

Togo

Ethnicity in Togo

Group selection

Although Togo's ethnic landscape is much more complicated than that, I reduced the list of politically relevant groups to two big clusters. This aggregation is also proposed by other scholars (3503; 3504). There are, of course, more ethnic groups than two such big clusters; however, there was however no evidence that any of these groups have ever been politically relevant in the sense that they were discriminated or politically represented by any ethnic interest group.

Group sizes according to Decalo (3505).

3503 [Brown, 1983]

3504 [?]

3505 [?]

Power relations

1960-1962: Rule of Sylvanus Olympio and his CUT. The CUT is an Ewe-based party (3506). The Ewe and other southern ethnic groups were the privileged groups during the colonial period. Accordingly, they dominate the country's political life after independence and the new state's civil service. Moreover, the Ewe south is also much more developed economically than the north, the home region of the Kabre and affiliated groups (3507; 3508).

3506 [Barbier, 1987]

Olympio's government is mainly composed of Ewe although there are also northerners included (also Kabre) (3509; 3510). In fact, the CUT received significant electoral support from the north in the 1958 elections (3511; 3512). The increasing discontent with Olympio's rule, moreover, came not least from the south and the Ewe (3513; 3514). It also seems that the military coup conducted by Eyadema in Jan. 1963 was mainly driven by other factors than ethnic rivalry (3515). However, it is a fact that the CUT leadership was overwhelmingly composed of Ewe and the government dominated by Ewe, too. Therefore, the Ewe and affiliated groups were coded as "dominant", and the northern Kabre cluster as mostly "powerless".

3507 [Brown, 1983]

3508 [?]

3509 [Barbier, 1987]

3510 [Brown, 1983]

3511 [Barbier, 1987]

3512 [Brown, 1983]

3513 [Brown, 1983]

1963-1966: Nicolas Grunitzky - an Ewe like Olympio - is installed as new president by the military. He forms a government that includes all political parties. Antoine Meatchi, a northerner, is elected vice-president. There is at least one more northerner in the cabinet. Hence, political inclusiveness, but also stalemate and instability.

In this de-facto power-sharing arrangement, the Ewe are still the "senior partner", but the Kabre can now be regarded as "junior partner".

1967-1990: New coup by Eyadema in Jan. 1967 and subsequent rise to power. Military dictatorial regime of Eyadema that rests upon the repressive force of the army. Political power becomes increasingly concentrated in the hands of members of his own Kabre group, which dominates the army and benefits from Eyadema's favoritism (3516, 1997; 3517). Important positions in the single party, the army, and in public enterprises are also given to family members or close personal cronies (3518; 3519, 3520; 3521). Even among students, "northerners" are favored by Eyadema's stipend system which leads to a militia of southern students that supports the opposition (3522).

Clear ethno-political cleavage between southern Ewe and northern Kabre. Opposition organizations are predominantly composed of Ewe and other southern groups (3523; 3524), while the only city that does not participate in the general strike in June 1991 is Kara, a northern city mainly populated by Kabre (3525). Eyadema repeatedly labels opposition to his regime as Ewe-tribalism that intends to promote Ewe dominance in the country (3526; 3527). The regime also uses attempted (or staged?) "plots" to launch a campaign of harassment and coercion against the old CUT-Ewe elite (3528).

The ongoing resistance of these opposition groups becomes increasingly violent, especially from the mid-1980s on. There are rising interethnic hostilities in Lome and the countryside - exaggerated and used by the regime for its propaganda (3529, 1997). Brutal suppression of all opposition by the army, which is still overwhelmingly composed of members of the Kabre group and completely loyal to Eyadema (3530; 3531; 3532, 1997; 3533). Decalo (1996) states that Eyadema's Kabre-army behaved like an occupation-army in the south and centre of the country, and that the only reason why the country did not experience any civil war in this period was because the southern opposition did not have any arms. Thus, the Kabre cluster was coded as "dominant" and the Ewe and affiliated groups as "powerless" during the whole period from 1967 to 1990.

3516 [Heilbrunn, 1993]

3517 [Nwajiaku, 1994]

3518 [?]

3519 [Heilbrunn, 1993]

3520 [Heilbrunn, 1997]

3523 [Heilbrunn, 1993]

3524 [Nwajiaku, 1994]

3525 [Heilbrunn, 1997]

3526 [Brown, 1983]

3527 [Heilbrunn, 1997]

3529 [Heilbrunn, 1993]

3530 [?]

3531 [?]

3532 [Heilbrunn, 1993]

3533 [Nwajiaku, 1994]

1991 Failed "democratization process" (national conference, new constitution providing for a multi-party system, elections etc.). Eyadema never really loses power. The prime ministers, selected by himself, remain subordinated to him (and the military forces behind him), the parliament – also intimidated by the military – is not able to constitute a countervailing power. Nevertheless, the aborted democratization process does lead to more ethnic inclusion in the higher circles of executive state power, for which reason we can code a power-sharing regime in this one-year period, with the Kabre as "senior partner", and the Ewe as "junior partner".

1992-2005 Return to "business as usual" as Eyadema consolidates his tight grip on power again, thanks to the loyal support of his Kabre-dominated army. Meanwhile, ethno-regional cleavages deepen increasingly. Eyadema's party RPT is now a clearly regionalist northern party. Opposition parties (Agboyibor's CAR and the UTD of Edem Kodjo) receive their support from the south (³⁵³⁴). The fraudulent presidential election in 1993 that Eyadema wins without rival candidates is essentially a "regional vote" with a national turnout of about 35% - mainly from the north. Turnout in the south ranges from 4 to 18% (³⁵³⁵; ³⁵³⁶).

³⁵³⁴ [?]

³⁵³⁵ [?]

³⁵³⁶ [Heilbrunn, 1997]

Eyadema holds a firm grip on power until his death in Feb. 2005. The fact that the army arbitrarily named his son, Faure Gnassingbe, as successor and subsequently supported him to win the so-called "elections" later in April 2005 shows that the system of political power in Togo has not significantly changed with Eyadema's death. (The interim president which was named by the parliament for the two months before the elections was also a northerner and firm supporter of Gnassingbe.) The opposition accused the military of stealing ballot boxes from polling stations in the south. The riots and civilian protests which, especially in the capital Lome, accompanied this "military coup" (so called by the African Union) were violently put down by the armed forces, resulting in tens of thousands of people fleeing to neighboring Benin and Ghana. There was significant interethnic violence between the two ethnic groups during the electoral conflict, with the Kabre-dominated army responsible for many of the committed human rights abuses (³⁵³⁷).

³⁵³⁷ [Freedom House Country Reports, 2007-2008]

In sum, in this period, like in the period from 1967 to 1990, the Kabre (and related groups) need to be coded as "dominant", whereas the Ewe (and related groups) are mostly "powerless".

(Note, however, that the bulk of the northern population has not benefited economically from the northern-based military regime of the late Eyadema. In 2006, 90% of families in the north and 77% in central Togo could not cover their basic needs (³⁵³⁸).

³⁵³⁸ [IRIN, 2006-2009]

2006-2009: Faure Gnassingbe as president (reelected in March 2010)

Gnassingbe has inherited his father's reign, based on a small circle of military associates. The armed forces are also the main base of support for the dominant party RTP (3539). Importantly, according to the U.S. State Department's Human Rights Report from 2009, the Kabre still constituted about 80% of the army's officers and soldiers in 2008. Moreover, the southern ethnic groups are still underrepresented in the government (3540).

However, there seem to be some slow improvements occurring, as Gnassingbe's regime is less repressive than his father's (3541). As a consequence of a "peace agreement" with the opposition in August 2006, Gnassingbe has named several southern prime ministers (e.g. Edem Kodjo and Yawovi Agboyibo) who appointed somewhat more inclusive "unity governments" (3542). In April 2009, Faure Gnassingbe had his younger half-brother Kpatcha Gnassingbe, former Defense minister, arrested on coup-plotting charges. Kpatcha was viewed as a conservative and hard-liner in line with the former regime of his father, whereas Faure's rule was characterized by more openness and better relations with the opposition - differences which resulted in a rift between the two brothers after their father's death (3543).

Overall, it is difficult to exactly determine the Ewe's (and related southern groups') power status under Faure Gnassingbe's regime. It is clear that the Kabre - through their dominance of the still extremely powerful army - are still the leading group within Togo's state (see also 3544). Yet, it seems that Gnassingbe's rule is markedly more (ethnically) inclusive than his father's (mirrored also in an upgrade of Freedom House values from 2008 on; see also 3545). The balance of power seems to be similar to the year of 1991 when Eyadema and his closest collaborators temporarily lost their iron grip on power. Therefore, it appears reasonable to code a new period of ethno-political power-sharing in Togo from 2006 on, with the Kabre (and related groups) as "senior partner" and the Ewe (and related groups) as "junior partner".

2010-2013 In the current coding period, Togo is still governed by a Kabre-Ewe power-sharing coalition, in which the Kabre (and related northern groups) clearly take the leading position. On these grounds, the Kabre were coded as "senior partner" and the Ewe as "junior partner." In the presidential election in March 2010, the incumbent Faure Gnassingbe received over 60 % of the vote and won another term in office. Quite surprisingly, Jean-Pierre Fabre and not Gilchrist Olympio ran as candidate of the main opposition party, the Ewe-dominated Union de Forces pour le Changement (UFC). Shortly after the elections, Olympio, apparently acting on his own account, negotiated a power-sharing deal with Faure securing the Ewe-leaning UFC seven cabinet seats (3546). This deal led to a split of the Ewe opposition: Fabre and a majority of other (former) UFC politicians founded the Alliance nationale pour le changement (ANC), whereas

3539 [Polity IV Country Report, 2010]

3540 [United States Government State Department, 2009]

3541 [IRIN, 2006-2009]

3542 [IRIN, 2006-2009]

3543 [AFP, 2009]

3544 [Bertelsmann Country Report, 2008-2010]

3545 [Bertelsmann Country Report, 2008-2010]

3546 [Seely, 2010]

Olympio was left with a minority rump of the 'old' UFC. The ANC quickly emerged as the main opposition force sidelining its 'mother party' UFC (³⁵⁴⁷). Generally speaking, Ewe continue to be under-represented in the Togolese state apparatus, both in its civil and in its military branches (USStateDepartment). The 2010 elections apparently marked a slight departure from previously established patterns of ethnic voting. While Faure's regime party RPT/UNIR still won all northern districts and the Ewe-dominated UFC prevailed in the south, both parties secured more votes outside of their traditional constituencies than it had been the case in previous elections (³⁵⁴⁸). This might indicate that ethnicity has become a somewhat less salient cleavage in Togolese politics. However, it is still highly politically relevant.

³⁵⁴⁷ [Tobolka2014]

³⁵⁴⁸ [Bertelsmann Country Report, 2008-2010]

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Political status of ethnic groups in Togo

From 1960 until 1962

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Ewe (and related groups)	0.44	DOMINANT
KabrÃ© (and related groups)	0.27	POWERLESS

From 1963 until 1966

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Ewe (and related groups)	0.44	SENIOR PARTNER
KabrÃ© (and related groups)	0.27	JUNIOR PARTNER

From 1967 until 1990

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Ewe (and related groups)	0.44	POWERLESS
KabrÃ© (and related groups)	0.27	DOMINANT

From 1991 until 1991

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Ewe (and related groups)	0.44	JUNIOR PARTNER
KabrÃ© (and related groups)	0.27	SENIOR PARTNER



Figure 760: Political status of ethnic groups in Togo during 1960-1962.



Figure 761: Political status of ethnic groups in Togo during 1963-1966.

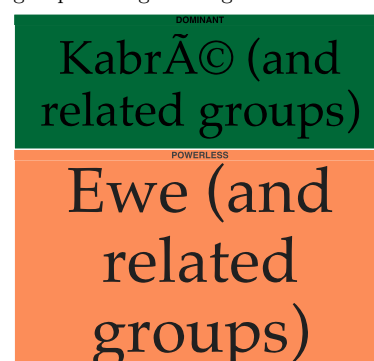
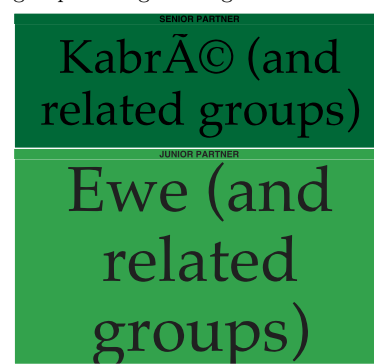


Figure 762: Political status of ethnic groups in Togo during 1967-1990.



From 1992 until 2005

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Ewe (and related groups)	0.44	POWERLESS
KabrÃ© (and related groups)	0.27	DOMINANT

From 2006 until 2013

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Ewe (and related groups)	0.44	JUNIOR PARTNER
KabrÃ© (and related groups)	0.27	SENIOR PARTNER

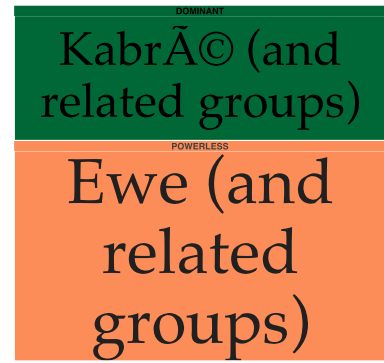


Figure 764: Political status of ethnic groups in Togo during 1992-2005.

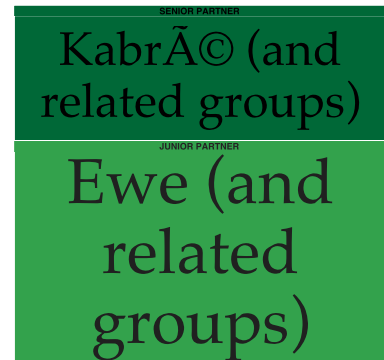


Figure 765: Political status of ethnic groups in Togo during 2006-2013.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Togo

From 1960 until 2013



Figure 766: Map of ethnic groups in Togo during 2006-2013.

	Group name	Area in km ²	Type
■	Ewe (and related groups)	14 185	Regionally based
■	Kabr� (and related groups)	12 639	Regionally based

Table 221: List of ethnic groups in Togo during 1960-2013.

Conflicts in Togo

Starting on 1986-09-23

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Togo	MTD	Ewe (and related groups)	1986-09-23	Presumed	Yes	Yes