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Putting a Nation on the Map: The Construction of a Geographical Imaginary through the Project for a *National Atlas of Ethiopia*, 1962–1987*

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ABSTRACTS

The recurring ethnically legitimized conflicts in Ethiopia have come to a dramatic head again since the end of 2020. This paper introduces an important source for the history of the contested nationalist politics of unity over the last 70 years, the National Atlas of Ethiopia, published in four editions between 1962 and 1987. So far, the National Atlas and the history of geography in Ethiopia have received little research attention, despite their crucial role in presenting the Ethiopian national project and state-led modernization abroad and the empirical appropriation of space for internal colonisation. Using the Atlas as well as geographic publications, the paper traces the genesis of the geographical institute and cartography, connecting it to the history of census and social survey as well as international development aid in Ethiopia.

The findings show how, in both imperial and socialist times, the government attempted to constitute the Ethiopian nation state through visual and scientific communication – against the conflicting ideas of how the country had grown historically.

Die wiederkehrenden, ethnisch legitimierten Konflikte in Äthiopien haben sich seit Ende 2020 wieder dramatisch zugespitzt. In diesem Beitrag wird eine wichtige Quelle für die Geschichte

der umstrittenen nationalistischen Einheitspolitik der letzten 70 Jahre vorgestellt, der National-atlas von Äthiopien, der zwischen 1962 und 1987 in vier Ausgaben erschienen ist. Bisher haben der Nationalatlas und die Geschichte der Geographie in Äthiopien nur wenig Aufmerksam-keit in der Forschung gefunden, obwohl sie eine entscheidende Rolle bei der Darstellung des äthiopischen Nationalprojekts und der staatlich gelenkten Modernisierung im Ausland sowie der empirischen Aneignung von Raum für die interne Kolonisierung spielen. Anhand des Atlas und geographischer Publikationen wird die Entstehung des Geographischen Instituts und der Kartographie nachgezeichnet und mit der Geschichte der Volkszählung und Sozialerhebung sowie der internationalen Entwicklungshilfe in Äthiopien verknüpft.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, wie die Regierung sowohl in der kaiserlichen als auch in der sozialis-tischen Zeit versuchte, den äthiopischen Nationalstaat durch visuelle und wissenschaftliche Kommunikation zu konstituieren – entgegen den widersprüchlichen Vorstellungen darüber, wie das Land historisch gewachsen war.

> *Today, Africa is not only the least known* […] *but also the most misrepresented continent.* […] *Isolated Ethiopia remained, but for her name, unknown. After the war, modern Ethiopia has left her doors wide open to western civilization. Ethiopia is now in the process of unveiling itself. The Imperial Mapping and Geographical Institute is to serve this purpose.*[1]

These confident lines about Ethiopia's location in the international landscape of knowl-edge were written by the young geographer Mesfin Wolde-Mariam[2] in 1956 when he introduced the Imperial Mapping and Geographical Institute to the US journal *Profes-sional Geographer*. At that time, the Institute was just two years old, with a small staff of Ethiopian employees and US consultants, and an extensive programme which ranged from training geography professionals and conducting large-scale topographic and the-matic mapping to producing textbooks. Probably none of the Institute's projects so broadly realized the objective and aspiration formulated by Mesfin in his article as the undertaking to produce a national atlas. Over a period of 16 years and during the politi-cal upheavals of the revolution in 1974, the first national atlas for Ethiopia was compiled in the country at the State Geographical Institute. The four editions of the atlas in total (1962, 1970, 1981, and 1987) contained a wealth of thematic maps whose changes in content and design over the course of the editions document how geographical knowl-edge production was closely intertwined with political and economic changes. These maps and their compilation in the *National Atlas* served on the one hand to present the national project of a Greater Ethiopian state and state-led modernization abroad, and on the other to anchor a scientifically based understanding of geography among young Ethiopians in the context of secondary school and university education. So far, the atlases

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1   M. Wolde-Mariam, The Imperial Ethiopian Mapping and Geographical Institute, in: Professional Geographer 8 (1956) 2, pp. 6–7.
2   Following the Ethiopian form of naming, which does not use surnames, in the following I write about Ethiopian actors with their main name.

have received little research attention, and little is known about their reception and dissemination. As a first step towards further research on the atlas, both in Ethiopian history and in international geographic history, I will trace the emergence of the national atlas and its connection to the project of state modernization and nation-building in Ethiopia after 1950. I will use three of the atlas's four editions and articles in geographic journals from 1950 to 1990. In doing so, I will focus in particular on the significance of the atlas as a scientific and visual contribution to the construction of the Greater Ethiopian nation state. The findings establish the atlas as a document of those hegemonic processes of inclusion and exclusion that are important for a better understanding of current conflicts in Ethiopia. They show how, in both imperial and socialist times, the government attempted to constitute the Ethiopian nation state through communication – against the conflicting ideas of how the country had grown historically.

Critical geography's research approach takes as its analytical starting point the fundamental change in geography since the nineteenth century. Through the use of empirical and mathematical foundations, on the basis of which individual countries, zones, continents, and finally the entire globe were measured in a standardized way, an overarching system and a "generally valid geographical language" emerged.[3] The Western European way of ordering the world was given enormous impetus by imperial expansionist efforts in the late nineteenth century. The division of territorial claims on Africa among the European empires, which was carried out remotely from the table of the Berlin Africa Conference in 1884/85, would have been inconceivable without the basic technical maps which were produced in the course of imperially financed geographical expeditions. The partition was oriented towards calculated demarcations of borders and geopolitical interests, rather than towards local political, social, and cultural areas.[4]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, mapping and surveying the African continent became relevant in new contexts: technocratic social and economic planning demanded a basis of data, for which territorial points of reference and ordering were created through mapping and surveying.[5] The necessary adaption of new military technologies also demanded more and more maps of areas not yet mapped or not mapped precisely enough.[6] From 1960 onwards, the heads of state of African countries established the political order of the continent anew through the decolonization process and during the tension of

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3   I. Schröder, Das Wissen von der ganzen Welt: Globale Geographien und räumliche Ordnungen Afrikas und Europas 1790–1870, Paderborn, 2011, p. 70f.

4   T. Falola, Explorers of Africa: Mapping the World Through Primary Documents, Santa Barbara, 2019; R. Fay, Explorers in Africa since 1800, in: K. A. Appiah, H. L. Gates, Encyclopedia of Africa, Vol. 1, Oxford 2010, p. 457-458; J. Moser, Untersuchungen zur Kartographiegeschichte von Namibia: die Entwicklung des Karten- und Vermessungswesens von den Anfängen bis zur Unabhängigkeit 1990, in: Cartographica Helvetica: Fachzeitschrift für Kartengeschichte 38 (2008), pp. 41–43.

5   Schröder, Wissen, pp. 113–116; D. Speich Chassé, The Roots of the Millennium Development Goals: A Framework for Studying the History of Global Statistics, Historical Social Research 41 (2016) 2, pp. 218–237, https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.41.2016.2.218–237.

6   C. Lotz/C. Gohr, Anti-imperialism or New Imperialism? Examining the Production and Content of the World Map/Karta Mira 1:2500000 (1956–1989), Conference Paper, Royal Geographical Society's Annual Conference, London, 28 August–1 September 2017, http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.19837.87526.

the global Cold War, and in the course of international development and geopolitics, the surveying and classification of African countries and societies based on the parameters of resources and population control boomed again.[7]

The scientific systems of modern geography, however, were completely informed by specific cultures, and certainly did not deliver the claim to objectivity that had long been part of the disciplinary self-image of geographical research. In recent decades, the social construction of space and the production of maps have received increased attention as objects of study thanks to the *spatial turn* in the humanities, with particular emphasis placed on communicative function and the political context of maps' origins.[8] Current research projects such as Ethiomap, a database of digitized historical maps from the Horn of Africa region furnished with indexed metadata and detailed descriptions, show that the often intertwined histories of this knowledge production – by local, national, and international actors, through surveying, photography, oral tradition, and written exchange – are complex and multilayered. These histories are most likely to be realized in inter- and multidisciplinary research projects, supported by digital tools and drawing comparisons over a longer period of time.[9]

In turn, the maps deconstructed in this way represent important source material for the study of global historical questions which deal with the new world order after 1945 and the mutually constitutive relationship between the formation of the modern nation state and internationalization.[10] For a more systematic comparative study of geographical and cartographic images, Eric Losang proposes the term "GeoImaginaries", based on the definition of "geographical imaginaries" by the British geographer Derek Gregory. As media, maps are not only representations of geopolitical claims or constructions but also act in a variety of ways, especially affective ones, in the social and political contexts in which they circulate.[11]

Approaches to geographical research that compare the visual language of school atlases internationally, using examples from Asia, Europe, and North America, show how important atlases have become in secondary education in the last 150 years for a spatial conception of globalization processes.[12] However, there is still not nearly enough re-

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7   U. Schneider, Das Afrika Kartenwerk der DFG, in: S. Günzel (ed.), KartenWissen: territoriale Räume zwischen Bild und Diagramm, Wiesbaden 2012, p. 246.

8   J. B. Harley/P. Laxton, The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography, Baltimore 2002, p. 163.

9   https://ethiomap.huma-num.fr/; K. Jahn/U. Wardenga, Wie Afrika auf die Karte kommt: Das Beispiel Georg Schweinfurth, in: G. Castryck/S. Strickrodt/K. Werthmann (eds.), Sources and Methods for African History and Culture: Essays in Honour of Adam Jones, Leipzig 2016, pp. 137–161; U. Wardenga, Writing the History of Geography: What We Have Learned – and Where to Go Next, in: Geographica Helvetica 68 (2013) 1, pp. 27–35, https://doi.org/10.5194/gh-68–27–2013.

10   E.-M. Muschik, Managing the World: The United Nations, Decolonization, and the Strange Triumph of State Sovereignty in the 1950s and 1960s, in: Journal of Global History 13 (2018) 1, pp. 121–144, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022817000316.

11   E. H. Losang, GeoImaginaries – Historic Maps and Their Perception – A Critical Analysis, in: 27th International Cartographic Conference, Leipzig, 2015, p. 17.

12   P. Cherrier/J. Moser/S. Lentz et al., Recognizing Spatial Formats and Map Languages: Proposal of a Methodology for Analysing Maps and (School) Atlases as Mediators of World Views Under Globalisation Processes (Working Paper Series of the SFB 1199 at Leipzig University, no. 19), Leipzig 2019.

search on various African countries to include them in such systematizing and comparative research approaches. This is where the Ethiopian national atlas is particularly valuable as a case study. Since the four editions mentioned above have survived and the context of their creation is well documented, at least in part, its development from a simple showpiece to a work with a nationalistic, educational, and developmental mission can be traced here.

The nation as a category of analysis plays a significant role in historical research on postcolonial Africa. In order to be able to describe the complex entanglements of language and speakers in the postcolonial world analytically, methodological approaches that, in a further development of the pioneering constructivist considerations of the 1980s, emphasize the ambivalence of the idea of the nation and nationalist programmes are particularly promising.[13] The research perspective of many studies focuses primarily on the discursive level of nation-building, i.e. the construction of identities in the decolonization movements and in independent nation states, which took place within territorial boundaries drawn during the colonial era. The governments of the new nation states were faced with the challenge of creating a unifying framework for very different ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, and political groups.[14] The formulation of a unified national identity was also important for the implementation of political emancipation at the international level. To create a particular political image both internally and externally, national identity was constructed through the writing of history, the preservation of monuments, and the politics of memory.[15] These more general findings have been applied to particular countries in many in-depth studies in recent years.[16] In the first postcolonial decades, African governments' nation-building aimed at homogenization through cultural assimilation policies. More recent research therefore draws attention to the fact that new institutions and structures were built, or those from colonial times were reconstructed, in order to promote the construction of national identity.[17]

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13   M. Goswami, Rethinking the Modular Nation Form: Toward a Sociohistorical Conception of Nationalism, in: Comparative Studies in Society and History 44 (2002) 4, pp. 770–799, at 774–775.

14   F. Cooper, Africa in the World: Capitalism, Empire, Nation-State, Cambridge, MA 2014, p. 89.

15   W. Speitkamp, "Authenticity" and Nation: Collective Symbolism and History Politics in Postcolonial African States, in: K. Knabel/D. Rieger/S. Wodianka (eds.), Nationale Mythen – Kollektive Symbole: Funktionen, Konstruktionen und Medien der Erinnerung, Göttingen 2005, pp. 225–243; A. Eckert, Ethnicity and Nation in the Historiography of Africa since 1960, in: Comparativ: Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung 11 (2001) 4, pp. 17–30.

16   E.g. J. Glassman, Creole Nationalists and the Search for Nativist Authenticity in Twentieth-Century Zanzibar: The Limits of Cosmopolitanism, in: The Journal of African History 55 (2014) 2, pp. 229–247; L. Edmondson, Performance and Politics in Tanzania: The Nation on Stage (African Expressive Cultures), Bloomington 2007; G. Mwakikagile, Statecraft and Nation Building in Africa: A Post-Colonial Study, Dar es Salaam 2014.

17   R. Bereketeab, Education as an Instrument of Nation-Building in Postcolonial Africa, in: Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism 20 (2020) 1, pp. 71–90, https://doi.org/10.1111/sena.12317; D. Elliott, Reimagining Science and Statecraft in Postcolonial Kenya: Stories from an African Scientist, ORT 2018, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315163840.

1. Ethiopia in the Twentieth Century

The history of Ethiopia in the twentieth century is marked by successful defence against prolonged colonial rule on the one hand and on-going difficulties in finding viable programmes for political, economic, and social unification and modernization at home on the other. The development and negotiation of national identity in the twentieth century is a core topic of recent Ethiopian history and a much discussed and controversial subject in research.

The reign of Tewdros II (1855–1868) is considered an important point in the emergence of the Ethiopian nation state. Under him, the balance of power between the various territories began to stabilize, directed by a central government, and it was possible to fend off the expansionist intentions of European colonial empires. At the end of the nineteenth century, Ethiopia's position was strengthened by the proclamation of the empire under Menelik II and the military victory over Italian troops in Adwa in 1896, which put a stop to colonial expansion for the time being. During this period, not only the political but also the social discourse of modernization gained importance in Ethiopia. Through state-initiated technology transfer, schools and bureaucratic institutions were established with the help of foreign experts, as were telecommunications, banking, and transport infrastructure.[18] Even after the establishment of Addis Ababa as the capital under Menelik II in 1887, some of the provinces were able to remain relatively autonomous, while others were governed directly from the capital. The southern provinces in particular were forced to accept settlers from the north on a large scale and were from then on ruled by governors installed by Menelik in order to compensate them for the loss of their lands in the north.

The prince regent, Ras Tafari, who took over the government after the death of Menelik II, continued to pursue the state modernization project. Ethiopia would thus not only gain importance internationally, but the political power of central government would also be strengthened at the national level. After Ras Tafari's coronation and renaming as Emperor Haile Selassie I, Ethiopia became a constitutional monarchy. From 1936 to 1941, Italy succeeded in occupying Ethiopia and Eritrea and established a colonial government. During the five years of Italian occupation, a restructuring of the provinces took place according to ethno-linguistic criteria, which ignored existing cultural and economic spaces and spatial relationships. After the end of the Italian occupation in 1941, the Ethiopian state again faced the challenges of organizing itself politically and centralizing state power.[19]

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18 S. Marzagora, Refashioning the Ethiopian Monarchy in the Twentieth Century: An Intellectual History, in: Global Intellectual History, forthcoming, https://doi.org/10.1080/23801883.2020.1796237; J. Calvitt Clarke, Alliance of the Colored Peoples: Ethiopia and Japan before World War II, Woodbridge 2011.

19 D. Crummey, Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia: From the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century, Urbana 2000, pp. 226–260; B. Zewde, The Quest for Socialist Utopia: The Ethiopian Student Movement, c. 1960–1974, Woodbridge 2014, pp. 126–127.

Haile Selassie I spent the period of occupation in exile in Great Britain; the period after his return was marked by the resumption and expansion of Ethiopia's international relations. Strategic bilateral cooperation with the USA, Germany, Sweden, and Japan, as well as the consolidation of Ethiopia's standing in international organizations, especially the UN, were important. During the 1960s, the focus was on intra-African relations and the claim to supremacy within the Organisation of the African Union (OAU), a claim derived from Ethiopia's status as the only monarchy and the only non-colonized country in Africa, and which was supported by many heads of state of the newly independent countries. However, during this period, when technical, social, and economic modernization measures under Haile Selassie I reached their peak, a resistance movement emerged that grew rapidly after unrest in the late 1960s. An intellectual programme grew out of this resistance and the student protests, which advocated for wider modernization and the abolition of traditional structures of governance, and was broadly supported by the mobilized rural population.[20] The call for a government which would take effective action to address living conditions that had worsened due to changes in land rights, droughts, and famines grew stronger, and the emperor was finally overthrown in a revolution in 1974. The military, which had orchestrated the overthrow, proclaimed a socialist state led by a council, the Derg, and President Mengistu Hailemariam. Although this government was able to promote important development measures, especially in education and agriculture, in the first years after seizing power it enforced its claim to power with ideologically legitimized violence, and a decisive improvement in living conditions was not achieved even in socialist Ethiopia.[21] From today's perspective, the revolution of 1974 must be seen not as a caesura, but rather as part of longer-lasting social and economic transformation processes after 1950, in the course of which traditional systems of land use and existing administrative structures were gradually replaced by modern bureaucratic state organization, as decreed from above.[22] The official identification of Ethiopian national identity, and its embedding in society, played an essential role in the central government's claim to sovereignty and legitimacy both in the empire and in the socialist regime.[23]

One reaction to the concomitant policies of assimilation and exclusion was the development of competing ethnic nationalisms within Ethiopia. As much as its representatives presented themselves as a beacon for the anti-colonial movements in Africa, the modern

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20 Ibid.

21 A drastic climax was the mass executions that took place from 1974 to 1979 as part of an ideological purge under the Derg that went down in Ethiopian history as the years of the "Red Terror"; see e.g. J. Wiebel, "Let the Red Terror Intensify": Political Violence, Governance and Society in Urban Ethiopia, 1976–78, in: International Journal of African Historical Studies 48 (2015) 1, pp. 13–29.

22 L. Puddu/E. Fantini, Ethiopia and International Aid: Development between High Modernism and Exceptional Measures, in: Aid and Authoritarianism in Africa: Development without Democracy, ed. T. Hagmann/F. Reyntjens, London/Uppsala 2016, pp. 91–118; J. W. Hussein, The Subtle Connection Between the Greater Ethiopia Image, the Ideology of Blaming and Silencing, and the Cult of Emperor Haile Selassie, in: The Australasian Review of African Studies 27 (2005) 1, pp. 49–80; J. C. McCann, People of the Plow: An Agricultural History of Ethiopia, 1800–1990, Madison, WI 1995.

23 U. Engel/M. Boeckler/D. Müller-Mahn (eds.), Spatial Practices: Territory, Border and Infrastructure in Africa, Leiden 2018, pp. 67–69.

Ethiopian state was in the eyes of many an empire with colonial policies and territorial claims.[24] After several famines in the 1970s and 1980s, the political situation became increasingly unstable. In 1987, Mengistu tried to end the civil war-like confrontation between the military regime and the troops of the ethno-nationalist liberation movements, especially the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, by proclaiming a socialist republic. In 1991, Mengistu and his regime were finally overthrown and the government was taken over by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, an amalgamation of various political groups among which the TPLF, which was also the driving force behind the overthrow, took a preeminent position. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was proclaimed with the Constitution of 1995. The internal contradictions of the country were to be resolved through the reorganization and new delineation of the national territory into nine ethnic federal states. However, the principle of ethnic federalism and the right to self-determination of the "ethnic nationalities" did not prove to be a unifying force. On the contrary, the lines of conflict between the various ethno-nationalist groups diversified and deepened according to competing historical narratives, which have contributed significantly to the escalation of the social and political conflicts in the last few years.

An analysis of the representations and imaginaries of national identity in various forms of knowledge production has therefore received increased attention in recent years. This work shows that the history of ideas and of the state in Ethiopia must be strongly linked to the study of textbooks and government publications, as well as to the production of the idea of the 'national' in the arena of cultural heritage.[25]

Institutions are central to state identity politics, for it is in them that culture can be politically instrumentalized and institutionalized by the state in new ways.[26] The role of state mapmaking in Ethiopia is part of a longue-durée institutional history of the modern Ethiopian state in the twentieth century. Especially in administration, technology, and scientific knowledge production, one can observe decades-long continuities which persisted through the intense political ruptures and which show that the preservation and expansion of the territorial status quo was the top priority in the empire as well as under

24   A. H. Gnamo, Conquest and Resistance in the Ethiopian Empire, 1880–1974: The Case of the Arsi Oromo (African Social Studies Series), Leiden 2014.

25   E. C. Zeleke, Ethiopia in Theory: Revolution and Knowledge Production, 1964–2016, Leiden 2020; M. Kebede, Eurocentrism and Ethiopian Historiography: Deconstructing Semitization, in: intejethistud – International Journal of Ethiopian Studies 1 (2003) 1, pp. 1–19; J. de Lorenzi, Guardians of the Tradition: Historians and Historical Writing in Ethiopia and Eritrea, Rochester, NY 2015; S. Marzagora, History in Twentieth-Century Ethiopia: The "Great Tradition" and the Counter-Histories of National Failure, in: The Journal of African History 58 (2017) 3, pp. 425–444; M. Huber, Developing Heritage – Developing Countries: Ethiopian Nation-Building and the Origins of UNESCO World Heritage, 1960–1980, Berlin/Boston 2020, https://www.degruyter.com/view/title/570571; A. Triulzi, Battling with the Past: New Frameworks for Ethiopian Historiography, in: W. James/D. L. Donham/E. Kurimoto (eds.), Remapping Ethiopia: Communism and After, Oxford 2002, pp. 280–285.

26   W. Kaschuba, Geschichtspolitik und Identitätspolitik. Nationale und ethnische Diskurse im Kulturvergleich, in: B. Binder/W. Kaschuba/P. Niedermüller (eds.), Inszenierung des Nationalen. Geschichte, Kultur und die Politik der Identitäten am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts, Cologne 2001, p. 26.

socialism.[27] In Ethiopia, the image of a distinguished and superior empire, characterized by the Christian, Amharic highland culture's continuity and Old Testament roots, was of particular importance for the construction of national identity at the government level and in order to justify the future plans of the nation state.

Ethiopian history is often made out to be a special case, in the way it is presented both to itself and to others, since there was never a prolonged period of colonial occupation. But this narrative of a "special path" must be questioned in the historical context.[28] The proportion of foreign expertise for knowledge production and state institutionalization in the national context was very significant in Ethiopia in the postcolonial period, as in other African states. Development assistance, which was not only financial but also technical and cultural, ran through all social and political levels, similar to the situation in other African states at the time.[29]

In terms of geographical knowledge production, however, Ethiopia was indeed a special case and literally a blank spot on many maps. In contrast to the intensive cartographic production in the colonized areas of Africa, at the beginning of the 1950s not even a first-order geodetic triangulation network had been established for Ethiopia. This basic survey, based on triangulation networks referenced to a fixed baseline, was not only the prerequisite for all further accurate surveying work in the country, but also for connecting Ethiopian surveys to existing cartographic records of the surrounding areas and the rest of the world.[30]

2. The Making of the Atlas – Production, Actors, and Context

"[I]t is sometimes true that something is better than nothing"; the preface of the first *National Atlas* was introduced with these words in 1962. Cartography as well as scientifically and systematically collected data in general were in a poor state in Ethiopia when the Geographical Institute was founded in 1954. During his reign from 1889 to 1913, Menelik II was the first Ethiopian ruler to make deliberate use of maps to express and legitimize his claims to power on paper. However, the maps he used for this purpose were created by foreign experts who were at the imperial court as advisers, researchers, or on diplomatic missions. Menelik's successor, the young regent Ras Tafari, later Emperor Haile Selassie I, also relied on the importance of foreign policy alliances to strengthen his regional and national position. As a diplomatic gift, in 1924, he presented the US geographer Homer L. Shantz with a map of Ethiopia prepared by the imperial court cartog-

27 B. Agyeman-Duah, The United States and Ethiopia: Military Assistance and the Quest for Security, 1953–1993, Lanham, MD 1994, p. 19.

28 N. Nurhussein, Black Land: Imperial Ethiopianism and African America, New Jersey 2019.

29 C. Clapham, Ethiopian Development: The Politics of Emulation, in: Commonwealth & Comparative Politics 44 (2006) 1, pp. 137–150, https://doi.org/10.1080/14662040600624536; A. K. McVety, Enlightened Aid: U.S. Development as Foreign Policy in Ethiopia, New York 2015.

30 H. Hillebrand, Kartenaufnahme von Hoch-Semyen, Ethiopien, in: Zeitschrift für Vermessungswesen 92 (1967) 4, pp. 117–125; H. A. Karo, Ethiopian Survey Operations, in: The Military Engineer 52 (1960) 348, pp. 285–288.

rapher, the Armenian K. B. Papuzian, in 1923, the data of which was based on mapping work carried out by the British military in 1908.[31] Between 1868 and 1941, numerous maps were produced for different areas of Ethiopia, primarily by the Italian and British military. However, this also meant that these maps mainly contained information for the extraction of raw materials and for military operations, and they described many other important pieces of information only partially, incorrectly, or not at all. In the eyes of contemporaries, this compendium of maps did not adequately depict the current political situation and border demarcation at all, but nevertheless, in the absence of other options, it repeatedly served as the basis for new maps.[32] The state of Ethiopia's mapping at the beginning of 1950 was thus not only incomplete but mainly determined by foreign interests. In the new empire, however, both the modernization of the administration and economic development had high political priority – and for this, accurate base maps and statistical data were indispensable.[33]

Figure 1: US-Ethiopian mapping mission in the field (www.ethi-usmappingmission. com, last accessed 9 September 2020, now no longer online).

31   W. W. Ristow, The Haile Selassie Map of Ethiopia, in: Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress 27 (1970), pp. 258–266; W. Smidt, Cartography from the 18th Century Onward, in: Encyclopaedia Aethiopica, vol. 1, Wiesbaden 2003.

32   H. W. Emmanuel, The Imperial Mapping and Geography Institute: A Review, in: Ethiopian Geographical Journal 2 (1964), pp. 37–39.

33   Mesfin, Imperial; H. Hurni, Topographische Karten in Äthiopien als Grundlage für ländliche Entwicklung, in: M. Grosjean/T. Hofer/A. Lauterburg et al. (eds.), Photogrammetrie und Vermessung – Vielfalt und Praxis. Festschrift für Max Zurbuchen (Geographica Bernsis, vol. 18), Bern 1989, pp. 29–37.

From the point of view of the Ethiopian government under Haile Selassie I, this aspect was probably decisive in obtaining cooperation and start-up financing for the Geographical Institute through the US "Point 4" programme. The programme, which had been approved in 1949 under US President Harry S. Truman, envisaged the targeted use of development aid as a foreign policy strategy to win over allies in the context of the Cold War. It followed a technocratic idea of development aid that sought to help people help themselves through knowledge transfer – an idea that boomed in bilateral and international politics during the 1950s (instead of offering primarily financial support, as became increasingly important from the 1970s onwards).[34] In this framework, cartographers in Ethiopia were trained and students with scholarships – among them Mesfin, mentioned above – were sent to the USA, while extensive technical equipment, with the necessary instruments and machines, was also supplied.[35] In addition, area-wide surveying on a larger scale began, starting with the establishment of geodetic control and area-wide aerial photography by the US military.

It was in this context that the Geography Institute was founded, initially headed for a few years by the US geographer Gordon B. Schilz, and most of the equipment was also procured from the USA.[36] This was not exceptional in the landscape of Ethiopia's state authorities in the 1950s.

For the intended modernization and development measures, which encompassed all sectors, there was a lack of both the state administrative infrastructure and appropriately trained workers for the planning and implementation of projects. The number of graduates from the first university in the country, opened in 1950, was still modest, and so the few Ethiopian citizens who had enjoyed secondary education or even university education abroad were dependent on the support of numerous foreign professionals.[37]

For the countries sending assistance, development aid was usually linked to military, geopolitical, or economic interests. The geodetic survey work by the US military, which first made further precise mapping possible, was carried out within the framework of military cooperation: in return for the survey work, the US was allowed to use the Kagnew military base in Asmara, Eritrea. Because of its radar range to the Arabian Peninsula and West Asia, Asmara was of key importance as a military location for the USA during the Cold War.[38] An explicit political strategy for implementing state reforms under Emperor Haile Selassie I that contemporaries already observed was the strategic instrumentalization of foreign geopolitical or economic interests and of international relations for technological

34   McVety, Enlightened Aid; D. Webster, Development Advisors in a Time of Cold War and Decolonization: The United Nations Technical Assistance Administration, 1950–59, in: Journal of Global History 6 (2011) 2, pp. 249–272.

35   E. Hailu Wolde, The Imperial Mapping and Geography Institute: A Review, in: Ethiopian Geographical Journal 2 (1964), pp. 37–39; E. Hailu Wolde, Cartography in Ethiopia, in: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (ed.), World Cartography, vol. 8, New York 1967, pp. 45–48.

36   Mesfin, Imperial.

37   T. G. Wagaw, Access to Haile Selassie I University, in: Ethiopia Observer 19 (1971) 1, pp. 31–46.

38   Agyeman-Duah, United States, pp. 11–19.

modernization projects that lacked resources and expertise, or for political projects that had little support at the national level.[39]

In the socialist state, from 1974 onwards, cooperation with UN organizations became even more important. Numerous projects in education, culture, and administration that had been in preparation for a long time were given top priority under the Derg and could finally enter the implementation phase.[40]

In 1980, the Mapping and Geographical Institute was renamed the Ethiopian Mapping Agency and became the Ethiopian Mapping Authority in 1981. The reason for this was that in the context of settlement policy and agrarian reform, mapping activities were given a central role, and the authority was incorporated into the Ministry of Land Reform, which gave it more weight.[41] At that time, the institute had more than 380 employees and was financed to a significant extent by funds from the UN Development Programme. While a first-order geodetic survey had been successfully carried out in the 30 years since the establishment of the Institute, as had an almost comprehensive aerial photography survey, many of the topographic maps produced in the 1960s were already outdated by the 1980s and had to be updated through new field research. In the 1980s, the government and also development aid organizations increasingly needed more accurate maps on larger scales beyond the Institute's capacity. The project of the *National Atlas* and the production of further up-to-date thematic maps by the research department of the Institute therefore increasingly became a permanent task.

The first edition of the atlas, which appeared in 1962, contained only 34 maps in black and white and was published under the title *A Preliminary Atlas of Ethiopia*. The preface also refers to the character of the maps as showing an interim stage of ongoing research which was only being published due to the lack of information on Ethiopia.[42] A slightly revised version of the atlas, which was not available when researching this paper, was published in 1970. In 1981, a completely revised edition of the *National Atlas* was published as a "Preliminary Edition", with a print run of 600 – which sold out after a short time. With its 90 maps, this edition was much more extensive than the first atlas of 1962, and the thematic spectrum was also clearly much broader. However, the maps were still in black and white, and the preface emphasized the provisional nature not only of the atlas but also of the underlying data for the thematic maps.[43] In 1987, the year of the proclamation of the People's Democratic Republic, which replaced the Socialist Council (the Derg) under the same leadership, the first official *National Atlas of Ethiopia* was published, with 75 thematic maps in colour. The atlas was completed with the help of the

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39   A.-M. Jacomy-Millette, Anatomie d'un pays en voie de développement à la lumière de ses engagements internationaux: le cas de l'Éthiopie, in: Revue générale de droit international public 4 (1974), pp. 1026–1036.

40   Report on visit of Mr. Bruce Stedman (UN Development Programme Resident Representative in Addis Ababa) to UNESCO Headquarters, 14 April 1975 in UNESCO CLP/01/3/110. See also Huber, Developing, pp. 150 ff.

41   M. Mekete Belachew, Modern Cartography, in: Encyclopaedia Aethiopica, vol. 1, Wiesbaden 2003, p. 692.

42   More detailed information on the production and distribution of the atlases is not currently available. The acquisition books of the Berlin State Library list the atlases as regular acquisitions, which rules out circulation of the atlases only as government gifts and for use in teaching.

43   Introduction, Atlas, 1981.

Canadian International Development Research Centre, which considered it a showcase project for the production of a contemporary atlas under national administration in a developing country.[44] The role of the atlas as an official, scientific source of information for economic and social data and as a basis for further development measures was emphasized in the dedication that precedes the atlas, written by the Ethiopian prime minister Fikre-Selassie Wogderess. In the foreword, the head of the authority, Asfaw Fanta, particularly stressed the fact that the data for this edition was predominantly derived from other Ethiopian institutions and not, as in the previous editions, from foreign sources.[45] In the following section, I will examine in greater depth aspects of this data basis for the cartographic representation and the function of the atlas for the construction of the Ethiopian nation state, in relation to the three versions of the atlas from 1962, 1981, and 1987.

3. From Armchair Cartography to Field Surveys

Asfaw Fanta's remark pointed to one of the most important differences between the editions of the atlas: it was only in the 1987 edition that the mapping's overwhelming dependence on foreign data came to an end. It is particularly noticeable in the first edition of the atlas that the maps were produced at the Institute's desk in Addis and were not based so much on data collected in field studies as, mainly, on theoretical considerations and extrapolations. Even the first nationwide surveys of social and economic data from 1965 to 1967, carried out a few years after the first atlas was created, achieved their results largely through extrapolations, not through comprehensive data collection.[46] This becomes very clear in the example of the language maps that are included in every edition of the atlas.

The map in the 1962 atlas lists a total of 11 languages, divided into three families: Semitic, Cushitic, and Negroid. This classification was completely in line with the scientific status of Ethiopian studies in the 1960s, but these linguistic categories were not without controversy even then.[47] Above all, the categorization of the language family found in Eastern Ethiopia with the term "Negroid" and not "Nilotic" – a term which was already established in research at the time – is to be understood in the context of the racist attempts at demarcation by Ethiopian elites from the Christian highlands, who did not see themselves, as a highland population, as belonging historically and culturally to "black" Africa.[48]

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44   N.N., Mapping their Future, IDRC Reports, October 1990, p. 15.

45   Foreword, Atlas, 1987.

46   Emmanuel, Imperial; E. Ficquet, Fonder un régime sur le recensement ethnique: le fédéralisme éthiopien, in: Critique internationale 45 (2009) 4, p. 37, https://doi.org/10.3917/crii.045.0037, 39.

47   See, for example, the map divided into nine language families (Amhara, Tigrina, Gurage, Saho, Gada, Somali, Sidama, Afar, and Beja) in J. Markakis/N. Ayele, Class and Revolution in Ethiopia, Nottingham 1978, p. 5.

48   R. M. Derricourt, Inventing Africa: History, Archeology and Ideas, London 2011, pp. 105–106; de Lorenzi, Guardians, pp. 63–65.

Figure 2: Ethiopia: Languages, Atlas, 1962.

Clearly demarcated areas were suggested on the language maps through the representation of both the regional distribution of languages and their classification. This was particularly problematic because language classification, like religious classification, was and is one of the criteria for subdivision into ethnic affiliations. The majority of Ethiopia was Christian Orthodox or Muslim; in the 1950s there was also a large Jewish community, the so-called Falasha Jews, as well as various other religions. However, the language families and religious classifications are only suitable for making an ethnic classification to a limited extent. The real distributions of the religious groups or language families, never ran along the possible geographical, geological, or political demarcations, nor did they correspond to the administrative units of the nation state.[49] Moreover, many of the ethnic, linguistic, and religious attributions that emerged in the course of the last cen-

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49   Some also speak of a situation comparable to that in the Balkan region; see for example A. Gascon/R. Pourtier, La Grande Éthiopie, une utopie africaine. Éthiopie ou Oromie, l'intégration des Hautes Terres du Sud, Paris 1995. On the problem of the political construction of ethnic groups in Ethiopia, see the introduction of D. Donham, The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia: Essays in History and Social Anthropology, Cambridge 1986, pp. 3–48, and the very detailed breakdown of declared groups and identities, and the subaltern position of the Oromo, in particular, in É. Ficquet/D. Feyissa, Ethiopians in the Twenty-First Century: The Structure and the Transformation of the Population, in: G. Prunier/É. Ficquet (eds.), Understanding Contemporary Ethiopia: Monarchy, Revolution and the Legacy of Meles Zenawi, London 2015, pp. 17–51. See also W. Smidt, The Tigrinnya-Speakers Across the Borders, in: D. Feyissa/M. Höhne (eds.), Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa, Woodbridge 2010, pp. 61–84.

tury and are still used today cannot be traced back further than the nineteenth century, and are based primarily on the idealized population standardizations of late nineteenth-century European science.[50]

The language map in the 1987 edition of the atlas gave a much more differentiated impression of language distribution in Ethiopia. The most important innovation, however, was that the complete 1987 edition could draw on the results of the Ethiopian microcensuses from 1984 onwards, which surveyed over 81 per cent of the population.[51] The later editions of the atlas were thus based on social, political, and economic data which had been much more precisely collected. The territories of Ethiopia were now divided into four language families and into numerous languages within the families. It was also made clear that there were no coherent, homogeneous language areas on Ethiopia's national territory. The accompanying text to the map endeavoured to explain that a classification of languages was not static but dynamic, taking place within historical-social contexts, and had to be continuously adapted.

Figure 3: Languages, Atlas, 1987.
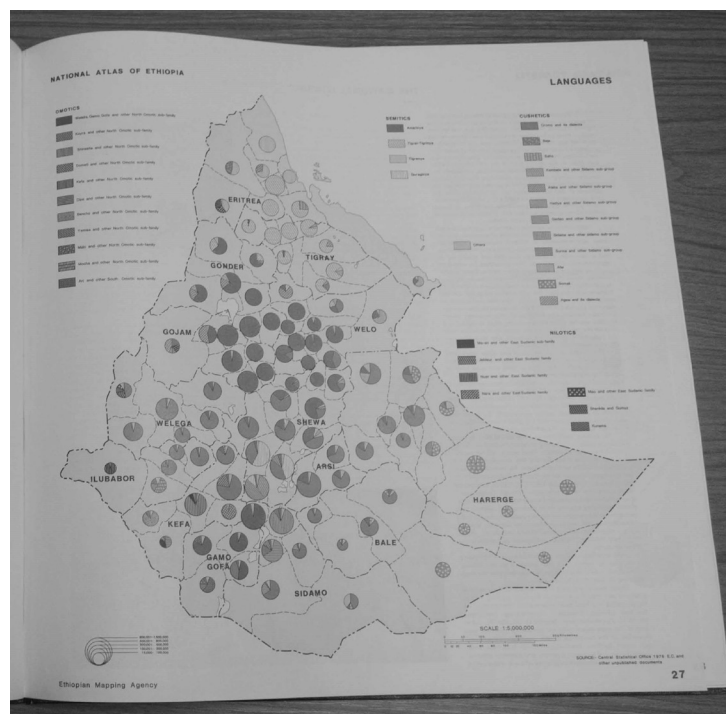
50   T. Güldemann, Language contact and areal linguistics in Africa, in: T. Güldemann (ed.), The Languages and Linguistics of Africa, Berlin/Boston 2018, pp. 445–545. Online: https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110421668-003, p. 60f.; T. Belay, A brief reflection on ethiopian languages, in: Callaloo 33 (2010) 1, pp. 100–101.

51   Ficquet, Fonder, p. 44.

In accordance with the better data, the two later editions of the atlas, from 1981 and 1987, contain differentiated maps for particular economic and, especially, social and infrastructural conditions. While the 1962 atlas's social category only contains a map of population density, the 1981 atlas has more than 20 maps on various topics: death and birth rates, household sizes, gender distribution, health and education provision. These maps were presumably produced on the basis of various regional case studies.[52] These maps are just as numerous in the 1987 atlas, which also has a much larger number of economic maps in which the programmes of socialist industrialization and development policy were represented. For the maps about the economy, numerous pages were devoted to the depiction of state-owned enterprises and state infrastructure planning, productivity through collectivized agriculture, and socio-spatial planning.

The empire pursued a policy of cultural assimilation in favour of the Amharic-Christian highland traditions, which strongly influenced institutional actions. Haile Selassie established Amharic as the lingua franca and the official language of Ethiopia in the new Constitution of 1955. Multi-ethnic diversity was conveyed as a characteristic of the non-Amharic-Christian population groups in the cultural institutions and museum exhibitions of both the imperial and socialist governments. Even though they were relatively large, these groups were declared ethnic minorities and were subordinated to the 'Greater Ethiopian' national identity.[53]

In its official propaganda, the Derg condemned the cultural assimilation policy of the empire as "feudal" and declared religious and ethnic diversity as a fixed component of Ethiopian identity. However, there could be no talk of self-determination for ethnic groups or identities, since in practice an overarching Greater Ethiopian identity, that invoked the same historical traditions of leadership as the empire, continued to be propagated. The state's claim to authority over the linguistic, cultural, and also territorial demarcation between the ethnic groups persisted, and the state research institute for Ethiopian nationalities, which was established on the recommendation of Soviet advisers in 1983, was also intended to substantiate this claim scientifically.[54]

However, this plan partly failed already in the survey phase of the new census between 1984 and 1987: in the provinces in Tigray, Eritrea, and Ogaden, the Institute's government officials could not conduct surveys because these areas were already occupied by the troops of the particular ethno-nationalist and separatist liberation movements found there. In many other regions, peoples had differing ways of identifying both themselves and other groups, ethno-linguistically, meaning that the survey could only be approximated. In the report on the results of the census, the scientists proposed a categorization of 91 ethnic groups, but also came to the conclusion that an ethnically homogeneous population could be determined in only 30 of a total of 580 administrative districts. In-

52 E.g. M. Wolde-Mariam, Welenkomi, A Socio-Economic and Nutritional Survey of a Rural Community, Berkhamsted/Herts 1971.

53 T. Guindeuil, Nature, culture, même combat? Sciences et conservation sur le campus d'Addis-Abeba (1950–1974), in: Études rurales 197 (2016) 1, pp. 125–146, https://doi.org/10.4000/etudesrurales.10679.

54 Ficquet, Fonder, 44.

stead of the comprehensive reform of the administrative districts and provinces that was originally planned, which was supposed to be better oriented towards ethnic distribution and would eliminate the structural problems of ethnic conflicts, only slight changes were made; there was also no further evaluation or revision of the results of the census.[55]

The census categorizations on which the maps of the *National Atlas* were based enabled bureaucratic control. Ethnic categorizations in particular were used strategically, both in a top-down and in a bottom-up manner, to legitimize access, who could create meaning, inclusion, and exclusion.[56] The historian of cartography Mathew Edney argues that imperial mapping can also be fruitful as a category of analysis in a figurative sense. In this case, not only does the institutional context of map production play a role, but also particularly the application of maps within political projects of spatial appropriation.[57]

The representation of ethnic groups is an ideal starting point for a critical deconstruction of the databases in order to better understand the extent to which indicative material was deliberately produced in the atlas regarding single topics and how this contributed to an internal colonization of ethnic groups and regions by the central government – especially when it came to development projects. In all three editions of the atlas, ethnic groups were teritorrially assigned not only through language maps but also through maps on religion, land use, and administrative boundaries. These attempts at categorization which were propagated in the maps of the *National Atlas* did not correspond to the reality of life for the population. Rather, through their contemporary visualization of political claims, the maps represent source material on the development of ethno-nationalis conflicts in Ethiopia that offers a valuable addition to previous research.

4. Locating the Nation in Space and Time

Another area which shows elite communication, and the thematic mapping of Ethiopia particularly clearly are the historical maps of the atlas. Under both imperial and socialist rule, identity politics was a central component of securing power, as explained above. Of particular importance was the narrative of a Greater Ethiopian state, or "Greater Ethiopia", which was proclaimed through the historical succession of the ancient, medieval, and modern kingdoms of Aksum and Abyssinia. An integral part of the Greater Ethiopia narrative was the construction of a past in which non-Christian, and non-Amharic groups functioned as immigrants or marginalized groups of Ethiopian history. In spatial terms, this meant that a historical claim was made to a national territory that to a large

55   Ibid. p. 44f.
56   B. J. Berman, Knowledge and the Politics of Ethnic Identity and Belonging in Colonial and Postcolonial States, in: A. Eisenberg/W. Kymlicka (eds.), Identity Politics in the Public Realm: Bringing Institutions Back In, Vancouver 2011, pp. 52–78. Particularly important in Berman's argument is that he first proves this with African examples, but then emphasizes that it is doubtful whether an African distinctiveness can be assumed from these observations.
57   M. H. Edney, The Irony of Imperial Mapping, in: J. R. Akerman (ed.), The Imperial Map: Cartography and the Mastery of Empire, Chicago 2009, pp. 11–46.

extent only became part of the later Ethiopian empire in the course of the nineteenth century.[58] Through policies that made authority over meaning and representation a matter of state, the historical narrative of the Ethiopian nation was also oriented towards integration and homogenization. History in state institutions, such as the universities and schools where the national atlas was used, was written primarily in the service of the nation state.[59]

In the 1987 edition, this national writing of history is visualized extensively for the first time. In a total of 11 maps, the regional history of the Horn of Africa is presented as Ethiopian history; reproductions of both European medieval maps and modern maps of Ethiopia were also used for this purpose.[60]

Figure 4: Cover: A Cradle of History.
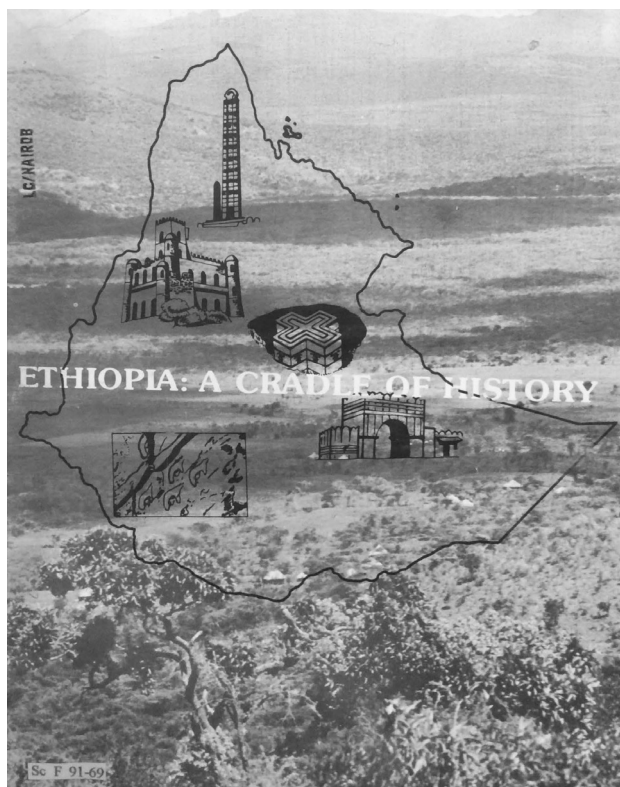
58   T. Tibebu, The Making of Modern Ethiopia, 1896–1974, Lawrenceville, NJ 1995, pp. 88–102.
59   Triulzi, Battling with the Past; de Lorenzi, Guardians.
60   The European maps which were used were: Presbiteri Iohanni, Sive Abissinorum Imperii Descriptio; Imperi Abassini Geographica (Job Ludolf).

In 1989, the Ministry of Information also published this historical section of the atlas as a special edition, under the title "Ethiopia – A Cradle of History". The introduction to this special edition quoted from the preamble of the new Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic:

> *We, the working people of Ethiopia, based on a centuries-old glorious history, are engaged in a great revolutionary struggle to extricate ourselves from our current state of backwardness, and to transform Ethiopia into a socialist society with a high level of development […]. Ethiopia, the home of a brilliant ancient civilization, has been an independent state which has existed in continuity for many thousands of years. The Ethiopian state has existed as a multinational state, and its long history of independence has been the history of the united existence and common struggle of her nationalities.*[61]

Figure 5: The External Challenges and Reunification.

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61   Ministry of Information, Ethiopia, A Cradle of History, Addis Ababa 1989, p. 2.
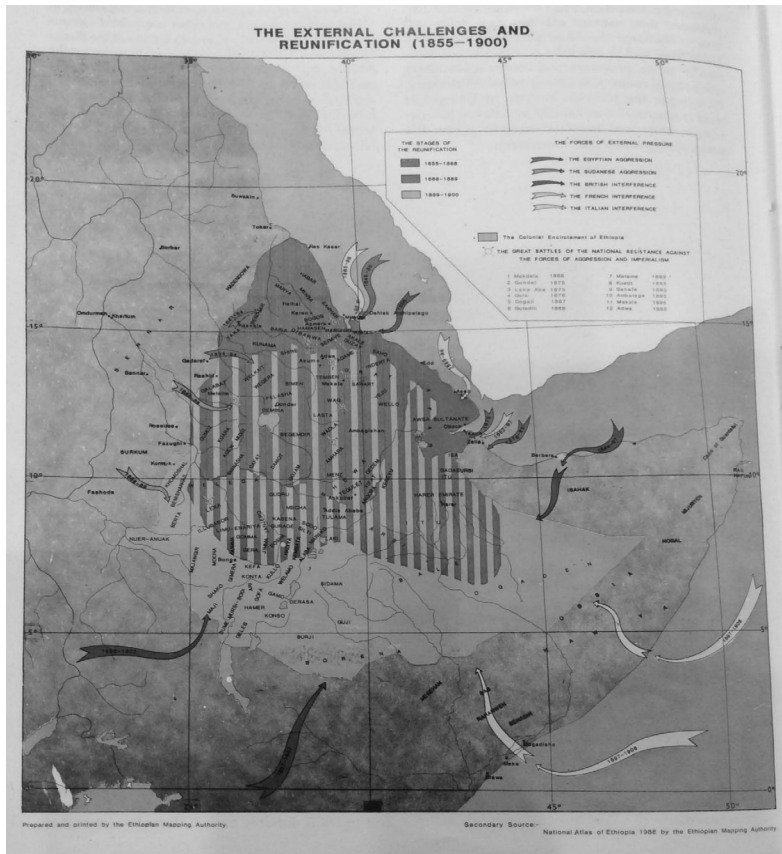
On the map of "The External Challenges and Reunification (1855–1900)", the imperial conquest and incorporation of the southern territories is referred to and depicted as a reunification which was enforced by a centrally ruling emperor against external opposition. The multiple changes in the internal and external political borders and regimes during this period were presented explicitly as the result of a linear development in order to legitimize the territorial claim to the Greater Ethiopian area historically and geographically.

In the map "Ethiopia and the Post-Colonial Neighbour States, 1910–1986", the conflicts that arose from the attempted integration of the different social communities, political territories, and ethnic groups and systems into the Greater Ethiopian nation are suppressed in favour of a history of national unity. The regional conflicts which shaped the situation after 1950 and which collided with the Greater Ethiopian claim, such as the border dispute with Somalia in the early 1960s, the annexation of Eritrea in 1962, and the war with Somalia over the Ogaden region, are not mentioned in the map.

Figure 6: Ethiopia and the Post-Colonial Neighbour States.
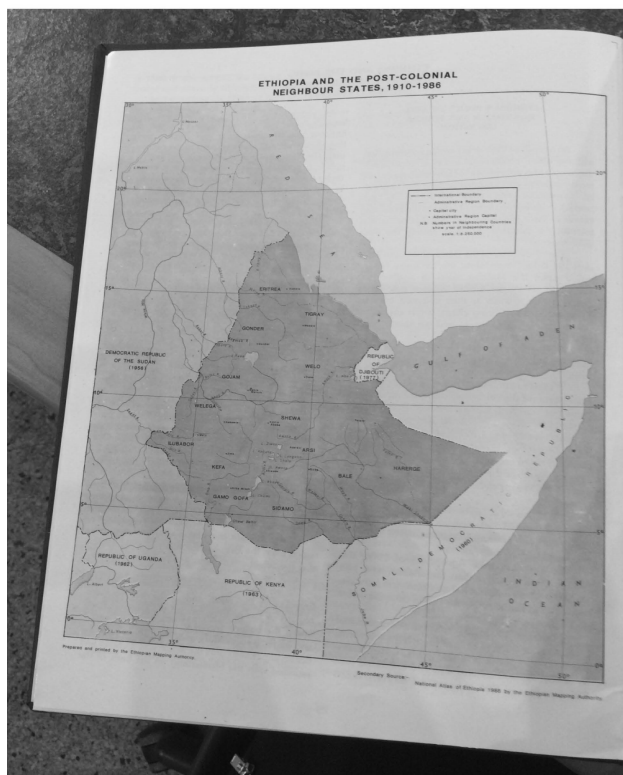
5. The Representation of Ethiopia and the World

The atlas must also be read as an attempt to establish Ethiopia as a region in the international language of maps and, as was repeatedly expressed in the prefaces and articles by Ethiopian geographers, as a contribution to an international cartographic discourse. With the thematic maps in the *National Atlas*, a symbolic geoimaginary space for the Ethiopian nation was created, which as a visual framework enabled the depiction of the natural (climatic, geological) and naturalized (agriculture, language distribution, etc.) conditions of the nation state. Knowledge and skills were needed to create effective national and global geoimaginations, so that the national cartography could be internationally recognized as valid.

Figure 7: World Azimuthal Equidistant Projection.
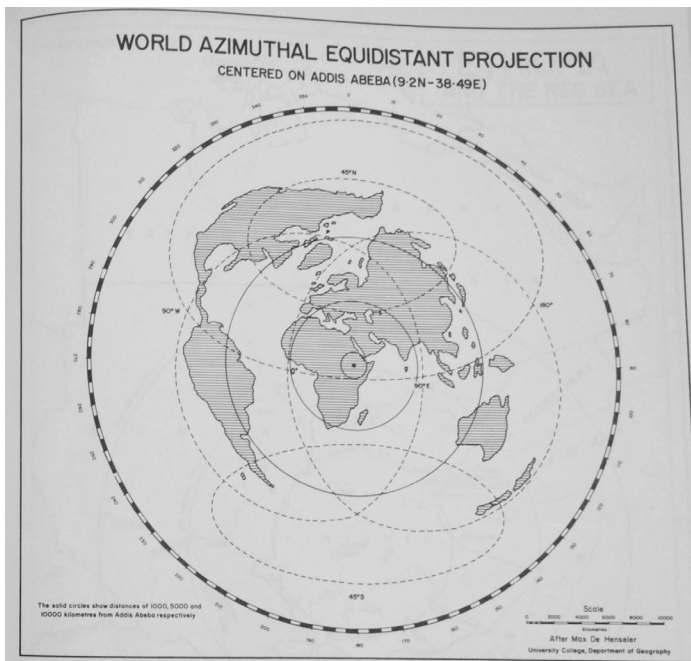
Advances in methods of graphic representation and in printing technology, especially regarding resolution and colour, may also have played a role in the differences in presentation between the individual editions. The maps of the preliminary atlas of 1962 are limited in their accuracy and differentiation because of coarse hatching and patterning, and the already stylized subdivision of, for example, the language zones was thus emphasized even more. For the later editions, the cartographers had the possibility of printing on glossy paper, and therefore could use greater detail and, in the last edition,

even colour. Thus, technically and in design terms, it was possible to convert much larger empirical foundations, compared to earlier editions, into a more sophistiacted, modern representation of the language of maps; the effectiveness of the cartographic constructs as well as the authority of the cartographers was also increased.[62]

In the case of the *National Atlas*, as has become clear after the explanations above, it was not only the representation of content on the maps that was important but also the rhetorical life of the maps and their role as a communicative practice. Each individual map should also be read as an argument, or at least a proposal, put forward by the authors, as should the collection of all the maps in an edition. For the Ethiopian nation state's sovereignty, not only was the claim to have authority over meaning within the desired territorial borders important, but so was Ethiopia's place as part of the international community of states.

Figure 8: Ethiopia in Comparison with Other African Countries.
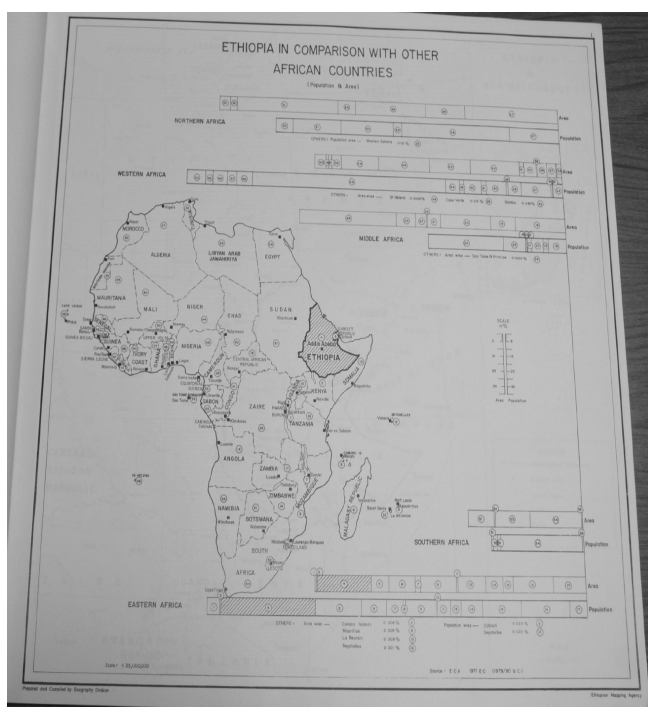
The maps in the various editions of the atlas, which are dedicated to Ethiopia's representation in the world, show the shift in emphasis of international politics in Ethiopia from a focus on Western countries and the UN to a more regionally oriented strategy.[63]

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62 I thank Jana Moser for expertly pointing out this possibility.
63 C. Clapham, Controlling Space in Ethiopia, in: Remapping Ethiopia: Socialism and After, ed. by W. James/D. L. Donham/E. Kurimoto/A. Triulzi, Oxford 2002, pp. 9–32, p. 11; B. B. Yehun, Black Ethiopia: A Glimpse into African

In 1962, an azimuthal projection of the world map centred on Addis Ababa located Ethiopia in the global context; in 1981, Ethiopia was shown in comparison with other African countries, and in 1988, Ethiopia was shown in Africa.

Figure 9: Ethiopia in Africa.
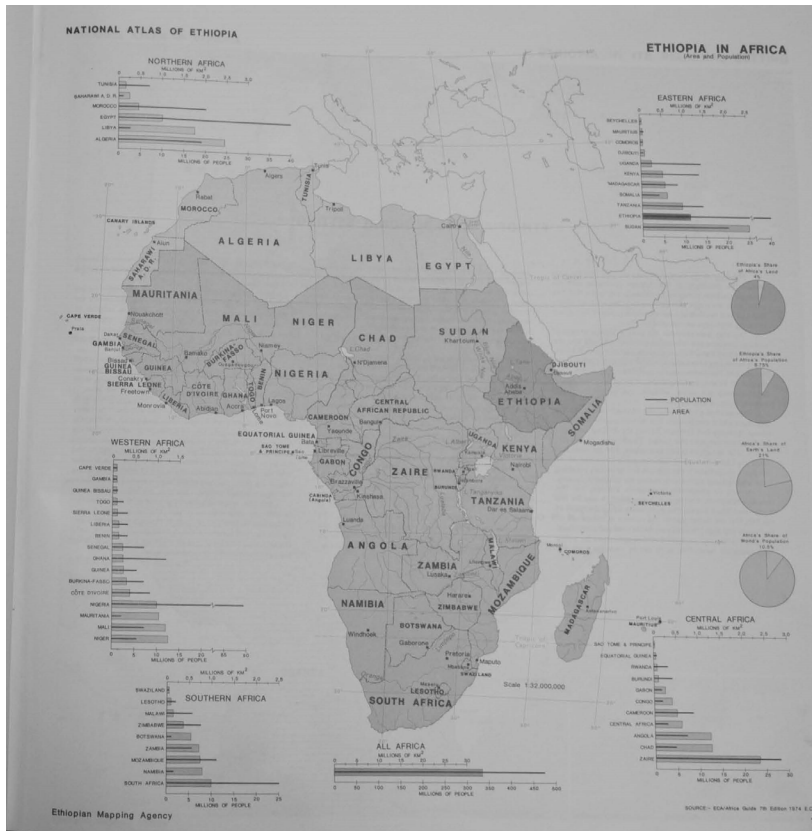
6. Conclusion

The cartographic description of Ethiopia in the twentieth century must be understood in a similar way to what David Gugerli has stated for the mapping of Switzerland in the nineteenth century: as "a communication strategy which seeks to provide the political system with new legitimacy and authority from an open and uncertain position".[64] The

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Diplomacy, 1956–1991, Los Angeles, CA 2014, pp. 7–22.

64 D. Gugerli, Präzisionsmessungen am geodätischen Fundament der Nation. Zum gesellschaftlichen Anforde-
    rungsreichtum einer vermessenen Landschaft, in: D. Gugerli (ed.), Vermessene Landschaften: Kulturgeschichte
    und technische Praxis im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, Zurich 1999, pp. 11–36, at 13.

National Atlas and its maps were important as a government instrument for spatial order. In order to legitimize the Ethiopian nation state, the construction of antagonisms – between periphery and centre, north and south, and on a cultural and economic level – became a counter-image to be overcome by the construction of a national identity. The atlas, through its categorizing and defining maps, was an attempt from the capital at the empirical appropriation of space.

From today's perspective, map production in Ethiopia is not only interesting as an intervention in the creation of the nation's spatial parameters. The maps of the atlas are an important source to get closer to the contemporary imaginary worlds of the national space. Their data and the language used are documents of a political discourse of identity that was conducted by Ethiopian scholars, bureaucrats, and politicians, but also by "international experts" and development professionals: this discourse in turn enabled the politically controlled construction of a Greater Ethiopian national identity. In the ethnically legitimized conflicts of the civil war, the maps were supposed to help anchor this overarching national identity linguistically, culturally, and historically, within the state borders that were wished for.

Even if Ethiopian cartographers were "native technocrats",[65] like the African cartographers on the Gold Coast, and understood their work primarily as empirical, the cartographic work of the Geographical Institute and the project of the *National Atlas* in particular were part of modernization discourses that took as a starting point the national identity policy which was oriented towards unity.[66] The thematic maps of the atlas show how Ethiopian actors took up existing foreign discourses about Ethiopia and tried to place them in the context of the international geographic and political production of knowledge. The rhetoric of the maps used the scientific vocabulary of a Western internationalist character as well as that of the Ethiopian political and intellectual elites. This means that communication about Ethiopia and the reference points of the idea of the 'national' was primarily directed at an audience outside the country.

Concerning the history of the creation and reception of the atlas and its maps as shown in this paper, and the interpretation of the maps as historical sources as well as the connections that can be derived from them, the results on these pages represent only a beginning. With regard to the many international cooperations in the creation of the *National Atlas* and the expansion of geography in Ethiopia, the recent history of the Ethiopian state can be told as part of a global history. The reception history of the atlas, for example in school lessons, could be investigated as part of studies in the history of education or the historical and social sciences. For the physical maps, too, it would be interesting to trace, in a way which is even more comprehensive and systematic than I have indicated here, in which international and national contexts this map material was actually decisive as a basis for action in economic or military planning and operations. This applies in par-

65 J. McGowan, Uncovering the Roles of African Surveyors and Draftsmen in Mapping the Gold Coast, 1874–1957, in: J. R. Akerman (ed.), Decolonizing the Map: Cartography from Colony to Nation, Chicago, IL 2017, pp. 205–251.
66 E. W. Giorgis, Charting out Ethiopian Modernity and Modernism, in: Callaloo 33 (2010) 1, pp. 82–99, 85–86.

ticular to the forced resettlement programmes of the 1960s and 1970s and to the ethnic federal states of Ethiopia created by the new Constitution of 1994. There is no doubt that the recurring ethnically legitimized conflicts in Ethiopia, which have come to a head again drastically since the end of 2020, also emerged from the soil of the nationalist politics of unity of the last 70 years.[67] The extent to which the consequences of this policy continue to have an impact today is only revealed by the history of state institutions and scientific knowledge production, as has taken place with the *National Atlas*.

67   S. Mulugeta Kene/S. Feyissa, Ethiopia's War of Narratives, Africaisacountry.com, 19.11.2020. https://africasacoun-try.com/2020/11/ethiopias-war-of-narratives.