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Ethnographic Research, Local Power Brokers and the Political Reorganization of Colonial Ewedome, British Mandated Territory, 1914-1930s

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Abstract

Present-day scholars have critically examined the nature and dynamics of indirect rule in Africa and have found it to be riddled with contradictions and ambiguities. Colonial officers were often accused of imposing colonial structures on local people in the name of tradition. Native Authorities (NAs), for instance, were seen as colonial inventions that often lacked real legitimacy. This article, however, extends the counter argument that the colonial state was actually the product of complex local dynamics rather than a straightforward 'imposition'. This article uses both primary and secondary sources to provide evidence which shows how ethnographic research shaped the British policy of amalgamation in colonial Ewedome and secondly adds to our knowledge on the role of local power brokers in the formulation of colonial policies in Africa.

Key Words: Ethnography; Power Brokers; Colonial State; Intermediaries; mediation; legitimacy.

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Résumé

Les chercheurs d'aujourd'hui ont fait un examen critique sur la nature et la dynamique de l'administration indirecte en Afrique et ils ont trouvé qu'elle était criblée de contradictions et d'ambiguïtés. Les officiers coloniaux ont souvent été accusés d'imposer des structures coloniales sur les populations locales au nom de la tradition. Les autorités traditionnelles, par exemple, étaient considérées comme des inventions coloniales qui souvent manquaient de légitimité réelle.

Cependant, cet article étend le contre-argument qui suggère que l'État colonial était en fait le produit de complexes dynamiques locales plutôt que d'une simple «imposition». Cet article utilise à la fois des sources primaires et secondaires pour fournir des preuves qui démontrent comment les recherches ethnographiques ont façonné la politique britannique de fusion dans le pays ewe, et d'autre part, il renseigne sur le rôle des médiateurs locaux dans la formulation des politiques coloniales en Afrique.

Introduction

In his critique of the concepts of 'invented tradition', 'making of customary law' and the 'creation of tribalism', Thomas Spear took issues with the assertion that Native Authorities were colonial inventions that had no traditional legitimacy'.[1] Mamdani's main criticism of indirect rule was that it left the NAs without any democratic checks and balances on the authority of the chiefs.[2] While Meyer, for instance, asserts that the British reliance on chiefs denied a voice to the new generation of literate school leavers, Berman described the whole NA system as 'the grassroots foundations of colonial domination'.[3]

To Spear, these criticisms against the use of chiefly power by the colonial officers are attributable to the failure by historians to engage with what he called 'the historical development and the complexity of the interpretative process involved'.[4] He noted further that the contradictions identified with indirect rule 'were rarely without local historical precedents'.[5] In Spear's view, most often,

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[1] Thomas Spear, 'Neo-traditionalism and the limits of invention in British Colonial Africa', Journal *of African History* 44, (2008), 3.

[2]Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (London, 1996), 54.

[3] Meyer Birgit, *Translating the Devil*: *Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana* (Edinburgh, 1999),15; Bruce J Berman, 'Ethnicity, patronage and the African state: the politics of uncivil nationalism', *African Affairs*, 388 (1998), 315.

[4] Spear, 'Neo-traditionalism', 4.

[5] *Ibid*.

colonial political structures were 'developed in response to local conditions'.[6] Thus, as Spear notes, both Africans and colonial officers went through a process of adaptation; they had to adapt to the 'multi-dimensional and interactive historical process' which necessitated some form of reinterpretation, reformation and reconstruction of local institutions to meet exigencies of the colonial state.[7] In effect, the use of NA was only a means of securing acceptability of the institutions on which the colonial officers placed their reliance. That, in the words of Hailey, was an important consideration that applied 'not only to the initial recognition of NAs, but to their subsequent adaptation to the more advanced requirement of modern rule'.[8] As Rathbone puts it, at the time, 'chiefly power was the best and, almost certainly, the only guarantee of what the British deemed to be law and order'.[9] He considers NA administration to be of pragmatic importance, and the best system to be adopted during the inter-war period, though 'it was not perceived as optimally efficient'.[10] In the Gold Coast Colony and Asante, chiefs wielded enormous power by virtue of their control of 'access to land and the people who worked on those lands'.[11] Therefore, the use of chiefs in local administration at the early stages of colonial rule was a pragmatic move. Even in municipal towns such as Accra and Cape Coast in the Gold Coast Colony, earlier experiments in 'modern' form of local government (in the early 1900s), as noted by Rathbone, proved to be unsuccessful and a vindication of the reliance on NAs.[12]

Recent research by historians such as Spear, Allman and Parker and Lentz have, however, demonstrated how important local leaders and other brokers have been in determining how the processes of introducing indirect rule unfolded in

[6] *Ibid*.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] PRAAD/A ADM 5/3/42, Lord Hailey, Report on Native Administration and Political Development in British Africa, 1940-42, 14-15.
[9] Richard Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana, 1951-60* (Oxford, 2000), 10.
[10] *Ibid*.
[11] *Ibid*.
[12] *Ibid.*, 11.

British colonial Africa.[13] Colonial administrators were not purely cynical in using indirect rule to justify colonial power, but were actually genuinely interested in and concerned to adapt existing beliefs and practices found amongst African populations. The British did not simply 'invent', but made real efforts to actually understand the recent history of the territories they sought to govern. Efforts were made to 'follow pre-colonial political organisation and affiliations in creating NA areas in Ewedome'.[14] These intentions of the British officials were mediated by local power brokers who used their incorporation into the indirect rule system as a means to strengthen their positions.

I refer to the chiefs mentioned in this article as 'local power brokers', although there is now a great interest in the use of the term 'intermediaries'. An edited volume by Lawrance, Osborn and Roberts draws on all kinds of example of people (particularly the early products of missionary and colonial education) who were able to 'mediate' between the concerns of the nascent colonial state and the views and experiences of local populations.[15] However, the use of the term 'intermediaries' in the context of this article is problematic because it could refer to commoners rather than chiefs. The chiefs mentioned in this article were 'power brokers'. They had some power and influence due in large part to their growing wealth in commerce between the interior and the Europeans on the coast. Their power also derived from the role of their political units as centres of education and were more directly connected to the specific roles that Europeans expected the chiefs to play for the colonial state; for example, in defining what was 'customary', administrative justice and levying fines on local people. The term 'local power brokers' fits well into Spear's argument that the colonial state was

[13] Spear, 'Neo-traditionalism', 3-27; Jean Allman and John Parker, *Tongnaab: A History of a West African God* (Indiana, 2005); Carola Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana* (Edinburgh, 2006).
[14] Wilson K. Yayoh, 'Protests against amalgamation in Colonial Ewedome, British Mandated Territory, 1920-1948, *Journal of History and Cultures*, 2 (2013),1-16.
[15] For details, see Benjamin N. Lawrance, Emily Lynn Osborn, and Richard L. Roberts, *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Madison, 2006).

relatively fragile and had to modify itself according to the power structures which confronted it in particular localities.[16]

It will be recalled that after the First World War, British colonial thought swung towards a closer embrace of African cultural values and institutions.[17] It was this change of attitude that led to the conception of the idea of indirect rule.[18] The call was for 'the retention of all that was best in Africa's own past culture'.[19] It is important to note that Rattray, the head of the Anthropology department of the Gold Coast, and one time District Political Officer in Togoland, was talking here specifically about Akan culture, especially Asante — and it was an Akan model that provided the template for colonial administrators in their application of the NA system to other places like Ewedome. But how the Akan model could work out in Ewedome which had diverse ethnic and linguistic groups was to task the energies of the colonial officers. The Akan model had unusual degree of political centralisation, hence the application of the model in Ewedome is of historical significance. The desire to see the Akan model work in regions with microstates, like Ewedome, afforded the local power brokers a lot of scope for their own agenda. This article thus provides evidence, which shows that ethnographic research by colonial officials preceded British policy of amalgamation in the region. It also shows that in Ewedome, the historical relationship that certain dominant local leaders had with first the Germans and then the British had an impact on shaping amalgamated states. Thus, the dependence of colonial officers on local Africans indeed 'complicated significantly the colonial project'.[20]

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[16] Spear, 'Neo-Traditionalism'.
[17] For an analysis of the anatomy of indirect rule, see Prosser Gifford, 'Indirect rule: touchstone or tombstone for colonial policy?' in Prosser Gifford and W. A. Roger Louis (eds.), *Britain and Germany in Africa*: *Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule* (New Haven, 1967), 351-391. For the specific area of Ewedome, see Togoland Report of 1936, 6.
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] Quote taken from R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Constitution* (Oxford, 1929), vii.
[20] Quote from Lawrance, Osborn and Roberts (eds.), *Intermediaries*, 4.

A Sketch of Ewedome

Europeans called the region between the Volta River and the Bight of Benin the 'Slave Coast' and Ewedome formed part of its interior hinterland.[21] From the first half of the nineteenth century, the area began to appear in European sources as Krepi or Crepe. The term 'Krepiland' is unsatisfactory because it is the corruption of the name Peki by the Danes, the first Europeans to establish trading contact with the area.[22] Moreover, 'Krepiland' was more than just the state of Peki, the delimitation of which historians find difficult to give a precise definition. Wilks refers to Krepi at one point as 'the Ewe country' and at another as a group of towns and states east of the Volta.[23] Law's description of Krepiland, for example, includes Anlo and the coastal town of Keta.[24] Akyeampong refers to Krepi as 'northern Eweland'.[25] Nugent's conclusion is that Krepi 'could be taken to cover a very wide area indeed'.[26] Collier intimated that the inability of earlier sources 'to clearly define Krepi could be interpreted as an indication of its lack of relative significance'.[27] Recent anthropologists, such as Lynne Brydon, prefer the name 'Ewedome', which is more accurate when one wants to narrow the focus to

[21] Jakob Spieth, *The Ewe People: A Study of the Ewe People in German Togo* (Berlin, 1906), 1.
[22] Until 1850, Peki was the most influential political unit in this region. See Wilson K. Yayoh, 'Krepi states in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 6 (2002), 67.
[23] Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order* (Cambridge, 1975), 57 and 772; Yayoh, 'Krepi States',67-68.
[24] Robin Law, *The Slave Coast of West Africa 1550-1750*: *The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on an African Society* (Oxford, 1991), 14-45.
[25] Emmanuel Akyeampong, *Between the Lagoon and the Sea*: *An Eco-Social History of the Anlo of Southeastern Ghana*: c. 1850 to Recent Times (Ohio, 2001), 41.
[26] Paul Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizen on the Ghana-Togo Frontier* (Ohio, 2002), 21.
[27] See Katharine Alexandra Collier, '*Ablode*: networks, ideas and performance in Togoland politics, 1950-2001 (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2002), 4.

the northern Ewe.[28] In fact, this is the term used by people who live in the area, and those people refer to themselves as *Ewedometowo*—literally meaning, 'occupants of the valley'. The area began to appear in British administrative documents from 1850, when Britain took over trading activities from the Danes.[29]

Ewedome occupied an ambiguous frontier between the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast, forming part of the of the Volta basin economy. Mountains known as the Togo-Atakora ranges succeed one another from southeast to northwest in the region. The Volta River forms the western boundary of the area, separating Ewedome from the Gold Coast. The area is highly heterogeneous and witnessed a complex migration of people from all directions throughout the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries.[30] Ewe-speakers, Guan-speakers, and groups that claimed to be autochthonous people it, the Ewes being the dominant ethnic group. Research based on linguistic evidence has shown that the autochthons were of Guan extraction. Painter's glottochronology of the Kwa group of languages shows Guan as 'a group of closely related languages spoken by people living in Ghana.'[31]These Guan-speaking people moved east of the Volta River into Ewedome because of a series of attacks by Akans beginning from the sixteenth century.[32] It is sure that by the mid-seventeenth century, the Ewe-speaking people of Ewedome (who claimed to have migrated from Notsie in the east) had emerged as a distinctive group in the region vaguely referred to as Krepiland. Later missionary activities set in motion a process of Ewe cultural diffusion, which saw the Ewe language dominating the language of the autochthones. Therefore, in the

[28] See Lynne Brydon, 'Women chiefs and power in the Volta Region of Ghana', *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 37-38 (1996); Lynne Brydon, 'Constructing Avatime: questions of identity in a West African polity, c. 1690s to the twentieth century', *Journal of African History*, 49 (2008).

[29] Britain's early trading activities in the area are recorded in G. E. Metcalfe, *Great Britain and Ghana: Documents of Ghana History, 1807-19* (London, 1964), 445.

[30] For details about this area being 'a meeting point for people migrating from both the east and the west' see Nugent, *Smugglers*, 17-21.

[31] See Painter, 'The Guan and the African historical reconstruction', *Ghana Notes and Queries*, 9 (1966), 58.

[32] See Nugent, *Smugglers*, 17-21.

context of this particular article, Ewedome includes Ewe and non-Ewe states within the area.

Britain first occupied the area in 1914 following the expulsion of the Germans. However, formal British colonization of the territory did not begin until after 1922, due in part to delay in defining the boundary between the British and French spheres of administration.[33] In fact, a tentative definition of the boundary between Britain and France was made possible following the work of the Anglo-French Boundary Commission and the issuance of a Boundary Protocol in 1929.[34] Even the boundaries between the Cold Coast Colony and British Mandated Togoland were not finalised until the 1940s.[35] At the time the British took over, the territory was fragmented with a multiplicity of chiefdoms. The Ewes did not form large centralised states comparable to those of the Akan people to the west in the Gold Coast. Instead, they existed as complete and independent patrilineal groups varying in numerical strength from about six thousand people to less than three hundred, and they were not prepared to sacrifice their independence for mere co-operation.[36]

In 1920, there were 63 Ewe speaking political units in Ewedome.[37] Each town showed very interesting lexical and phonological variations in the Ewe language. In addition, the settlements were few and scattered. Thus, distances, topography and cultural peculiarities became barriers to cooperation among the various states.

[33] Details about the polities that came under British rule as a result of the boundary demarcation are seen in PRAAD/A ADM 39/1/174, Anglo-German Boundary, 1922. All ADM documents cited in this article can be found at the Public Records and Archives Administration Department, Accra. [Hereafter, PRAAD/A].

[34] Nugent, *Smugglers*, 4.

[35] CO 96/780/4, Native Administration, Adjustment of Boundaries of Administrative Districts between Gold Coast Colony and Mandated Area, File No. 31458/6, 1944-45. All Colonial Office documents cited in this article can be found in the National Archives, Kew, London. [Hereafter, CO].

[36] CO 96 737/4, Togoland Report, 1936, Enclosure in Government's Despatch NO. 249, 23 April 1937; CO 96/746/7, General Statement by Accredited Representative to the 35th Session of the Permanent Mandate Commission, Geneva, 25 October 1938. See also Yayoh, 'Krepi states', 72-73.

[37] CO 96/746/7, General Statement by Accredited Representative to the 35th Session of the Permanent Mandate Commission, Geneva, 25 October 1937.

The British colonial officials realised that the multiplicity of those tiny administrative units was a problem, and that if the system continued unmodified, it would much increase the difficulty of introducing improvements in the political, social and financial development of the region.[38] In line with the overall policy of indirect rule, the British government introduced the policy of amalgamation. The policy was based on the recognition of only big states. In other words, the principle of governing through existing African structures in practice tended to favour those whose structures most closely resembled what European administrators recognised as states. It meant therefore that all smaller chiefdoms should merge to form larger entities known as Native Authorities (NAs).[39] In other words, 'indirect rule was premised on culturally homogeneous territorial 'tribes' ruled by chiefs'.[40]

The British policy of amalgamation was therefore believed (by British colonial officials) to be benign in the sense of promoting viable units of local government to which powers could be gradually transferred, but in reality, it generated a series of factional disputes.[41] This article insists that the process of amalgamation in Ewedome needs to be historicised. Akwamu and Asante dominance of Ewedome from the early eighteenth to the late nineteenth centuries transformed the region in the most profound way. Akwamu, the most powerful centralised Akan state in the hinterland of the eastern Gold Coast in the second half of the seventeenth century, invaded Ewedome in 1733 and dominated the area for some hundred years.[42] This was followed by Asante invasion and subjugation of the same region from 1869 till 1874 when the British drove Asante away from the area.[43] The Akan contact

[38] CO 96/681/13 Togoland Report, 1927.
[39] CO 96/716/9 Togoland Report, 1933. See also Raymond B. Bening, *Ghana*: *Regional Boundaries and National Integration* (Accra, 1999), 258; Andreas W. Massing, *Local Government Reform in Ghana: Democratic Renewal or Autocratic Revival*? (Saarbrucken, 1994), 5; Carola Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana* (Edinburgh, 2006).
[40] Spear, 'Neo-traditionalism', 16.
[41] Yayoh, 'Protests against amalgamation'.
[42] In 1833, the Ewe states came together to defeat Akwamu.
[43] For Akwamu-Asante invasions, see Nugent, *Smugglers*, 17-21: Yayoh, 'Local government', 40-46.

brought about a dissemination of an Akan-style chieftaincy system and the reconfiguration of regional politics.[44] The chiefs of Avatime, Kpando/Akpini and Ho distinguished themselves in the Akwamu and Asante wars and by accumulating status and authority, they became important leaders in the region before the advent of colonialism.[45] This article therefore argues that, after the Asante invasion of 1869 and during the 'reconstruction' of Ewedome, there were conditions in place which favoured a process of incipient political centralization, due to the capacity of some chiefs either to accumulate wealth through trade and agriculture or through their ability to lead alliances. German rule from 1890 to 1914 essentially built up this underlying economic development, whilst also ensuring that this did not become tied to political centralisation. Rather, the towns and the chiefs that became important in the German era were those that benefited either from colonial policy or from their being the locations of Bremen Mission stations. This led to the situation of Ho, Kpando and Amedzofe in Avatime (all in the Ewedome region) becoming the most important towns by the First World War, and it is against this background that the policy of amalgamation in Ewedome should be understood. The legal framework — 1932 Native Administration Ordinance – which contained procedures to be followed in reorganising the region into NAs, was applied to a politically fragmented region and thus provided significant opportunity to local power brokers, particularly chiefs who were looking to strengthen or consolidate their own power relations within neighbouring micro-states. Those chiefs had the prospect of being elevated to the status of paramount chiefs at the head of large centralised states with executive and judicial powers as enshrined in the 1932 ordinance.[46] This sketch of Ewedome is important in accounting for the heterogeneity and political

[44] Collier, '*Ablode*', 10.

[45] It is important to note that there are spelling differences in the name 'Avatime' because of attempts by various researchers to get the correct phonetic symbols of the Ewe language. However, the most common spelling seems to be 'Avatime', although some authors prefer 'Awatime' or 'Avatime'.

[46] For detail about the structure and functions of NAs in Ewedome see W. K. Yayoh, 'Native courts and customary law in colonial Ewedome, 1914-1949', *Ghana Social Science Journal*, 10 (2013), p. 79-106.

fragmentation of the region. This will in turn illuminate our understanding of the peculiarity of the political reorganisation of the territory.

Early Ethnographic Research

The formulation and implementation of British colonial policy in Ewedome followed various studies done on the custom, tradition and history of the region from 1914 to the early 1920s. It is important to note that soon after the expulsion of Germany from Togoland, Britain was the first to occupy the capital Lome on 26 August 1914.[47] In line with the initial exchange agreement between the governor of the Gold Coast and his French counterpart in Dahomey, the Officer Commanding British Forces in Togoland, Lieutenant Colonel Bryant, sent a proposal to the colonial secretary urging the government of the Gold Coast to assume the administration of the districts of Lomeland, Misahohe (in the present-day Republic of Togo), Kete Krachi, and the whole of the Dagomba territories — all in present-day Ghana.[48] Of the four, Misahohe District was the largest, stretching from present-day Togo to Ewedome in the Central part of the Volta Region of Ghana.

Ethnographic research in British-occupied Togoland began with the appointment of Rattray as the District Political Officer of Misahohe soon after his graduation from Exeter College, Oxford, with a diploma in Anthropology in 1914.[49] His study of the district led him to discover the significance of Kpando to the German economic enterprise. Kpando was an important centre on the trade route that ran from Salaga in the Northern Territories through Kpando to Lome. To control this trade route, as noted by Rattray, the Germans signed a treaty with chief Dagadu of Kpando on 10 October 1894 whereby the latter was to give up control over the trade route to Lome and to ensure that the route was kept safe in

[47] NA CO 96/742/20, Capture of Togoland in 1914.
[48] ADM 39/1/1, Confidential Letters from the Officer Commanding British Forces to the Colonial Secretary, Gold Coast, 3 December 1914.
[49] For Rattray's educational background, see Richard Rathbone, 'Rattray, Robert Sutherland (1881-1938)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition, May 2006.

return for 50 marks.[50] In addition, the Germans seized a war horn, which was sounded when Dagadu wanted to call his people to assemble for war, and lodged it in Lome.[51]

Rattray sought to establish cordial relationship between British officials and the local people and his first step was to invite Sir Hugh Clifford and Major C.E.D.O Rew, Commander of British Forces, to Kpando in 1914. To cement this cordial relationship, Rattray returned the war horn to the chief of Kpando.[52] He mediated in several boundary and land disputes among various political units in Ewedome and clamped down on the dangerous activities of a group known as Hundi. The group which was formed in Adaklu and gained popularity in the Ho area was described by Rattray as 'having all the attributes of a secret society'.[53] Its members drank each other's blood to cement their membership; swore oath of secrecy and engaged in all kinds of violent activities, including threat to destool some chiefs. Rattray's annual reports on Misahohe district were instructive to British officials. Later in 1917, the Colonial Secretary acknowledged the good works of Rattray in Togoland and specific reference was made to his 'tact and judgment' in handling disputes among villages.[54]

In 1915, Rattray was commissioned to undertake ethnographic research in the territory.[55] His work on 'tribal history' in Togoland was his pioneering research on ethnography in West Africa and the scope of this work was much bigger than the 'Chinyanja folklore and custom' published in 1907.[56] Rattray's research in British occupied Togoland had three main objectives. First, 'to ascertain as far as possible what connection racially, linguistically, or by reason of conquest, or suzerainty, normal or real, the tribes in the region (Togoland) have with the

[50] See ADM 39/1/11, Confidential Letters1914.
[51] ADM 39/1/11, The War Horn of Kpando, 16 May 1916.
[52] *Ibid*.
[53] ADM 39/1/3, Confidential letters, 1915 to 1916.
[54] ADM39/1/11, Confidential Reports, 1917.
[55] See RAG/H RAO 2073, Rattray, Togoland, 1915. All documents cited from the Regional Archives of Ghana, Ho, the Volta Regional capital of Ghana, are referred to as RAG/H.
[56] For his work on Chinyanja, see Melville J, Herskovits, *Robert Sutherland Rattray*, American Anthropologist, New Series, Vol. 41 No. 1(1939), 130-131.

inhabitants of the Gold Coast Colony'.[57] Second, to find out 'what racial or linguistic connection exists between the different elements that go to form this portion of Togoland'.[58] Third, to determine 'what grounds, other than of language and race, go to make up the claim of Peki (an Ewe state in the Gold Coast colony) to be over [Ewedome] area'.[59] Rattray was intrigued about how valuable such history or traditions, collected directly from the native raconteurs, were to the local colonial officers;

> a collection of traditions such as these help the administrative officer to get in close touch with the people whom he lives among, and the knowledge that their ancient history is shared by the European who governs them serves to give that bond of mutual understanding without which the administration of the blackman by the white must be a rule based on suspicion, aloofness or fear. An understanding of past-linked-histories of these tribal divisions may sometimes help the administrators to know where trouble is to be expected.[60]

The above statement summed up the relevance and the motive behind the task assigned to Rattray. He interviewed chiefs and elders of over 234 villages stretching from the district of Misahohe in present-day Togo to the districts of Kpando and Ho in Ewedome. His approach was to 'compile verbatim as much of the history as oral tradition has preserved'.[61] His findings established the point that the inhabitants of Ewedome were one people with strong linkage with the inhabitants of the Gold Coast and that their disintegration into smaller chiefdoms was fostered by the German policy of direct rule. All these, according to Rattray, made 'a case for British right, politically and morally, to take over that part of German Togo'.[62] Based on these findings, Rattray concluded that it 'would not be a difficult task to unite under more powerful heads units that still remember their past history and traditions'.[63] As a result of Rattray's work in Ewedome the

[57] *Ibid*.
[58] *Ibid*.
[59] *Ibid*. Peki was a powerful state in Ewedome but it was separated from its kith and kin following the Anglo-German partition of Krepiland in 1890.
[60] RAG/H RAO 2073, Rattray, Togoland, 1915.
[61] *Ibid*.
[62] *Ibid*.
[63] *Ibid*.

colonial government recognised him as a man of great ability and led to his subsequent appointment as the Gold Coast Anthropologist in 1917.

On 14 January 1918, before the formal Anglo-French partition of German Togo, J. T. Furley, the Gold Coast Secretary for Native Affairs, was commissioned to 'undertake the task of finding out the wishes of the people of the British sphere of occupation in Togoland with regard to the future administration of their country'.[64] Given the German highhandedness, very little hesitation was evinced by the inhabitants in expressing a strong aversion to German rule and an equally strong preference for British rule.[65] In fact, the inhabitants of the British sphere of occupation had for a long time feared the likelihood of Britain eventually restoring Togoland to Germany, and the delay in coming into force of a purely British system of administration affronted many inhabitants.[66] Some inhabitants were optimistic that British administration in Togoland would unite them with their kith and kin who had been separated by the Anglo-German partition of 1890.

In 1924, P. D. Le Lièvre researched into the 'tribal' history of Kpando.[67] Le Lièvre was of French family background but he served in Kpando as British DC before C. C. Lilley.[68] Lièvre's research focused on Kpando and its surrounding divisions and covered aspects such as history, administration of native law, religion and custom. Key to the work of the local colonial officers, and indeed to the formulation of the policy of amalgamation, was Lièvre's findings that Kpando was the most important political division in Ewedome area of the British

[64] CO CAB29/2 Correspondence Relating to the Wishes of the Natives of the German Colonies, Enclosure 1v, November 1918.
[65] *Ibid*.
[66] CO CAB 291/1, Wishes of the Natives of the German Colonies, Enclosure IV, November 1910. For this uncertainty about the future status of the territory, see Andrew J. Crozier, 'The establishment of the mandate system, 1919-25: some problems created by the Paris Peace Conference', *Journal of Contemporary History*, July 1979, 486.
[67] PRAAD/A ADM39/1/42, Le Lièvre, An Essay on Tribal History of Kpando Division, 1924.
[68] David Brown, 'Politics in the Kpandu area of Ghana, 1925 to 1969: a study of the influence of central government and national politics on a local factional competition' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1977), 103.

Mandated Territory.[69] He observed that before 1903, many units were at one time or another either subservient or at least under the influence of Kpando'.[70] It was in that year that the Germans dealt a blow to the power and prestige of Kpando by setting up those dependent units as independent.[71] A German Station Assistant, Pearl, who was recruited from the non-commissioned officer class of the German army, was stationed in Kpando, making the town a sub-district headquarters with jurisdiction over many villages in Ewedome.[72] The report also noted that it was recognition of Kpando's importance in Ewedome that informed the decision of the governor of the Gold Coast to invite the Chief of Kpando to Accra to ask him to bring his people to join the British to defeat Asante the 1874.[73] Therefore, a detailed understanding of the history and culture of Kpando, according to Lièvré, was 'the key to a knowledge of the inhabitants of a comparatively wide stretch of country' known as Ewedome.[74]

Captain C. C. Lilley conducted similar research in the early 1920s, though on a smaller scale.[75] Lilley was appointed to the area in 1920 and was given the task of superintending over the implementation of the policy of amalgamation and the introduction of NA system of local government in the territory. He was born in 1889 and was educated in Cheltenham College, after which he joined the British army. He rose to become a Captain and fought in the First World War, during which he lost his right arm. In 1920, he was appointed Assistant District Commissioner to Kpando sub-District in the Ewedome region. In 1930, he was awarded an OBE.[76] Lilley initially worked under Captain E. T. Mansfield who

[69] *Ibid*.,1.
[70] *Ibid*.
[71] *Ibid*.
[72] ADM39/1/11, Confidential Letters.
[73] *Ibid*.
[74] Brown, 'Politics', 103..
[75] Lilley's account 'A Short History of Nkonya' published in the *Gold Coast Review* in 1923, provided detailed ethnographic history of not only Nkonya, but also aspects of the history of Ewedome during the Asante invasion.
[76] CO Colonial Office Lists, 1926 and 1938; PRO CO96/724/2, Dispatches No. 358, 12 April 1921.

was appointed the DC at Ho in 1921.[77] The former brought his military discipline to bear on the execution of colonial policies in the area.

Lilley's work was not just a compilation of oral history. He engaged with some analysis of 'the various emigrations which took place, [particularly from the West] and which resulted in populating the country known as Togoland'.[78] Lilley went on to become a member of the Anglo-French Boundary Commission which demarcated the frontier between British Togo and French Togo in 1929. He used his knowledge of the ethnography of the area, in the words of Nugent, 'to ensure that the line did not cut across divisions where this could be avoided'.[79]

In 1924, follow-up research was undertaken by Captain Mansfield to ascertain which chiefs could be made the head of the amalgamated states. It emerged from his findings that Kpando, Avatime and Ho were the most influential states in the Ewedome region. It can be concluded, therefore, that these findings were the basis for the merger of the southern section of British Togoland with the Eastern Province of the Gold Coast in 1924 and important factors in formulating the policy of amalgamation in Ewedome. Rattray, the author of the 1915 report, went on to greater fame with his huge body of research on Asante and the Northern Territories in the 1920s.[80] His anthropological findings on Asante provided crucial information for the design of the scheme of native administration not only in that region but also in southern Togoland and the Northern Territories.[81] Lentz noted Rattray's admiration for Akan political structure and constitution, which the latter viewed as 'the prototype for the planned reform of native administration'.[82] As the head of the Anthropology department of the Gold Coast, Rattray's ideas

[77] CO96/724/2, Dispatches No. 358, 12 April 1921.
[78] Lilley, 'A short history',125.
[79] For details about the work of the Boundary Commission in shaping the Ghana-Togo border, see Paul Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier: The Lie of the Borderlands since 1914* (Oxford, 2002), 35-38.
[80] For the work on Rattray in the Northern Territories, see Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History*, 94.
[81] Rattray, *Ashanti*, v.
[82] Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History*, 95.

largely influenced the creation of large states with strong chiefs in Ewedome.[83] This gives credence to Brown's concept of 'Akanization' and its super-imposition on the southern British Togoland region in the 1930s.

These various studies show that the administrative officers were well armed with invaluable information aimed at ensuring that the policy framework recognised the fabric of social and political organisation in the territory. Lawrance alluded to some investigations that were conducted into native traditions and structures from 1924 upon which the colonial government endorsed the policy of creating larger states in the territory.[84] He also intimated that Lilley, by virtue of his research and long stay in the region, 'was becoming somewhat of an expert on Ewe custom'.[85] Indeed, the main legislative framework applied to the territory was specifically intended to take into account social and political groupings and custom. This is evident in the extension of the jurisdiction of the tribunals to cover almost every aspect of 'customary law', and the fact that the interpretation of those laws was actually devolved onto the native tribunals.[86] Lentz notes how important the tours of the rural areas by officials were 'in the British production of ethnographic knowledge'.[87]

It was after similar research into native 'constitutions' that we see, by the early 1930s, the extension of indirect rule into the Northern Territories, and of course, the start of the move towards the restoration of the Asante Confederation, a process which became complete on 31 January 1935. Thus, the policy of amalgamation was not peculiar to the southern section of British Togoland; similar projects of formalizing and extending the NA system were also underway

[83] For a detailed account on R. S. Rattray, see Carola Lentz, Colonial ethnography and political reform: the works of A. C. Duncan-Johnstone, R. S. Rattray, J. Eyre-Smith and J. Guiness on Northern Ghana', *Ghana Studies*, 2 (1999),136-146.
[84] Benjamin N. Lawrance, 'Bankoe v Dome: traditions and petitions in the Ho-Asogli amalgamation, British mandated Togoland, 1919-39', *Journal of African Studies*, 46 (2005), 256-257.
[85] *Ibid*., 259.
[86] CO 96/790/2, Draft Togoland Report of 1947, 22.For detail on native courts and their operation in Ewedome, see Yayoh, 'Native Courts'.
[87] Lentz, *Ethnicity*, 73.

in the Gold Coast, including Asante and the Northern Territories. But of more comparative relevance to the Ewedome case-study was the Northern Territories, where small-scale 'stateless' people were also being amalgamated into larger, and supposedly more administratively 'rational' units, with treasuries and courts based on the findings of anthropologists such as Meyer Fortes. Parker gives detailed account of how Fortes was officially tasked, not only to provide ethnographic knowledge that would aid the formulation of policy for political reorganisation of Taleland (which also had chiefs but with limited mandate) but also to actually assist in designing the framework for implementation of indirect rule in that part of the Northern Territories in the 1930s.[88] Ewedome presents a more peculiar picture because the region was not strictly acephalous – chieftaincy existed, but on a small scale.

The British colonial government had, since the 1930s, demonstrated its willingness to use research in shaping colonial policy. We also learn from Allman and Parker's work that Fortes's research on Taleland from 1934-35 was important in the design of indirect rule in that territory. In the introduction of direct taxation, specific reference was made to the relevance of Fortes' research on the 'organisation and delegation of responsibility among the 'tribes' which comprised the Mamprusi Division' in the Northern Territories.[89] Indeed, Fortes was credited with drawing up the framework for indirect rule among the Talensi people, just as Lilley was instrumental in drafting the 1932 Ordinance for the southern section of British Togoland.[90] Similarly, DC Blair's research on Dagomba law and constitution in the early1930s was in the context of organising the Dagbon kingdom to ensure the authority of the Ya Na over his over-ambitious chiefs, particularly the chief of Tamale who was accused of aggrandising himself during the period that much of Dagomba population was separated from the traditional capital, Yendi, which was in the German zone. Blair and his assistants were looking for local power brokers to help them establish themselves in Tamale so

[88] Parker, 'Dynamics of Fieldwork', 640.
[89] Allman and Parker, *Tongnaab*, 182-216.
[90] *Ibid*, 205.

they could reverse the process and make sure the Ya Na had full control. Blair was assisted by the report written in the 1890s by George Ekem Furguson, a coastal African, who certainly played a role in gathering and analysing the information that Blair later used in his book. Similarly, Lentz has shown how ethnography and history aided colonial administrators in restructuring precolonial traditional organisation in Lawra areas of north-western Ghana.[91]

Another comparison can be drawn from the Tanganyika case, where the Germans were thought to have destroyed 'tribal cohesion' [and] 'tribal government'.[92] This necessitated the merging of small chiefdoms by the British into large ones in an attempt to create united 'tribes' by 'reconstructing the institutions existing before the disaster of German rule'.[93] This called for ethnographic research for 'a true appreciation of the existing conditions and forms of government immediately prior to German occupation'.[94]

It was observed by colonial officials that the various 'tribes' in Africa had genealogical connections and that, 'small tribes were offshoots of big ones and might therefore be reunited'.[95] Iliffe quoted a British official as saying that:

> native administration was as much a historical as a political exercise, its outcome depended heavily on the historical view current among administrators or plausibly advocated by interested Africans'.[96]

It was these ideas emanating from the various researches that led to the crystallization of the concept of amalgamation in British colonies from the 1920s. This policy, which involved the creation of states large enough for the purpose of local government necessitated 'the subordination of smaller chiefdoms'.[97]

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[91] Lentz, 'Colonial ethnography',120-121.
[92] John Iliffe, *Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge, 1979), 323
[93] *Ibid*., 322.
[94] *Ibid*.
[95] *Ibid*., 324.
[96] *Ibid*., 323.
[97] *Ibid*., 330

The Amalgamated States

In this section, I provide evidence which demonstrates how important local leaders have been in determining how colonial policies such as amalgamation unfolded in the Ewedome region. The 1932 Southern Section of British Togoland ordinance gave legal backing to the creation of amalgamated states in the territory. The choice of Avatime, Asogli and Akpini as the seats of the amalgamated states in Ewedome was based on studies done on the precolonial histories of the chiefdoms in Ewedome. In the words of Debrunner, 'the kings of Ho, and Kpando had distinguished themselves particularly in the resistance against Asante and now exercised a kind of leadership based on the reputation they had won'.[98] Even before the proclamation of the policy of amalgamation, there were intriguing manoeuvres by Dagadu IV of Kpando (Akpini), Adjatekpor V of Avatime, Kwadzo Dei of Peki and Howusu of Ho (Asogli) to reassert their influence over smaller chiefs to whom the Germans had granted independent tribunals.[99] Peki's move was untenable because, as stated earlier, it was outside the British mandated territory. Thus, there were local power brokers who stood to benefit from the policy and whose support led to the development of what Berman referred to as 'patron/client' relationship, a crucial factor in creating amalgamated states in Ewedome.[100] Subsequent sections in this article will consider the creation of the three amalgamated states in turn.

Akpini State

Lilley referred to Kpando (the headquarters of the Akpini State) as the most important political division in the British mandated territory.[101] It was no surprise

[98] Hans W. Debrunner, *Church between Colonial Powers* (London, 1965), 19. It is important to note that Debrunner's work was based on oral traditions that he collected in the territory from 1959 to 1960.
[99] CO 96/706/2, Reports on Provinces, Volta River District, 17 August 1932. The role of Howusu in pushing for amalgamation in Asorgli state is recorded in Lawrance, 'Dome', 252.
[100] Berman, 'Ethnicity', 316.
[101] Togoland Report, 1926, 4.

that, according to Brown, Kpando was 'the head of the first amalgamated state in British southern Togoland' in 1928.[102] Kpando was made up of fifteen towns with Kpando-Gabi being the capital. Lilley considered as outstanding the personality of the head chief, Anku Dagadu III, who ascended the throne on 3 May 1898 and died in 1925.[103] According to the Togoland Report of 1926, 'never had a sovereign a more loyal and devoted servant than this government had in Dagadu Anku'.[104] But Dagadu had his own agenda in his co-operation with the British. He certainly wanted to seize the opportunity presented by the British presence to reassert his overlordship over neighbouring micro-states. Le Lièvre's ethnography of Kpando also shows that Sovie and Awate formed the rear guard of the Kpando military organization in pre-colonial times.[105] Various colonial documents stated that there were political units or divisions which had been subservient to the stool of Kpando and that it was the German government which caused the disintegration of Dagadu's empire 'by setting up as independent a number of 'tribes' formally subservient to the stool of Kpando'.[106] The Germans, during their period of occupation, arrogated to themselves the prerogative of disposing of wilful chiefs. A case in point was the imprisonment and subsequent deportation of Dagadu III to Cameroon in 1913.[107] Brown observed that the deportation of Dagadu inadvertently shored up Kpando's prestige within Krepiland.[108] One will also recall how Dagadu III mobilised other Ewe states to oppose the German decision to inoculate people against the alleged sleeping sickness. Even before the German presence in the area, the British government

[102] David Brown, 'Anglo-German rivalry and Krepi politics', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 2 (1974), 213.
[103] Dates taken from CO96/672/5, Togoland Report 1927; Funeral brochure for the late Dagadu VII, 2007, p. 42.
[104] *Ibid*.
[105] PRAAD/A ADM 39/1/42, Lièvre, Kpando Division, 4.
[106] PRAAD/A ADM 39/1/25 No. 48/20, Rattray and Captain Mansfield to the Governor of the Gold Coast, 1921.
[107] CO 96/672/5 Togoland Report, 1926, 6.
[108] Brown, 'Anglo-German Rivalry', 213.

had acknowledged the seniority of Kpando over the other states, including Nkonya.[109]

Again, it was observed that Kpando was 'decidedly the largest and most important commercial town in the whole of the Krepi country'.[110] It was Kpando's commercial importance that attracted the Germans to Ewedome in the 1890s and it had been the desire of 'the chief of Kpando and his elders to see their economic importance translated into a correspondingly improved political position'.[111] At the time Dagadu 1 of Kpando ascended the throne in the 1830s, the Danes had already had a long tradition of contact with Kpando. The coming of the Danes increased trading activities in the hinterland of Ewedome in general and Kpando specifically. Danish merchants travelled upstream on the Volta to the Kpando area to exchange guns, gunpowder and beads for rubber, salt and palm oil.[112] Johnson pointed out that slaves, cotton, palm oil and pottery were brought down the river Volta to the coast at Ada and Accra in large quantities from states such as Kpando in the late nineteenth century.[113] Kpando was famous for pottery production. To the Germans, Kpando was 'more important than its neighbours in Krepi' and the chief was said to have exercised political authority over much of the territory.[114] It came therefore as no surprise that Kpando became one of the district capitals in German Togo. As noted, Akpini state was the first to start the process of amalgamation in the southern section of Togoland in January 1927, when the first group of 12 previously independent chiefs, came together at the

[109] *Ibid.*, 205.
[110] *Ibid.*, 202.
[111] *Ibid.*
[112] PRAAD/A ADM39, Lièvre, 'Kpando Division', 23.
[113] Marion Johnson, 'Asanti east of the Volta', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 8 (1965), 48. See also R. A. Kea, 'Akwamu-Anlo relations, c. 1750-1813', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 10 (1969), 60.
[114] Brown, 'Anglo-German Rivalry', 212. Dagadu was one of the few chiefs who were paid a salary by the Germans in recognition of his importance. See CO 96/672/5 Togoland Report, 1926.

instance of Dagadu IV, who ruled from 1926-1948, to oppose a gun-tax of £1 introduced by the British government.[115]

The success in opposing the gun-tax led to the convening of a second meeting on 21 November 1929, this time by Dagadu IV.[116] It was at that second meeting that the name 'Akpini' was adopted and Dagadu IV elected as president. This, then, was 'the original and indigenous attempt of the people for an amalgamation'.[117] According to Brown, Lilley had actually abandoned the plan to form amalgamated states by August 1928; instead, he came out with what he called a "group scheme".[118] Dagadu vehemently opposed Lilley's plan to scrap the amalgamation policy and petitioned the Governor.[119] When Lilley went to the UK on a six-month leave, Dagadu took advantage of the former's absence to form the Akpini amalgamated state and got the Commissioner of the Eastern Province's endorsement before Lilley returned to the territory in May 1929.[120]

Avatime State

Avatime, with its capital at Vane, was also one of the prosperous states in the Ewedome region; but Avatime was Siyase-speaking, not Ewe. In the words of Brydon, Avatime, in spite of its small size, wielded some political influence in the nineteenth century.[121] In pre-colonial times, the oath of Adza Tekpor, the paramount chief of Avatime, was resorted to by Ewe states in settling inter-personal and inter-state disputes. Adza Tekpor's court commanded respect and reverence among Ewe states as far as Agu in present-day Republic of Togo

[115] See RAG/H RAO 1/1932, Report on the Native Administration Ordinance of British Sphere of Togoland, 1932. The 12 hitherto independent divisions were Agate, Awate, Gbefi, Fodome, Have, Leklebi, Liate, Kpeve, Sovie, Vakpo and Tsyome. See the preamble to *Danyigba Kaka* festival brochure, 1 July 1974. Interview with Dagadu VII Kpando, 5 February, 2005, Mr Vanance Kyekye, a retired Kpando Local Council worker, Kpando, 3 July 2007. For the period Dagadu IV ruled, see Preamble to *Danyigba Kaka* festival brochure, 1 July 1974.
[116] *Danyigba Kaka* festival brochure, 1 July 1974.
[117] *Ibid*.
[118] Brown, 'Politics', 33.
[119] *Ibid*., 35.
[120] *Ibid.*, 36.
[121] Brydon, 'Constructing Avatime', 29.

because of an alleged potency of Adza Tekpor's oath, *Adza Tekpor Wanbi*. The oath had its origin in one of the wars that Avatime was said to have fought with neighbouring Logba and Tafi towns on a mountain known as *Wanbi* in the late nineteenth century.[122] Adja Tekpor IV was said to have lost his two sons in that war and it became a taboo to make reference to that event or to swear by *Adja Tekpor Wanbi*, referring to the tragic event on Wanbi, a mountain located between Avatime and Logba. Feuding factions in Ewe-speaking states swore the oath in order to seek redress in the court of Adja Tekpor.

In addition, the popularity of Adja Tekpor soared higher among Ewes because of the defeat that Asante suffered in the hands of Avatime people in 1869.[123] During the Asante invasion, many Ewe-speaking people sought refuge in Avatime.[124] There was also the obvious fact that by the end of the German period, Avatime had developed and became the most prosperous of all the states that later formed Avatime Native Authority in 1932. Adja Tekpor IV had a long tradition of working with Europeans since the Bremen Mission Station was opened in Amedzofe in 1890. It was from Amedzofe that Christian influence radiated to neighbouring states. The establishment of educational institutions in Amedzofe by the German Bremen missionaries, such as a seminary for the training of mission teachers and a residential senior school for boys and girls in 1890, gave prominence to Avatime.[125]

Furthermore, the paramount chief of Avatime, Adja Tepkor V, who ruled from 1917 to 1954 was equally a great leader whose ability to speak both English and German made him a dependable partner of the colonial officers.[126] For his able leadership, Adza Tekpor V was awarded the Knight of British Empire (KBE) in

[122] Interview conducted with Mr Lawson Osena, Asafoatse of Awatime Gbadzeme and a Retired Educationist, 4 December, 2007.
[123] See Spieth, *The Ewe People*, 7.This view is supported by Brydon, 'Constructing Avatime', 29.
[124] CO 96/746/7, General statement by C.C. Lilley to the 35th session of the PMC at Geneva, 24 to 25 October 1938.
[125] C0 96/672/5 Togoland Report 1926; CO 96/724/2 Togoland Report, 1920-21.
[126] Interview with Adzatekpor VI, Former President of the National House of Chiefs, 8 June 2002.

1949.[127] Nevertheless, colonial officers expected some protestations over whether it was plausible to expect Ewe divisions to recognise Avatime, a non-Ewe state, as the seat of their amalgamated state. Avatime people were not part of the Ewe-speaking people. They migrated from Ahanta in the west and they spoke a distinct language that was not a variant of Ewe; it had its own grammatical features and vocabulary and was not intelligible to the people who spoke the neighbouring languages unless they made concerted effort to learn it.[128] If the claim by Avatime people, as reported by Brydon, that they left Ningo in the Ga-Adangbe area in the wake of Akwamu invasion in 1679 is anything to go by, then one can conclude that the peopling of Ewedome by Ewes preceded the arrival of Avatime people.[129] Geographically, the Siyase-speaking people of Avatime occupied the greater part of the mountainous area of Ewedome. There were seven towns or divisions forming Avatime: Amedzofe, Biakpa, Dzogbefeme, Dzokpe, Fume, Gbadzeme and Vane. The paramount chief of Avatime resided in Vane, the capital town. In the south-east and south-west parts of Avatime were Ewe states such as Akome, Dodome, Dzolo, Hoe, Honuta, Klave, Kpedze, Kpoeta and Saviofe.

By the policy of amalgamation, these Ewe states were expected to join Avatime to form an enlarged Avatime state and to recognise Adza Tekpor, the head chief of Avatime, as their paramount chief. Although Adza Tekpor was popular in the area, there were obvious problems in attempting to make him paramount chief over Ewe-speaking states. Apart from the historical and linguistic differences between the people of Avatime and their Ewe neighbours, there were cultural peculiarities that set the two ethnic groups apart. For example, circumcision was a taboo and forbidden among Avatime people, while the Ewes

[127] Interview with Mr Lawson Osena, Asafoatse of Avatime Gbadzeme and a Retired Educationist, 4 December 2007.

[128] C0 96/746/7 Report to the 35th Session of the Permanent Mandate Commission, Geneva, 24-25 October 1938; RAG/H RAO/C 728, Petition, Avatime State to the Governor of the Gold Coast, 21 February 1953.

[129] Brydon, 'Constructing Avatime', 28. The assertion that Avatime people were from Ahanta in the southwestern Gold Coast and that they arrived in Ewedome after the Ewes had settled in the region is also found in H. P. White, 'Awatime: A highland environment in Togoland', *The Malayan Journal of Tropical Geography*, 1 (1956), 35.

as a whole practised circumcision.[130] This cultural prohibition inhibited intermarriage between the people of Avatime and their Ewe neighbours in pre-colonial times. In addition, marriage customs and several other traditional practices of Avatime people were fundamentally different from those of the Ewe-speaking people.[131]

The differences between Avatime and the other states were further widened by a land dispute that occurred between Avatime and Tafi in 1929. The conflict resulted in a riot in which Avatime was alleged to have seized the stool and other paraphernalia of the people of Tafi. All attempts by the latter to retrieve the items proved futile. Consequently, all states in Ho District ostracised the people of Avatime and refused to have anything to do with them.[132] These differences had relevance for the determination and promotion of the aspirations of Avatime people with regard to their Ewe neighbours on the other. Undoubtedly, the differences were essential factors which explained the difficulties that confronted colonial officers in deciding on an amalgamated Avatime state. An awful lot more effort had to be expended by Lilley and other officers to persuade these Ewe and Avatime groups to cooperate in a common local government administration.

Asogli (Ho) State

Some work has been done on the formation of Asogli NA by Lawrance.[133] It is, however, important to recount how Ho came to be chosen as the seat of Asogli State. Ho was also one of the earliest Bremen Mission stations and the local chiefs had acquired some degree of importance and prestige due to the development of a thriving market in the town.[134] It was made up of seven towns or divisions with Bankoe being the first settlement. The formation of Asogli state was the most protracted. The divisional chief of Ho-Dome, Constantin Komla Howusu, presented himself to British officials 'as the only literate chief' in the Asogli

[130] *Ibid.*
[131] *Ibid.*
[132] RAG/H Case no. 314/945, Riots and Peace Preservation, 1929 (Not Filed).
[133] Lawrance. 'Bankoe V Dome'.
[134] RAG/H Case no. 314/945, Riots and Peace Preservation, 1929 (Not Filed).

area.[135] In a petition to the governor in 1931, Afede of Ho-Bankoe recalled the gallantry displayed by Ho-Dome in the Akwamu invasion.[136]Consequently, Howusu became the obvious choice for paramount chief of Asogli State, which was to be composed of divisions outside Ho territorial area.[137] There is, however, another version to the reason for the choice of Howusu, instead of Afede. According to the Agyeman Badu Commission Report on the chieftaincy disputes in Ho in 1958, the choice of Howusu of Dome instead of Afede of Bankoe was due to the latter's refusal to shake hands with Lilley.[138] Lilley had lost his right arm in the First World War and on meeting Afede, he offered his left hand but Afede refused on the ground that it was a taboo to shake hands with the left hand. This annoyed Lilley and he decided not to have anything more to do with Afede. While the outside divisions resented the loss of their independence, disagreement over the choice of Howusu rendered Ho division itself incapable of leading the amalgamated state. The other divisions of Ho objected to the choice of Howusu Komla because they considered Afede of Ho-Bankoe the head chief of Ho.

Obviously, as noted earlier, the choice of Asorgli, Avatime and Kpando as the focal points of the amalgamated states was based on British colonial officers' knowledge of the pre-colonial political history. There is no doubt that the historical relationship that the three dominant local leaders had, first with the Germans, and then the British had an impact on shaping the amalgamated states. Their emergence as new 'paramount chiefs' represented, to some extent, a return to the regional status quo of the late nineteenth century where the three chiefs became dominant local leaders after the Akwamu and Asante invasions. It is

[135] Lawrance, 'Bankoe V Dome', 250.
[136] PRAAD/A ADM 11/1/1285, Unification of Native States Togoland, Ho-Asogli, Petition of Fia Afede of Ho Bankoe to Sir Alexander Slater, 7 July 1931.
[137] The ceremony of installation of Howusu is recorded in PRAAD/A ADM 11/1/1285, The Unification of Native States of Togoland, Notes by Captain Mothersill of a Meeting of Chiefs held at Ho, 24 February 1931.
[138] RAG/ H, RAO144. Agyeman Badu Commission of Enquiry into the Chieftaincy Disputes in Ho, 31 January to 16 May 1958. The controversy between Afede Asor I and Lilley is contained in PRAAD/A ADM39/1/456, Quarterly Reports, Ho District, 1932. See also Barbara Callaway, 'Local politics in Ho and Aba', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 4 (1970), 134-145.

reasonable then to suggest that given time, the new 'paramount chiefs' could have established large centralised states, a process that was truncated by the German occupation.

The implementation of policies of this nature, Spear argued, could not have been possible without some local historical precedents.[139] This further corroborated Iliffe's view that the establishment of NAs 'was as much a historical as a political exercise, its outcome depended heavily on the historical views current among administrators or plausibly advocated by interested Africans'.[140] The amalgamated states as well as the paramount chiefs needed some degree of local legitimacy to be effective partners in the scheme of indirect rule, which of course limited the ability of colonial officers to simply invent and impose such a policy on the indigenes.[141] Spear provides a detailed and broader picture of local dynamics and their influence on the construction of new identities in colonial Africa.[142] Lentz also argues that 'it was not only European views that fed into this discourse about 'tribal' characteristics, history and ethnicity; African knowledge and ideas, introduced by chiefs, also played their part'.[143] What was happening in Ewedome with regard to this policy exemplified the dynamics at play during the colonial era in Africa, where colonial officials created larger units, with the assistance of indigenous actors in areas where chiefdoms were seen to be too small and fragmented to be of practical use. The fact was that, various chiefdoms in Ewedome, just as in other parts of Africa, started experiencing tremendous economic, social and political transformations since the contact with the missionaries. Later, the need for local farmers to engage in large-scale cash crop cultivation, taxation and labour in order to pay tax put further stress on pre-colonial divisional boundaries. Local parochial interests, according to the officials, had to give way to the interest of a larger community in order to meet

[139] Spear, 'Neo-Traditionalism', 4.
[140] *Ibid*, 323.
[141] Spear, 'Neo-Traditionalism', 3-27.
[142] *Ibid.*.
[143] See Lentz, *Ethnicity*, 86

the demands of modernity. Spear is right in stating that the colonial state itself had to change in order to adapt to local conditions and meet its own objectives.[144]

Conclusion

This article builds on Tomas Spear's argument that legitimacy lay at the heart of indirect rule, for which reason it was not easy for British colonial officers to simply foist an invented tradition on colonial subjects. It examines the role of colonial ethnographic research in the British political reorganisation of Ewedome to demonstrate that colonial officials developed a fairly accurate knowledge of pre-existing political formations and that their acquisition of that knowledge was importantly shaped and facilitated by local power brokers. Thus, British officials were sincere in their bid to take into consideration pre-colonial political organization and affiliations in creating NA areas in Ewedome. Their research into the history and ethnography of the region did lead to a reasonable understanding of local realities, a crucial factor in the formulation of the policy of amalgamation in the region. In fact, ethnographic research on various 'tribal' organisations was invaluable in the quest of the British colonial administration to move from 'the *ad hoc* system of rule of the past' to 'a rationalized system of indirect rule'.[145] In Ewedome, as the article has shown, there were local power brokers who stood to benefit from the policy of amalgamation. Such influential leaders saw the policy of amalgamation as an opportunity for mobilizing connections to consolidate their own political positions. Although the British colonial government had a broad commitment to indirect rule, the precise objectives and outcomes tended to vary in different regions because local power brokers were able to influence the terms and conditions.

[144] PRO CO 96/705/8, Report on an Ordinance of the British Sphere of Togoland (Southern Section) Amendment Ordinance 1932, 29 June 1932.
[145] Quotes taken from Parker, 'Dynamics' 627 and 635.

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