



Colonial education and the world market: The cotton school experiment in German Togo (1900–1914)

Christel Adick¹

Accepted: 15 July 2023
© The Author(s) 2023

Abstract

Critical research on colonial education should not only include the intentions of colonial actors, but also an awareness of possible learning outcomes that were intended or not intended by “the colonial masters”. The case study presented here explores the fate of an agricultural school located in Notsé (Togo) from its first ideas in 1900 until about 1914 (the end of German colonial rule in Togo). The main reason for setting up the “cotton school experiment” was to find ways of formalising the transfer of knowledge, competences and attitudes which were deemed necessary for the transformation of the local economy and society from a subsistence or household economy to capitalist modes of production. The history of this agricultural institution transcends colonial history between Germany and Togo, opening up a broader view of entanglements between the regional histories of Africa, Germany and the southern United States. The story begins with African Americans from Tuskegee in Alabama under the leadership of the African-American educationist Booker T. Washington, who were despatched to German Togo in 1900 in order to enhance local cash-crop style cotton production for the sake of the German cotton industry in Germany. It ends with the colonial government in Togo appointing German regional agricultural officers to consult and instruct local Togolese communities in cash-crop production as itinerant teachers.

Keywords Togo · German colonialism · Colonial education · Education for work · Agricultural education · Education transfer · Booker T. Washington

Résumé

Éducation coloniale et marché mondial : l’expérience de l’école du coton au Togo allemand (1900-1914) – La recherche critique sur l’éducation coloniale devrait non seulement examiner les intentions des acteurs de la colonisation, mais aussi s’intéresser aux éventuels résultats, intentionnels ou non, de l’éducation dispensée par les colo-

✉ Christel Adick
christel.adick@rub.de; christel.adick@web.de

¹ Faculty of Philosophy and Educational Research, Institute of Education, Ruhr-University Bochum, Bochum, Germany

nisateurs. La présente étude de cas se penche sur l'histoire d'une école d'agriculture située à Notsé (Togo), de l'idée de sa création en 1900 jusqu'à environ 1914 (la fin du règne colonial allemand au Togo). Créer une « école expérimentale du coton » avait pour principale vocation de formaliser le transfert de savoir, de compétences et de comportements jugés nécessaires pour transformer l'économie et la société locales en les faisant passer d'un modèle d'économie de subsistance ou domestique à un mode de production capitaliste. L'histoire de cet établissement d'enseignement agricole dépasse le cadre historico-colonial qui lie l'Allemagne et le Togo, ouvrant un champ plus vaste où s'enchevêtrent les histoires régionales d'Afrique, d'Allemagne et du sud des États-Unis. Tout commence ici avec des Afro-Américains de Tuskegee dans l'Alabama, qui furent envoyés sous la houlette du pédagogue afro-américain Booker T. Washington au Togo allemand en 1900 pour améliorer la production locale de coton de type commercial, au profit de l'industrie du coton en Allemagne. Elle s'achève avec l'affectation d'agents agricoles régionaux allemands, missionnés comme enseignants itinérants par le gouvernement colonial du Togo pour conseiller les communautés togolaises et les éduquer en matière de production commerciale.

Introduction

Critiques of European colonialism have recently been resumed by new debates on colonialism, coloniality and postcoloniality highlighting the historical entanglements and long-term effects of colonial domination, exploitation, oppression, racism and cultural hegemony. Discussions extend to general ontological and epistemic critiques of European or Western ways of reasoning, as reflected, for instance, in the book *Postcoloniality – Decoloniality – Black Studies*, edited by Sabine Broeck and Carsten Junker (2014), which covers various humanities and social sciences, albeit without featuring education among them. These recent debates entail a change of perspective from imperial-centred research to critiques from the “periphery” of Europe, as demonstrated in the edited book entitled *Europe as the Other* (Becker and Stanley 2014), which also includes chapters touching on questions of missionary education. In a very broad sense, then, recent postcolonial debates tend to focus on *colonialism* as a way of thinking and ideology, but less on research on the *colonial history* of certain eras or colonial powers. Even if in a broad sense *European colonialism* since the 15th century may be regarded as a large-scale ideological enterprise to (re-)educate the colonised non-European populations, the effects of which continue to this day, such an ideology-critical perspective leaves ample room for evidence-based research specifically addressing historical developments of particular colonial places and times. This includes the study of *colonial education* in a narrower sense, i.e., institutions, programmes and arrangements explicitly designed to socialise, instruct and (re-)educate identifiable groups or individual children, youths and adults from among the colonised.

The longstanding general notion is to regard education in postcolonial societies as “a colonial heritage” and label it once and for all as “European” or “Western” (Adick 1989, 1992). But such debates, important as they are, often miss the point of research in the field of education, because they tend to treat education as just

a dependent variable, which it is not, neither in “Western” countries, nor in colonial settings or elsewhere. Critical research on colonial education should include an awareness of possible learning outcomes that were not intended by “the colonial masters”, or even counterproductive to colonial objectives. For instance, many leaders of anti-colonial liberation movements were former students of missionary and colonial schools and made use of their education to profoundly criticise colonial domination. This calls for research into the self-directed (re-)actions of “the colonised”, which might go unnoticed if the national school systems of former European colonies continue to be regarded as purely “Western” today, after generations of “Indigenous” parents, teachers, children, youths and adults have attended and worked in them.

Continuing this line of reasoning, this article posits the peculiarities of education as they have been pinpointed by Paulo Freire in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 2005 [1970]). The universal double face of “education” includes its domesticating aspect on the one hand, and its empowering features on the other, which exist even in situations of oppression, except, of course, in cases of sheer force, when one would not refer to “education” at all. Taking this view for granted, colonial education must be analysed as part of “the colonial situation” which predetermines the roles of “the coloniser” and “the colonised”, but also includes contradictory relations, as has been demonstrated by Albert Memmi in his classical treatise on *The Colonizer and the Colonized* from over half a century ago (Memmi 2021 [1974]).¹ Next to Freire’s and Memmi’s views, the specific situation of colonialism in Africa has to be taken into consideration. Colonialism did not only mean the domination and suppression of – from a European perspective – “overseas” territories and people. It also entailed a transformation of the whole African continent into a “periphery”, as epitomised by Walter Rodney in his famous contribution to global history entitled *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Rodney 1972), while at the same time, as he posited, Europe developed. It should be noted that the works of Freire, Memmi and Rodney (and others) initiated a complete revision of perspectives on education and colonialism which quickly resonated in scientific disciplines, including comparative and international education (Carnoy 1974; Berman 1975; Adick et al. 1979). Furthermore, Freire, Memmi, Rodney and other anti-colonial-minded scholars of the 1950s to 1970s are being re-discovered in many a postcolonial discussion today not least for their groundbreaking critical analyses decades ago.

The analysis I present in this article is written in the spirit of these classical fundamental approaches to education and colonialism. In this view, colonial education is predetermined by colonialism, but not necessarily regarded as (mere) “colonial heritage” which might have been simply accepted or rejected during colonial times or after political independence. Colonial education is a mirror of “the colonial situation” (Memmi 2021 [1974]), and it must be researched as a cornerstone to the formation of the “underdevelopment vs development” nexus (Rodney 1972). Despite being restrictive and oppressive, it includes traits of “conscientisation” (Freire 2005

¹ The original French version of Memmi’s two-part treatise, *Portrait du colonisé, précédé par Portrait du colonisateur*, was published in 1957.

[1970]), signs of a self-reflective acquisition of knowledge and awareness of “the oppressed” (ibid.). This challenges scholars to research factors like agency, self-directed learning and critical competences of “the colonised” instead of only analysing ideologies, proclamations and programmes of “the coloniser”. In short, this article starts from the basic premise that in the German colonies, education was structurally predetermined as being (a) envisaged for “the colonised”; (b) arranged by “the coloniser”; (c) in a “colonial situation”; with (d) the ultimate aim to benefit “colonial interests”. My analysis includes reflections about whether the intentions of “the coloniser” always came true or not, and how much room for manoeuvre “pre-termination” left for individual actors.

Education in the German colonies – an overview

The German “colonial empire” consisted of colonies in Africa and some territories in Asia and the Pacific, with different histories of domination between roughly 1884 and 1914, i.e., in the era after the Berlin Conference 1884/85 in which the imperialist powers “distributed” the not yet occupied regions of the world among themselves, up to the First World War, when Germany lost all her colonies, which were then re-distributed to other colonial powers in the treaty of Versailles (1918). Postcolonial debates have helped to (re-)start a new focus on German colonialism in international scientific communities (Conrad 2013), becoming more visible internationally as increasing numbers of academic papers on German colonialism are written in English. Current public debates on colonialism in Germany are often directed towards the re-naming of parks and streets hitherto commemorating an alleged German colonial hero; the restitution of arts and religious objects from German museums to their countries of origin; as well as addressing the colonial legacy of historical atrocities like the German genocidal war on the Herero and Nama in German South West Africa (1904–1908), today’s Namibia. While such public debates may lead to the “conscientisation” (Freire 2005 [1970]) of the wider German public and while they may then influence the teaching of colonialism in German schools, universities and adult education institutions, proper research on *education in the German colonies* is lacking in recent “postcolonial” debates.

Colonial German education mainly took place in the four African German colonies: German Togo, Cameroon, German South West Africa and German East Africa. My choice to use the historical names of these territories here is deliberate in order to signal that geographically they are not equivalent to the countries after their independence, because after the First World War, the territories were allocated to other colonial powers, not always adhering to the former German colonial borders. It is important to note that my considerations in this article include neither the schools for white children in German colonies (if at all, most of them existed in German South West Africa), nor the rare educational provisions for Africans who received their education somewhere in Germany at that time (Adick and Mehnert 2001, pp. 423ff.). The North German Mission Society, for instance, sent some Togolese youths to Germany to be educated as mission assistants. Their fates and experiences are critically evaluated today as reflecting African views on what

they experienced in an allegedly Christian Europe (Azamede 2014). Another type of institution this article does not include are the “colonial schools” which existed in Germany to prepare Germans for working and living in the German colonies; namely the *Deutsche Kolonialschule für Landwirtschaft* (German Colonial School for Agriculture) and the *Koloniale Frauenschule* (Colonial Women’s School), both located at Witzenhausen in northeastern Hesse, about 30 kilometres east of Kassel (Zollmann 2020). Although such institutions would have to be included in an overall picture of “colonial education”, this article concentrates on education in the German colonies meant for the African populations of these colonies by highlighting the example of German Togo.

Schools in the German colonies were mainly run by the manifold Christian missionary denominations, which by far outnumbered the few German state-run schools in the colonies. Like other colonial education systems in Africa in the first decades of the 20th century, e.g., the internationally better-known British and French ones, German colonial education provision mostly consisted of primary schools, some middle- and some rare examples of secondary schools, but lacked institutions of proper higher education. This “colonial school system” also encompassed some vocational education and practical training, namely: *Seminare*, i.e., seminaries of missionary societies which prepared local personnel to work as catechists and/or teachers; *Mädchenschulen*, i.e., separate mono-educational girls’ schools; *Handwerkerschulen*, i.e., crafts and trades schools; furthermore *Ackerbauschulen*, i.e., agricultural schools, as well as some rare *Fortbildungsschulen*, i.e., a vocational form of secondary or continuing education schools. German colonial times thus laid some foundations of vocational and practical training, which have been upheld throughout history to date (Akakpo-Numado 2011).

After the turn of the century, the colonial school system emerging in German Togo in the early 20th century established a primary school called *Volksschule*. This term also designated the regular (primary, and later also lower secondary-level) school attended by the mass of the people in Germany, in which, however, one could not achieve the *Abitur*, i.e., the secondary school completion certificate required for university entrance. The official curriculum of basic education in German Togo was extended from four to six years in 1910 and mandated to teach various oral and written competences in the German language, arithmetic, so-called *Realien* (literally: realities); i.e., the transmission of knowledge in geography, history and natural sciences; and singing (Staatsarchiv Bremen 1910, cited in Adick and Mehnert 2001, pp. 167–169). Religious teaching in the schools of the missionary societies was not codified in this governmental order, but left to be decided upon by the missionary societies.

Education for work

In the context of a prevailing general critique of formal schooling being “too academic”, failing to prepare students for the realities of life and practical work, many historical commentaries on missionary and colonial education in Africa agreed that the introduction of modern schooling meant the proliferation of “bookish”,

i.e., academic-type, learning (Paterson 2005). This, it was argued in the early 20th century, would inevitably lead those completing their school education towards so-called “white-collar” jobs, as epitomised by the oft-cited Phelps-Stokes Commission, which reviewed British Colonial Education in various parts of Africa in the 1920s and suggested education for manual work as the best remedy (Bude 1983). But the Phelps-Stokes Commission was neither the first nor the only agency to promote education for diligent work and not for idleness or academic parity. In real terms, this most often meant an education for “blue-collar” jobs serving the interests of “the coloniser”. This outlook on “education for work” (*Erziehung zur Arbeit*) geared towards making people work was typical for missionary, commercial and public protagonists of German colonial education (Markmiller 1995). Based on the *ora et labora*² of Christian philosophies, such a “Gospel of Work” (Paterson 2005) also existed in other colonial empires, like in Senegal and Mali under French colonial rule (Tiquet 2020). Moreover, it was also applied as suitable for rural, poor and working-class-populations in Europe, as has been pinpointed by Sebastian Conrad (2009), who, by taking the case of Imperial Germany, alludes to the structural similarity between dependent and exploited colonial subjects and suppressed lower classes in Europe.

After the Second World War, Wolfgang Mehnert (1929–2013) was the first to submit an academic critique of *German colonial education* in his *Habilitationschrift* (inaugural dissertation qualifying for a professorship) at the University of Leipzig in the then German Democratic Republic (Mehnert 1965). Despite its importance, his treatise was (and is) not widely known, due to language barriers, lack of availability (no book publication), but also due to the Cold War situation which hampered international discourse at the time of his submission. After screening the existence, practice and outcome of missionary and governmental schools in the four German colonies in Africa, Mehnert derived a *fundamental definition of “colonial education”*, analysing it as a concept which by necessity includes a basic contradiction (ibid., pp. 276–311): He posits an inevitable antagonism between the economic necessity to furnish parts of the dominated populace with some basic education in order to make the colonies profitable and manageable, and the fear of well-educated African subalterns for their competitive competences and critique if they were at eye-level with the European rulers.³

Mehnert’s work also contains an extensive discussion of colonial education for work policies (ibid., pp. 162–183), for which he distinguishes three types which may still serve as a valuable classification today:

- pure and direct exploitation of children and youth;
- juxtaposition of child labour and a certain amount of instruction; and

² Latin: pray and work.

³ The original German statement reads: “Dieser Antagonismus ist letzten Endes gekennzeichnet durch die eigentümliche Verbindung des Verlangens der Kolonialprofiteure nach einer eng begrenzten Realbildung für Teile der afrikanischen Bevölkerung mit der Furcht der gleichen Kreise vor einer solchermaßen ‘gebildeten’ Kolonialbevölkerung” (Mehnert 1965, p. 276). This is further elaborated in the subsequent chapters of his work.

- crafts and trade schools, agricultural schools and home economics classes.

In German Togo, pure and direct exploitation existed in the form of forced labour in colonial infrastructure projects like railroad construction, carried out by brigades which “the colonised” had to provide. One example is the line built between the coastal centre Lomé and the inland station Atakpame, which also affected the school in Notsé, the object of the case study discussed below. As the acting German Governor literally claimed, such work would have beneficial *educational effects* (Amtsblatt Togo 1909, p. 33). Even though Togo had been propagated a “model colony” by colonial circles, because of allegedly more “peace and harmony” than in other German colonies, forced labour has since long been classified as one of the “demerits of the German Administration in Togo” by critical historians (Darkoh 1967, 1968, p. 164).

Mehnert’s second type of education for work, the juxtaposition of child labour and a certain amount of instruction, was common in the school landscape in Togo, since some kind of manual work alongside instruction in schools had always existed on the Christian mission stations, especially in harvesting, construction and maintenance work. A North German Mission inspector reported that education for work included girls’ household chores, various handicrafts and agriculture (Schlunk 1914, p. 103). According to a 1907 timetable used by this Mission Society, pupils had to do farm work (“*Landarbeit*”) on every weekday between 4 and 5 p.m. (see Appendix 7 in Adick 1981, pp. 350f.). Besides the acquisition of functional competences, like knowing how to handle agricultural tools, this manual work included some lessons which reflect the colonial situation, like respecting working hours, regular attendance, and obeying the orders of colonial agents and missionaries. In other words, the intended outcome was *learning to become a colonial subaltern*.

Finally, Mehnert’s third type of education for work, namely crafts and trade schools, agricultural schools and home economics classes, is illustrated by the case study presented in this article next to other types of vocational education and training mentioned above.

Besides considering the disruptive implications of *Arbeitserziehung*, any analysis of it must also take into account the type of colony under consideration, for instance whether it was a plantation colony or a settler colony. It makes a big difference whether “agricultural training” is designed to prepare Germans to become good farmers as future settlers (“colonisers”) in a German colony in Africa, or whether it is meant for “the colonised” in a settler colony who are assigned the subaltern roles of farm workers. This is highlighted by Jakob Zollmann (2020) in “Becoming a Good Farmer – Becoming a Good Farm Worker”, based on his research on colonial agricultural education policies in Germany vis-à-vis their roles in German South West Africa, a settler-type colony. German Togo was neither a settler colony nor a plantation colony, because there were few Europeans living in the colony, and not many large plantations, resulting in a situation very different from that in Cameroon, for example. Instead, in German Togo, the colonial exploitation through cash crop production (tropical wood, palm oil, cotton, etc.) was largely dependent on the so-called *Volkskulturen* (literally: people’s [agri]cultures), i.e., the agricultural yield of the local population, who then had to be either forced to participate, or co-opted to

comply and lured into any “colonial project”. The “cotton school experiment” set up at Notsé intended to target such a co-optation process among the rural population.

Historical reconstruction of the cotton school experiment

After the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, the colonial boundaries and administration of German Togo had – in the eyes of the “coloniser” – been “consolidated” and the colony was expected “to bear economic fruit”, i.e., to become profitable, for instance by installing cash crop production in local plantations. It is conceivable how, after 1900, economic progress, even if of the “colonial type”, went hand in hand with expanding numbers of students being trained to keep the project running (Adick 1981, pp. 294ff. and Fig. 5, p. 297). From this it may be concluded that an educational experiment after the turn of the century was not necessarily condemned to fail right from the start.

Considering the fact that a proper history of the “cotton school experiment” in German Togo has yet to be written, I decided to collect existing evidence from the very point which set off the whole experiment until it finally ended, identifying important turning points during these years. The limited space of an article requires abstention from each and every detail and nuance, in order to compile a condensed but evidence-based overview of main events and outcomes. To achieve this, I felt it was appropriate to resort to a *key incidents analysis*, originally conceptualised by Frederick Erickson (1977), and later adapted and enriched by researchers in the fields of ethnography of schooling (Wilcox 1980) and intercultural education (see Kroon and Sturm 2000). In a nutshell, the method screens the broad background of available descriptive and interpretative details of various qualitative and quantitative historical data on a certain object of research – in this case, the cotton school experiment. It then arranges their representation into a storyline along events, which are considered as “key incidents”, as defined by Erickson, who posited:

what qualitative research does best and most essentially is to describe key incidents in functionally relevant descriptive terms and place them in some relations [*sic*] to the wider social context, using the key incident as a concrete instance of the workings of abstract principles of social organization (Erickson 1977, p. 61).

This approach allows me to recount the story step by step in its “main instances” against the background of the “abstract principles” of colonialism and the world market.

Existing research on the history of German Togo treats the school mostly in its relation to, for instance, economy, administration, historical biographies, ethnography or infrastructure (e.g., Knoll 1978; Sebald 1988, Erbar 1991). Many scholars have focused on parts of the history of the “cotton school experiment”, such as the African Americans brought in from Tuskegee in Alabama, highlighting the African-American agency in the tripartite relations between the southern United States, Germany and Togo, relevant to the background and foundational phase of the cotton school experiment (Ali 2000; Beckert 2005; Retter 2017; Zimmerman 2005).

This leaves room for research on the later developments of the school. Existing *educational research* (including my own) on this school lacks a thorough analysis of details concerning the *formalisation* of agricultural learning as well as its *institutionalisation* as a new type of school. Looking for the relation between “concrete instances”, and the working of “abstract principles” in discovering “key incidents”, I posit here that the main reason for and governing idea of the cotton school experiment was to formalise and institutionalise the transfer of such knowledge, competences and attitudes deemed necessary for an effective transformation of the local Togolese economy and society. This intervention would transform the local system from a subsistence or household economy into capitalist modes of production which would benefit the German cotton industry, thus implementing the “abstract principle” of colonialism and world market ideology. It is along these lines that my key incidents analysis below tries to pull together the scattered findings into a “storyline”; i.e., a synthesis of existing knowledge, giving priority to such dates, names and figures which are referenced by archival sources.⁴

28 December 1900: African Americans from the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama arrive in German Togo in order to increase local cotton production for export

The “cotton school experiment” in German Togo grew out of a transnational mission based on interactions between Germany, German Togo and the southern United States which evolved in the year 1900. The mission was initiated by the *Kolonialwirtschaftliches Komitee* (KWK), i.e., a private economic lobby consortium in Imperial Germany, founded in 1896. Its objective was to foster the colonial economy, which meant increasing *imports* from the colonies – including agricultural products – into Germany, as well as boosting *exports* of German industrial products to its colonies. The KWK operated on the basis of various commissions, among which its “cotton commission” decided in the year 1900 to venture into German Togo. This mission was privately financed by the KWK, with support from the colonial budget in German Togo. Its main aim was to explore whether the local cotton production in this colony, which had existed for over 200 years, could be “modernised” in order to meet the growing demand for cotton in the German textile industry and reduce German dependence on the world market for cotton, dominated at the time by the United States (US). Togolese cotton cultivation had already been producing good quality tissue for the local textile market for some time, but did not technically meet the demands of the European cotton industry. Modernisation would mean finding cotton varieties which would be suitable for machine weaving as well

⁴ The storyline I present here owes much to archival research of Ralph Erbar 1991 (pp. 128–161), including his details on the school up to its final phases, as well as to the special chapters on the school’s history by Edward Graham Norris 1993a (pp. 141–149) and Napo Pierre Ali (2000, pp. 80–91). Furthermore, research on the Tuskegee expedition to German Togo (Beckert 2005; Zimmerman 2005), and data in Adick 1981; Adick and Mehnert 2001; Knoll 1978; Pohl and Longi 2013; and Sebald 1988 add to the picture and were cross-checked for events, figures, names and dates.

as increasing the amount of local cotton for export. Crucially, this operation would also need to include motivating the local population to participate in this agricultural “revolution”.

Why cotton? Cotton belongs to the famous “plants that transformed mankind”, next to quinine, sugar, tea and potatoes (Hobhouse 1992) and other plants subsequently added to this discourse. “King Cotton” or “the Cotton Empire” is a constitutive part and reflection of the expansion of global capitalism, which was equally revolutionary and transformative for humankind (Beckert 2014). In contemporary pedagogical discourse on climate change, plants are therefore discussed to date as “political plants” beyond ecological and biological considerations, and in that context, the history of cotton demonstrates the intricate entanglements between the Atlantic slave trade, colonialism and industrialisation (Overwien 2022).

In historical comparison, Germany was a latecomer in the global competition among growing textile industries, gaining momentum, however, after about 1900. In order to reduce German dependence on cotton imports, especially from the US, investors began to look for ways of producing cotton profitably in the German colonies, including German Togo.⁵ This implied converting the locally grown cotton into a commodity that would sell on the world market. Cash crops thus signal the *introduction of capitalist modes of production* in sub-Saharan Africa, where, according to a treatise on “imperialism and the transfer of agricultural techniques” (Yudelman 1975), most African peoples had been “outside the money economy”, but were ever more pulled into it during colonial times – not least by cash crops. The conversion to capitalist modes of production included, next to money in cash, other economic and social revolutions like the introduction of wage labour, modern infrastructure to guarantee transport and marketisation from local producers to colonial headquarters, trading posts and overseas ports.⁶ This resonates with findings in the educational geography of German Togo, in which the expansion of schooling was proved to overlap with (a) infrastructure, in this case: railroads and road connections on the coast and inland (Adick 1981, Fig. 2, p. 84), and (b) the increasing cash crop production, largely based on cultivation by local populations rather than European-owned plantations (*ibid.*, Fig. 3, p. 97).

In its quest to find out how best to enhance the cotton production in German Togo, the KWK approached African-American educationist Booker T. Washington (1856–1915) and his Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, a widely-known educational institution for Black ex-slave populations in the southern United States, which, among others, relied on practical and vocational learning, including agriculture, as a means for income generation, progress and empowerment. Alluding to allegedly similar circumstances, experts from Tuskegee were co-opted by German colonial

⁵ All German colonies were monitoring the state of plantations and agricultural export products (see *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 1913). As part of this monitoring, the records mention another “cotton school” founded by the KWK – in German East Africa (*ibid.*, pp. 532–533 [reprint, p. 100]) which might be a suitable object of future comparative research. The initial idea was, then, not confined to German Togo alone.

⁶ A map provided in Beckert (2005, p. 500) shows the areas of cotton production as well as existing and projected railway lines in German Togo c. 1909.

circles and travelled to Togo in order to enhance the local cotton production. Booker T. Washington had become prominent internationally and also among German colonial and missionary stakeholders by the turn of the century, not least because he had visited Europe, including Germany, several times and his works had been translated into German.⁷ Unlike his famous opponent William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868–1963), who was striving for a higher education that would form a Black elite to counter white supremacy, B. T. Washington's prime motif was not parity with white citizens (which would come in the course of time). What he was advocating instead was vocational and practical training in order to gradually but effectively improve the living conditions of the poor, mostly rural, Black populations in the US. His *Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute* in Alabama offered education for over 1,000 students, with curricular emphasis on training in agriculture, crafts and industries for boys, and home economics, gardening and social work for girls.

Sven Beckert (2005, p. 506f) recounts how the German–Tuskegee cooperation came about: Beno von Herman auf Wain,⁸ who was a member of the KWK and the agricultural attaché of the German embassy in Washington, D.C., had met Booker T. Washington on 13 August 1900 in Massachusetts. Only two weeks later, Washington had agreed to provide him with cotton planters and a mechanic “to teach the Negroes there [in Togo] how to plant and harvest cotton in a rational and scientific way” (ibid., p. 507). In September 1900, Washington confirmed despatch of a Tuskegee delegation to German Togo:

James Calloway, forty years old, director of the cotton section of Tuskegee, was to direct the mission and supervise its younger members. He had been in charge of Tuskegee's eight hundred-acre farm and spoke some German. He was to be joined by John Winfrey Robinson, an 1897 Tuskegee graduate; Allen Burks, a 1900 Tuskegee graduate; and Shepherd Harris, who had entered Tuskegee in 1886 and learned the carpentry trade there. They were all the sons of slaves, and according to Washington, the ancestors of two of the experts “came from this part of Africa”. He confidently expected his men to get along well with both the Togolese and the Germans (ibid.).

In November 1900, the African Americans from Tuskegee left New York by boat via Hamburg to Lomé, the capital of the German Togo colony:

In a gesture perhaps surprising to African Americans used to increasing segregation from white Alabamians, they were welcomed by no less than the German vice governor of Togo, Waldermeer Horn. He promised the full support of his small colonial administration to ensure the success of their mission. Just as surprising, there was virtually none of the basic infrastructure that usually

⁷ The impact of his influence in Germany is manifested by the fact that a German translation (Washington 1902) of his famous autobiography *Up from Slavery* was published in Germany relatively soon after the English original (Washington 1951 [1900]).

⁸ Andrew Zimmerman (2005, p. 1371) names *Baron Beno von Herman auf Wein* as the Agricultural Advisor of the German Embassy, whereas Hein Retter (2017, p. 47) speaks of *Freiherr von Herman* as an agricultural expert who worked for the KWK.

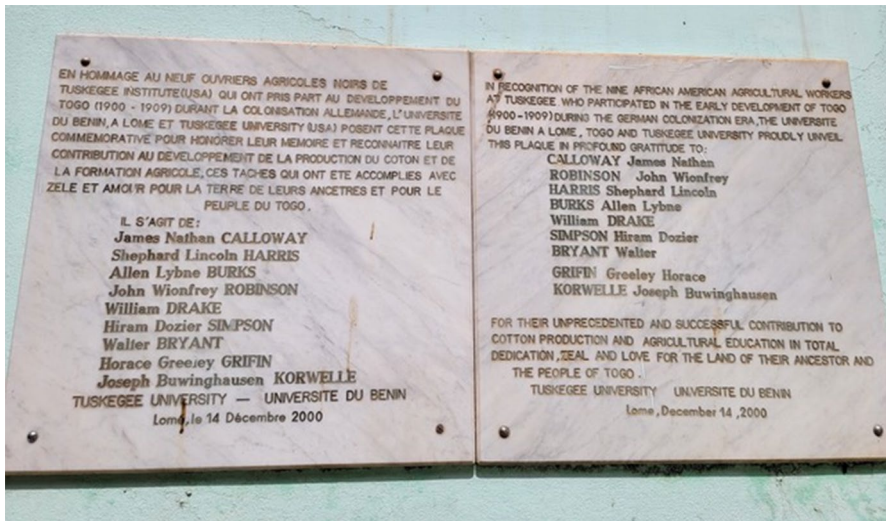


Figure 1 Bilingual plaque, installed at the entrance of the Ecole Supérieure d'Agronomie at the University of Lomé, commemorating the African-American experts recruited from Tuskegee to enhance cotton production in Togo Photo credit: private photo provided to the author by S. Y. Akakpo-Numado, Lomé

went along with cotton production in the southern United States – indeed, the vice governor met the Americans on the beach, since no port had yet been built (ibid., p. 499).

Taking *the arrival date of the Tuskegee experts in Lomé* as the first key incident of the historical reconstruction seems appropriate, because the purpose of their coming also included a pedagogical mission, namely, as has been pinpointed above, *to teach the Togolese rational and scientific ways of cotton production*. According to Ali (2000),⁹ whose book includes the terms of the contract for the Tuskegee delegates' expedition to Togo (ibid., p. 28) and a photograph of all four Tuskegeans (ibid., p. 34), they arrived in Lomé on 28 December 1900 (ibid., p. 36). Even though elsewhere the arrival date is given as 30 December 1900 (Beckert 2005, p. 498f; Zimmerman 2005, p. 1383), I have chosen to base the beginning of the storyline of my historical reconstruction on Ali's date, because his book, published in the year 2000, commemorates the centenary of the Tuskegee expedition to Togo, for which the universities of Tuskegee and Lomé signed a Treaty of Cooperation and unveiled a double plaque (in French and in English) at Lomé University's *Ecole Supérieure d'Agronomie* (see Figure 1) in memory of the members of the expedition.

⁹ Zimmerman (2005) references "Pierre Ali Napo, *Togo, Land of Tuskegee Institute's International Technical Assistance Experimentation: 1900–1909* (Accra, 2002)", the English version of the book. At this point it should be mentioned that according to my enquiries with S. Y. Akakpo-Numado (University of Lomé), the family name of the author (who is meanwhile deceased) is Ali, with Napo and Pierre being his first names.

Upon arrival of this group at Lomé on the coast, German governmental institutions in Togo directed them to Tove, about 60 miles inland, in order to establish an experimental cotton farm there. The idea was that the Tuskegee graduates should serve as *role models* for future Togolese modern cotton farmers. This notion alluded to alleged similarities between the two groups in terms of historical relations and racial identities. In the centenary commemoration of their expedition, their work or mission was thus evaluated as an example of “development aid” between the African diaspora and Africa. A number of other Tuskegee missions were added in several African and Caribbean countries from 1902 onwards (see Ali 2000, p. 110, Table 10).

In Tove, their experimental farmland consisted of about 75 acres, which were mainly leased from the local king. Hans Gruner, the local colonial administrator, recruited about 200 men, women and children to work on this farm, but for very little pay, in any case much lower wages than what the expedition had paid their porters when moving inland from Lomé. The main objective was to modernise agricultural techniques by introducing animal-drawn ploughs to replace traditional hoes. But the animals sent for this purpose (22 horses and 22 oxen) all died shortly after arrival, after being infected with sleeping sickness by tsetse flies. Thus, when animals fit to do the job could not be replaced, the employed farm workers had to pull the ploughs themselves instead of abandoning them for a return to their traditional techniques.

The expedition began its work right away in 1901. A surviving photo taken that year shows Tuskegee experts and German colonial administrators with the first three bales of cotton harvested on their model plantation (see Beckert 2005, p. 503). Another photo, dated 17 March 1903, shows the machine which was installed to press bales of cotton (see Ali 2000, p. 48). But the Tuskegee group was not confined to Tove, its members also ventured out

to remote areas to purchase cotton from growers. Indeed, by 1902, the Tuskegeans had fanned out over a large area of Togo, running experimental farms and purchasing cotton whenever there was an opportunity to do so. They also had participated in building and supervising cotton-collecting stations in Klein Popo, Kpeme, Ho, Kete Kratchi, Kpandu, and Yendi (Beckert 2005, p. 515).

In 1902, Calloway returned to the US for a short visit, coming back to Togo with five more Tuskegeans, two of whom, however, drowned due to rough conditions at the landing of their ship at Lomé. The remaining Walter Bryant, Horace Griffin and the drowned Hiram Simpson’s widow (Griffin’s future wife) joined the first Tuskegee group. All these African Americans from the southern United States were despatched to Togo in order to modernise cotton production in this colony. Their mission was to set up model farms and demonstrate the benefits of using new methods, utensils and cotton variants for a prosperous cotton cash crop cultivation in German Togo.

Their personal fate in Togo was, in the order of events, as follows: Of the first group of four, Shepherd Harris established himself on a cotton farm in order to give a good example for the Togolese to imitate, but he died in 1902 from malaria. Allen Burks went back to the US in 1902 (Zimmerman 2010, p. 7), and James N. Calloway

returned to Tuskegee in 1903, after which the 27-year-old John Winfrey Robinson became the head representative of the Tuskegee expedition in Togo, where he died in a boat accident on the Mono River in 1909. All surviving members of the second group, Walter Bryant, Horace Griffin and his wife, were still in Togo by the end of 1904 (*ibid.*, p. 8). But the heavy loss of volunteer model farmers discouraged any further Tuskegee graduates to join the initiated Togo cotton experiment.

7 February 1904: Foundation of a “cotton school” in Notsé (Nuatja)¹⁰

The origins of the *school project* as such grew out of the teaching mission of the Tuskegee group, but its approach was markedly different from the earlier idea of role model learning. Its history needs to be disentangled from a mix of varying data and interpretations in the existing literature. For instance, educational research devoted to this school concludes that in 1902, the German government operating in Togo had erected an experimental station in Notsé, which was handed over to the KWK the following year, as a “cotton school” (*Baumwollschule*) for the Indigenous population (Norris 1993a, p. 141). This would suggest that the school was initiated by the German colonial government in 1902, who then endowed the KWK with its management.

But establishing the facts is not as easy as this, because the above perspective is contested by researchers focusing on the Tuskegee expedition, maintaining it was its representative John Winfrey Robinson who founded the school in Notsé (Nuatja) in the year 1904 (Zimmerman 2005, pp. 1386ff.) and stating it was Robinson who directed the school in collaboration with Allen Burks and Shepherd Harris (Ali 2000, p. 61). Archival documents reveal that Robinson had outlined “a kind of farm school” in a letter to Governor Zech,¹¹ dated 11 January 1904 (see Beckert 2005, p. 520, fn. 46), which included a comprehensive approach to improving farming which went beyond the mere idea of increasing the cultivation of cotton for the world market:

The source and life of all governments are its people, and the first duty of the government is to maintain this life and source. Consequently, the people are its first and Chief Concern. For that same reason we wish to teach the people cotton culture, because it is good for *them*, they will gain wealth thereby and the Colony grow richer But the people cannot live by Cotton alone. Therefore we should begin now to teach them, Where they grow only maize we will teach them to grow more maize and better maize, and also Cotton. Where they grow now Yams and Cotton they must be shown how to grow larger Yams and finer Cotton (Robinson quoted in Beckert 2005, p. 522).

¹⁰ In the German records, the spelling varies between Nuatja, Nuatjä and Notschä.

¹¹ Julius Graf Zech auf Neuhofen (1868–1914) was the Governor of German Togo between 1903/05 and 1910.

Robinson's sketch of a farm school could be taken as the *key incident* in this historical turning point from the Tuskegee-inspired model learning to formal schooling in Togo. However, research on cotton cultivation in German Togo presents another key document, namely an order issued by Governor Zech, dated 7 February 1904. This was directed at the regional administrator at Atakpame, instructing him to erect what he referred to as a "*Baumwollkulturschule*" (a cotton cultivation school) at Notsé (Bundesarchiv 1904; referenced in Erbar 1991, p. 151). It is striking to note the short space of less than a month between Robinson's sketch of a farm school and the Governor's order to erect such a school. According to Erbar (*ibid.*, p. 145ff.) and Ali (2000, pp. 63ff.), the order resulted from earlier consultations in a "cotton conference" held on 31 March 1903 at the Agu or Agou-Tafi (or Tavie) station. Representatives from economic circles, including Robinson and Calloway from the Tuskegee expedition, convened with administrative staff to discuss the prospects of enhancing cotton production in the German Togo colony. In order to start the school in 1904, Governor Zech ordered the recruitment – if necessary, by putting pressure on the local African authorities – of a total of 45 "intelligent apprentices willing and fit for work" (this referred to male youths only) from around the region, for work and training at the Notsé school for a period of two years (Erbar 1991, p. 151). Besides working on the school farms, for which they would receive a certain daily pay, the apprentices were to be instructed – orally only – in rational agricultural practices, such as ploughing using draft animals, mechanical extraction of cotton seeds, and other techniques. The idea was that graduates would return home to implement what they had learnt either on their own fields or as intermediaries of demonstration farms under the control of regional officers.

These records suggest that the *idea of a school*, instead of just following the living examples of the Tuskegee farmers in Tove and other places, grew out of the Tuskegee model, the expedition experiences and the consultation processes geared towards making the cultivation of cotton profitable in German Togo. As mentioned above, the concept of a farm school had first been sketched by John W. Robinson on 11 January 1904 in what Beckert terms "an exceptionally wide-ranging letter" (Beckert 2005, p. 522), after which the idea was converted into a government order by Zech on 7 February 1904. Which date, then, should be taken as the key incident?

Acknowledging the leading influence of Robinson, but considering that the school would probably not have come into existence without government consent, my choice is the government order as the *key incident* which realised a new pedagogical concept: the *formalisation and institutionalisation* of agricultural teaching and learning in a new educational institution which targeted *Togolese farming youths* (instead of African American role models) as future multipliers of modern agriculture.

Under the watchful eyes of Robinson, ... the plan was to train young sons of rural cultivators in scientific cotton growing ... Modeled by its director on his own alma mater, Tuskegee, the *Baumwollschule* (cotton school) counted 53 students from all over Togo in August 1904 (Beckert 2005, p. 520).

Tuskegee head of mission James N. Calloway returned to Tuskegee in early 1903 and was officially replaced by Joseph Buvinghausen, a German American from

Texas, who was recruited in 1903 as the new leader of the KWK Expedition to German Togo. He assumed his position there in 1904, but already died in April 1905. On 15 March 1904, the site of the prospective school and its surrounding farmland was handed over to the KWK, which ran the school with Robinson as the head teacher. Robinson's move to Notsé was followed by the relocation of the remaining members of the Tuskegee expedition from Tove in 1905. Tove, however, remained an experimental cotton farm until the end of the German colonial regime in Togo.

The pedagogical concept of the school had an important blind spot, in that it did not anticipate the language diversity among the apprentices, which resulted from the regional intake from different ethnic communities. This proved to hamper communication and instruction. As a remedy, some teaching of German as a lingua franca was introduced in 1906, for which the Togolese teacher Manasse from the government school in Lomé was despatched to Notsé in order to teach, and the German teacher Ehni was constructing suitable curriculum material (Bundesarchiv 1906, cited in Adick and Mehnert 2001, p. 358). But unlike literacy and numeracy taught in primary schools as the basic means of formal education, this oral teaching of a few German words was reduced to being purely instrumental for the practical purpose of some kind of basic communication on agricultural and technical terms.

At the end of 1906, the first cohort graduated from the new cotton school, having completed the two-year course. Cotton exports had increased to some extent, but the impact of this agricultural schooling turned out to be below expectations, since, for instance, graduates returned to their "traditional" methods of hoeing instead of ploughing, or cultivated their local food crops instead of the cash crop variety of cotton they were supposed to grow.

29 December 1906: The government issues a new programme for the school and re-names it Agricultural School

After some early successes, the joint running of the KWK *Baumwollkulturschule* among Germans and the remaining few African Americans deteriorated.

The German colonialists were not interested in John Robinson's creating what amounted to a Togolese branch of Tuskegee, and Robinson resisted the idea of encouraging Togolese rural producers to abandon their subsistence agriculture for cash-crop production (Beckert 2005, p. 521).

As outlined above, Robinson's aim was to develop and modernise agriculture more generally in German Togo, and not just enforce cotton, wishing to harmonise the different logics of food and cash crop production.

Spurred by the meagre outcome of the first cohort's completion of the two-year cotton school experiment under KWK tutelage, the colonial government decided to increase its control. My choice of the *key incident* of this new stage of the school is *a new programme* for the school, issued by Governor Zech on 29 December 1906, in which he referred to the institution as *Ackerbauschule Nuatja* (Agricultural School Notsé), because its spectrum would include other crops besides cotton. His order also included *a more finely tuned curriculum*, extending the duration of the course to

three years (Amtsblatt Togo 1907, pp. 1ff.; see No. 101 in Adick and Mehnert 2001, pp. 354–358).

The *programme* declared that apprentices should be between 17 and 23 years of age and of good health and disposition. They were to live on the school site and receive a remuneration of about 12 or 15 German Marks (M) per month, from which, however, the sum of 4,50 M was to be subtracted for board and living. Annual examinations would be supervised by colonial officials, and at the end of the three-year course, the apprentices were to be equipped with a plough, hoes and other agricultural tools to set up on their own on 8 hectares of farmland provided by the colonial administration. These prospective new farmers were then expected to make a livelihood from the fruits of their farm work and encouraged to start their own family on their allocated plots. They were to receive support whenever this became necessary, but, crucially, they were to be monitored by colonial officials about four times a year.

The *curriculum* consisted of modules which were mainly practical training and farm work on the spot, plus some basic – oral only – language teaching of German agricultural vocabulary. Much of the third year, which had been added with Zech's new programme, was devoted to repetition and revision. But the real novelty of the curriculum was its mandate to test their knowledge and competences under *real-life conditions*: for the duration of 1/3 of the year (103 working days), each apprentice was assigned one hectare of land with free access to the schools' ploughing animals and all farming utensils to prove his proficiency as a prospective agricultural graduate.

On 23 August 1907, Governor Zech negotiated with the KWK about signing their (the KWK's) cotton school over completely to government ownership (Erbar 1991, p. 155; Ali 2000, p. 83). The governor envisaged this to take place without any remuneration, because the colonial government had already sponsored the KWK cotton school project since 1903 with a total of 78,000 M (Erbar 1991, p. 155). However, on 1 April 1908, the colonial government in Togo finally bought the school from the KWK for 25,000 M (ibid.). It was estimated that the value of the school's terrain at Notsé – buildings, livestock, machines and other inventory – amounted to 36,050 M (ibid., fn. 200). But the purchase did not affect the programme and curriculum of the school which remained as decreed in December 1906.

The decision to transfer the school authority from the KWK to the colonial government did not only result from conflicts around the school, but also mirrors the fact that “the position of the African American experts was always threatened by German racism” (Beckert 2005, p. 523). In 1907, this in particular affected Robinson, the founder of the cotton school, who was dismissed from his position by the Governor: “Count von Zech, who three years earlier had lauded Robinson, argued that the government would not be able to retain Robinson as the director of the school and replaced him with a European” (ibid.).

1 April 1908: Purchase of the *Ackerbauschule* by the colonial government

I consider the transfer of ownership of the school on 1 April 1908 as another *key incident* in the history of the school, because it announced complete government control. The records show that on 16 December 1908, the cotton specialist M. Pape, apparently responsible for the school at the time, and M. Unger, named as the teacher, presented “their apprentices” in the final governmental exams of the 1908 graduates of the school. This indicates that at the end of that year, Robinson was no longer its director (Ali 2000, p. 84). *Formal examinations* were held under government control. The examination programme of 1909, for example, covered a whole day from 7.30 a.m. until 4 p.m. with a break between 12 a.m. and 3 p.m. (Bundesarchiv 1909a; cited in Adick and Mehnert 2001, pp. 358–359). It involved practical exams in the morning like handling different kinds of ploughs, harvesting and farming tools, including the correct picking of cotton, and oral exams in the afternoon about ploughs, different kinds of soil, seedlings, and other topics. The exam day was closed by a visit of the school’s farmlands lasting from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Robinson was despatched on matters of cotton “further North than I was before”, as he writes in a letter dated 24 January 1909, continuing:

When this is finished the plan is to begin an experiment station with a small cotton school still further northward, then I have also to travel a great deal through the colony with the purpose of instructing the natives [*sic*] the use of plows etc. (Robinson quoted in Ali 2000, p. 125).

But his plans did not come to fruition, because he died in an accident on the Mono River on 23 July 1909, and after him, there was nobody left from Tuskegee who could have realised his pedagogical ambitions.

Graduates of the school received *written certificates* (handwritten text without formal grading) which evaluated their personal conduct, practical competences (e.g., in ploughing), behaviour in terms of diligence and industriousness, and whether the individual apprentices had worked reliably on their own or (still) needed external control. Examples of two such certificates issued for graduates of the 1908–1910 course, both from the Atakpame region, demonstrate different texts for both candidates, signalling that the certificates were not merely ceremonial, but individually formulated by Dr Albert Sengmüller, the then head of the school (Bundesarchiv 1911a; cited in Adick and Mehnert 2001, pp. 360f.).

In this research, it is useful to remember that *enrolment in the Ackerbauschule* in Notsé followed government orders requiring Togolese district authorities to pick a certain number of young men, if even against their will, and despatch them to Notsé. The result of this was that learning in this agricultural school occurred under external pressure rather than due to self-motivation. On 25 January 1908, Governor Zech reported in Berlin about the difficulties of recruiting apprentices for the school; only two youths had enrolled voluntarily (Erbar 1991, p. 155). Similarly, a German officer in charge of the district of Aného (frustratedly)

reported to headquarters in Lomé of having gone to great lengths to explain the value of attending the Notsé agricultural school to the *Häuptlingsversammlung* (assembly of chiefs) on 27 October 1909, but, alas, without any effect. All of the chiefs present had unanimously declared that no one from their territories would volunteer to be sent to the Notsé school (Bundesarchiv 1909b; cited in Adick and Mehnert 2001, pp. 359f.). This implies that forced learning was effectively resented by “the colonised”.

The *impact of the school* should be evident in the life and work of its graduates. In 1907, the first 37 apprentices of the new three-year course graduated, eleven of whom took up employment on the experimental farms of the colonial government, while the others returned to their home districts (11 to Atakpame, 8 to Sokode Bassari and 7 to Sansane Mangu) (see Erbar 1991 p. 154). But all in all, the concept of individual Notsé graduates as role models for their countrymen did not work well, so that an alternative idea was born, the idea of *collective settlements of graduates* on farmlands set aside for this purpose, called *Ansiedlungen*, an approach which was then implemented. In a summary report of 1910/11, the director of the Notsé school, Dr Sengmüller, displayed the meagre results of this programme (see Norris 1993a, p. 145f.). Except for Lomé city, he reported, all districts had installed settlements for its graduates, one in Lomé Land, three in Atakpame, two in Kete Kratchi, one in Sokode, and four in Mangu Jendi (ibid.). Quite a number of these graduates, however, had in the meantime run away from their settlements. In other words, they had fled from their assignment of being role models for the adult generation of Togolese farming populations, refusing to disrespect existing age and social hierarchies, or they were simply homesick. Lack of success was also due to the high mortality rate of oxen and horses provided to the settler youths upon graduation. This resulted in a lack of draft animals, which in turn hampered the implementation of a ploughing revolution and devalued what apprentices had been taught in Notsé.

In 1908, the *Ackerbauschule Nuatja* also began to host further education courses for teachers of the mission societies operating in German Togo, which were not only free of charge, but even offered travel allowances and bonuses for excellence (Amtsblatt Togo 1908, p. 215; 1909, p. 33). These courses were supposed to prepare African teachers for their school farm assignments, which targeted the instruction of African youths in rational cultivation methods. Details on such courses (Ali 2000, pp. 88–91) reveal, for example, that 20 teachers were enrolled in the one-month course in July/August 1908, 10 were from Catholic and 10 from Protestant mission schools. The course included five hours each for theoretical instruction and practical work on the compound. At the end of the course, participants’ success was graded on a scale ranging between 0 and 10, and remunerated with 2 M for each point, with only two teachers (from the North German Mission) attaining the top score of 10, while the others’ results ranged between 5 and 9. This kind of continuing education for teachers coming from the general education sector sought to influence their teaching practice of “education for work” and continued until 1913.

One important topic under discussion was whether the cotton school had any impact on the cotton economy. In a first phase, the production of cotton for export had indeed increased, but expansion had subsequently stagnated, partly due to drought, death of draft animals and deteriorated quality not ideal for export.

Cotton exports began in 1902 with the first 20 bales of cotton (each weighing 250 kg); this increased to 128 bales in 1903; 519 in 1904/06; 857 in 1906/07; 1,204 in 1906/07; 1,690 in 1907/08; and 2,237 in 1908/09, after which it declined and fluctuated between 1,839 in 1909/10; 2,123 in 1910/11; 2,068 in 1911/12; and 2,183 in 1912/13 (Sebald 1988, p. 439). But diminishing cotton exports would not necessarily result from poor teaching, so that critics, who maintained the *Ackerbauschule* would have too little impact on the local-based cotton production, were told that it was premature to evaluate the impact of the school after only a few years of its existence. The school concept would bring about a “fundamental change of habits transmitted by hundreds of generations and deeply rooted in the agriculture of the ‘Negroes’” in Togo as elsewhere in tropical Africa (Amtsblatt Togo 1911, p. 250).¹²

It may be added that, *first*, there was *de facto* a marked increase in cotton export during the time of the school experiment, at least up to 1908/09, with subsequent fluctuations, but no sharp decline. So why attribute any alleged failure to the cotton school? *Second*, criticism of the school mingled with economic motifs questioning the profitability of cotton in German Togo as compared to other cash crops. For instance, in 1908, German Togo’s main exports were corn (worth about 2,030,746 M), palm oil products (worth about 1,454,705 M), and rubber (worth about 587,022 M), all of which easily outsourced cotton exports, worth only 366,040 M (Erbar 1991, p. 156). *Third*, it would be altogether naïve for any policymaking, education programme or research on education to expect a school experiment to have any direct effects on economic variables such as income, economic output and rates of return, as discussed in a World Bank working paper on the effects of farmer education (Lockheed et al. 1980).

Whatever critical voices maintain, the school was definitely still operating in 1911, since there is evidence that it participated in a scientific survey designed by a commissioned researcher (Prof. Dr Georg Volkens), based on written interviews. The questionnaire, which inquired about the prevalence of variations of cotton-producing kapok trees and requested sample specimens, was sent out to the German colonial government to be circulated in all Togo districts in September 1911. Botanist Prof. Eberhard Ulbrich’s subsequent survey report mentions that the agricultural school in Notsé, directed by Sengmüller, had completed and returned the questionnaire, also sending sample specimens of its plants and seeds (Ulbrich 1913, p. 51).

On 23 April 1911, Dr Albert Sengmüller had become the director of the agricultural school Notsé (Erbar 1991, p. 158). A letter of his to the colonial government in Lomé dated 23 October 1911 throws some light on *life on the school compound*: In this letter, Sengmüller announces that 23 students were scheduled to graduate on 1 January 1912 (7 from Sansanne Mangu, 7 from Atakpame, 6 from Kete Kratchi and 3 from Sokode). To replace these and in order to increase the intake, he requested 40 new students aged 20–25 years. These should be (1) of good health and disposition,

¹² Translated for the purposes of this article. The German version says “Man darf niemals vergessen, daß es sich in Togo, wie im tropischen Afrika überhaupt, bei derartiger Versuchsarbeit um eine grundlegende Abänderung von Gewohnheiten handelt, die durch hunderte von Generationen überliefert, in der Ausübung des Ackerbaues bei den Negern [*sic*] tief eingewurzelt sind” (Amtsblatt Togo 1911, p. 250).

because the school had just experienced health problems (not specified) with some candidates; (2) women should be sent along to provide catering for these (unmarried) Notsé students, since they had to work in the fields during the day and women from neighbouring villages had proved unreliable in providing such services (Bundesarchiv 1911b; cited in Adick and Mehnert 2001, p. 365). This evidence implies that the school was definitely scheduled to continue operating in 1912.

1 August 1912: The school is transformed into a model farm

As outlined above, the *Ackerbauschule* in Notsé was deeply entangled with Togolese cotton history. But the notion of cotton being *an important* or even *the most important* export product came to be contested. Already in September 1908, Governor Zech had called for an increase in *palm oil plantations* in German Togo, arguing that *cotton for export* should only be cultivated in soil found to be unsuitable for more lucrative cash crops (Erbar 1991, pp. 155f.). The colonial government became less interested in supporting cotton cultivation in German Togo, which led to a decrease in the importance of the whole KWK endeavour of promoting Togo cotton as an export product for the world market based on the model of “*Volkskulturen*”.¹³ But the governmental retreat from pushing cotton also affected the *Ackerbauschule* in Notsé and finally ushered in the colonial government’s decision to convert the school into a *Landeskulturanstalt*, a kind of *model farm*, with limited educational features, even if still located in Notsé. This decision made on 1 August 1912, then, marks another *key incident* in this historical reconstruction, indeed the final one. How did this come about? And what kind of education was decreed, if any?

At this point, educational research may benefit from *critical self-evaluation*, which was probably not so common in those days: In 1911, i.e., while the school was still up and running, the KWK as the driving force behind the whole cotton project initiated a remarkably critical assessment and sustained analysis of the *Ackerbauschule* in Notsé, well-structured and including empirical data. Resembling an expertise or evaluation in today’s terms, this assessment was the outcome of a fact-finding mission set up and carried out by an American called John Booth,¹⁴ who had been a member and later leader of the KWK mission to German East Africa, and who, in 1911–12, became the appointed cotton expert of the KWK in German Togo. His assessment report was submitted to the government at Lomé on 3 July 1911, sent from Nuatja/Notsé (which means that the school was still functioning), and it was explicitly devoted to the school and its renovation (Bundesarchiv 1911c;

¹³ For a deeper analysis of political and economic reasons behind the *Volkskultur* concept in German Togo and the failure of the cotton export industry in German Togo, see Sebald (1988, pp. 432–444). For comparative aspects of the fate of cotton as a cash crop in other parts of the world, see Beckert (2005) and Pohl and Longi (2013).

¹⁴ According to Norris (1993a, p. 146) John Booth was a member of the African American mission from Tuskegee. But this is not confirmed by cross-checking other sources. John Booth is not mentioned by Ali (2000), Beckert (2005) or Zimmerman (2005), all of whom are experts of research on the Tuskegee group.

cited in Adick and Mehnert 2001, pp. 361–364). The importance of this document merits the following comprehensive paraphrase:

Booth begins by positing that despite substantial investment, the school, both under the KWK and the government, had had no success in and impact on increasing cotton production in Togo. The overt reason he saw behind this was the fact that one could not (from above) effectively introduce new agricultural methods into deeply rooted native cultivation methods such as hoeing and mixed cultivation. Like similar endeavours elsewhere, e.g., in German East Africa, all such projects would fail due to fundamentally false European theories of the agricultural practices of the country. Criticism notwithstanding, Notsé did have advantages like a railway connection, good soil and climate conditions and ample land to be cultivated.

Booth then embarks on suggesting changes: *First*, the theoretical model of a school, and everything reminiscent of a school, should be suspended, because according to his considerable experience over the years, the principle of a three-year course with the subsequent forced settlement of graduates would not advance cotton production in any way. The resources which the settlements required would not outweigh their effect. This *teaching and settlement concept* (“*Lehr- und Siedlungsprinzip*”), Booth argues, was based on two false assumptions: *one*, the external imposition of foreign methods demanding high cognitive competences and energies not to be expected from “natives” when even Europeans would not succeed in such an enterprise as proved by Notsé; *two*, the agricultural competences of the “natives”, who had been growing cotton successfully for centuries, had been grossly underestimated, so that there was no need for a training course lasting several years, particularly when cotton cultivation and spinning were in the hands of women in various parts of the colony, whereas weaving and tailoring was in the hands of men.

Booth then continues to enumerate arguments which mainly concern the agricultural side of the school experiment: *Second*, he writes, stockbreeding at Notsé was too costly and even if successful would not contribute much to the colony. *Third*, animal-powered ploughing should be completely abandoned because it did not match native cotton production techniques. There was no reason to disrupt the generally most effective traditional ways; interfering with them would mean the opposite of fostering culture. *Fourth*, the ginnery¹⁵ would need to be partly repaired and enlarged. *Fifth*, 60 hectares would be too small and should be enlarged to become profitable. – At this point, Booth submits a detailed calculation of different ways of achieving profit, of which one page is lost. – His assessment report concludes by alerting the colonial government to the fact that it should always be kept in mind that cotton production in Togo was coming out of the fields of the “natives”; any attempt and innovation which could not harmoniously integrate into this mode of production would be futile and potentially harmful.

Shortly after submission of the Booth report, school director Sengmüller came up with his own criticism and suggestions for a reorganisation of the school on 15 August 1911 (Erbar 1991, pp. 159f.). Like Booth, he advocated a demise of the settlement model, because Notsé graduates would crave leaving the settlements to

¹⁵ Ginning is the process of separating the cotton fibres from the seeds that are inside the cotton.

return home as soon as possible. In addition, he pointed out pedagogical deficiencies: The language problem had not yet been solved, sometimes it would take three to four speakers of different languages to translate one message. The curriculum was too complex and abstract for many apprentices in view of the fact that they arrived with little prior formal education. In addition, the students were too tired after a hard day's work to follow any instruction and often fell asleep. Sengmüller suggested the school should enlarge its portfolio to include cash crops other than cotton, which would also add to the self-financing of the school. All theoretical instruction and as a matter of fact the whole school and settlement concept had proven futile and should be abolished.

It took about one year for the main ideas put forward by Booth and Sengmüller to be taken up in the government decision in August 1912 to convert the school into a *Landeskulturanstalt*. A map dated 1913 shows the demarcation of the “*Landeskulturanstalt und Baumwollstation Nuatja*” and indicates the areas used for educational purposes and those primarily dedicated to the cultivation of different crops. The map also visualises how the institution was connected to the Notsé railway station, as part of the important railway connection to Lomé, which had opened in 1907 (see Ali 2000, p. 131).

Although the school's three-year course was discontinued, it seems that some kind of instruction still went on, because a report published in 1913 says that “young people from various parts of the colony receive practical and theoretical instruction in rational ways of agriculture and stockbreeding” (Deutsches Kolonialblatt 1913, p. 535; reprint, p. 104).¹⁶ In addition, the report mentions three “cotton stations”, the one in Notsé attached to the agricultural school, as well as one in the district of Sokode and the other in Kpalimé. The Governor was assisted by a board of agricultural experts, as well as *Bezirkslandwirte*, i.e., agricultural officers in each of the districts of the colony, who also acted as *Wanderlehrer*; i.e., itinerant teachers, to instruct the “natives” especially in cotton-growing (ibid.). These *itinerant teachers* were operating under the *Landeskulturanstalt* as regional agricultural consultants for the propagation of modern agriculture and rational methods of cash crop production among the local farmers, as mentioned on p. 333 in the official bulletin of German Togo (*Amtsblatt Togo*) in 1912. In 1913, German Togo employed five such regional agricultural officers who mainly worked as itinerant teachers (Erbar 1991, p. 158, fn. 210). This educational model of consultancy including some itinerant teachers was, then, all that was left of the process of formalisation and institutionalisation of agricultural education since 1904; and as such it was the end of the “cotton school experiment” in German Togo.

¹⁶ “Junge Leute aus den verschiedensten Gegenden des Schutzgebiets erhalten praktischen und theoretischen Unterricht im rationellen Ackerbau und in der Viehhaltung.” Translated for the purposes of this article.

Analysis and interpretation: Why the cotton school was invented and discontinued

The agricultural school concept applied in Notsé did not try to copy a model already practised by the imperial power – in this case, Germany – but drew on external international advice right from the beginning. At the same time, the protagonists sought not just any foreign “Western” expertise, but instead consulted explicitly African-American educationists. They were already experienced in designing their own pedagogical concepts of education in Tuskegee as a means of enhancing the living conditions of the rural and largely poor Black ex-slave populations in the southern United States. Run by and for African Americans, Tuskegee was a formal education institution with objectives allegedly similar to those declared to be beneficial for farm populations in German Togo.

Booker T. Washington and his institute at Tuskegee were “discovered” and co-opted by the *Kolonialwirtschaftliches Komitee* (KWK), an economic lobby organisation, and not by a Christian mission society or the colonial government as was prevalent for most school foundations in Africa at that time. Experts from Tuskegee were recruited and arrived at the end of the year 1900, taking up their work from early 1901 and joined by a second group in 1902. They came with equipment and know-how to develop cotton production in German Togo, and their case is possibly the best-documented education transfer between Black populations in America and in Africa of its time. In 1904, Tuskegee expert John W. Robinson outlined the idea for and founded the “cotton school” in order to make the production of cotton, already established in Togo for a long time, competitive in the global market. This cotton school was connected to the colonial exploitation project to transform and re-structure pre-colonial modes of production, so that the school’s educational ideal was to train peasants who would produce cotton for the world market.

The “colonial situation” predetermined the order of events as well as their outcome. It was the German colonial government which officially started the school in 1904, even though the ideas and main actors had come from Tuskegee in the US. The cotton school was government-controlled, albeit operated by the KWK and with Tuskegee expert Robinson as the educational advisor behind the curricular concept of the Notsé school, until it was finally purchased from the government in 1908. “The colonised” were the target population of the project. The envisaged “cotton revolution” was the lever of a total assault on the local traditional subsistence economy and society. Colonial officers, missionaries and the experts from Alabama agreed that the cotton project would not only yield income through export, but would be ideal as a means of “transforming” (in reality: reversing) local Togolese cultural traditions and production styles. In the culture of the Ewe people living in southern parts of German Togo, the division of labour designated hoeing and processing cotton, gardening and growing food crops as female work, while men’s work comprised tailoring and other trades and crafts. The colonisers’ plan was to introduce modern mono-cultural cash-crop cotton production on large estates with animal-drawn ploughs (hitherto unknown

in Togo) and cotton processing with machines. Combined with the missionaries' efforts, this would lead to Christian ways of living, with monogamy instead of polygamy, and a patriarchal family order with men doing work outside the compound and women inside. The Tuskegee experts largely agreed with this vision, teaching local farmers and the apprentices in Notsé based on their own background of personal experiences with formal agricultural training in Tuskegee, which was inspired by Christian concepts of family and education for work.

In the literature, Norris (1993a, b) is just about the only author who discusses specific *educational reasons* for the success or failure of the cotton school experiment, basically differentiating between three *methods of intended knowledge transfer* from the German colonisers to their "Black subalterns" in Togo (Norris 1993a, p. 125 ff.):

- (1) *Demonstration*, as practised on experimental and model farms, where African farm workers experimented with new seeds and cultivation techniques under European "leadership" and control.
- (2) *Persuasion*, whereby "the coloniser" tried to convince local populations, often via co-opting their head representatives with stipends and symbols to accept the intended agricultural "modernisation" towards cash crop production.
- (3) *Forced labour*, making farming communities who were not able to pay the yearly head tax in cash or kind from the yield of their own plots work on governmental plantations instead, from which they could even benefit (plants and fruit would belong to their village), but only if they accepted the prescribed new ways of cultivation.

More analysis would be needed to determine whether and in what ways *demonstration*, *persuasion* and/or *force* were effective or combined in the above-listed educational models.

Occasionally in his analysis (ibid., pp. 141–149), Norris suggests that the failure of the cotton *school approach* as compared to other ways of learning and knowledge transfer might have resulted from the *formalised and highly didactical instruction* (timetables, curricula and formal examinations) applied in the cotton school experiment. A more efficient approach, he argues, would have been *model learning* (imitation and learning by doing), i.e., ways of learning which the apprentices experienced from their childhood and youth. – But this argument is not so convincing, because model learning had in fact been applied with the idea of Togolese young graduates being role models for Togolese farmers, which however failed, due to social and especially age-related hierarchies hampering African authorities and the adult generation in charge learning from their young generation.

Norris further argues convincingly that the German colonial circles had a *wrong concept of "development education"* (Norris 1993b). Instead of building on the agricultural knowledge of the local people, who already had generations of experience of adapting their farming habits to local crops, soil and climate, practising shifting cultivation, and cultivating mixed instead of monocultures,

etc., “the coloniser” was blind to such local expertise. As a result, the externally imposed transfer of knowledge, such as introducing animal-powered ploughing instead of hoeing, was not successful. Such inappropriate education concepts have since been repeated in many later agricultural “education aid” projects, which then often also collapse after development cooperation has ended. – There is nothing to add to this analysis, which resonates with the historical reconstruction presented above.

How, then, was pedagogical thinking enacted in this “experiment”? Among the key incidents discussed above, which occurred roughly between 1900 and the end of German colonial rule over Togo, several different educational models arose and were practised:

- The first model was the employment of *Tuskegee graduates as role models for Togolese farmers* on plantations run by the Tuskegeans at Tove and other places in German Togo. This African-American development aid to their African counterparts was a complete novelty which inspired other Tuskegee projects in Africa and elsewhere. Two groups of Tuskegeans arrived in German Togo, but they suffered a heavy loss of lives, which, among other factors, discouraged any more experts from Tuskegee from coming to German Togo.
- The second model was the *formalisation of agricultural teaching in a new institution called a school*. This model did not evolve in Germany; it was conceptualised by Tuskegee graduate Robinson, who applied a *capitalist logic* to satisfy the increasing demands of the German cotton industry. His idea was to enhance the “development” of Togolese farmers by means of a school, until he was dismissed from his position of directing the school in 1907, obviously due to racial discrimination. From then onwards, the formalised school model was totally subsumed under the *colonial logic* to govern and rule over “the colonised” by effective control, aiming to achieve the best results for the German Empire in comparison to other colonial powers (1908–1912). While the capitalist and colonial logics overlapped to a great extent, they were not entirely identical.
- The third model was to install *Togolese youths as role models of a modernised agriculture*. Apprentices of the cotton school did not simply enrol, graduate and somehow make the best of their certificates. Rather, they were, if necessary, picked and sent by force to attend the school. After graduation they were, by virtue of their enrolment in the school, obliged to apply what they had learnt either on their own, albeit under government control, or sent into governmental service positions, or installed together in collective settlements (*Ansiedlungen*) which produced cash crops in the colonially prescribed manner. This model was a complete failure, since only very few Togolese farmers could be converted to cash crop production in this way.
- The fourth model was to offer *continuing education for teachers*. This was a necessary (and the only) supplement to the existing missionary and colonial primary schools which made up the bulk of the colonial school system of German Togo. It seems that these teacher development courses were accepted both by the German missionaries and by their African teachers, who were already familiar with European thinking from the mission schools and their teacher training.

- The fifth model was to employ *German agricultural officers* (“*Bezirkslandwirte*”) as *itinerant teachers* (“*Wanderlehrer*”), who would propagate the agricultural policies and practices which “the coloniser” felt best for his or her German colony Togo. Since German rule over Togo ended shortly after this model had been initiated, judging its possible effect remains an open question.

It is also challenging to compare the Tuskegee pedagogy and its possible Togolese copy in Notsé (Retter 2017). There are overt similarities like a love of manual work, agriculture and handicrafts, or the idea that the students’ work on school plantations and in workshops should contribute to the running of the school. But these cannot conceal a number of basic differences: Tuskegee enrolled girls, Notsé did not. Tuskegee included a Christian philosophy, Notsé did not. Tuskegee operated in English, the common language of students and teachers in Alabama, while Notsé students and teachers spoke different languages among themselves and had to grapple with German, the language of “the coloniser”, as a lingua franca.

But what is more, and what has hitherto been completely overlooked in all the discussions and comparisons, is the fact that Tuskegee’s teaching was practical, yes, but also text-based. In the Tuskegee Institute, the students received agricultural and industrial training in addition to formal schooling. They spent four days a week in the school, and two days on the farm or in the workshop. Students from poor backgrounds had the option to work for 10 hours during the day with two hours of evening courses (Washington 1904, p. 203). Washington supported the idea of the school’s economic viability, but argued that “[t]he moment the idea of ‘making it pay’ [was] placed uppermost, the institution [would become] a factory and not a school for training head and hand and heart” (Washington 1904, p. 63). The Tuskegee curriculum included written instruction materials, building on the students’ existing basic literacy and numeracy skills and enhancing these, whereas the Notsé school was reduced to only oral instruction, demonstration and imitation, repetition, and learning by doing. Not that these modes of teaching are not valuable; they occur every day and contribute to a person’s learning. Also, trial and error might be regarded as an effective means of education, and practical work may be a good counterbalance to “bookish learning”, but an institution based only on these should not be called “a school”. It seems that Robinson had sensed this blind spot of the school concept, since he suggested commissioning a Tuskegee graduate to write a bilingual textbook for the agricultural teaching at Notsé; in German and in the students’ “mother tongue”. The latter, however, immediately raised the problem of which language to choose. While Ewe was perhaps the main African language spoken in the Notsé area, due to the diverse regional origins of the students, it was far from being a lingua franca in the school project (Ali 2000, p. 101).

Criticising the lack of written instruction materials resonates with Paulo Freire’s esteem of literacy and numeracy for the emancipation of rural and poor populations, enabling them to decode the world in which they live and act (Freire 2005 [1970]). This leads me to posit here that the cotton school experiment in German Togo was, besides other factors named above, largely hampered by a lack of academisation, which was, to be clear, not an accidental omission. The reason for this blind spot is evident in *the basic contradiction of any colonial education*, as diagnosed

by Mehnert (1965, pp. 276–311). In the case of the cotton school experiment, the contradiction lay between the *economic necessity* of transmitting some agricultural instruction to the Togolese subalterns as the main agents of the intended “*Volksskulturen*”, deemed ideal to make cotton production profitable and manageable, and the colonial master’s *fear of “the colonised”* who would compete as well-instructed, competent and self-aware Togolese farmers on the evolving capitalist world market with “the coloniser”.

Funding Open Access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL.

Declarations

Competing interests There is no conflict of interest in the manuscript.

Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article’s Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article’s Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

References

- Adick, C. (1981). *Bildung und Kolonialismus in Togo* [Education and colonialism in Togo]. Weinheim & Basel: Beltz.
- Adick, C. (1989). Education in the modern world system: An attempt to end the mythology of the concept of education as a colonial heritage. *Education: A biannual collection of recent German contributions to the field of educational research*, 40, 30–48. <https://doi.org/10.25656/01:21761>
- Adick, C. (1992). Modern education in “non-Western” societies in the light of the world systems approach in comparative education. *International Review of Education*, 38(3), 241–255. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01101431>
- Adick, C., Große-Oetringhaus, H.-M., & Nestvogel, R. (1982 [1979]). *Bildungsprobleme Afrikas zwischen Kolonialismus und Emanzipation* [Africa’s educational problems between colonialism and emancipation], revised edn. Hamburg: Institut für Afrika-Kunde.
- Adick, C. & Mehnert, W. (2001). *Deutsche Missions- und Kolonialpädagogik in Dokumenten. Eine kommentierte Quellensammlung aus den Afrikabeständen deutschsprachiger Archive 1884–1914* [An annotated collection of sources from the African holdings of German-language archives 1884–1914] (archive documents nos. 101–107, pp. 354–365). Frankfurt am Main: IKO-Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation <https://doi.org/10.25656/01:11694>
- Akakpo-Numado, S.Y. (2011). Entwicklung der beruflichen Bildung in Togo und die Gender-Problematik [Development of vocational education in Togo and the gender issue]. *Zeitschrift für internationale Bildungsforschung und Entwicklungspädagogik*, 34(1), 25–30. <https://doi.org/10.25656/01:9416>
- Ali, N. P. (2000). *Le Togo, terre d’expérimentation de l’assistance technique internationale de Tuskegee University en Alabama, USA 1900–1909* [Togo, a testing ground for international technical assistance from Tuskegee University in Alabama, USA 1900-1909]. Lomé: Edition Haho.
- Amtsblatt Togo (1907). Programm für die Einstellung, Ausbildung und spätere Verwendung von Ackerbauschülern [Programme for the recruitment, training and subsequent use of arable trainees]. *Amtsblatt für das Schutzgebiet Togo* [Official Gazette for the Togo Protectorate], issued by the Kaiserliches Gouvernement Lome [Imperial Governorate in Lome], 2(1), 1–2. Retrieved 27 September 2023 from <https://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/kolonialbibliothek/periodical/titleinfo/7779306>

- Amtsblatt Togo (1908). Besprechung mit den Vertretern der im Schutzgebiet tätigen Missionen über Fragen des Schul- und Steuerwesens [Discussion with the representatives of the missions working in the protectorate on issues of education and taxation]. *Amtsblatt für das Schutzgebiet Togo*, 3(26), 213–215. Retrieved 27 September 2023 from <https://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/kolonialbibliothek/periodical/titleinfo/7779307>
- Amtsblatt Togo (1909). Bezirksstag in Lome: 7. Bis 15. September 1908 (Fortsetzung). Vierter Tag [District Day in Lome: 7 to 15 September 1908 (continued). Fourth day]. *Amtsblatt für das Schutzgebiet Togo*, 4(6), 33–34. Retrieved 27 September 23 from <https://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/kolonialbibliothek/periodical/titleinfo/7779308>
- Amtsblatt Togo (1911). Der Baumwollbau in Togo, seine bisherige Entwicklung und sein jetziger Stand [Cotton farming in Togo, its development so far and its current status]. *Amtsblatt für das Schutzgebiet Togo*, 6(30), 245–256. Retrieved 27 September 2023 from <https://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/kolonialbibliothek/periodical/titleinfo/7779310>
- Azamede, K. (2014). Reactions of African converts to Christianity, particularly those who visited Europe: The case of the North German Mission's assistants in West Africa. In J. Becker & B. Stanley (Eds), (2014). *Europe as the Other: External perspectives on European Christianity* (pp. 197–218). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Becker, J. & Stanley, B. (Eds) (2014). *Europe as the Other: External perspectives on European Christianity*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Beckert, S. (2005). From Tuskegee to Togo: The problem of freedom in the empire of cotton. *The Journal of American History*, 92(2), 498–526. <http://dx.doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/3659276>
- Beckert, S. (2014). *Empire of cotton: A New history of global capitalism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Berman, E. H. (Ed.) (1975). *African reactions to missionary education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Bude, U. (1983) The adaptation concept in British colonial education. *Comparative Education*, 19(3), 341–355. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/0305006830190308>
- Broeck, S. & Junker, C. (Eds) (2014). *Postcoloniality – decoloniality – Black critique*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus.
- Bundesarchiv (1904). Erlaß des stellvertretenden Gouverneurs Zech an den Bezirksleiter in Atakpame betreffend die Errichtung einer Baumwollkulturschule in Nuatja, Lome, 7. Februar 1904 [Decree of Deputy Governor Zech to the District Head in Atakpame concerning the establishment of a cotton culture school in Nuatja, Lome, 7 February 1904]. BArch – R 150, FA 3/1008, 44–45. Berlin: German Federal Archives.
- Bundesarchiv (1906). Brief des Regierungslehrers Ehni an das Gouvernement über den Deutschunterricht an der Ackerbauschule Nuatjä [Letter from the governmental teacher Ehni to the governorate about German lessons at Nuatjä agricultural school]. BArch – R 150, FA 1/363, Bl. 144f., No. 102. Berlin: German Federal Archives.
- Bundesarchiv (1909a). Prüfungsprogramm der Ackerbauschule in Nuatjä (1909) [Examination programme of Nuatjä agricultural school (1909)]. BArch – R 150, FA 1/388, Bl. 137f.; No. 103. Berlin: German Federal Archives.
- Bundesarchiv (1909b). Schreiben des Bezirksamtes Anecho an das Gouvernement in Lome über die ablehnende Haltung der einheimischen Bevölkerung gegenüber der Ackerbauschule (1909) [Letter from the Anecho district office to the governorate in Lome about the negative attitude of the local population towards the agricultural school (1909)]. BArch – R 150, FA 1/388, Bl. 103; No. 104. Berlin: German Federal Archives.
- Bundesarchiv (1911a). Zeugnisse von Schülern der Ackerbauschule in Nuatjä (1911) [Report cards from pupils at the agricultural school in Nuatjä (1911)]. BArch – R 150, FA 3/1000, Bl. 196, 199; Doc. No. 10. Berlin: German Federal Archives.
- Bundesarchiv (1911b). Schreiben des Leiters der Ackerbauschule, Sengmüller, an das Gouvernement mit der Bitte um Sendung von Schülern und Frauen (1911) [Letter from the head of the agricultural school, Sengmüller, to the governorate with the request to send pupils and women (1911)]. BArch – R 150, FA 1/267, Bl. 3f. Berlin: German Federal Archives.
- Bundesarchiv (1911c). Schreiben des Vertreters des Kolonial-Wirtschaftlichen Komitees, John Booth, an das Gouvernement über die geringen Erfolge der Ackerbauschule Nuatjä sowie Vorschläge zur Umstrukturierung des Unterrichts (1911) [Letter from the representative of the Colonial Economic Committee, John Booth, to the governorate about the poor success of Nuatjä agricultural school and proposals for restructuring lessons (1911)]. BArch – R 150, FA 1/388, Bl. 263–268, with Bl. 267 missing. Berlin: German Federal Archives.

- Carnoy, M. (1974). *Education as cultural imperialism*. New York: David McKay Co. Inc.
- Conrad, S. (2009). "Education for work" in colony and metropole. In H. Fischer-Tiné & S. Gehrman (Eds), *Empires and boundaries: Rethinking race, class, and gender in colonial settings* (pp. 23–40). London: Routledge.
- Conrad, S. (2013). Rethinking German colonialism in a global age. *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 41(4), 543–566. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2013.836352>
- Darkoh, M. B. K. (1967). Togoland under the Germans: Thirty years of economic development (1884–1914), Part I. *Nigerian Geographical Journal*, 10(2), 107–122.
- Darkoh, M. B. K. (1968). Togoland under the Germans: Thirty years of economic development (1884–1914), Part II. *Nigerian Geographical Journal*, 11(2), 153–168.
- Deutsches Kolonialblatt (1913). Der Landwirtschaftliche Dienst und das landwirtschaftliche Versuchswesen in den deutschen Schutzgebieten [The Agricultural Service and agricultural experimentation in the German protectorates]. *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, 24(12), 532–535. Reprint retrieved 25 September 2023 from <https://www.jarts.info/former/jahrgang-14-nr1-2/14.pdf>
- Erbar, R. (1991). *Ein „Platz an der Sonne“? Die Verwaltungs- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte der deutschen Kolonie Togo 1884–1914* [A "place in the sun"? The administrative and economic history of the German colony of Togo 1884–1914]. Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag.
- Erickson, F. (1977). Some approaches to inquiry in school-community ethnography. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 8(2), 58–69. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1525/aeq.1977.8.2.05x1396r>
- Freire, P. (2005 [1970]). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. 30th anniversary edition. New York & London: Continuum.
- Hobhouse, H. (1992). *Seeds of change: Five plants that transformed mankind*. London: Papermac.
- Knoll, A. J. (1978). *Togo under imperial Germany 1884–1914: A case study in colonial rule*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press.
- Kroon, S., & Sturm, J. (2000). Comparative case study research in education. *Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft*, 3(4), 559–576. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s11618-000-0053-0>
- Lockheed, M. E., Jamison, D. T. & Lau, L. J. (1980). Farmer education and farm efficiency: A survey. In T. King (Ed.), *Education and income: A background study for World Development Report, 1980*. World Bank Staff Working Paper, no. 402 (pp. 111–152). Washington, DC: World Bank. Retrieved 22 September 2023 from <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/859171468764745203/pdf/multi0page.pdf>
- Markmiller, A. (1995). „Die Erziehung des Negers zur Arbeit“. *Wie die koloniale Pädagogik afrikanische Gesellschaften in die Abhängigkeit führte* [“The education of Negroes for Work”: How colonial pedagogy led African societies into dependence]. Berlin: Reimer.
- Mehner, Wolfgang (1965). *Schulpolitik im Dienste der Kolonialherrschaft des deutschen Imperialismus in Afrika (1884–1914)* [School policy in the service of the colonial rule of German imperialism in Africa (1884–1914)]. Habilitation, Leipzig University
- Memmi, A. (2021 [1974]). *The colonizer and the colonized*. Transl. H. Greenfeld. London: Profile Books.
- Norris, E.G. (1993a). *Die Umerziehung des Afrikaners. Togo 1895–1938* [The re-education of Africans: Togo 1895–1938]. Munich: Trickster.
- Norris, E. G. (1993b). Die Unfähigkeit der Entwicklungshilfe aus ihrer eigenen Geschichte zu lernen. Die vergessenen Erfahrungen der deutschen kolonialen Ackerbauschule [The inability of development aid to learn from its own history: The forgotten experiences of the German colonial agrarian school]. In T. Bierschenk & G. Elwert, G. (Eds), *Entwicklungshilfe und ihre Folgen. Ergebnisse empirischer Untersuchungen in Afrika* [Development aid and its consequences: Results of empirical studies in Africa] (pp. 143–154). Frankfurt am Main: Campus.
- Overwien, B. (2022). Politische Pflanzen [Political plants]. *Zeitschrift für internationale Bildungsforschung und Entwicklungspädagogik*, 45(2), 4–8. <https://doi.org/10.31244/zep.2022.02.02>
- Paterson, A. (2005). "The gospel of work does not save souls": The conceptions of industrial and agricultural education for Africans in the Cape Colony, 1890–1930. *History of Education Quarterly*. 45(3), 377–404. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-5959.2005.tb00040.x>
- Pohl, J. O., & Longi, F.Y.T. (2013). The relative failure of German Togoland as a model cotton colony. In W. Apoh & B. Lundt (Eds), *Germany and its West African colonies: "Excavations" of German colonialism in post-colonial times* (pp. 185–200). Münster: LIT.
- Retter, H. (2017). Die Erziehung von „Negroes“ zur Arbeit in Tuskegee (Alabama, USA) durch Booker T. Washington. Vorbild deutscher Missionstheologen für die Arbeitserziehung bekehrter „Neger“ nach 1900 [The education of "Negroes" for work in Tuskegee (Alabama, USA) by Booker T. Washington: A model of German mission theologians for the work education of converted "negroes"]

- after 1900]. In D. Käbisch & M. Wermke (Eds), *Transnationale Grenzgänge und Kulturkontakte. Historische Fallbeispiele in religionspädagogischer Perspektive* [Transnational border crossings and cultural contacts: Historical case studies in a religious education perspective] (pp. 39–72). Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt.
- Rodney, W. (1972). *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*. London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications.
- Schlunk, M. (1914). *Das Schulwesen in den deutschen Schutzgebieten* [The school system in the German protectorates]. Hamburg: L. Friederichsen & Co.
- Sebald, P. (1988). Togo 1884–1914. Eine Geschichte der deutschen „Musterkolonie“ auf der Grundlage amtlicher Quellen [Togo 1884–1914: A history of the German “model colony” based on official sources]. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.
- Staatsarchiv Bremen (1910). Lehrplan für die Volksschulen des Schutzgebietes Togo (Im Auftrage S.r. Exzellenz des Herrn Gouverneurs ausgearbeitet von den Regierungslehrern Ehni und Kottmann) [Curriculum for the primary schools of the protectorate of Togo (prepared by the government teachers Ehni and Kottmann on behalf of His Excellency the Governor)]. In Norddeutsche (Bremer) Mission, *Lehrplan für Volksschulen in Togo (1909/1910)* [Curriculum for primary schools in Togo (1909/1910)]. Staatsarchiv Bremen, archival record 7,1025-39/1, no. 33. Bremen: Staatsarchiv Bremen.
- Tiquet, R. (2020). Education through labor: From the *deuxième portion du contingent* to the Youth Civic Service in West Africa (Senegal/Mali, 1920s–1960s). In D. Matasci, M. B. Jerónimo & H. G. Dores (Eds), *Education and development in colonial and postcolonial Africa* (pp. 83–105). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ulbrich, E. (1913). Die Kapokbäume von Togo. Ergebnisse einer Umfrage [The kapok trees of Togo: Results of a survey]. *Notizblatt des Königl. Botanischen Gartens und Museums zu Berlin*, 6(52), 39–65. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3994352>
- Washington, B. T. (1951 [1900]). *Up from slavery: An autobiography*. Reprint. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Washington, B. T. (1902). *Vom Sklaven empor. Eine Selbstbiographie* [Up from slavery: An autobiography]. Transl. E. Du Bois-Reymond. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.
- Washington, B. T. (1904). *Working with the hands; being a sequel to "Up From Slavery," covering the author's experiences in industrial training at Tuskegee*. New York: Doubleday.
- Wilcox, K. (1980). *The ethnography of schooling: Implications for educational policy-making*. Stanford mimeo ED 199 809. Stanford, CA: Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance, Stanford University.
- Yudelman, M. (1975). Imperialism and the transfer of agricultural techniques. In P. Duignan & L. Gann (Eds), *Colonialism in Africa 1870–1960, vol. 4: The economics of colonialism* (pp. 329–359). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Zimmerman, A. (2005). A German Alabama in Africa: The Tuskegee expedition to German Togo and the transnational origins of the West African cotton growers. *The American Historical Review*, 110(5), 1362–1398. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.110.5.1362>
- Zimmerman, A. (2010). *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German empire, and the globalization of the new South*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Zollmann, J. (2020). Becoming a good farmer – becoming a good farm worker: On colonial education policies in Germany and German South-West Africa, circa 1890 to 1918. In D. Matasci, M. B. Jerónimo & H. G. Dores (Eds), *Education and development in colonial and postcolonial Africa* (pp. 109–142). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Christel Adick held the Chair of Comparative Education at the Institute of Educational Research of the Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany) from 1983 until her retirement in 2013. She is the author of an Introduction into Comparative Education (in German) and has published on the history of education in Africa and the Caribbean, including colonial times. Other domains are theoretical debates on education in the modern (capitalist) world system and transnationalism, as well as international education transfer, global learning, and education for sustainable development.