

REGREENING ETHIOPIA BEYOND CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION: THE POLITICAL MEANING OF GREEN LEGACY

Valentina Acquafredda*

*Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo, v.acquafredda@campus.uniurb.it

Abstract

Come i fattori che determinano la deforestazione sono molteplici, anche le motivazioni dell'afforestamento e della riforestazione (Ar) in Etiopia dalla fine del XIX secolo a oggi sono cambiate nel tempo. Dopo un breve excursus storico, l'articolo analizza le quattro edizioni di *Green Legacy*, un'iniziativa di *re-greenization* guidata dal Primo Ministro Abiy Ahmed che ha mobilitato l'intero Paese. L'iniziativa, pur mantenendo gli obiettivi di Ar, come la lotta al degrado ambientale e la mitigazione delle emissioni di gas serra, strategicamente rimossi nella narrazione del progetto, ha rivestito l'intera operazione di un nuovo significato estetico e politico, volto in primo luogo a celebrare la stagione politica del premier.

As the drivers of deforestation are manifold, the reasons for reforestation and afforestation (AR), that involved Ethiopia since the late Nineteenth century to the present, have changed over time. After a brief historical overview, the article aims to analyse the four editions of *Green Legacy*, a *re-greenization* initiative led by Pm Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. The initiative, while retaining the objectives of past AR operations, such as tackling environmental degradation and mitigating GHG (strategically removed in the project narrative), has clothed the entire operation with a new aesthetic and political significance, aimed primarily to celebrate the Pm's political season.

Keywords

Ethiopia, reforestation, afforestation, climate change, Green Legacy

Forest, deforestation and re-greenization in Ethiopia

Forests at every latitude are complex ecological and socioeconomic systems, important in their own terms and for provisioning, regulating and supporting cultural services (Gupta 2012). The forests in Ethiopia are no less, as they can be primary and include moist and dry tropical Afromontane forests, woodlands, and shrub or planted lands. Ethiopian forests have experienced different administrative classifications over seventy years, from the 1994 law to the 2007 one, until 2018, when a decree distinguished among state, private, community, and association forests, all of them providing important goods and services to Ethiopian people, environment, and economy.

The sacred forests around the monasteries in Gondar and in Borana landscape (Bassi & Tache 2011), the tourist destinations in the Bale Mountains, the characteristic coffee forests in Kaffa, and many others as biodiversity heritages and reserves of medical and rituals plants are part of the country's collective identity and imagination. Likewise, there are trees in Orthodox churches' gardens that represent the only freely usable form of green space in Addis Ababa, and others that

are crucial in defining the relationship between communities and their surroundings as source of their survival.

But as Ethiopia's forests have impressed travellers and scholars over the centuries (McCann 1997), their anthropogenic deforestation is similarly reported in having more severe impacts than in other African countries (Bekele et al. 2015), occurring due to rapid population growth, agricultural conversion, infrastructure projects, over grazing and cutting for fuelwood and construction materials without replanting, and its contribution, albeit minimal, to climate change (Bagliani & Dansero 2011; Humphreys 2013).

However, if the tales and descriptions in literature fed the myth of Ethiopian deforestation until the 1990s, when the historian James McCann (1997) deconstructed the narrative that it was a linear and persistent process that denuded, primarily, the long-inhabited highland areas, the data of the last 30 years cannot be ignored. In 2020, the Ethiopian forest area was 17068.50 square kilometres, 19258.50 square kilometres in 1990, 18528.50 square kilometres in 2000 and 17798.50 in 2010 (Knoema 2020).

As manifold are the drivers of deforestation, similarly, attempts to remedy and halt it, or at least to limit the continuing decline of forest cover have also been varied, characterized by the different priorities of the governments (Bekele 2008). In the decades however there were laws and policies of inadequate enforcement with full political and administrative support as well as weak institutional memory and high staff turnover (Fdre 2017). Since the late 19th century, forests strategies contemplated utilization and conservation plans alongside re-greening practices (subject of the analysis of this paper). The latter involved on the one hand the creation of enclosure areas and on the other afforestation and reforestation practices (Ar), including industrial plantation, peri-urban energy forests and small-scale plantations (Lemenih & Habtemariam, 2014). These operations were carried out by a composite arena of actors, with different types of objectives.

The literature (Tigabu et al. 2014) identifies a phase marked by a coercive state-centred and top-down approaches (more prevalent in the past but still not entirely archived, which is why it is important to beware of superficial labels for periodizations), as well as participatory and decentralized approaches, including engagement of local and international Ngos and private sectors (Ayana et al., 2018). However, as Gupta (2012) states, "no regime addresses forest for its own sake".

The purpose is to describe the re-greening, reforestation and afforestation practices that have been conducted in the country since Emperor Menelik starting from a locally contingent situation and moving through the relations with the supranational dimension of the oil crisis and the climate change to the four editions of the #Green Legacy campaign, the centrepiece of the paper. The Prime

Minister (Pm) Dr. Abiy Ahmed actively engaged the society to handle the environmental problems. Green Legacy is defined as Ethiopia's green environment movement to support national green environmental goals, planting 200million seedlings across the country in one-day on July 29th, 2019, and setting a new world record (Fdre 2019). This effort is in line with a global phenomenon, but it is declined in the specific context of Ethiopia and its political season.

Such initiatives have achieved several records and attracted the interest of scholars. For my side, I propose a critical analysis of the Green Legacy issue, showing its political significance and pointing out that, unlike other reforestation and afforestation efforts, it is not simply a multipurpose operation, but a propaganda work, aimed at presenting the prime minister as green.

There is nothing really new in this affair: the Pm shows himself able of attracting the sympathies of a global climate governance, as his predecessors, especially Meles Zenawi (1995-2012), but without the current prime minister ever explicitly referring to them.

Overview of reforestation and afforestation practices in Ethiopia

The first recorded forest management intervention by the state is linked to the name of Emperor Menelik (1889-1913). Although it was nothing more than an expression of concern over a rapid deforestation, fuel and construction wood scarcity, it was an attempt to intervene in environmental matters, declaring all forests (including trees on private lands) State property, and forbidding the felling of some tree species (*Cordia*, *Juniper* and others) (Horwath 1968). The shortage of trees became so critical that it forced Menelik to import from Australia several species of eucalypts, whose wood was needed for the construction of the empire's new capital established in Addis Ababa (Dessie & Teklu 2011). Ethiopia became one of the first countries to introduce eucalypts that spread throughout the country, encouraged by academic, research and development institutions, not without problems and conflicts, becoming the main components of farm forestry practices in the country.

The growth and the pervasive spread of exotic trees with high growth rate, such as eucalypts, occurred mainly during the period of Derg military and socialist government (1974 to 1987), considered "the strongest forestry organization in the country's history" (Ayana et al. 2013, 187). At that time, it sought with a strong top-down approach on the one hand to curb the exploitation recorded in the imperial age by trying to ensure the conservation of natural and forest resources, and on the other hand to increase forest cover by planting trees within its locality in areas designated as reserve. In 1980, the Forest Proclamation was issued, the implementation of which was entrusted centrally to the Forest and Wildlife Conservation and Development Authority, and locally to the Peasant Associations and Urban Dweller Associations.

At the same time, the exotic fast-growing monoculture of firewood plantations were also intended to cope with rising global fossil fuel prices and the related energy crisis of the early 1970s. The project was financed by international organizations, foreign environmental agencies, multilateral and bilateral donors including Fao, Undp, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), led by the state and widespread (Yirdaw 1996). Indeed, if one travel across the country from North to South one can see how eucalyptus trees dominate the landscape.

After the dreadful famine of 1984-85, beside the need to produce more energy it became urgent to address the holistic function of forests in the environmental balance, since from the results of the Ethiopian Highlands Reclamation Study (1983-1985), funded by the Swiss government and published in 1986, the aetiology of famine in Ethiopia was precisely traced to the conditions of soil erosion, loss of fertility and land degradation of the country.

Tree planting, construction of terraces, embankments on steep slopes, and soil quality interventions were incorporated into a food security perspective. The Ministry of Agriculture, with the help of major international donors, initiated a massive reforestation program planting more than 300,000 hectares of tree seedlings on the highlands between 1984 and 1993, since the goal of Fawcda's 10-year plan (1984-1993) was to increase Ethiopia's forest cover by 24 percent over the planned period (Ayana et al. 2013).

“By 1992, most of those seedlings had died from livestock damage, fuel foragers, or ill-suited placement. Though farmers received grain and cooking oils in return for planting millions of seedlings per year, the attempt to recreate a putative forested landscape failed. With the best of intentions, both the Ethiopian government and international donors had rushed to embrace the narrative of Ethiopia's forested past” (McCann 1997,156).

Despite McCann's negative assessment and the consideration that AR is a complex process that “must follow environmental and social impact assessment standards” (Fdre 2017,73), these *re-greenization* practices become even more central and urgent as they were increasingly recognized for their role in climate stabilization, contributing to the global climate mitigation goals. Deforestation is responsible for 35% of the increase in carbon dioxide emissions at the planetary level and in the specific case of Ethiopia the percentage grows to 37 percent (Abbadiko 2016). The Ethiopian government in 2011 therefore established forestry among the four pillars of the Crge (Climate Resilient Green Economy) strategy which aimed to make Ethiopia a middle-income country and to reduce national emissions by 50% by 2030.

“The government also set the following major targets for the forestry sector: afforestation on 2 million ha, reforestation on 1 million ha and improve management of 3 million ha of natural forests and woodlands. Through proper management of 5 million ha of forests and woodlands, Ethiopia hopes to achieve 50% of its total domestic greenhouse gas (GHG) emission abatement potential by 2030” (Lemenih & Habtemariam, 2014,1898).

The government identified a tool to achieve these goals in the national version of a program named Redd+. Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, plus the sustainable management of forests, and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (Redd+) is “the forefront of climate change mitigation policy” at global level (Pascual et al. 2018, 265). Ethiopia ranks thirteenth among beneficiary countries, and third in Africa behind South Africa and Egypt (Climate Funds 2022). It is a significant contribution to the country’s long-term development goals and toward meeting international commitments (Bekele et al. 2015). Redd+ is a highly discussed project, controversial in local people’s perceptions and literature (Gupta 2012; Humphreys 2013). It is mainly aimed through fast-growing trees to mitigate GHG emissions, while focusing on maintaining and conserving existing natural forests, making large-scale intervention in forest rehabilitation in degraded highlands, supporting livelihoods of local communities improving forest and agriculture management. With its variety of activities, Redd+ can be an example of how multiple goals can be pursued through *re-greenization* actions. It is also the case of Green Legacy, whose aesthetics and rhetoric seem to go beyond the environment itself and to have a properly political value.

The Plasticity of Green Legacy by Abiy Ahmed

On July 29th 2019, the PM in office since April 2018 launched the #Green Legacy campaign for Ethiopia’s green development. It was a mass afforestation initiative to plant 200 million trees in one day, indeed in 12 hours and break the planting record held by India. The tree planting campaign, as it turns out, is not a new practice in the country, with the provision of nursery sites and reforestation and afforestation activities implemented by both and international agencies and local and foreign Ngos or by previous governments, but the goal has never been to enter the Guinness Book of Records, establish supremacy and gain popularity in the world.

The Ethiopian government reported that 25 billion seedlings were planted in four years, where they had set a target of 20 billion between agroforestry, forestry, ornamental varieties, due to the contribution of 25 million Ethiopians, with an impact equivalent to removing 64 million gasoline powered vehicles from the road for an entire year (Ahmed 2022c).

Green Legacy tripled the number of nurseries, from less than 40,000 in the territory with very low production capacity to 121,000 with the capacity to produce up to 7.6 billion seedlings of various species including fruits, especially avocado, mango and papaya. The campaign also created 767,000 jobs mostly for women and youth; 1.8 million hectares of land have been identified for planting, of which more than 200,000 hectares have been geo-referenced. There has been a significant decrease in the rate of deforestation, formation of new forests, which will be essential for carbon sequestration as “Ethiopia moves forward in efforts to address climate change”, with a positive

impact on watershed development, expansion of agroforestry, ecotourism opportunities, and improvement of urban green space (Ahmed 2022 b). This is a long list, which while tedious, is far from sterile, but gives us the measure of effort, and Dr. Abiy intention's intentions to communicate it.

#Green Legacy campaign is strongly linked to Prime Minister Abiy as a green leader, and since the first edition of the initiative it is possible to highlight features that have remained constant, first and foremost the media widespreadness. Prof. Teshome Shoromessa points out during one of our interviews how the fact that Green Legacy is launched by means of a # and is constantly re-proposed written in this way, already indicates the sense of the message, i.e. to show up and go viral not only in Ethiopia, but in the whole world, a goal fully achieved given the resonance of the news in the international and even Italian media.

The amount of photos, of Abiy's representations as a "tree planter" in which he hoes or plants while wearing a military uniform or shirt and tie, with a T-shirt, alone or with other people around him observing or imitating him in his movements, is impressive. It is evident how the photos or images produced have an intense rhetoric and powerful effectiveness. It is remarkable to note the solemnity and sacredness with which Abiy is depicted in Figure 1, in the first edition of his personal and national green ritual and by exploiting the natural and intrinsic symbolism of trees, in their number, their essentiality and their aesthetic value. In fact, they are in most cases chosen among non-native species, as the director of the Ngo Agriservice in the Shebel Berenta Woreda in Amhara Region suggests, and not placed in the holism of forests and woodlands.

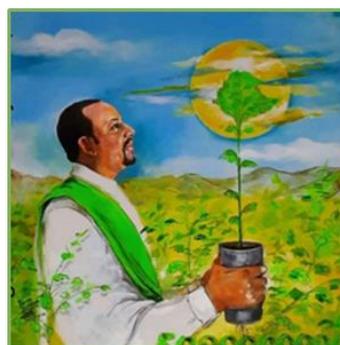


Figure 1 - Representation of Abiy circulating on social media

A little more than a year after Abiy's ascension as Ethiopia's premier in April 2019, the gesture of planting new trees eloquently represented the prime minister's desire to tie his term in office to the country's renaissance under his leadership, considering that shortly thereafter, namely at the end of 2019, he established a new party, the Prosperity Party, ending the 30-year rule of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (Eprdf) coalition.

As we have seen, the vision of Ethiopia as green, sustainable, modern, capable of capturing international aids and resources by showing its ecological commitment, is by no means new to the

point that it is also informally referred to as Meles Park, precisely because it evokes those *re-greenization* activities already carried out by the former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (1995-2012). These are examples of lemmatic fluidity, informality of oral conversation, or memory of the landscape that Abiy is remedying by beginning to rename places with his name.

With a simple and powerful language, he imbued the already established and well-known rural practice of planting trees with a new political significance. The Prime Minister did not just plant and broadcast pictures and videos of such an operation depicting himself and a couple of people planting a tree, as if it was a simple Arbor Day, but he wanted it to be a massive mobilization, and to be told as such in which numbers were strategically important, repetitively showing men, women and children at work, intent on digging, clearing and planting trees. There were celebrations in each corner of the country, at national offices and in the gardens of international agencies. The task of the multimedia language was not to capture the peculiarities of the country's different agro-ecological realities, but rather the unanimous response to that call. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the data released on Green Legacy emphasizes the proportion of the number of trees planted per person in four years, equal to 250 seedlings for Ethiopian.

The media and propaganda deployment woven around the initiative is similar to that is described in detail by Armiero in his book *Le montagne della patria. Natura e nazione nella storia d'Italia. Secoli XIX e XX*, relating to another era and another context, namely that of fascist Italy (Armiero, 2013). However, Armiero's pages are in great assonance with chronicle and the meanings constructible from the political texts used for Green Legacy, images, social content, videos, statements, from year to year looking for higher aesthetic perfection. It started from the simple symbolic association between trees, children, the concept of future-inheritance, and the perspective of teaching and learning a new, sustainable, green lifestyle in living, behaviour, development. The connection rhetorically posed in opposition to a past of unaccountable and inappropriate actions, which caused environmental degradation. The difficulty and the greatness of task is well represented by one of first images of the campaign reproduced in Figure 2, in which the depiction of the green effort is simplified in concept and graphics, as a cartoon.

In the later promotions of the campaign, as the video posted on Abiy's Telegram channel on 12th October 2022, the childish language is gradually abandoned. However, it does not lose its effectiveness. The initiative chooses to place itself in an equally common horizon of meaning, that of the representation of climate change with forests catching fire and melting glaciers and violent floods. It is opted to use the main national language (Amharic) and English to explain images and videos, considering that this is an event that promotes Ethiopia on an international stage, also calling in photographers and video makers from the country.



Figure 2 - A graphic of the #GreenLegacy initiative (AfricaNews.com)

Over the years, for all the four editions Abiy is able to combine the standardization of the ritual of the communal act of planting trees, which must repeat itself to be recognized as such, with historical contingencies by exploiting the plasticity of the phenomenon. Indeed, during the Covid 19 pandemic, in 2020 Abiy went further mobilizing the Ethiopian people not only with social media and TV, but launching also a phone campaign (arranged by the Ethiopian state mobile phone company) in which he urged them to plant trees safely, using masks, replacing the incoming recorded voice on each call with the advice to prevent the spread of the virus. This was the creation of an addressed relationship with the population and an invasion of their daily lives by speaking directly into their ears.

At the third edition in June 2021, the Green Legacy days just preceded the elections and there was a lot of emphasis on it being the first free and fair election, with an obvious reference to past events and to the violence and repression of 2005. It became even more evident how Ethiopia's rebirth is linked to the choice of Abiy's Prosperity Party and his leadership, as reflected in the premier's compulsive tweets one week before the election of June 2021. Figure 3 shows one of them that exemplifies Abiy's message; on one side it is an icon of a voting hand, and on the other side it is one holding a seedling. The program also planned to distribute more than 7 trillion seedlings to the six neighbouring countries according to a specific allocation: 9 million to Djibouti, 29 to Eritrea, 386 to Kenya, 129 to Somalia, 91 to South Sudan, and 316 to Sudan (Jalleta 2021) to strengthen regional cooperation in transboundary ecosystem management and beyond.



Figure 3 – Abiy's tweet on July 15th 2022

Also on this occasion, trees are not in the foreground, they are not the focus and objective of the policies, as reflected in the motto used *#Let's adorn*, according to a view of nature as corollary and accessory, they are rather the tool for the embellishment of whole country, for the removal of the ugliness associated with regional, ethnic, religious divisions, and those caused by the civil war

¹. Rob Nixon about the Green Belt Movement of Kenyan politician and international environmental activist Wangari Maathai, wrote:

“To plant trees was metaphorically to cultivate democratic change; with a slight vegetative tweak, the gesture could breathe new life into the dead metaphor of grassroots democracy” (Death 2016,112).

This message is precisely explicated and written in the Prime Minister's June 19th, 2022, statement, titled *Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative-Planting our print for future generations*. It inaugurated the Green Legacy's fourth edition, in which instead the role played by reforestation and afforestation practices in mitigating the effects of climate change remained secondary (Ahmed 2022a). The climate change centrality was instead clarified in the August statement *Hands that are Greening a Nation*, issued on Abiy's birthday. This is a coincidence that can be interpreted as purely unintentional or the clever ability to overlap two different rituals (the Ethiopian AR campaign and the celebration of the prime minister's birth), and further enshrines a strong personalization of the initiative.

Further evidence that this is a task intimately and politically connected to Abiy's term in power, is the fact that the institutional body in charge of disseminating messages and communications regarding Green Legacy is the PM's office and not the Efccc (Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission) now become the Epa (Environment Protection Authority). Several passages in the head of government's statements leave no doubt:

“It is my call and that of Ethiopia's that other African countries and the global community in general, initiate such practical actions as a means of collectively tackling the adverse effects of climate change. I implore my African counterparts to invest more in planting as one solution, than is invested in conferences to discuss the problem” (Ahmed 2022 b).

Although this statement anticipates but does not exhaust the speech given at Cop27 in November 2022 by Abiy himself, it is the maximum expression of another narrative enacted by Green Legacy: the tangibility of measurable results of mitigation practices (Ahmed 2022c) and Ethiopia's role as a model for all Africa in AR practices.

¹ The war has been dividing the country since November 2020. The clash has pitted Tigray People's Liberation Front forces, and later the Oromo Liberation Front, against federal forces led by the Pm Abiy.

Green Legacy shows the concreteness of mitigation initiatives, which are often blamed, mostly by developing countries, for the vacuousness of their impacts and the need for long time scales. Indeed, since Cop16 in 2010 in Paris, emphasis has been placed on adaptation projects (Pascual et al. 2018), especially in those contexts.

Moreover, by putting forward this vision, Ethiopia stands as an example of the entire continent in reforestation and afforestation after having long stayed behind other African countries in terms of forestry legislation and management (Ayana et al. 2013). Furthermore, referring to realities outside his country, Ethiopia's chief of government acknowledges how they can accommodate "Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative as a best practice, in tandem with other climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies" (Ahmed 2022b), where instead at the national level there is a celebration not only of the exceptional nature of the initiative, but also of its exclusivity. Indeed, such a re-greening measure is not at the apex of the history of similar and past initiatives in the country and does not sit alongside other plans such as Crge and Redd+, undertaken by the government, the civil society and the international agencies, and still existing in Ethiopia.

Those practices are never mentioned in Abiy's official speeches, who in fact speaks about greening and not re-greening (Ahmed 2022b), cuts ties with everything in the past before him, also considering the desire for political caesura with previous government experiences. However, the main new feature of the Green Legacy initiative is the plasticity of meanings it can take on according to circumstance, contingency and audience.

Indeed, from a practical and field perspective, there is no evidence of Green Legacy's uniqueness, upon which an epic of extraordinary achievements has been built that has aroused quite a few suspicions. Farmers and institutions at the rural level do not differentiate - except for the counting they are required to do by the federal government - what they planted for Green Legacy and what for other structural activities in *Kebele* (smallest administrative unit) and *Woreda* (district).

In fact, they clearly recognize its propaganda intent given the deployment of cameras and mass mobilisations. With the words "This is politics!" a farmer commented on the events of Green Legacy's days (personal interview with farmer, Ubabare Kebele, 10 April 2022). Furthermore, farmers and peoples interviewed in April 2022 in the Ubabare Kebele in Demba Gofa Woreda in Southern Nations told how all the seedlings planted last year were lost due to the increase in temperatures, an outcome that is not new compared to the reforestation and afforestation practices also carried out in the past.

Similarly, Abiy and his Green Legacy disregard related activities performed at the same time by other African countries, promoting and spreading the idea of a plan, successful, designed, reproducible and exportable elsewhere, but 'made in Ethiopia'. However, Green Legacy is far from

being a patent. Indeed, in two very recent research, Ethiopian campaigns are among the examples of virtuous actions and placed consecutively to Maathai's Green Belt Movement (Ennos 2021) and alongside to fifty-nine others urban re-greening projects in Africa over the last decade 2009-2021 (Lobe Ekamby & Mudu 2022).

The *re-greenization* of Ethiopia has its showcase in the restyling of the capital Addis Ababa, in which it wants to erase the traces of the socialist liveliness and essentialism of the past with vivid colours, starting right from the green (The Economist 2022), through the construction of three major parks: the Unity Park inside the Grand Palace built by Menelik II, the Friendship Park celebrating the much fruitful partnership with China, and the Entoto Park. The parks are part of a wider plan of the University of Addis Ababa. It involves the rehabilitation of the Addis River, from Mount Entoto to the city centre, of which the parks are just a celebratory interlude, but with Abiy's green obsession they turned out to be the purpose. They have been very expensive projects which, in hard times such as the country is experiencing due to civil war, are perceived by the city's population (surveyed in the capital in May 2022) as superfluous, unnecessary, and Western-driven.

Moreover, a part of Ethiopian people sees how Green Legacy's messages about life, renaissance and future clash with the reality of the country's civil war. Hence, a joke, an image laden with cutting irony (Figure 4), became viral on Facebook during the summer of 2022, coinciding with the launch of the fourth edition of Green Legacy. The image showed Abiy in his usual tree-planting scene, and below him a skeleton with an umbrella referring to the fact that the planted trees will only shade the graves, an implicit reference to the dead in the country and the dramatic consequences of the war.



Figure 4 - Ironic image from Facebook

Conclusion

Forests, their deforestation, and attempts at *re-greenization* are arenas intersected by actions at different levels and of various natures, layered over time, to be explored ethnographically to grasp

the meanings of their deep relationships and also a fertile political field. If Ethiopia's famines had already led governments and partners to face up and address long-lasting problems related to land and environmental degradation, the discourse of climate change has driven to grow public attention and increase engagement by global governance, which, after conducting delocalized deforestation (Bagliani & Dansero 2011), has developed an interest in healing ecological wounds by intervening in the global South itself, as Redd+ does (Eriksen & Mendes 2022).

Abiy well grasps the global aspect and seeks to win the endorsements of the global climate regime, but he also looks to transform his country, to grow within the framework of a green culture inaugurating a new model of Ethiopian citizenry. Nevertheless, in all this green metaphor, in all this talk of trees and forests, we lose sight of the real needs of the environment and the people connected to it, not put at the centre of a real change in policies and practices.

References

- Abbadiko, G. H. (2016), "The role of climate–forest–agriculture interface in Climate Resilient Green Economy of Ethiopia", *International Journal of Sustainable and Green Energy*, 5 (6), pp.111–126.
- Ahmed A. A. (2022a), "Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative-Planting our print for future generations", June 19th 2022.
- Ahmed A.A. (2022b), "Hands that are Greening a Nation", 15th August 2022.
- Ahmed A.A. (2022c), Full Speech PM Abiy's Message at COP27, 10th November 2022.
- Armiero M. (2013). "Le montagne della patria. Natura e nazione nella storia d'Italia. Secoli XIX e XX", Einaudi, Torino.
- Ayana A.N., Arts B., Wiersum K.F. (2013), "Historical development of forest policy in Ethiopia: Trends of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization", *Land Use Policy*, 32, pp.186-196.
- Ayana A.N., Arts B., Wiersum K.F. (2018), "How environmental NGOs have influenced decision making in a 'semiauthoritarian' state: The case of forest policy in Ethiopia" in *World Development*, 109, pp. 313-322.
- Bassi M., Tache B. (2011), "The Community Conserved Landscape of the Borana Oromo, Ethiopia: Opportunities and Problems", *Management of Environmental Quality*, 22 (2), pp. 174-186.
- Bagliani M., Dansero E. (2011), *Politiche per l'ambiente: dalla natura al territorio*, UTET Università, 2 Edizione, Torino.
- Bekele M. (2008). "Ethiopia's Environmental Policies, Strategies and Programs" in Assefa T. (2008) "Digest of Ethiopia's National Policies, Strategies and Programs", pp. 337-369.
- Bekele M., Tesfaye Y., Mohammed Z., Zewdie S., Tebikew Y., Brockhaus M., Kassa H. (2015), "The context of Redd+ in Ethiopia. Drivers, agents and institutions", Occasional Paper 127. Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR.
- Death C. (2016). "The Green State in Africa". Yale University Press.

Dessie G., Teklu E. (2011), “Eucalyptus in East Africa: Socio-economic and environmental issues”, Working Paper FP46/E Fao, Rome.

Ennos R. (2021), *L’età del legno. Come un unico materiale ha plasmato l’intera storia dell’umanità*, Giulio Einaudi Editore, Torino.

Eriksen T. H., Mendes P. (2022), “Introduction. Scaling down in order to cool down” in Hoffman S., Eriksen T. H., Mendes P. (2022) “Cooling down: local responses to global climate change”, Berghahn Books pp.1-24.

Fdre (2017), Technical Report Ethiopia Forest sector review. Focus on commercial forestry and industrialization, Addis Ababa.

Gupta J. (2012), “Glocal forest and Redd+ governance: win-win or lose-lose?”, *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 4, pp. 620-627.

Horwath R. J., (1968), “Addis Ababa’s Eucalyptus Forest”, *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 6 (1), pp. 13-19.

Humphreys D. (2013). “Deforestation”, in Falkner R. (2013), “The Handbook of Global Climate and Environment Policy”, Ed. Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, pp. 72-88.

Jalleta A. K. (2021), “The Legal Protection of Forests: Ethiopian Green Legacy vs. International Environmental Regimes”, *Beijing Law Review*, 12, pp. 725-749.

Lemenih M., Habtemariam K. (2014), “Re-Greening Ethiopia: History, Challenges and Lessons”, *Forests*, 5, pp. 1896–1909.

Lobe Ekamby E.S.H., Mudu P. (2022), “How Many Trees Are Planted in African Cities? Expectations of and Challenges to Planning Considering Current Tree Planting Projects”, *Urban Sci*, 6 (59), pp. 1-16.

McCann J. (1997), “The Plow and the Forest: Narratives of Deforestation in Ethiopia, 1840-1992”, *Environmental History*, 2 (2), pp. 138-159.

Pascual U., Garmendin E., Phelps J., Ojea E. (2018). “Opportunities and Conditions for successful foreign aid to the forestry sector” in Huang Y., Pascual U. (2018) “Aid effectiveness for environmental sustainability”, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 257-305

Tigabu M., Lemenih M., Nagash M., Teketav D. (2014). “Rehabilitation of degraded forest and woodland ecosystems in Ethiopia for sustenance of livelihoods and ecosystem services”, in Katila P., Galloway G., de Jong W., Pacheco P., Mery G. (2014), “Forests under Pressure: Local Responses to Global Issues”, International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), pp. 299-313.

Yirdaw E. (1996). “Deforestation and forest plantation in Ethiopia” in Polo M., Mery G. (1996) “Sustainable Forestry Challenges for Developing Countries”, Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp. 327-342.

Website

Climate Funds 2022 ([Data Dashboard - Climate Funds Update](#)) (20th November 2022)

Knoema ([Ethiopia Forest area, 1960-2021 - knoema.com](#)) (20th November 2022)

Fdre ([Office of the Prime Minister 2019 | Green Legacy](#)) (20th July 2020)

The Economist ([Ethiopia's capital is a showcase for its leader's ambition | The Economist](#)) (June 16th 2022)

List of acronymus

Ar	Afforestation and reforestation
Pm	Prime Minister
Fawcda	Forest and Wildlife Conservation and Development Authority
Pa	Peasant Association
Uda	Urban Dweller Associations
Fao	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Undp	United Nations Development Programme
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
Fdre	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Crge	Climate Resilient Green Economy
Redd+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation Plus
Eprdf	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
Efccc	Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission
Epa	Environment Protection Authority
Cop	Conference of the Parties