3. Accounts of Ethiopian Urbanisation

This chapter gives an overview of the research discussions on urbanisation in Ethiopia and current descriptions of urbanisation there. The limits of knowledge on the issue of urbanisation are pointed out. Material on the ancient history of urban Ethiopia is the starting point of the review, in order to clarify that the development of urban structures and urbanism is not a recent phenomenon in the country. Nevertheless, a new phase of rapid urban growth has to be acknowledged since the early 20th century, which needs to be conceptually framed. The chapter gives an account of the urban policies that have been developed so far at the national level in order to clarify the institutional framework under which urban development in Ethiopia is regulated. It, further, serves as a reference to which the specific case of Bahir Dar can be compared later in this thesis.

As 83.9% of the total population live in the rural areas, mainly as small-scale farmers (CSA 2008: 19), Ethiopia's levels of urbanised population are among the lowest in the world. The overall percentage of inhabitants living in Ethiopian cities was at 16.1% in 2007 (ibid). This is the result of the slow speed of urbanisation until the arrival of the Italians in the 1930s (Golini et al. 2001: 93). This low level of urban residence seems particularly surprising in the face of Ethiopia's ancient history of urban settlements and the foundation of cities in the Axumite empire as early as the fourth century BC (Fasil Giorghis 2010: 49). Nevertheless, prior to the 20th century, caravan trade, feudal residences and shifting capitals as well as military garrisons formed the bases for establishing towns in Ethiopia (Koehn 1979: 215, Solomon Mulugeta 1997: 190). However, as in other African countries, there has been a struggle for Ethiopian urban history to find acknowledgement, even within the scholarly Ethiopianist discourse. A common narrative on the early Ethiopian towns is that they were not permanent sites of settlement, and the only historical exceptions as sites of permanent residence are Axum and Gondar (Liyew Adamu 1994: 35, Golini et al. 2001: 94-96, Gebeyaw Walle 2003: 20-21). The royal camps are said not to have had the support of an urban citizenry and the artisans and traders following these travelling camps were focused on the supply to the camp (Liyew Adamu 1994: 35-36). Meanwhile, the remaining population is assumed to have been supplied by open-air field markets outside the settlements (ibid: 36-37).

According to this line of argumentation, modern urban development with a hierarchical network of cities cannot be traced back further than the 19th century (Liyew Adamu 1994: 35). Donald Crummey (1987) challenged this account of absence of towns in Ethiopian history, as he believes a researcher's bias has led to a focus on the traversing royal camps and dismissed evidence of fixed settlements inhabited by the ordinary population. Thereby, Crummey (1987: 1) does not contest the basic proposition of the discourse that nucleated concentrations of population were not common in Ethiopian history. Crummey (1987: 12) notes that the establishment of a royal residence is not to be confused with the founding of a town on the same site. Instead, one has to assume that some nucleated concentrations of population did exist (ibid). According to him, a civil type of permanent town pertained before the 18th and 19th centuries (ibid: 2). These Ethiopian towns can be described as permanent, nucleated centres of settlement (ibid). They were found throughout the Amhara and Tigrinian speaking areas and constituted the upper end of a spectrum that ranged in size from hamlets of around one hundred residents to towns with as many as 6,000 to 10,000 inhabitants (ibid: 2). His opinion is supported by evidence from Richard Pankhurst, who notes that the establishment of settlements with small numbers of stone buildings, such as Emfraz, Gorgora and Danquaz in the Lake Tana area, marks the transition from royal camps to more settled capitals (as precursors of the well known site of Gondar) in the second half of the 16th century (Pankhurst 1979: 426). Pankhurst drew attention to these towns, but, due to methodological issues, his topic was dismissed by some other scholars (Crummey 1987: 2). However, other researchers have come to support his findings, and studies on varieties and frequencies of clustered settlements, particularly in the Amhara area, furthered the notion of a historical Ethiopian town (ibid: 2). Thereby, "towns were an intrinsic and significant feature of the physical and social geography of Christian Ethiopia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" (ibid: 2) and have to be considered indigenous (ibid: 15). Crummey points this out, as the contingency of Ethiopian cities was repeatedly challenged and attributed to foreign influence in scholarly publications (cf. Koehn 1979: 217). This assumption has led to hypotheses that describe cities in Ethiopia as foreign installations and, hence, disconnected from historical roots (ibid). Contrary to this, however, also the smaller settlements of about 2,000 to 4,000 inhabitants are to be viewed as deeply interconnected with their rural surroundings, while functionally serving as a city to these surroundings, despite their comparatively small size (Crummey 1987: 2). Reducing them to having been installed as foreign outposts would, thus, disregard the fact of their emergence as products of their local societies (ibid: 2-3). So, even beyond the evident ancient sites of Axum and Gondar, small settlements have been historically verified in the meantime.

Largely lacking are descriptions of the historical settlements, as the sources are limited and not representative. The 18th and 19th century literature is largely restricted to the accounts of foreign travellers, as the written Ethiopian sources

of the time are not descriptive of the localities' nature or appearances (Crummey 1987: 3). The travellers, in turn, apply their own urban nomenclature to structures foreign to them for which they might not have had more suitable vocabulary (ibid: 3). Within these accounts, Ethiopia is said to have had a specific role in the European imagination and in European geopolitics, shaped during the Portuguese Jesuit period starting at the beginning of the 16th century (Martínez d'Alós Moner 2003: 165 f.). Thereby, Ethiopia was reduced to a somewhat enclosed country with Christian customs, Semitic elements and a few other notions (ibid: 174).

Urbanisation in Ethiopia accelerated after the Italian occupation (Golini 2001: 93) and has not stagnated since. Between 1950 and 1965, it reached rates of 5.4 and 5.6% p.a., resulting in a doubling of urban population every 13 years (ibid: 93). In 1975, 9.5% of the population lived in urban areas of at least 2,000 inhabitants (ibid: 92). The period of the largest urban growth in the time up to 1975 can be linked to the highest rate of rural-urban difference in population development, which signifies that the urban growth was triggered by rural-urban migration (ibid: 93). Urbanisation continued at a rapid pace in the final decades of the 20th century, with another peak of 5.93% urban growth in 1985–1990 (ibid: 93). The low level of urbanised population is, thereby, about to change from a small minority into about a third of the total population, as the UN extrapolates figures of 10.4% in 1980 to a projected 27.4% in 2030 (UN-HABITAT 2008: 171). The total size of the urban population is, thus, expected to almost triple within a time span of five decades. Although rapid urban growth will continue, the coming of urbanisation in the towns has only received modest interest from the field of Ethiopian studies. The early settlements were repeatedly dismissed as exceptions in a largely rural society (Genet Alem 2011: 10). Given the current figures for urban development, this will have to change. However, the definition of what a town is in Ethiopia seems disputed, as the historical sites of urbanisation have not been sufficiently interrogated (Crummey 1987, Genet Alem 2011: 10). The statistical criteria of a "town" are limited to the quantitative point of having more than 2,000 inhabitants (Liyew Adamu 1994: 50). In fact, the average size of Ethiopian cities, excluding Addis Ababa, was not significantly bigger than this minimum figure in 1994, resulting in a mean of 5,670 inhabitants according to the CSA (Golini 2001: 101). Golini et al. dismiss the current urban network as "weak", as there are "urban deserts", in which no small and medium-sized towns exist to serve the surrounding area (Golini et al. 2001: 93). Meanwhile, just as the discussion on global urbanisation has focused on the existing and proclaimed mega-cities of 10 million inhabitants and more (see chapter 1), the discussion on rapidly growing Ethiopian cities is largely fixed to the national capital and primate city Addis Ababa, with an estimated population of 4–5 million. The population figures are also reflected in the number of cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants, which rose from just four in 1994 to more than 25 in the year 2005 (see figure 2). While the map shows that larger urban structures in

Ethiopia are, indeed, a recent phenomenon, it also indicates a need for discussion on the phenomenon of urbanisation within the secondary cities.
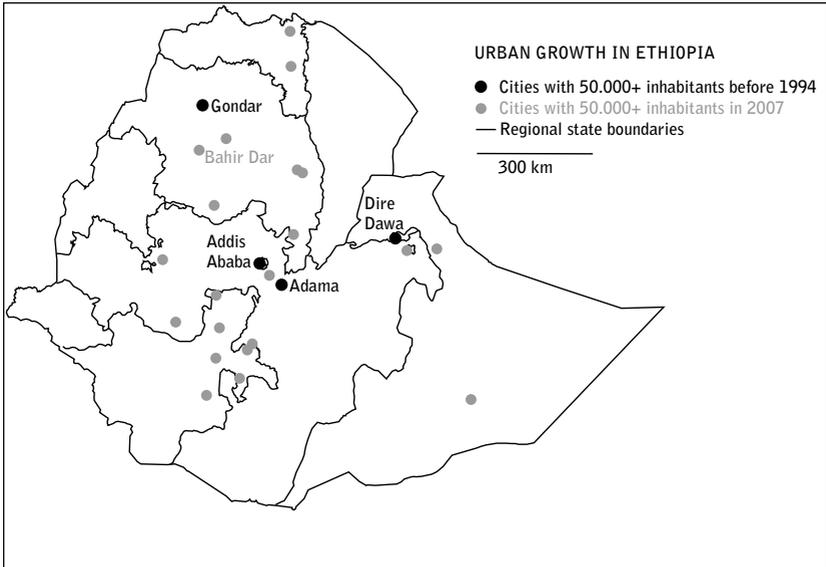
Fig. 2: Urban Growth in Ethiopia

Image by the author with data from Golini et al. 2001 and CSA 2008.

Yet, the literature review for this thesis on the question of urbanisation in Ethiopia suggests that explanation building on the subject of urbanisation is highly speculative. The low level of urbanisation is described as due to the fact that the early growth of Ethiopian towns is irrelevant to development, as they were apparently shaped as a result of political factors, consumed and had no underlying economic system by which they could contribute to production by Gebeyaw Walle (2003: 20-21). Other authors claim that the historically low rate of urbanisation still visible today is due to the self-sufficiency of the rural areas (Ofcansky and Berry 1991, Golini et al. 2001: 93). Crummey (1987: 11) concurrently assumes that the redistribution of surplus to large royal courts preventing the establishment of settlements may have been the main restrictive factor for urbanisation until the recent acceleration. Another attempt at an explanation refers to a historical contingency ascribed to the country. Thereby, the account of isolation mentioned above recurs in recent narratives on Ethiopian international relations (Gebeyaw Walle 2003: 20–21, Zegeye Cherenet 2010) as an attempt to explain the low level of urbanisation and coming about of the country's dispersed and culturally particular settlement structures.

Accounts of urbanisation in Ethiopia have, further, been given as a processes of population concentration with non-agricultural income generation (Gebeyaw Walle 2003: 20-21). The recent rapid urbanisation is, then, commonly explained by natural population growth and movement of individuals from the rural areas to the towns (Golini et. al. 2001: 104, cf. Piguet and Dechassa 2004: 137, Gebeyaw Walle 2003: 19), paired with the opportunities through the concentration of infrastructure and social resources that are perceived as offering better chances for making a living in the city (Gebeyaw Walle 2003: 19) or as urban growth being the result of urban policy interventions (Liyew Adamu 1994, Gebeyaw Walle 2003: 20-21). At the same time, Liyew Adamu (1994: 49) claims that processes of urbanisation were due to industrialisation and bad conditions in the rural areas (ibid: 50). This account is similar to that of the UN, which views matters as being complicated by the fact that the urban economies are not growing at the same rate as the influx of population that reaches the urban areas (cf. UN-HABITAT 2008: 4). In contradiction to the theory of industrialisation triggering urbanisation, Koehn states that urbanisation in Ethiopia either has not been accompanied by industrialisation or has exceeded the economic growth rate of the few industrial centres (Koehn 1979: 215). The theoretical context in which "urbanisation" has, thereby, been placed is that of "over-urbanisation" in the capital and "under-urbanisation" for the rest of the country (Benti Getahun 1995, Golini 2001: 92). This model claims that the urban population is too large for the industrial sector of the city, or an absence of urban functions respectively (Benti Getahun 1995: 521). Benti Getahun (ibid) comes to the conclusion that this happened despite not conforming to dependency theory or colonial influence.

However, accounts of the reasons for the initial low-levels of urbanisation and the rapid urban growth in Ethiopia have generally not been placed in a historical context and systemisation, which is why the explanations stated are often derived from political programmes rather than empirical exploration. They are, therefore, somewhat contradictory to each other due to their mostly speculative nature and lack of reliable data. However, the rapid expansion of urban settlements is posing a challenge to organisation and construction and needs further investigation. The statements collected and the reasoning behind them will, therefore, be questioned in the following, to see which argumentation can be furnished with evidence from the existing empirical material but also through the findings of the case study research conducted in the course of this research project. Currently, few comprehensive compilations of empirical studies on recent urbanisation in Ethiopia are available – those that are tend to be quantitative descriptions. This chapter will, therefore, provide an overview of urban development according to the periods of Ethiopian rulership and discuss the data available. It attempts to merge and describe the state of knowledge on urbanisation in the different phases of rule to give a comprehensive overview of the topic of more recent urbanisation in Ethiopia.

3.1 1880–1936: Early Towns

As discussed above, widespread urbanisation and the formation of fixed settlements that shape the basis of today's towns, in the opinion of some scholars, has only been under way since the founding of Addis Ababa in 1887 in the period of Menelik II's reign (Liyew Adamu 1994: 38c, Gebeyaw Walle 2003: 20-21). The facts that lead them to this assumption are grounded in the occasion of Addis Ababa becoming the first permanent capital. The impact of Addis as a fixed capital changed the spatial organisation of the country. The permanent location became possible through the introduction of eucalyptus as fuel wood, the introduction of private-ownership of urban land through a proclamation from 1907, and, as this ended the notion of impermanence, a cultural turn towards embracing technological advances led to the completion of the construction of the Djibuti- Addis Ababa railway line in 1917 in a cooperation with the French and saw the introduction of modern social and technical infrastructure in the new capital Addis Ababa (Pankhurst 1985: 363, Solomon Mulugeta 1997: 191). Menelik II intended to set up a central traffic and communications network in his empire (Liyew Adamu 1994: 38) and is said to have laid the foundations for the modernisation of urban Ethiopia. This embrace of new technologies was taken up and accelerated by all his successors (Pankhurst 1985: 363).

Beyond the establishment and modernisation of the new capital city, Menelik II began founding military and administrative towns in which trade gained an increasing importance (Liyew Adamu 1994: 40). Their location was chosen on strategic grounds, often on hilltops in the malaria-free highlands (ibid). In 1880, around 11% of the population were counted as settled in places with more than 2,000 inhabitants (Ofcansky and Berry 1991). Meanwhile, forms of settlement such as the "ghebbi", reflecting the court, were taken into the cities and shaped their layouts (Genet Alem 2011: 97). Most of the 19th century towns served as administrative centres and provided seasonal residence for political figures (Crummey 1987: 5), while the pace of overall urbanisation remained slow (Ofcansky and Berry 1991). However, while northern Ethiopian regions have been noted for their urban life of at least 18 centuries, few permanent settlements could be found in the south of the country (Koehn 1979: 215).

The cities' economies were reliant on diverse fields. Crafts were modestly concentrated in the cities as well as other forms of specialisation, but craftsmanship was not a sufficient source of income and had to be combined with mostly agricultural subsistence activities (ibid, Gebeyaw Walle 2003: 20–21). The general absence of inns, restaurants, hostels or other kinds of hospitality services in these towns was noted at the time (Crummey 1987: 6). In various aspects, the towns functioned as connectors of interests and linked with their rural surroundings (ibid: 7). The monasteries, thereby, tended to preserve the natural surroundings in their original state and were not involved in transforming the sites outside of their compounds

into urban areas (Persoon 2003: 680-81). Importantly, through the presence of the church and monastic schools, towns were centres of education (Crummey 1987: 6). The churches located there were provided with vast lands to support the clergy, which attracted clerical students in the absence of other educational facilities (ibid: 6). Some churches and monasteries had social and economic importance as destinations of pilgrimage (Persoon 2003: 681). The churches played further important structural roles, as they could provide personal sanctuary in the churchyard and amassed considerable surplus through "rist" tax collection from the surrounding agricultural land (Crummey 1987: 8). As the Ethiopian courts did not allow an urban class to feed on the agricultural surplus from the rural areas but rather entertained large courts on the produce, the settlements' population sizes had to remain comparatively small (ibid: 11). In this manner, the class structures of nobility and rural peasantry were reinforced and feudal militaristic endeavours supported in expense of urban development (ibid).

3.2 1936–1941: Italian Fascist Settlement Plans

Ethiopia's self-image is that of an independent nation that has never been subject to colonial seizure of power (Benti Getahun 1995: 517). To some extent, Ethiopia is even considered a colonial power itself (Myers 2011: 56, Martínez d'Alós Moner 2003: 165). Thereby, the long-standing non-colonisation of Ethiopia is considered not purely a military achievement but also a result of the preceding contact and exchange with European rulers (Martínez d'Alós Moner 2003: 175). However, while a first attempt at colonisation by the Italians was successfully fought off in the "Battle of Adwa" in 1896, the country faced renewed and extended colonialist aggression during the five years of Italian occupation from 1936 to 1941. The initial motive for the Italian invasion of Ethiopia was a desire for commercial exploitation, later amplified to political and military aims (Sbacchi 1985: 229). This desire was paired with a strategic settlement programme for Italian nationals, known as "demographic colonisation" (Haile M. Larebo 1994: 138-76). Their intention was to further the self-sufficiency of various settlement areas, with the result that the Italian road networks that were installed to support this purpose departed from the exiled Emperor's line of centralist development in favour of a network (Liyew Adamu 1994: 40). Generally, urban growth increased with the Italian invasion and during the occupation (Ofcansky and Berry 1991). A number of settlements was established across the country during the occupation. The cities were often founded around transport infrastructure, in particular along the Addis Ababa – Djibouti railway line, and also along the expansionist road-network the Italians were seeking to install (Koehn 1979: 215, Liyew Adamu 1994: 40). The effects are still visible today, as now the most industrialised region of Ethiopia is established along the railway line (Liyew Adamu 1994: 40). Many of these new or expanded

"Italian" towns were garrisons, which also attracted local population through the new incorporation of markets (Liyew Adamu 1994: 40). Even though the Italians did not have any labour or housing policies to address urban growth or migration issues (Solomon Mulugeta 1997: 192-193), factors such as the land rights and land-use practice also have substantial significance for the change of meaning and importance of Ethiopian cities. A number of the settlements received a core of permanent buildings for the first time, in which mainly administrative functions were allocated (Liyew Adamu 1994: 40). The building legacy of the Italian occupation is largely found in the large cities, namely Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, Gondar, Jimma and Harar (Liyew Adamu 1994: 87, Rifkind 2011: 508-09). No labour intensive industries were introduced, so industrial work places were only occasionally installed in small numbers (Liyew Adamu 1994: 40, Benti Getahun 1995: 521).

Overall, the discussion and evaluation of the colonial occupation on urban development in Ethiopia is controversial, as estimations of the nature and strength of its impact on the cities vary strongly. Regarding the spatial development, some authors like Künzel and Hebel (2007: 29) deny colonial impact, while Myers dismissively states, "Italy's brief occupation led only to a small transformation of Addis Ababa's central business district" (2011: 50). Contrastingly, Liyew Adamu (1994: 87) comes to the conclusion that urban planning in Ethiopia begins with the Italian occupation. Also Podestá (2013) claims a vast socio-economic impact of the Italian infrastructural endeavours. Like a number of Italian authors, he limits his description of impact to the colonial settlers themselves and does not offer any insight into the effect on the local population. In fact, many of the available papers looking at the larger urban scale focus on the formalistic discussion of master plans developed for these locations to enforce colonial rule (e.g. Solomon Mulugeta 1997, Perotti 2010). The draft of two master plans for Addis Ababa, once it was decided to keep it as the capital, are well documented (Solomon Mulugeta 1997: 193). The first was more of a sketch that was devised by LeCorbusier following an order of Mussolini, while the second is a more detailed plan designed by Valle and Guidi in 1937 (ibid). Yet, it is necessary to look beyond descriptive accounts of plans and move towards an evaluation of their significance for the cities they shape to this day. In this vein, Rifkind describes how Italy instrumentalised urban design as a key concept in reforming the everyday life of the Empire's public, based on the analyses of the re-constructionist master plans of Gondar, which served as Amhara Region's capital during occupation (ibid: 493 f.). In going beyond the identification of the Italian architectural legacy to look at the developmental practice, he shows how the design of the city impacts on identity formation and urban life. According to him, the Italians viewed their settlements in East Africa not only as military bastions but also as agricultural depots and sites of industrial production. The cities were nodes in a system in which the Italians aimed to subject the Ethiopian nation to their rule through the settlement of Italian agronomists (to be) in the fertile region under the slogan of "demographic colonisation" (Rifkind 2011:

496). From the examples in North and East Africa as well as South and South-East Asia, the Italians adopted the approach of "translating political order into built form", the aspects of race and religion, thereby fell under the regulation of spatial administration within the cities (ibid). The Italians' planning philosophy was derived from the experiences of the British and the French in their respective occupied territories and becomes very evident in Gondar (ibid: 507). In a "civilising mission", the occupiers, thereby, substituted the tukuls of the historical city surrounding the castle and established structures on principles of modernisation targeted at the "technical deprivation" of the Ethiopians (ibid: 507). Technological modernisation, such as the installation of communications infrastructure, was to be synonymous with the act of "civilising colonisation" (ibid: 498). A master plan set up by Bosio in 1936 laid the principles that still implicitly guide the city's urban development to this day (ibid: 503). The plan intended to relocate many of the Ethiopian residents to the neighbourhood of Ghebbi, south of the city, clearing the site for the buildings to house the colonial administration in the centre (ibid: 504). It was only by the intervention of the viceroy Duke of Aosta that the Ethiopian building heritage (including the famous castle structure) was preserved and the master plan revised (for the third version;ibid: 505). The master plan included a zoning framework, a street network and design principles. In a second step, a racially segregating zoning plan was devised for the city, which had become a self-sufficient garrison town (ibid: 495-496).

In an effort to estimate the overall impact of the Italian occupation on cities in Ethiopia, Rifkind (2011) comes to the conclusion that the towns need to be analysed by placing them in the general context of Italian city building. He also notes that in a "disquieting compatibility between progressive planning practises and authoritarian politics cities built in Italian-occupied East Africa further demonstrate the extent to which the modern urban design could participate in the coercive project of constructing imperial identities, among both Italian settlers and African colonial subjects" (ibid: 493). This signifies that, as far as the architectural legacy of the period is concerned, the remainders of Italian building activities can undoubtedly be distinguished and identified as their artefacts influencing the construction practice. With the strongly increased use of concrete under Italian influence, new building standards were set (ibid: 502). Regarding the Italian influence on building practice, building contractors, who stayed on even after the period of occupation, had a great impact on Ethiopian architecture (ibid: 497). However, Liyew Adamu (1994: 87) notes that the Italians did not consider local aspects such as nature, climate, culture or social issues in their plans, which signifies a break with Ethiopian building traditions. Cultural identities and regional typicality of architecture was lost, in consequence. Yet, he evaluates the introduction of systematic urban planning and policy positively (ibid).

In summary, although the period of Italian occupation is brief placed in the longer history (Martínez d'Alós Moner 2003: 165), a review of the available ma-

terial shows that the country was subject to racist and colonialist restructuring principles, and spatial development of this period is comparable to that of other colonised areas (Liyew Adamu 1994: 40). Yet, as Haile M. Larebo (1994) points out in the introduction to his book "The Building of an Empire", the academic description of the period of Italian occupation, overall, has a strong focus on the battles and violent oppression. He criticises that "Italy's colonisation per se is generally ignored or dismissed in a few perfunctory paragraphs" (ibid: vi). The introduction of wage labour by the Italians, for example, has so far not been discussed regarding how it changed the urban setting. This dismissal of critical encounter with the Italian colonial legacy is also noticeable regarding the poor availability of critical empirical material describing the colonisation practice in the urban centres of Ethiopia. What can be established is that Italian rule entwined modernism and authoritative rule. So, although the Italian presence in Ethiopia from 1936 to 1941 is generally acknowledged, the rhetoric of "free Ethiopia" has obstructed the account of how the colonialist agenda applied by the Italians has affected the current towns beyond an (aesthetic) architectural legacy and representational master planning.

3.3 1941–1974: IMPERIAL MODERNISM

Emperor Haile Selassie returned to power in 1941, marking a period that was subject to conflicts arising from British attempts to dominate Ethiopia (Benti Getahun 1995: 518). Haile Selassie's reign experienced accelerated growth of many newly established urban centres with a growth rate of about 6.3% p.a. in the 1960s (Ofcansky and Berry 1991, Golini et al. 2001: 93). The population size of the six settlements Akaki, Arba Minch, Awasa, Bahir Dar, Jijiga and Shashemene more than tripled, while eight other sites more than doubled (Ofcansky and Berry 1991, Golini et al. 2001: 93). Mostly, these were capitals of newly constituted regions and agricultural distribution centres (Golini et al. 2001: 93). These smaller, rapidly expanding southern towns (particularly Shashamene, Gore, Awasa and Dembi Dolo) experienced rapid economic growth, as they became major marketing centres where imported goods and local agricultural produce were loaded and unloaded, distributed and stored (Koehn 1979: 220). They experienced a diversification of tasks and profiles as sites of industry, educational institutes, communications or service centres (Golini et al. 2001: 93). Meanwhile, the railway-line from the harbour of Djibouti to Addis Ababa constructed under Menilik II by the French had made Addis the unchallenged distribution centre for imported goods in the country (Benti Getahun 1995: 518). It was, then, in the period from 1950 to 1965 that a network of towns developed closely around the capital, linking it more strongly to the surrounding regional capitals of the time (Golini 2001: 96). However, the longer established towns of Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa and Debre Zeyt experienced rather slowed population growth in this period (Ofcansky and Berry 1991), while

overall urbanisation in the country continued at a rapid pace between 1967 and 1975 (Golini et al. 2001: 96). The rapid population growth of small and medium-sized towns during the later years of imperial rule is rooted in rural-urban migration, also to the smaller cities (Koehn 1979: 220, Golini et al. 2001: 96). The concentration of educational facilities in the cities is stated by Koehn (1979: 220) to have led to a brain-drain in the countryside, while the vast majority of migrants coming to Addis had been residents of other towns before arriving (ibid: 220-221). The population of the cities above 20,000 inhabitants is, thereby, most fluctuant (ibid: 215). Simultaneously, Addis Ababa concentrated 50% of the urban population in 1950, but the percentage declined to 24% at the end of the century (Golini 2001: 93). From 1950 on, Addis Ababa even lost importance as the commercial centre (ibid). In the latter years of imperial rule, the commercial base of older northern centres (Gondar, Axum, Dessie) stagnated or declined, while town populations continued to increase at slow pace (Koehn 1979: 220, Ofcansky and Berry 1991). However, neither was the economic base of the cities reliant on industry, as employment was seldom to be found in manufacturing. Only 5% of the economically active population were employed here in 1969 (Koehn 1979: 220). Yet, in the years 1973/74, less than 40% of the Tigre, Gurage, Amhara and Oromo migrants in a survey intended returning to their place of origin or family home and seem to have made their livelihoods in the city (ibid: 221).

In the face of these developments, Haile Selassie pursued an active urban agenda and 47 of the 210 municipalities of the time were subjected to master planning (Koehn 1979: 224). His strategy largely abandoned the colonialist ideas; for example, the Italian road networks were often not maintained during Haile Selassie's reinstatement due to differing political agendas (Liyew Adamu 1994: 40). The Central Statistical Agency (CSA) was installed in 1960, since when the monitoring of urban population sizes has been possible in principle (Liyew Adamu 1994: 49). The Ministry of Interiors paid an Italian consulting firm to set up 40 master plans during the 1960s; a further seven were drafted by the Municipalities Department in the early 70s (Koehn 1979: 224, Liyew Adamu 1994: 88). Addis Ababa as the capital, thereby, received special attention. Overall, at least five master plans were set up for Addis in the post-liberation period (Solomon Mulugeta 1997: 193).

A number of assessments describe the royal planning as conducted according to the political interests of the sovereigns (emperor and local royalty), which did not lead to satisfactory results in urban design from a professional perspective, as building was undertaken for prestige (Liyew Adamu 1994: 88, Koehn 1979). During Haile Selassie's reign, master plans were prepared without consulting or regarding the majority of the urban population, neither in formulation nor in the planning stage (Koehn 1979: 224). Only in the larger cities were technical employees of the municipality included in devising the plans (ibid). The aims of the plans devised by the "Municipalities Department" of the Ministry of Interiors mainly proved too ambitious for the municipalities to implement with their limited set of

legal authority (ibid). The plans were based on dubious data sets; yet, they introduced strict zoning controls and firm design objectives such as material-intensive paved roads (ibid). Social and economic requirements of the population majority are said to have been left out of consideration (ibid). All of these master plans resemble each other in the respect that, although they include widely formulated development aims and zoning regulations, public opinion and elected local officials were not consulted (ibid). Instead, they are seen by Koehn as administrative exercises with no chance of being implemented successfully (ibid: 224-225). They had no legal backing, lacked political support and could not rely on any administrative capacity for their realisation (ibid: 225). The municipalities were generally not equipped with a budget for plan execution (ibid). There was also no accordance with the legal code for the implementation through the municipalities, which left them grid-locked from action (ibid: 226). Voluntary compliance was expected from the developers, instead, who typically did not meet the requirements of the plan (ibid). Forty to sixty per cent of the buildings had been constructed without a building permit; yet, these were hardly ever demolished, while informal settlements were also not serviced or upgraded (ibid). Nevertheless, expropriations were almost randomly undertaken, as municipalities could legitimise them as being in the "public interest" (ibid: 227). Further, while a small wealthy group of 5% of the population owned 95% of the land in private hands (Mesfin Wolde Mariam cited in Koehn 1979: 228), tough landownership disputes arose and obstructed the progress of plan implementation.[1] In this struggle to secure royal land tenure, Haile Selassie forged alliances with the Orthodox Church, as the monasteries gave up some of their autonomy in order to (seemingly) take a share in political power and gain access to more material wealth (Persoon 2003: 681). The establishment of cities, however, was not accompanied by a devolution of power to the regional or municipal level. Although self-government was to be introduced on awraja (sub-province) level in 1966, the attempt failed and the centralist power structure remained (Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher 1997 694). Thus, while the Italian urban policies were based on racism, the monarchy under Haile Selassie can be titled a "meritrocracy" in which the gains would be shared among the Emperor's protégés in a non-racially based system of favouritism (Teshale Tibebu 1995: 170).

Beyond urban restructuring and securing royal land-claims, the post-occupational period also saw the first attempts at formulating housing policies. The first was drafted for the second five-year plan devised for the years 1963–1967 (Solomon Mulugeta 1997: 195). It was "aimed at launching large-scale moderate and low-cost housing programs, while at the same time calling for the formulation of legislation to define landlord-tenant relationships" (ibid). The third five-year plan (1963–1973) expanded the housing policy realm so it could build on the results of the first urban housing survey conducted by the Ministry of Public Works (ibid). It now specified

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1 | For further reading see Koehn 1979: 227.

the number of dwellings as 25,400 housing units to be constructed annually in large-scale government-sponsored projects throughout the country (Solomon Mulugeta 1997: 195). Of this, 91% were designated for low-income households (ibid). The fourth 1974–1979 five-year-plan then newly introduced the instrument of aided self-help housing programmes (ibid). However, hardly any housing was delivered (ibid: 195-196). Still, contrary to the account of Koehn (1979: 226), Solomon Mulugeta (1997: 197) claims that pre-revolutionary land-tenure was successful in preventing the development of informal housing.

3.4 1974 – 1994: Towns under Socialism

Generally, there is a controversial discussion as to whether or not socialism favoured rural-urban migration (Mengistu and Sjöberg 1999: 28). According to Golini, the urban population growth between 1975 and 1984 can be attributed to natural population growth and differs from the urban expansion due to rural-urban migration seen in the foregoing periods (Golini 2001: 96). Many small towns emerged and by 1970 there were 171 towns with 2,000–20,000 inhabitants, increasing to 229 towns by 1980 (Ofcansky and Berry 1991). The towns largely emerged informally and, since the socialist period, are characteristically road-side villages that appeared about every 15–20 km (Liyew Adamu 1994: 43). They were not deliberately planned but rather spontaneously constructed (ibid). Unlike the former residential settlements, they are often located in the lowlands along transport and infrastructure routes and in fertile areas that have been appointed for agricultural development (ibid: 44). The cultures of these towns are not regionally differentiated or very sophisticated, due to the recent emergence of the urban structures (ibid). They are typically comprised of chicka (mud) buildings, either on an irregular layout or in circular or oval layouts in reference to the royal camps (ibid: 45). Even in socialist times, stone and concrete buildings were only found in the cities founded by the Italians (ibid: 46), and multi-storey buildings outside the capital Addis Ababa are a recent phenomenon. The economic basis of the small towns founded since the socialist period is trade and hospitality, with businesses mainly run by individuals or families (ibid). According to Liyew Adamu, these towns have an important function as connectors that accommodate innovative institutions in the sectors of education, health, trade with industrial goods and craft (ibid: 48).

The pace of urbanisation was reduced in this period, before it regained speed in the time from 1984 to 1994 (Ofcansky and Berry 1991, Golini 2001: 96). Much of Ethiopia's urbanisation increase took place between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, while before that time the level of urbanisation was fairly stable (Liyew Adamu 1994: 18-19, Mengistu and Sjöberg 1999: 28). About 35% of Ethiopia's urban population was concentrated on Addis Ababa in 1987 (Ofcansky and Berry 1991). The second largest city, then, (before the secession of Eritrea) was Asmara, with 7%

of the urbanites residing there (ibid). The breakdown of the socialist government and the secession of Eritrea in 1994 left Addis Ababa in the position of a primate city. Asmara was succeeded by Dire Dawa as the second largest city, which was 14 times smaller than the capital of Addis Ababa, though (Liyew Adamu 1994: 22). During warfare from 1988 to 1991, all urban centres received refugees and migrants (Golini 2001: 94). Young people and children prevailed, and in 1990 more than 55% of Addis Ababa's population was below 20 years of age (Golini 2001: 94).

At the same time, the socialist policies are said to have had a negative impact on urbanisation (Golini 2001: 93). In 1987, the Derg established autonomous administrative regions in Eritrea, Diredawa, Asseb and Tigray, while the rest of the country remained under centralist rule (Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher 1997: 694). The national government institutions were the only ones executing development planning (ibid). However, after the socialist revolution and the transfer of power to the socialist Derg regime in 1974, radical changes were undertaken in the formulation of policies concerning urban development. As one of the first measures, all land, non-owner occupied housing, firms and shops were nationalised in March 1975 (Koehn 1979: 229, Liyew Adamu 1994: 22, Solomon Mulugeta 1997, Crewett et al. 2008: 12). The land reform also included the expropriation of the church, and ecclesiastical land was lost to the government (Persoon 2003: 683). In effect, all private landownership was abolished and tenancy relations were forbidden, making state-owned rental housing and owner occupation the two sole tenure systems. (Gebeyaw Walle 2003: 31). The reasoning for the land reform was stated as wanting to overcome the historical injustices of the exploitative relation of the imperial system towards the countryside as well as aiming to create egalitarian access to land for all of the families dependent on farming (Crewett et al. 2008: 12). The traditional hereditary systems of landownership were dismissed and substituted by the state granting usufruct rights (ibid). The effect of this is said to have been stronger on the tenant cultivators in the south of the country than on the farmers in the rist system in Northern Ethiopia (ibid). The problems encountered with the implementation of master plans due to unclear ownership compensation were, thereby, resolved in the interest of the government (Koehn 1979: 229). However, regarding rental regulations, no differentiation was made between richer and poorer land-lords, the policy also led to a number of destitute residents renting out living space on their property for income being expropriated, while cramping into the remaining quarters (Solomon Mulugeta 1997: 198).

Although the focus of the new policies lay in the implementation of "agrarian socialism" (Crewett et al. 2008: 12), the new sovereigns also broke with the past urban development policies. Balanced urbanisation and development of regions was one objective of the Ten-Year Perspective Development Plan (Habtemariam Tesfaghiorghis 1986: 165). Planning under the socialists was conducted according to ideas from the Eastern bloc (Liyew Adamu 1994: 88). On the premise of "social planning", urban and rural development was to be undertaken jointly (Koehn 1979:

229). However, according to Koehn (1979: 220), the political focus on commercialised agriculture functioned as a "push factor" from the rural areas, as the agrarian population could not conform to the demands of such a changed approach to working the land. Coupled with unrealistic employment expectations towards the urban areas, this led them to leave their rural homes to live in the cities (ibid).

Urban planning regulations were drastically amended during the first year of power (Koehn 1979: 229). The renamed "Ministry of Urban Development and Housing" institutionalised regional planning and this institution centrally prepared regional development plans (ibid) for the 14 regions (Liyew Adamu 1994: 14). In the 1980s, a redefinition of the tasks of urban development was undertaken (Solomon Mulugeta 1997: 199). The National Urban Planning Institute (NUPI) was established (ibid: 200). From 1985 to 1988, this institute for urban planning set up urban plans for 79 of the 366 cities of the time, but these plans were not legally acknowledged at city level and therefore had no grounds for enforcement (Liyew Adamu 1994: 89). The sites for which the plans were devised were apparently randomly selected, and pre-studies had only been undertaken for 11 of these, resulting in the plans generally being insufficient for implementation (ibid). The scrutiny through which these policies now had to pass was so intense that the result was a freeze of housing production in the urban centres (Solomon Mulugeta 1997: 200). In combination with the nationalisation of the national housing stock in 1975, this proved fatal. Local and federal governments owned 37.92% (Wendwosen 2007: 3), since between 1975 and 1980 each citizen was allowed to own one house only, irrespective of its size, while all others were confiscated (Liyew Adamu 1994: 22). The influence of this practice on private initiative is described as strikingly negative (ibid). By 1991, the figure of housing stock in the hands of the government was reduced to 34% of the country's total housing stock by sales. (Wendwosen 2007: 3). However, despite the acclaimed state ownership of housing, living space remained scarce. Despite a large need for housing, the imperial housing policy was disregarded under the socialists (Liyew Adamu 1994: 21-22). Instead, inconsistent and sometimes even contradictory proclamations and legal notices on housing issues were released between 1975 and 1990 (Solomon Mulugeta 1997: 199). The socialist government did not prepare a demand-based housing programme, and, although housing policies from other socialist countries were introduced from 1980 on, hardly any new dwelling units were constructed (Liyew Adamu 1994: 22). The rate of housing output in Addis Ababa from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, for example, was about 1.1 dwellings/1,000 inhabitants, against an estimated demand of 8–10 dwellings/1,000 inhabitants (Wendt cited in Solomon Mulugeta 1997: 204). During the period of the five-year-plan from 1984 to 1989, only 12,376 housing units were newly constructed across the country, of which 83% were located in Addis Ababa, leaving virtually none for the remaining Ethiopian cities (Liyew Adamu 1994: 27). The implementation lacked critical adaptation and the units produced were standardised architecture that was organised on the socialist principles of

cooperatives (Liyew Adamu 1994: 22). The socialist reign deepened the problems caused by urbanisation in the areas of housing, technical infrastructure and urban design (ibid, Wendwosen 2007: 2c), and the negligence of urban issues under the socialist regime is still held responsible for the housing backlog of today (Wendwosen 2007: 2c).

A further significant impact on the administrative organisation of cities was made by the institution of "urban cooperatives", called "kebeles", for development aims (Koehn 1979: 230). Thereby, 300–500 neighbouring households formed one kebele and were to elect a kebele leader (ibid). The kebeles of certain areas were organised into "higher urban dwellers' associations" called "keftigegna", while these again formed "central urban dwellers' associations" in the largest cities (ibid, Solomon Mulugeta 1997: 199). According to Koehn, these "central urban dwellers' associations" were expected to perform typical duties of a municipality (Koehn 1979: 232), while Liyew Adamu states that the municipalities in question did not have authority to set up their own urban development plans, as this power was allocated centrally to the national ministry (Liyew Adamu 1994: 89). At first, in 1975, important development tasks were assigned to the kebeles, as their members were to be mobilised in the support of the government's urban development directives and in building activities such as the construction of schools, clinics, roads and other urban facilities (Koehn 1979: 230). Direct input from residents was not pursued when setting development aims (ibid: 234). In 1976, these capacities were expanded to forestation, beautifying the urban centre, property protection, cleaning duties, hygienic education, combating illiteracy and keeping a population registry (ibid: 230). For this purpose, the kebeles were granted access to all property revenues below E$ 100 of the nationalised rental housing (ibid, Solomon Mulugeta 1997: 198). The system of the cooperatives was untested and the expectations towards the kebeles were very high (Koehn 1979: 232). The system came into severe crisis when the Derg began to instrumentalise the kebele structures for oppressive measures, such as raids and physical violence against critical citizens (ibid: 233).

As explained earlier (see chapter 3), the churches historically held an important role as centres of power and education within the cities but also as structuring elements around which settlement organised (Genet Alem 2011: 19). Contrary to common assumption, monastic life was not undermined by the socialist revolution as far as the religious institutions were concerned (Persoon 2003: 679), even though it was reshaped to emphasise its civil nature and the withdrawal of political power (ibid: 681). Since then, the monasteries have no longer owned substantial amounts of urban property, as it was also expropriated in the nationalisation of land. They lost considerable direct influence on urban development. Despite the loss of material assets, this allowed for a concentration on the spiritual roles that can also be interpreted as liberating for the monasteries (ibid). Their influence on popular culture and political spheres, however, remains.

3.5 1994 – Present: The Federalist Urban Network

The ruling party EPRDF came to power in 1991, when the breakdown of the social-ist regime resulted in a major influx of population into the cities (Mengistu and Sjöberg 1999: 28). With the secession of Asmara, Addis evolved to be the primate city of the country (Benti Getahun 1995: 518), making its connection to Djibouti's harbour all the more strategically important. Yet, the new government inherited certain administrative structures and structural assets from the socialist govern-ment it succeeded. The nationalisation of land undertaken under the socialists can be assumed to impact on urban development and settlement patterns to the present day, as almost all land is still owned by the state and use rights are granted on terms set by the government (Crewett et al. 2008: 15). The constitution set up in 1995 made some changes to the question of land rights, but private land owner-ship remained virtually impossible (ibid: 15-16). The lease of land, the hiring of labour and unlimited plot-sizes per individual are now allowed, and compensation for cases in which "the right to use expires" has been included in legislation (ibid 16). However, the duration of usufruct rights is not clearly regulated, leaving ten-ure-security in very uncertain conditions (ibid). Due to the growth of the formal economy on the basis of state-led development (Müller 2015, it has to be assumed that investment pressure on urban land has increased. Therefore, the demographic development marks the onset of "rapid urbanisation", which, in conjunction with the impediments on subsistence economy and limits on infrastructure provision, has led to a new quality of informal urbanisation in Ethiopian towns, to provide for the low-wage majority of the population.

Under these conditions, the government has been following a decentralisation strategy (Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher 1997: 691). The new decentralisation strategy has two major fields of intervention: regionalisation and modification of the urban hierarchy (ibid: 697-698). The decentralisation strategy is, thereby, not only seen as a reorganisation of the administration but actively aims to modify the urban hier-archy by installing regional capitals and sub-centres. The modification of urban hierarchies refers to the changes in status of cities in the administrative system, as new regional capitals were designated and assigned to serve as service nodes (ibid: 701). The cities rising in the functional ranking, thereby, are granted priority when it comes to infrastructure provision (ibid). Regionalisation, on the other hand, is described as the approach to development and disaggregating national plans to these new units (ibid: 698). Consequently, administrative reforms have installed new spatial governing units in the form of nine regional states, while the former "higher dwellers' associations" were partly restructured and are now known as woredas (ibid: 695, Solomon Mulugeta 1997: 199). Together with the national level, they form a three-tier hierarchical governance system (Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher 1997: 691). In this installation of the federal system, the monasteries were largely stripped of their former roles, since political, cultural and material flows were not

transferred to the new institutional systems (Persoon 2003: 682). Further, a reorganisation of space-related responsibilities, leading to the devolution of power to the new administrative levels, resulted in the fact that urban development today is guided by a complex set of rules and policies in the hand of multiple authorities at various policy levels (Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher 1997: 697, Meheret Ayenew 2008). The intention is to install a planning system split into national, regional and zonal levels for all regions (Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher 1997: 701). However, the Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation (MEDaC) at the national level is still authorised to "derive policy objectives, strategies, plan preparation, guidelines and parameters used by ministries and regions" (ibid: 702). Consequently, the national institution is the only administrative level that can determine the specific planning tools to be put into use by the cities. In controversial land issues concerning the transformation from rural to urban land, the Ministry of Federal Affairs also remains the deciding instance (MoFed 2005). Resource allocation, though, is officially in the hands of the regional government (Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher 1997: 710). The tasks of the regional planning offices were to identify the region's resource base, formulate strategies and objectives for regional development, set development priorities and prepare the regional plans and studies as framed by the MEDaC (ibid: 702-703). Actors involved in setting up the regional plan are the regional councils, the regional executive committees, zonal administrations, wereda councils, regional and zonal planning offices and sectoral planning offices of the woreda (ibid: 703). If the MEDaC approves the plans, the regional level guides their implementation (ibid: 702. This dependency of the regional planning institutions on the federal state calls the autonomy of the socio-economic development institutions at the lower administrative levels into question, as the regions are, hence, at risk of being no more than the facilitators of the central government's interests (ibid: 706).

Already with the shift of power, Liyew Adamu recommended a review of urban policies for Ethiopia towards "developing urban policies based on the profound analysis of the current local situation, the historical growth of structures and the demographic and ethnic particularities of places, while considering natural, economic and social factors" and further advises that "the theoretical and methodological foundations of planning formulated in the developed regions should be taken into account and checked for their suitability to be transferred" (Liyew Adamu 1994: 9). He, thereby, makes it explicit that Ethiopian planning is open to accepting planning models from elsewhere as state-of-the-art in the profession. This attitude was not followed up until 2005, by turning to international consultancy for setting up national planning documents, when the current Ethiopian government loosened its exclusive focus on rural development and a set of urban policies was newly formulated to address urban development (Interview Dirr 20.10.09). The federal government has put itself "in power of supporting capacity building for accelerating urban development" (MoFed 2005). It allocates and distributes the finances required for the implementation of urban development policy and issues

Box: Integrated Housing Development Programme

An additional housing need of 2,230,831 units between 2005 and 2015 was officially calculated due to population growth and formation of new households in Ethiopia (Ministry of Works and Urban Development 2007: 30). To meet this demand a National Integrated Urban Housing Development Programme was included in the formulation of the National Urban Development Policy in 2005, (Wendwosen Demrew 2007: 4). The largescale housing programme has been developed in order to accommodate the strong demand for low-income housing space (ibid: 5-6). It is meant to drive the regeneration of "slum areas", the development of micro- and small enterprises, create a large amount of employment, promote cost-efficient housing construction technology, provide affordable housing and ensure tenure security through ownership (ibid).

Under the "Integrated Housing Development Programme" the construction of 360,000 low-cost housing units and 36,000 commercial units were to be realised between 2006 and 2010 (Ministry of Works and Urban Development 2007: 30). In Amhara Region 48 cities were selected for the first realisation phase, in which a total of 49,654 units were to be constructed (Ministry of Works and Urban Development 2007: 31).

The Housing Programme is meant to address housing problems; however, its concept claims not only to provide housing space, but also to cater for economic livelihoods (Ministry of Works and Urban Development 2007: 32; Künzel, Hebel 2007: 27). The programme incorporates the development of micro- and small enterprises, employment generation, capacity building in the construction industry and regeneration of inner urban areas (Wendwosen Demrew 2007: 4). However, the division of work and housing space in the low-income sector is enforced by this programme and needs to be noted as a reorganisation of spatial practice in Ethiopian towns.

regulations on this implementation (ibid). In the face of increasing numbers of urban dwellers, the core documents devised are the framing PASDEP (Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty), under which the Ministry of Works and Urban Development formulated the National Urban Development Policy in 2005 (Meheret Ayenew 2008: 456c). The policy intends to tackle the issues of urban poverty and infrastructure deficits in connection with rapid urban growth (ibid). Concerning cities, this is the policy formulating all aims to take place on urban ground (ibid). The seven priority areas of urban development it names are, therefore: (i) fighting urban unemployment and poverty, (ii) improving urban governance, (iii) building institutional capacity, (iv) infrastructure development, (v) housing upgrading, (vi) tackling urban environmental issues and (vii)

the mobilisation of urban civil society (ibid). The Ministry of Federal Affairs is appointed to coordinate the policy transfer and undertakes the monitoring of the implementation (MoFed 2005). The policy hands down the responsibility for setting up an urban plan to the administration of the towns, obliging them to stay in line with the national and regional urban development plans. They are, thereby, allowed to issue rules and regulations for the implementation of the National Urban Policy, set up and strengthen institutions for its execution, ensure public participation and carry out development activities. The formulation of the implementation strategy is handed to the regions, which are also responsible for allocating subsidies and permitting loans to the towns. One of the problems acknowledged by recent policies, such as the "Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty" (PASDEP) is the necessity of overcoming the rural-urban dichotomy. PASDEP, therefore, seeks to adopt rural-urban linkage mechanisms (MoFed 2006, Aynalem and Assefa 2011: 173). At the same time, there is a sharp division of power concerning rural and urban land use issues between the Ministries of Works and Urban Development and the Ministry of Rural Development at a national level, which is repeated at the regional administrative level (MoFed 2005).

The set-up of the National Urban Policy in 2005 (Meheret Ayanew 2008: 456c, Ministry of Works and Urban Development 2007: 20) marks a significant change in approach towards urban questions. Despite the indicated conflict between the federal and regional decision levels, this is the first time that urban planning has been supported by regional administration and has had a legal base. However, the impacts of implementation are still to be evaluated. The government's assumption is that decentralisation will further popular participation in planning and development, that it will generate additional resources and improve their distribution, and that it will facilitate coordinated and integrated planning by the preparation of local plans (Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher 1997: 691). Whether this has been achieved will be discussed in the findings of this thesis.

3.6 Missing Accounts of Urbanism

The phenomenon of urbanisation in Ethiopia can be described as a research gap, as such. Not much is known about common towns in early Ethiopian history. We do not know when exactly ordinary towns first emerged in Ethiopia, as there is scant record of them. However, it is established that the early emergence of cities is distributed unevenly across the country, as cities are a much more recent phenomenon in the South than in the North. What can be dismissed is the claim that early towns in Ethiopia are relevant politically but not economically or culturally, due to their lack of contribution to development. Evidence for this claim has not been provided and the growth of historical settlement sites suggests otherwise. Although it is still disputed whether the early towns shaped a distinctly urban

economy entailing trade, crafts, communication services, hospitality industry etc., in a combination with subsistence practices, the question is not whether there is innovation at these sites but rather what kind and with which effect. Accordingly, the definition of "development" needs to be challenged and set in relation to the local context. Thus, while the assumption by which Ethiopia did not experience true urbanisation after the Aksumite period is speculative and improbable, the early course and nature of urbanisation in Ethiopian cities in the early periods is still under-researched.

Starting from this low level of urban population, urban growth in Ethiopia has been described as a fairly slow process until the reign of Menelik II in 1880, followed by a rapid movement of population towards the cities since the late 19th century. Whether this leap was due to the low percentage of urban residents and the dispersed situation of towns, "isolating" the wider population from the urbanisation process of other countries, whether it was a result of the self-sufficiency of the agricultural society or whether it stemmed from the agricultural surplus accumulating in the court and not in the settlements is hard to verify at this point due to lack of empirical material on the subject. What is known on the phase first considered as modern city building in Ethiopia can be summarised as follows: Ethiopia's overall percentage of urban population until the 20th century is very low, even in comparison to the low figures of other African states. Yet, this is changing, as low urbanisation has since been followed by rapid urban growth, which is due to natural population growth but also to movement of individuals from rural to urban areas. From the data available, it is evident that most of today's towns in Ethiopia and, thus, their stock of housing were founded within the past 140 years, and large proportions of the urban population can be classified as newly urbanised. The review of the material taken together seems to suggest that there are multiple factors relevant for the migration decisions leading to urban growth. Under royal reign and under the Italians, an active urban development policy was pursued and implemented and, overall, the new centres grew much faster than the old centres from 1967 to 1994 (Golini 2001: 96). Reasons for this are, hence, seen in the opportunities provided by the concentration of infrastructure and social resources in the city or as a result of policy intervention (e.g. induced industrialisation policies), at times under the pressure of foreign interests. Thereby, their urban policies are stated to have attracted people to the new urban centres.

Meanwhile, Ethiopia has, so far, not been the focus subject of study by progressive planning theorisations. Repeatedly insisting on uninterrupted national independence, contemporary urban studies in Ethiopia have hardly been in touch with post-colonial critique. Instead, urban policies and plans are well documented and heatedly discussed. However, the urban fabric in which the majority of the population lives has not been produced through these policies. Cities have seldom been the focus of political and academic discussion. When they have, it can be noted that academic descriptions of practices of urbanisation, such as construction,

housing provision, foundation of towns and population movement, rely heavily on evaluations of official policies towards towns. This chapter displays that, in the accounts that largely stick to political periodism, there is contradictory assessment of the extent and significance of urbanisation in Ethiopia from author to author. The most common phasing of recent urbanisation, producing urban structures that are still in use today, is as follows:

- vernacular towns and imperial capitals
- Italian garrisons
- socialist resettlement activities
- decentralisation and regional capitals in the Federal National State

It seems plausible that the different phases of growth and waves of population influx into the city have different causes of coming about and need further investigation. Yet, unlike the material available on Ethiopian folklore and traditions, the data available on life in Ethiopia's cities is often not grounded in primary data collection and are rather conducted as implementation monitoring. Thereby, policy documents are available and valuable written sources, giving an account on the historical views and aims geared at urbanisation. Yet, the resulting discussions are somewhat focused on the effectiveness of the directives. However, the current size of cities is expanding beyond natural population growth by migration that cannot be explained by any of the described policy directives. This urbanisation indicates that forces beyond the policy initiatives must be at work, leading the population to move into the cities. How these entire neighbourhoods were constructed remains largely undescribed. Beyond systematic descriptions of traditional regional building typologies, there is little account of mundane practices of urbanisation as a collective societal endeavour available within Ethiopian cities. The material that is available mostly concentrates on the capital city and the historically acclaimed sites such as Aksum, Gondar and Harar. The information on the other cities, their dependencies, interrelations and specialisations in the functional urban network, have largely been left out of academic accounts so far. Given this pre-condition, the tendency to idealise pre-colonial conditions needs to be avoided (Myers 1994: 200). Instead, qualitative research on the issue of urbanisation in Ethiopia is, therefore, necessary to question the status of knowledge on the subject through inductive reasoning.

At the same time, unaccounted urban growth will continue. The high rise in population figures and relatively low levels of economic production suggest that a large proportion of the newly urbanised population is increasingly dependent on irregular forms of income and is, therefore, particularly prone to food insecurity and lacking access to basic amenities. The stream of population into the city without a formal economic basis for survival needs to be addressed, as the standards of living are often inadequate by humanitarian standards. This fact has

been recognised politically, and, by introducing decentralisation in the realm of urban planning, politics are currently trying to expand their reach and facilitate their governance. In alliance with leading international institutions, they have taken on the task of reshaping Ethiopia's urban face. The formal legitimisation to restructure is, thereby, supported by the international organisations rhetoric of declaring 98% of Ethiopia's urban fabric slum areas (see UN-Habitat 2007: 22, Ministry of Works and Urban Development 2007:4). In doing so, the description of everyday urbanisation practices is obstructed and qualitative empirical accounts on its relation to planning has been reduced to the viewpoint of compliance or non-compliance with introduced building standards and land-use zoning. This is seconded by Tegegne's verdict on the overall situation of governmental urban development practices: "The planning process thus far practised has no role for popular participation in which local people are involved in decision-making and problem identification" (Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher 1997: 704). Despite dispersed recent efforts to change the situation, this leads to the question whether we are at all looking at how the majority of people live when we devise urban plans. While it is, yet, to be empirically identified where the socio-economic reception structures of rural-urban migration lie in the urban fabric and what roles the cities take in a larger urban network, the meaning of urbanisation for the development of Ethiopia's cities has seldom been the subject of discussion. There, consequently, is a need to reconceptualise this description and give a more holistic account, in which everyday urbanisation is granted a review of its agency and contribution towards urban structures, modernity, urbanity and identity. The interactions between planning and urbanisation, to date, need to be accounted for in more detail, so that, on the basis of qualified accounts, everyday urbanisation can be re-evaluated and adjusted to suit local requirements. Data on the practices of the ordinary population need to be gathered and systemised to function as an informative foundation and reference for statutory urban planning. The qualities of the process and the resulting built fabric, going beyond the technical criteria of urban policies, need description. For this, narratives of individual cities' urbanisation are necessary.