: Demographic and Spatial Context,” 59.

¹⁰⁴ John Arthur, *The African Diaspora in the United States and Europe* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), 66.

the community-at-large.”¹⁰⁵ In addition, these associations serve as social networks for the Ewe immigrants to discuss political and economic conditions in Ghana and Togo among their country fellows. Kwodzo, for example, noted that being a member of a Ghanaian association for him was a way to share with America his pride in his cultural heritage through the celebration of Ghanaian independence and other cultural events that the association hosts.¹⁰⁶

Patricia noted that social problems like gossip, ethnic discrimination and stereotypes of Ewes within the Ghanaian association of which she was a member, contributed to her decision to quit the association and later join the United Volta Association that she is now a member of.¹⁰⁷ Kwodzo argued that ethnic discrimination and stereotypes of Ewes within the Ghanaian associations as Patricia illumined to, was one of the reasons why the Ewe association: United Volta Association was created. Associations like the United Volta Association; Kwodzo noted has provided the Ewes in New York, social support, a place to come together and celebrate the Ewe culture.¹⁰⁸ Both Kwodzo and Patricia noted that the social support that the association offers help in their adjustment in the United States.¹⁰⁹ However, not all the Ewes I interviewed felt the same way about the associations.

For example, Paul noted that he never participated in any of the events of any of the Togolese associations, because he feared that members of the organizations might be paid informants of the Togolese government. Since he still has family in Togo, he does not want to jeopardize their safety by joining any of the Togolese Associations.¹¹⁰ Jean-Pierre stated that “you cannot trust Togolese, the same people who said lets petition the U.S government to

¹⁰⁵ Arthur, *The African Diaspora in the United States and Europe*, 67.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Kwodzo, New York , June 17, 2009.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Patricia, New York, June 21, 2009.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Kwodzo, New York , June 17, 2009.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Kwodzo, New York , June 17, 2009; Interview with Patricia, New York, June 21, 2009.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Paul, New York, June 21, 2009.

demand democratic changes in Togo, will be the same people reporting you to the Togolese government of what you said.” He added, “if you want your family to [be] safe in Togo, do not participate in any of the activities of the Togolese associations, whether it is the one in Arizona or Connecticut. They are all the same, full of spies.”¹¹¹

Ewe Settlements and the Role of the Associations

As noted, the settlement of African immigrants like the Ewe throughout the United States is concentrated throughout few regions, states and metropolitan areas. The settlement pattern is based on social networks that the urban and suburban areas provide, and economic availabilities in the cities, in addition to academic opportunities and low violence in the suburbs. These patterns are also influenced by the racial discrimination that African immigrants like the Ewe have experienced or perceived in their social interactions with Americans. The formation of the Ewe associations is an effort by the Ewe immigrants to offset the racism and discrimination the Ewes have experienced as Black immigrants. The organizations also serve as a way, to preserve their Ewe culture in order to distinguish themselves from African Americans and Caribbean and African immigrants like their Ghanaians and Togolese nationals of different ethnicities.

The Ewes like other African immigrants including those born in the United States are concentrated in few regions and states throughout the United States. “The Northeastern and the Southern regions have consistently attracted more Africans than any other regions.”¹¹² For example, the South has the largest concentration of 35 percent of African immigrants in the United States, followed by the Northeast with 24.1 percent. The West and the Midwest have 22.6 percent and 13.5 percent of African immigrants respectfully. However, while the South and the Northeast’s African immigrant population has been growing; the West and the Midwest have

¹¹¹ Interview with Jean-Pierre, New York, June 25, 2009; Jean-Pierre is a friend of Paul and Juliette.

¹¹² Baffour K Takyi, and Kwame Safo Boate, “Location and Settlement Patterns of African Immigrants in the U.S: Demographic and Spatial Context,” 56.

experienced a decline of 3 percent and 4 percent African immigrants respectively. Thus, the Midwest has the “least number of African immigrants in the U.S.”¹¹³

Within these regions, the number is unevenly distributed. For example, of the 35 percent of African immigrants in the South region of the United States, 24.1 percent are in the South Atlantic division of that region. The Middle Atlantic division has 23.2 percent of the 24.1 percent African immigrants in the Northeast region. At the state level, Takyi and Boate, based on a 2000 research study, noted that African immigrants live in “five main states: New York, California, Texas, Maryland and New Jersey.”¹¹⁴ The settlement patterns of Ewe, like those of other immigrants of the contemporary African Diaspora in the United States, is a result of persistent racial discrimination in the United States that has led to concentration of Ewe and other Black African immigrants in certain regions, states and cities, which serves as the network for social interaction and job opportunities. The creation of associations like the Ghanaian and Togolese association is an attempt to preserve the cultures and pride of Ghanaians and Togolese in the United States. However, different political views and cultural differences within the national associations, as Patricia mentioned, led to the creation of ethnic associations like the Ewe associations. The creation of these associations is to preserve the culture of the Ewe people, which many Ewe immigrants feel is being eroded in the United States. However, these associations are also globalizing the political history of the Ewe unification movement.

¹¹³ Baffour K Takyi, and Kwame Safo Boate, “Location and Settlement Patterns of African Immigrants in the U.S: Demographic and Spatial Context,” , 54.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

THE EWE ASSOCIATIONS: CULTURAL RENAISSANCE AND THE POLITICS OF BELONGING AT HOME

Through regional, state and metropolitan Ewe associations, Ewe immigrants have organized cultural events and social gatherings in American cities and towns to illustrate the culture and history of the Ewe people. The mission of the associations is not different from that of the Togoland Congress, the All Ewe Conference and the Comité de l'Unité Togolaise, which is the development of the Eweland. However, unlike the latter, they do not seek the unification of the Eweland, thus they are not political, even though their activities may have political objectives. Majority of the Ewe immigrants who were interviewed expressed the importance of why the objective of the associations was purposely created to be apolitical, because they do not seek political power rather focus on the cultural, social and economic development of the Eweland.

Class impacts the membership of the Ewe associations, with the middle-class Ewes dominating the leadership of the associations and its composition. Class differences are determined by when and how long the individual Ewes have been living in the United States, their education level and whether they were able to transfer their education credential once they settle in the United States. As a result, Ghanaian Ewes dominate the membership and leadership of the Ewe associations, because they came to the United States earlier than their counterparts from Togo, due to the fact that the Ghanaian economy was in worse conditions than Togo in the 1970s and the 1980s. In addition, Ghanaian Ewes ability to speak English due to their colonial history made their immigration to the United States earlier than Togolese who immigrated to the United States in the late 1990s due to the political conflict and economic decline in the late

1980s and 1990s. Furthermore, because Togo was a French trusteeship, after independence, its official language became French, thus unlike Ghanaian Ewes, Togolese Ewes speak French as their second language. Togolese Ewes' lack of English-speaking background led to their immigration preferences for French-speaking countries like France, Switzerland and Belgium. However, anti-immigration policies of those European countries and others have contributed to the Togolese Ewe diaspora in the United States.

The Ghanaian Ewes who have higher education background prior to coming to the United States were able to transfer their college, advanced professional and non-professional degrees which enable their integration into U.S labor force. However, Togolese Ewes were unable to do so because the linguistic differences, instead many have lower class jobs such as nurse aide, car wash parking ramp attendants and as Faranak Miraftab points out in her ethnography of small Illinois town many of them end up working in meatpacking factories.¹¹⁵

The middle-class status of the Ghanaian Ewes explains their domination in the associations and its hierarchy. However, the population of Ewes in Ghana and Togo also explains the Ghanaian Ewe domination. While Ewes are the majority ethnic group in Togo and a minority in Ghana, there are more Ewes in Ghana than there are in Togo. In addition, the fact that Ewes tend to select the Anlo-Ewes of Ghana "to lead the Ewe organizations and cultural ceremonies" because of the perception among Ewes that the Anlo-Ewes "reflects a fundamental ethnocentrism and the ethics of the Ewe culture"¹¹⁶ add to the reason why the Ghanaian Ewes dominate the associations' membership and its leadership.

There are sixteen Ewe associations throughout the United States; their goal is to assist in the socio-economic development of the Eweland which encompass southeastern Ghana, southern

¹¹⁵ Faranak Miraftab, "Faraway Intimate Development: Global Restructuring of Social Reproduction," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 20, no. 10 (2011): 1-18.

¹¹⁶ Hiheta, "The Ewe Diaspora," in *A Handbook of Eweland: The Ewe of Togo and Benin*, 341.

Togo which the pro-Ewe parties of the 1950s petitioned to be united. In addition, the southeastern Benin has been included in the Eweland. As noted on the mission statement of the Volta Association, the goal of the association is:

To bring together all people from the Volta Region, Ghana and the Ewe speaking people or people of Ewe heritage from Togo and Benin living in the Washington, D.C, Maryland and Virginia areas for a united Ewe community...To promote Economic, Social, Cultural and Civic activities among members and community. And to extend possible seize opportunities to display and teach Ewe culture to the larger communities of Washington, D.C metro area....To use available resources to aid in the Socio-Economic development of Ghana, Togo and Benin and the Washington, D.C metro area.¹¹⁷

Since September 3, 1994 the Ewe associations in different states and cities of the United States have joined their sister associations of Canada to form the Council of Ewe Association of North America. The goal of CEANA is to develop a strong and vibrant Ewe community in the diaspora and in the Eweland in West Africa socially and economically. Since the inception of CEANA, the organization has hosted yearly international convention through the United States and Canada. Kwodzo noted Ewes from across Europe and West Africa have attended these conventions.¹¹⁸

At the 12th anniversary of the organization, the convention was hosted in Washington, D.C. in September of 2005. The theme of the convention was “Investment and Socioeconomic Development: Critical Issues Across Eweland.” Dr. Mark Kutame “the outgoing President of CEANA” started the convention by “calling on all Ewes in the diaspora to pool their resources together so as to improve the socio-economic conditions of those at home.” Furthermore, he stated the organization had raised two thousand dollars in donation for Dzodzo Hospital in the Volta Region of Ghana in order to install an x-ray machine in that hospital. In addition, blankets were shipped to Ghana to be distributed throughout hospitals in the Eweland. The organizations also “completed its first school improvement project in Agu in the Republic of Togo.” In the

¹¹⁷ <http://www.voltaclub.org/our-mission-a-objectives.html>

¹¹⁸ Interview with Kwodzo, New York, June 17, 2009.

same year of CEANA's 12th anniversary, 2005, Togo's longtime president, General Gnassingbé Eyadema died; he was quickly replaced by his son Faure Gnassingbé, which led to another political crisis in Togo. The Togolese opposition parties protested against the undemocratic nature of the succession, which was followed by international condemnation. However, the violence between the Togolese security forces and the civilian population resulted in thousands of Togolese seeking refuge in Ghana and Benin. The refugees were mostly Ewes from southern part of Togo, stronghold of the Togolese opposition against the northern Kabre dominated RPT government. CEANA sent letters of protest to the presidents of Ghana and Nigeria demanding the governments of both countries oversee that democracy prevails in Togo.¹¹⁹ In the letter to President Kufuor of Ghana, CEANA leadership wrote:

The crisis of the movement must be managed, but as an organization representing all Ewes from Ghana, Togo and Benin, the ethnic group that is the base of opposition to the Eyadema kleptocracy, hence the most repressed, we fear that the trend of events may easily degenerate into tribal war if serious sanctions are not imposed on the RPT regime.¹²⁰

As Kwodzo noted, the individual Ewe associations and CEANA have intentionally tried to restrain their activities within socio-economic realms by linking the diaspora with the homeland as illustrated by the hosting of the first CEANA convention in Africa at Ho, the regional capital of the Volta Region, Ghana with the theme "Educational Development in Eweland: Focusing on Infrastructural Development." However, the associations have also taken side in the political developments in Ghana and Togo.

From 1981 to 1992, Ghana was ruled by a Ewe dominant Provincial National Defense Council led by Jerry John Rawlings. In the 1990s due to the democratic wave that swept Africa, Ghana was able to introduce democratic reforms that led to a democratic government since.

¹¹⁹ CEANA Annual Convention and 12th Anniversary Celebration, http://www.ceanaonline.org/news/Annual_Convention_12th_Anniversary_Celebration.php

¹²⁰ State of Affairs in Togo, Open Letter to President Kufuor of Ghana, http://www.ceanaonline.org/news/OPEN%20LETTER_TO_PRESIDENT_KUFUOR.php

However, the two political parties that have since dominated the political sphere of Ghana have been the Ewe-dominated National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the Asante-dominated New Patriotic Party (NPP). Both parties have ruled Ghana one after another making the country one of Africa's democratic states. However, the ethnic undertone of the parties has created a political system based on ethnic politics rather than ideology. In the diaspora and in Ghana, the Ewes are automatically perceived to be supporters of the NDC. While the democratic transition in Togo was not as successful as in Ghana, the RPT lost its political monopoly since 1969 with the creation of opposition parties like the Ewe-dominated Union of Forces for Change (UFC) led by the son of first Togolese President Sylvanus Olympio, Gilchrist Olympio. In Ghana, the Volta Region has subsequently voted in majority for the NDC, just as they have done in Togo for the UFC. This political behavior is not limited to West Africa. In fact, all of Ghanaian and Togolese Ewe immigrants expressed their support for the NDC and UFC parties covertly even though many of them will not express this in the Ghanaian and Togolese associations overtly.

The apolitical stance of the CEANA and the individual Ewe associations has to do with the ways in which the Ghanaian and the Togolese governments have reacted to Ewe nationalist demands since the 1950s. Since the leadership and composition of the Ewe associations is dominated by Ghanaians, many of them remember the consequence of Ewes participation in the Ewe unification movement. In 2003, Ghana held a National Reconciliation Commission to explore the past injustice committed by previous regimes. Robert Kwame Antor, the son of S.G. Antor, leader of Togoland Congress, appeared before the commission. Robert Kwame Antor testify that that his father's imprisonment and association with the Togoland Congress resulted in the disruption of his academic career, the revocation of the scholarship offered to his two brothers as well as their removal from school. Skinner noted that other Ewe nationalists like

“Moses Asase spent six years in detention” and like S.G. Antor’s children, Asase felt that his children’s education was disrupted too. Like Robert Kwame Antor, Elizabeth Ohene recounted the negative impact that her father’s removal from his post as a teacher had on her life. Ohene noted how another student could not buy underwear, uniform or sheets because like her, the student’s father was in prison for accusation of association with the Togoland Congress. In summary, Ghanaian Ewe nationalists “had a great deal to lose from continue opposition to the CPP, and the price they paid affected the next generation.”¹²¹

The consequence of participating in the Ewe nationalist cause are remembered among the Ghanaian Ewe immigrants, a fact Kwodzo testify to and another reason why the associations activities have remained in the realms of socio-economic development and not political. For Togolese Ewe immigrants, the opposition role that they have play against the Kabre (northern) dominant government made them fearful that the Togolese government would view any political activities of the Ewe associations as threat to the Togolese state. For these reasons the Ewe immigrants noted that the associations should refrain from any political support overtly for either the NDC or the UFC.

While the associations do not overtly support the political parties in West Africa, individual Ewes as Kwodzo noted had financial supported the NDC during presidential elections in Ghana. While Paul noted that he never financially supported the UFC since coming to the United States, his wife expressed how emotional he gets when it comes to Togolese politics and his strategies for UFC to defeat the RPT. In addition, unlike All Ewe Conference, the Comité de l'Unité Togolaise and the Togoland Congress who demanded unification of Ghana and Togo or the Volta Region and Togo, neither CEANA nor any of the associations have demanded the

¹²¹ Kate Skinner, “Local Historians and Strangers with Big Eyes: The Politics of Ewe History in Ghana and its Global Diaspora,” *History in Africa* 37 (2010): 146-7.

unification of any type instead they have focused on the socioeconomic development of the Eweland. This is because as Donald Horowitz noted “no Northern Togolese would like to augment the ranks of Togo’s Ewe population by a border adjustment.” Such change would present an obstacle for the Kabre-based northern dominated government of Togo in terms of checking the threats of the Ewe attempts to overthrow the RPT government. Furthermore, “Ghanaian Ewe sensing the anti-Ewe character of the Togolese regime would not like to join Togo under present conditions.”¹²² This explains why there is no demand for the unification of Eweland by the Ewe associations as the pro-Ewe parties proposed in the 1950s.

To the Ewe immigrants, the associations serve not only for the cultural and socioeconomic development of the Eweland, but also a way to preserve the Ewe identity in the diaspora. To Ghanaian Ewes, the activities of the Ewe association such as display of Ewe culture through social gatherings of Ewe through the wearing of Ewe cloths, music and food illustrate to the American public that not all Ghanaians are Asantes nor do all Ghanaians speak Twi. Thus, the associations serve to preserve the identity of the Ewe people in the diaspora. Beside the yearly annual CEANA conventions, the Ewe associations hold monthly meetings open to their communities, in which leaders from West Africa are invited. At these meetings, the story of the Ewe dispersal from Notsie, Togo due to King Agokoli I’s dictatorial rule is told and traditional ceremonies are depicted.

These Ewe immigrants are forty to sixty year old men and women who often bring their children some of whom were born in West Africa or the United States so that they know their culture. Some have created Ewe language courses to teach their children who had forgot the Ewe language because they immigrated to the United States at an earlier age and those who were born in the United States thus do not speak the language. However, the nationalist sentiment among

¹²² Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 283.

the older generation is sometimes not shared among the younger generation, especially those born and raised in the United States. Edem and John the sons of Kwodzo and Paul who came to the United States at the age of four and seven and speak Ewe fluently note how indifferent they are about attending the association meetings.¹²³ However, Emefa the daughter of Kwodzo, who was born and raised in the United States, stated that while she does not speak Ewe or traveled to Ghana like her brother and sister, she feels that she is Ewe and thus she has participated in the association meetings by doing all she can to make the meetings successful. She wears her Ewe kente cloth, eat the food and has taken the Ewe dance and language classes.¹²⁴

Ewe nationalist sentiment among the children of the immigrant varies. The children of Ewe immigrants who came to the United States at earlier age tends to be indifferent about the associations nor do they take part in any of the activities that are supposed to celebrate Ewe culture in the diaspora. Thus, unlike Emefa who said that she loves wearing Ewe cloths, eating Ewe food for and at the association events, Edem and John noted that they do not feel comfortable wearing them, instead they prefer the fashion of the urban black youth. Regarding Ewe food, John state he does not like fufu, jollof rice, fried plantain or any other Ewe food.¹²⁵

Ewe immigrants who came to the United States in their late teens and earlier twenties love wearing Ewe cloths, eating Ewe food and learning to speak ‘proper’ Ewe. Lauren states “I love being Ewe, I am a proud Ewe, I love our culture. Some of my Ewe friends do not like saying they are Ewe because of the stereotypes that other Ghanaians have about us as juju worshippers and things like that, but I love being Ewe.” Furthermore, she noted that she wants to marry an Ewe man and will make sure that her children speak Ewe.¹²⁶ The associations have

¹²³ Interview with Edem, New York, June 17, 2009; Interview with John, New York, June 21, 2009.

¹²⁴ Interview with Emefa, New York, June 17, 2009

¹²⁵ Interview with John, New York, June 21, 2009

¹²⁶ Interview with Lauren, Boston, Massachusetts , June 14, 2009

provided a forum through which Ewes born in the Eweland and in the diaspora can express their culture in the United States, giving rise to Ewe cultural renaissance.

Chapter 6

Concluding Remarks

Ethnic identity has been a matter of debate for a longtime now among Africanists and African scholars, politicians and intellectuals. The debate has been whether ethnicity is a primordial sentiment or an elitist construction. While the debate is still ongoing, the constructivists or those who believe that the ethnicity is a social construction, an invention of elites as a reaction to colonialism in the context of Africa, have had an edge over those who believe that ethnicity is a primordial feeling, a natural process of people who share a common history and myth of origin uniting to separate themselves from the “other.” The Ewe ethnic identity exemplifies this debate. The failure of Ewe nationalist movement has been argued by constructivist scholars like Sandra Greene and Benjamin Lawrance as a construction of Ewe identity by coastal Ewe elites of Ghana and Togo.

African politicians and intellectuals faced with the ethnic politics that threatened to destabilize many African states in the immediate period following independence used the argument of the constructivists to discredit ethnic nationalism as a threat to the national development of the African states. Thus, in African states like Ghana and Togo, ethnic nationalist movements were eliminated through a process of military repression, economic and political marginalization. While Ghana and Togo were able to eliminate the perceived threat of ethnic nationalism, the African diaspora has offered an environment through which ethnic nationalisms repressed in Africa are able to reemerge.

The emergence of Ewe national consciousness in the United States illustrates that Ewe ethnic identity is a response by people to group and separate themselves from those with different language and culture. From the period of the British and German colonization of the

Eweland, the Ewe people had demanded the unification of their homeland. While the Ewes were not united under one king or chief during the pre-colonial times, and while it is true that they fought among themselves during the period before European encroachment, the lack of central polity did not hinder the various subgroups of the Ewe peoples to trade and unite when the occasion demands. However, the demarcation of the Ewe homeland by the British, German and later the French contributed to the demands for the unification of the Eweland. This is because trade and communication that once existed among the various subgroups was obstructed by the establishment of European colonial boundaries.

Thus it is true that Ewe nationalism was a reaction to European colonial balkanization of the Eweland. However, Ewe nationalism cannot be argued was merely an inspiration of European nationalist movements in Europe of 1800s, nor was Ewe nationalism merely a creation of Western educated elites of the Ewe society. It was also a natural response by the Ewe people, whose land was changing due to European colonization. The Ewe people like other people across the African continent and throughout the world, understand that their language and their culture distinguish them from their neighbors and that the trade and the political alliances that once existed among them was in jeopardy.

The oppositional role that Ewe play in both Togolese and Ghanaian politics illustrates not only that the Ewe view themselves separately from their ethnic, cultural or linguistic neighbors, but that the latter view them as the other. While Ewe ethnic identity may be argued to be a result of their ethnonationalist movement and their subsequent opposition role in both countries' politics, their political experiences solidify Ewe ethnic consciousness. This distinguishes Ewes from the Asantes in Ghana and the Kabre in Togo.

African scholars, intellectuals and politicians who argue ethnic identity is a colonial construction aided by African elites for political gain also risk giving too much credit to the colonial regimes. One may argue this is as if African people like the Ewe, the Yoruba and the Zulu did not know they were Ewe, Yoruba or Zulu prior to colonialism. It is true that European colonial rule continues to cause many social, economic and political problems for the people of Africa; and that ethnic identity is often used as an element in creating or promoting political conflicts. But it is a grave mistake to limit understanding of ethnic identity formation to the colonial or European interests.

The conglomeration of different African linguistic, cultural and ethnic groups into one state like Ghana and Togo is the creation of European colonial rule in Africa. But ethnic identity like that of the Ewe is not simply a European construction. However, in attempt to build stable African states, since the end of colonialism, African leaders and scholars have engaged in discourses that taboo ethnic identity or tribal affiliation as the reason for Africa's lack of democracy or development. Such discourses while reveal certain historical truth about the continent's ethno-nationalisms, they also contribute to the marginalization and stereotyping regions and people of different ethnic group in their plan for national development.¹²⁷

The socio-economic and political activities of the African, and in specific Ewe, Diaspora as discussed in this thesis further reveals the complexity of identity formation through a range of motivations and socio-political contextual forces. This proves that while ethnic identity maybe set aside as primordial, an impediment to development, its impact do not stop at the border of African states.

¹²⁷ Alex Thomson, *An Introduction to African Politics* (London: Routledge, 2005), 37.

The narratives of Ewe immigrants as included in this thesis reveals a range of motivations contribute to groups' ethnic identity formation and creation of ethnic associations. These include social support, linguistic accommodation or a need to resist discriminatory attitudes and practices of the dominant society. In the US, I argue the discrimination and racist attitudes of White society against African Americans contributes to certain degree to African immigrants' desire to solidify their ethnic identities in this case their promotion of Ewe associations across the United States. While Ewe immigrants experiences of race and discrimination in the United States shape the Ewe ethnonationalism in this Country, the rise in Ewe national consciousness through the Ewe associations is a continuation of the movement of the Ewe people across the world to unite.

It is important, however, to note that Ewe ethnonationalism in the United States is generational. Through my field study, it became clear that the children of Ewe immigrants who came to the United States at an early age (months of birth up to 7 years of age) and those born in the United States seemed to differ in their relationship with the Ewe ethnonationalism. Ewe ethnonationalism is stronger and more evident among the adult Ewe immigration population and those who came to the United States in their teenage years or older. The impact the Ewe associations will have on the lives of the second-generation Ewes who at the present seem indifferent about the Ewe associations and the Ewe culture, however, remains to be seen.

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