The Impact of the Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam (GERD) in Shifting the Hydro Political Relation between Egypt and Ethiopia

MA Thesis in Political Science

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June, 2022

DEBRE MARKOS UNIVERSITY

The Impact of the Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam (GERD) in Shifting the Hydro Political Relation between Egypt and Ethiopia

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Political Science Post Graduate College Of Debre Markos University for the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Art in Political Science

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June, 2022

Declaration

The thesis entitled *"The Impact of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in Shifting the Hydro-political Relation between Egypt and Ethiopia"* is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other purpose in any University, and all the source materials used in this thesis are appropriately acknowledged.

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Certification

This is to certify that this thesis entitled *"The Impact of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in Shifting the Hydro-political Relation between Egypt and Ethiopia"* is submitted in my approval as advisor.

Advisor: Mekonnen Alehegn (PhD)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Approved by Board of Examiners

This is to certify that this thesis is prepared by Yaregal Wondu entitled *"The Impact of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in Shifting the Hydro-political Relation between Egypt and Ethiopia"* submitted to the Department of Political Science Post Graduate College of Debre Markos University for the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of master of art in political science complies with the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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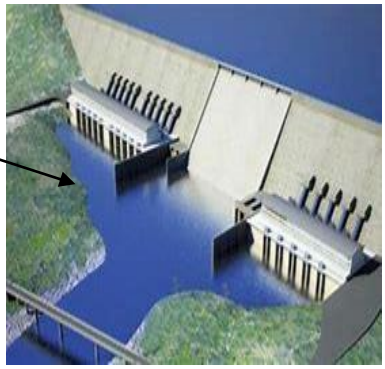
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Acronyms

AU	Africa Union
BCM	Billion Cubic Meters
CFA	Cooperative Framework Agreement
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DoP	Declaration of Principles
ENTRO	Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office
EOTC	Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
HAD	High Aswan Dam
HYDROMET	Hydro Meteorological Survey
IPoE	International Panel of Experts
MW	Megawatt
NBI	Nile Basin Initiative
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NISRG	National Independent Scientific Research Group
SAP	Subsidiary Action Programmes
SVP	Shared Vision Programmes
TECCONILE	Technical Cooperation Committee for the Promotion of the Development and Environmental Protection of the Nile
TNC	Tripartite National Committee
TPLF	Tigrean People Liberation Front
UN	United Nation
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
WB	World Bank

Map of the study area and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)





Abstract

The Nile water shapes the hydro political relations of Egypt and Ethiopia. Thus, Egypt dominating the hydro politics of the Nile basin and monopolized the Nile water for a long period of time. While Ethiopia contributes 86 percent of water to the Nile River, however she has been failed to utilize it. As a result, the Nile hydro politics is characterized by the existence of opposite asymmetric relations, which is the largest utilizer, is the least contributor and the largest contributor is the least utilizer. However, in the post 1990s, the Nile hydro politics experiencing significant changes, notably after the commencement of the GERD project in 2011.Therefore, this thesis tried to investigate the impact of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in shifting the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia. In doing so, the study takes the assumptions of realism perspective as a theoretical framework to explain the arguments of the study. Methodologically, the study employed qualitative approach, case study design and purposive sampling technique. Both Primary and secondary data were collected from key informant interviewees, media outlets and published and unpublished documents, the data were analyzed and interpreted thematically. The findings of the study indicate that Ethiopia has shown its solid commitment to utilize the Nile water resource on the basis of international accepted principles, such as equitable and reasonable utilization, no-significant harm, and negotiation with good faith. Thus, Ethiopia changes its role from observer and silent partner into game player and influential partner on the Nile hydro politics. Moreover, The GERD changes the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relations into a new chapter by enforcing Egypt to come into round table negotiation on the utilization of the Nile water and recognizes it in the Declaration of principles (DoP) in 2015. Despite the growing relationships of Egypt and Ethiopia, persistent controversies are revealing between them over the filling and operation of the GERD project. Thus, the study shows that the controversy over the filling and operation of the GERD project arises from Egypt's fear of losing the status quo and power influence on the region rather than water. The major conclusion drawn from the finding of the study reveals that the GERD is one means of changing the existed dominative and monopolistic water use into equitable and reasonable use of water, but GERD by itself is not changing the existed hydro hegemony. Accordingly, unless the existed asymmetric power relation is changed and all-inclusive legal binding agreement is established the shift from hydro hegemony into cooperation may not prevail.

Key words: Conflict, Cooperation, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eastern Nile, GERD, Hydro politics, Hydro hegemony, Counter hegemony, Nile Basin, Power assymmetry

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Background of the Study

Trans-boundary Rivers across the world have become both sources of conflict and cooperation (Ashumar, 2020). Thus, Water is the most fundamental resources for human life, and it has no bounds in crossing the boundaries of states that might have conflicting or cooperating interests over it (Ejigu, 2016). Among the Trans-boundary Rivers, Nile is one of the longest rivers in the world, flowing 6,825 km over 35 degrees latitude from south to north (Yacob, 2007). The Nile water is shared by eleven riparian countries, namely, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan and Egypt (Okbazghi, 2013). Thus, among the riparian states, Ethiopia 'land of the blue gold' and Egypt 'gift of the Nile' are the two most important actors in the Nile basin (Ibid, 2013).

Ethiopia contributes a lion's share to the Nile River that provides 86% of the Nile waters, while the remaining 14% comes from the Equatorial Lake region (Ibid, 2007). However, Ethiopia utilized a small amount of water without taking into consideration the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam which is under the process of construction. As a result, "Ethiopia is a country of paradoxes, which is poverty in the midst of biotic plenty and thirsts in the midst of hydrological abundance" (Okbazghi, 2008). Therefore, the 'silent partner' of Ethiopia to the Nile basin riparian states as an upper riparian state is a great puzzle or dilemma.

On the other hand, Egypt has taken a lion's share from Nile water benefits without any water contribution to the volume of the Nile River (Yacob, 2012). Accordingly, Egypt is the lower riparian state, has hegemonic power and controls the Nile water for a long period of time unilaterally through various mechanisms (Cascao, 2009). Hence, in order to use and control the Nile water, Egypt adopted a variety of measures (economic, technological, legal, and political) to prevent upstream riparian countries from mobilizing water resources for their own gain (Cascao, 2008).

Furthermore, Egypt has been adopted various mechanisms to strength its hegemonic status quo via coercion, sanctioned discourse, treaties, privileged access to funding and diplomatic means (Tekuya, 2018). The colonial agreements have been the main legal basis for Egypt in an attempt to achieve its hegemony over the Nile River. Hence, the 1929 and 1959 treaties are the two main

controversial legal documents, which provide an exclusive right of utilization of the Nile water to Egypt (Negasa, 2021).

In a nutshell, the Nile basin is characterized by higher asymmetric power relation among the riparian states that Egypt has hydro hegemonic power to dominate the Nile water politics and utilize it without any water contribution. Thus, the Nile river riparian states had divergent level of capacities to utilize, technically control and allocate the water resources (Cascao and Nicol, 2016).

Until 1991, Ethiopia had been the 'silent partner' in the Nile Basin, which signaled explicit consent and indirect contest in the Nile Basin hydro hegemonic configuration (Waterbury, 2002; ibid, 2016). However, in the post 1991, Ethiopia has become strong in challenging and influencing Egyptian hydro-hegemonic power via a variety of counter hegemonic mechanisms (Dawit, 2013). Thus, to deconstruct the persistent legacies of the colonial and neocolonial impositions, Ethiopia mobilized upper riparian countries to form the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) in 1999. The NBI was founded with the intention of creating long-term institutional and normative frameworks that promote equitable use of the water resources in the Nile basin. After ten years of intense negotiations, NBI was transformed into the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) in 2010. As a result, the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) was established under the auspices of NBI (Ibid, 2016).

However, Egypt and Sudan refused to sign the cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) and want to defend their hegemonic power on the utilization of the Nile river Basin. As a result, following the refusal of downstream states to sign and accept CFA led countries to restore into unilateral measures within their jurisdiction (Yacob, 2012; Endalkachew, 2015; Negasa, 2021). Therefore, the rejection of Egypt to sign CFA has led to unilateral actions of GERD by Ethiopia on the Blue Nile.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) was laid down on April 1, 2011, on the Blue Nile by the let Prime Minister Meles Zenawi at Guba; Benishagul Gumuz region, Ethiopia. Immediately since the commencement of GERD project, Egypt became confused and sent its public diplomats to Addis Ababa (Henok, 2016). This has become a turning point in challenging the hydro hegemony of Egypt and power asymmetry, which could promote reasonable utilization

of the shared water resources and means of cooperation rather than conflict. When completed, the GERD will produce 6,450 MW and have a reservoir of 74 BCM, making it Africa's largest hydroelectric power station. The power dynamics in trans-boundary Rivers should be examined in terms of water cooperation and conflict. As a result, examining the impact of GERD in changing the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia is the focus of this study.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Water resources have an important role in resolving local, national, regional and international issues. In solving such problems and bringing development, constructing dams on Trans Boundary Rivers play a crucial role by generating hydro power and other services. As a result, Dams have become a major source of contentions between and among riparian states. Such tensions have been raised into conflicts over the rights and obligations of riparian countries over Trans-boundary Rivers in some branches of the globe (Salman, 2001). Thus, Trans-boundary Rivers intensify riparian countries' political, economic, social and environmental interdependence (Wuhibegezer, 2020). However, there is no consensus on how Trans-boundary Rivers are a source of cooperation or conflict among scholars, which become a growing debate.

In hydro-political relations, some scholars argued that Trans-boundary River can be a source of conflict and war between riparian states (Elliot, 1991; Elhance, 1999, quoted in Hagar Elbarbary, 2021). In contrast, other studies strongly argue that cross-boundary water resource is a basis for cooperation (Wolf, 1998; Turton, 2000; Sadoff & Grey, 2002).

On the other hand, other researchers blame the common conflict-cooperation debate. Accordingly, Atwan argues that hydro political interactions associated with variety events that conflict and cooperation co-exist at a variety of intensities and levels. So, conflict and cooperation coexist with different strengths, not at both ends of the range (Atwan, 2018). For instance, conflicts can range from tiny quarrels and competition to full-fledged war (Vinogradov, 2003). In the same way, cooperation can take many forms and situations, from nominal information to collaborative projects (Tesfaye, 2014).

In similar vein, the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relation has a long history of both peaceful and conflictual interactions that went to back to the early years of Axumite kingdom (Yayew, 2018). Mostly, the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political interactions have been historically

characterized by mutual distrust, intimidation and competition. As a result, Egypt's and Ethiopia's visions for basin-wide collaboration remain completely contrary (Tawfik, 2015). Egypt aims to enforce its historic right to utilize the Nile water in the absence of a cooperative or shared history. As a result, the Nile basin's hydro politics is a hotspot in the MENA region. Since lower riparian countries, particularly Egypt, have insisted on preserving their historical and natural rights based on colonial and bilateral accords, while upstream countries, mainly Ethiopia, have asserted their sovereign right to utilize the Nile water resources (Henok, 2016). Thus, the two riparian countries have been failed to reach an agreement on how to utilize the common Nile water resource. However, in April 2011, Ethiopia launched and laid down the construction of the GERD project at Guba in Benishagul Gumuz region, Ethiopia near to the Ethio-Sudan border. As a result, the commencement of the GERD project has been deteriorating the hydro-political relations of Egypt and Ethiopia. Accordingly, the GERD project has been credited as igniting water tensions between the two countries (Atwan, 2018). Thus, the impact of GERD on the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relations remains questionable and debatable among scholars. Accordingly, the implication of GERD either in exacerbating the existed conflict into war or changing into cooperation is a lively debate.

On the one hand, some scholars argue that the unilateral construction of GERD by Ethiopia trigger conflict and may create violent war between Egypt and Ethiopia (Hagar Elbarbary, 2021; Hana Attia and Mona Saleh, 2021). According to Hagar Elbarbary (2021) Ethiopia's refusal to allow the dam's reservoir to fill more slowly and the absence of transparency in sharing all the related data of the GERD's safety and the reservoir filling scenarios are the major causes of triggering conflict and pushing Egypt to choose for military options in order to maintain its water share.

On the contrary, a growing number of scholars argue that GERD is a 'game changer' that challenges Egypt's long-standing hegemony over the Nile Basin and heralds in a new era of cooperation (Tawfik, 2016; Cascao and Nicol, 2016; Gashaw, 2019; Jiregna, 2020). According to Rawia Tawfik (2016) the GERD is a 'game changer' that challenges Egypt's hegemony in the Nile Basin and a significant step towards a new order in the basin, leading to a more impartial order and creating incentives for cooperation beyond the project. Moreover, the GERD is

considered as a major ‘game changer’ and a catalyst for cooperation, which is symbolizing the start of a new era in the Nile Basin (Cascao and Nicol, 2016; Gashaw, 2019).

Furthermore, the construction of the GERD project obliged Egypt to accept, for the first time, a project that was built unilaterally by upstream country, and pushed back to round table negotiations on the use of the Nile water resources. Jiregna argues that Dynamic changes of Nile water politics are forcing Egypt’s foreign policy from hard power to soft power. As a result, Egypt is changing from military and coercive power into soft power, which involves dialogue and negotiation (Jiregna, 2020).

The GERD is changing the hydro politics of the Nile Basin into a new chapter by enforcing Egypt to come to the round table for negotiation on the utilization of the Nile water, even if she insists on her long held static interests and positions. Indeed the GERD is influencing and changing the Nile politics into a new order. However, the Nile Basin water sharing and benefit sharing is characterized by two opposite extremes; the upstream states mainly, Ethiopia contributing major water with less or no benefit, and high benefit sharing by Egypt with no contribution to the water sources of the river. Accordingly, Egypt wants to maintain its status quo with its historic dominance on the basin, while Ethiopia needs to use the Nile Water resource by constructing the GERD project via the principle of equitable and reasonable share of the basin. So, Ethiopia and Egypt have antagonistic interests on the utilization of the Nile water resource.

Therefore, the researcher wants to raise questions such as; How the GERD changes the existed monopolistic and dominative water use into equitable right and reasonable utilization of the Nile water? Why Egypt always opposes Ethiopia’s sovereign right to utilize the Nile Water resource? Even though Ethiopia is contributing the prominent water resource to the Nile River, but she has not been benefiting from it. Thus, the thesis tried to investigate the impact of GERD in shifting the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia. Since the construction of GERD is an ongoing process; it is difficult to determine its real repercussion on the relation between Ethiopia and Egyptian water politics. Is the GERD changing the hydro political relations of Egypt and Ethiopia and leads to cooperation between them? Or, is the GERD triggering the existing conflict into a violent water war between Egypt and Ethiopia?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

In line with the above stated problem the study has the following objectives:-

1.3.1. General Objective

- The overall objective of the study is to investigate the impact of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in changing the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

- To examine the influence of the existing treaties in shaping the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia.
- To explain the dynamics of the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relations following the commencement of the GERD project.
- To identify the major causes of conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia in relation to the GERD since 2011.
- To explain the role of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in changing the existing hydro hegemony of the Nile Basin.

1.4. Research Questions

The study attempts to investigate and provide answers for the following basic research questions:

1.4.1. Major Question

- How the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is changing the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia?

1.4.2. Specific Questions

- How the existing treaties are influencing the hydro-political relation of Egypt and Ethiopia?
- What are the major determinant factors that influence the dynamics of Ethio-Egyptian hydro-political relation over the GERD project?

- What are the major factors that cause for conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia in relation to the GERD since 2011?
- What will be the role of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in changing the existing hydro hegemony of the Nile Basin?

1.5. Core Argument

It is arguable that the existence of symmetric power relation between/among riparian states leads to cooperation rather than conflict between/among them. In this regard, the GERD has a great contribution in balancing the existing power asymmetry of the Nile River Basin. Therefore, the researcher argues that the GERD will have an impact in changing the asymmetric power relation between Egypt and Ethiopia and bringing balance of power relation in the Nile River Basin.

1.6. Research Methodology

1.6.1. Research Approach

The thesis aims at investigating the impact of the GERD in changing the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia. Accordingly, qualitative research approach was employed, because qualitative approach is significant among other methods to study about issues involving individuals' interest, the role of institutions and events that takes place in a specific time and geographic area (Perakyl, 2011). Since the method is appropriate to analyze the current events or processes such as the water negotiations and cooperation efforts between Egypt and Ethiopia and factors hindering it.

The study focuses on how actors and institutions affect the water negotiations and cooperation efforts between the riparian states of the Eastern Nile Basin. Qualitative research approach is viewed as an appropriate when an analysis aims to better understanding of the dynamics behind social, economic and political processes in areas where contentious issues are discussed (Jagerskog, 2003). Furthermore, qualitative research method is characterized by using multiple sources of data, inductive data analysis and interpretive inquiry (Cresswell, 2007). Accordingly, this method would help to produce inductive reasoning and interpretation from a single case with various data sources.

Therefore, to examine the potential impact of the GERD in changing the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia, qualitative research method, particularly explanatory method is more preferable. Explanatory research helps to give explanation or determining why or how something occurred beyond giving descriptions. Accordingly, explanatory method helps to seek an answer for the proposed research questions. Hence, explanatory research is useful because the major purpose of the research was to explain the determining factors that influence the dynamics of the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia in relation to the GERD.

1.6.2. Research Design

An in-depth investigation on the impact of the GERD in changing the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia is the central theme of the study. Thus, the research design of a case study allows researchers to develop a detailed analysis of a case, often a program, incident, action, activity, or one or more people (Cresswell, 2007). Hence, Case study research gives much more detailed information than what is possible through other method. Moreover, case study design enables to explore the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relation by using the GERD as a case. As a result, this research design enables to understand the problem in detail by acquiring multiple evidences from various data sources. Therefore, to deeply examine the case outlined above, case study design is deliberately selected by the researcher.

1.6.3. Data Source

To address the basic issue raised above, the researcher used both primary and secondary data sources. Accordingly, the primary data sources are more accurate and nearest to the situation which helps the researcher to get reliable evidence to the study. As a result, the investigator used primary data sources such as key informant interviewees (political science scholars), media outlets (newspapers and online news), and historical documents (Treaties, Agreements and Declarations). Besides, the researcher used secondary data sources such as scholarly books, articles, and academic documents, such as MA thesis and Doctoral dissertations.

1.6.4. Data Collection Instruments

To answer the aforementioned basic questions, the researcher collects data from primary and secondary sources via key informant interview and document review. Accordingly, the researcher used key informant interview to gather primary data sources from political science experts to supplement the data obtained from the secondary sources. The researcher took an in-depth interview with scholars of political science and international relations, particularly those who undertook studies on the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia in particular and the Nile basin in general. Since key informant interview provides an opportunity for detail investigations of informants' perspective about the influence of GERD in changing the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relation with detail subject coverage.

Moreover, the researcher also used document review to consult both published and unpublished documents. Accordingly, the researcher analyzed scholarly Books, articles, treaties, agreements, declarations, media outlets and other academic documents, such as MA thesis and Doctoral dissertations in order to achieve the objectives of the study.

1.6.5. Sampling Techniques

To conduct this research, the researcher employed non-probability, notably purposive sampling technique in selecting key informants. Accordingly, the researcher selected the key informant interviewees based on their profile, expertise, and availability of data to their position and familiarity to the subject matter into consideration. As a result, the researcher selected key informants who are believed to be knowledgeable over the research topic, and can provide relevant information regarding the impact of GERD in shifting the hydro political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia. Therefore, the researcher deliberately selected participants who can best help him in the process of data collection.

1.6.6. Data Analysis

The researcher attempts to provide clear answer for the aforementioned research questions via content and thematic analysis in combination. Accordingly, the investigator used content analysis to analyze secondary data sources. In addition, primary data were analyzed through interpretive technique. Thus, by using thematic analysis, the investigator tried to offer an

explanation and understanding of the impact of GERD in changing the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relations. As a result, participants' response, media outlets, agreements were thematically analyzed to find answers to the already raised questions. Since, thematic analysis is a method for categorizing and analyzing the major themes of the research in accordance with the established objectives.

1.7. Significance of the Study

The Nile river basin is one of the international watercourses where the demand for water is rising alarmingly. Accordingly, Ethiopia and Egypt are the major actors in the Nile politics, which have divergent interests on the utilization of the Nile water resource. Therefore, by examining the impact of GERD in changing the hydro political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia, the research will have a valuable contribution for different stakeholders.

First, it provides insight for political science teachers and students about how the GERD influence the current and future hydro political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia in particular and the Basin power dynamics in general. Thus, the study gives additional knowledge to the field of Hydro politics through presenting better understanding of the hydro political relation of the two riparian states following the commencement of the GERD.

Second, the study gives insight for policy makers and water ministry of the two riparian states, teachers and students of political science in general and hydro politics in particular about the socio-economic and political impact of GERD on the present and future cooperation between Egypt and Ethiopia in particular and the Basin at large, and the factors hindering their cooperation efforts.

The last but not least, it will also contribute to the literature for future studies on the area of hydro political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia. Hence the GERD is a recent and an ongoing process, it serves as a reference by encouraging further investigation on the hydro political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia in relation to the GERD.

1.8. Scope of the Study

The study is delimited to investigate the impact of the GERD in shifting the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia. Although there are different factors that influence the

dynamics of the hydro political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia, basically the study solely focuses on the impact of GERD in shifting the hydro political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia. In terms of time framework, the study focuses on post-2011 hydro political relation, because it was on April, 2011 that Ethiopia announced the construction of GERD at Guba in Benishagul Gumuz region, Ethiopia near to the Ethio-Sudan border, which creates a new order on the relation between Egypt and Ethiopia. Geographically, the study focuses on the Eastern Nile basin at large, giving special emphasis to Egypt and Ethiopia.

1.9. Limitation of the Study

In conducting this study, the researcher faces certain challenges. The first challenge is related to the difficulty of collecting all relevant data from all sources of data because the issue is a high political issue that requires collecting data from high political positions. Accordingly, the thesis is conduct on the national interests of Egypt and Ethiopia; the researcher may face challenges to get genuine evidence from key informants, and time and financial constraints to collect data from Ethiopian and Egyptian diplomats, water ministers and foreign affair ministers. So, to overcome these challenges and accomplish this thesis, the researcher uses the available opportunities and techniques that help to acquire necessary data for this study.

1.10. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research, particularly in qualitative research method are important. This is because of the closer relationships between the researchers and researched give rise to a range of ethical issues such as privacy, informed consent, anonymity, secrecy and so on (Loraine, 2010). Accordingly, the researcher respects the views uphold by informants and appreciate their willingness to be part of the study. Confidentiality with regard to the information provide by informants is respecting. Informants are never mentioned by name without their free consent. As a result, the researcher only uses the term informant, if they demand anonymous; unless the researcher mentions them by name.

Therefore, the researcher tried to maintain impartiality and neutrality in conducting interview, explanation, analysis and conclusion. Moreover, all the data collected from secondary sources are also appropriately acknowledged and quoted to avoid plagiarism.

1.11. Organization of the Study

The central focus of the thesis is to investigate the impact of the GERD in shifting the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia. Accordingly, the thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter one is an introductory part, the blueprint of the study that deals about the background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, basic questions, central argument, methodology of the study, significances of the study, scope of the study, limitations of the study, ethical consideration and organization of the study. Chapter two focuses on conceptual clarifications, theoretical framework and literature review.

Chapter three discusses the historical background of Ethio-Egyptian hydro-political relations; water related treaties, and legal frameworks. The fourth chapter deals the impact of the GERD in shifting the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia. Accordingly, it organizes around the main research questions to make the analysis fit into the purpose. It provides a detailed analysis of the study. The last but not least chapter largely focuses on constructing a plausible conclusion and providing recommendations in line with the findings.

CHAPTER TWO

Concept, Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Clarification

As clearly described in the introductory part, the study focuses on the impact of GERD in shifting the hydro political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia. Thus, in order to avoid difficulty and ambiguity on the discussion, it is sound to clarify important concepts. Therefore, the basic concepts, which need further clarification are hydro politics, cooperation, Conflict, hydro-hegemony and counter hydro-hegemony.

2.1.1. Hydro-politics

The term hydro-politics, which is sometimes called water politics. According to Meissner (1999), Hydro politics is a systematic study of interactions between state, non-state actors and other actors with respect to the relevant allocation and use of international and domestic water resources. Thus, hydro politics is the systematic analysis of the relation between different actors on the allocation, distribution and utilization of Trans Boundary River. Others defined as hydro politics is the systematic analysis of inter-state conflict and cooperation regarding international water resources (Elhance, 1997).

More importantly, according to Oppenheim (1955), hydro-politics is a situation when conflict and cooperation taking place in shared international river basins with the sovereign control over water. Accordingly, Water is an essential and a strategic natural resource, and in its absence, it becomes an important element of political and diplomatic conflicts between riparian states (Ibid, 1955). Therefore, the concept of Hydro-politics in this thesis is termed as turning water issue from low political issue into high political issue of states. Thus, water is becoming a crucial political issue for Egypt and Ethiopia, mainly after the commencement of GERD. So, water politics is being central political concern for Egypt and Ethiopia in the contemporary period of time. Hence the study tried to show the situation of the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia particularly after the announcement of the GERD.

In a nutshell, hydro-politics means the political management of trans-boundary Rivers. Moreover, it is all about the distribution and utilization of water resources in terms of both quantity and quality of water across the boundary of sovereign riparian state.

2.1.2. Cooperation

Cooperation is the willingness of parties to negotiate and compromise incompatible issues to set a common goal (Qureshi, 2017). Thus, in order to promote cooperation, parties pursuing different interests and seeking to establish common rules. Cooperation is the fact that working together for common aim. For instance, Ethiopia wants equal and equitable utilization of Nile water, while Egypt wants to realize its historic dominance over the Nile Basin. Such divergent interests might be minimized in order to enhance collaboration between Egypt and Ethiopia.

According to neoliberals cooperation creates a condition of mutual ownership or the establishment of mutual institution with a desire to prevent something bad from happening. Thus, according to Boland (2017) the management of shared water resources requires innovative and flexible techniques to foster collaboration across various groups of users. However, whether GERD has a negative or positive impact on the other riparian states in the Eastern Nile Basin, Egypt has been continuing to challenge the project because of the existence of persistent mistrust, fear and suspicion between Egypt and Ethiopia. As a result, trust building and mutual understanding are essential for cooperation between Egypt and Ethiopia.

Moreover, the existence of weak institutions in the basin paves the way for powerful riparian country to control all actions and decisions (Rees, 2010). In similar vein, in the case of the Nile Basin, Egypt is the more powerful riparian state that dominantly controlled the water resource and used its power to divert the attention of riparian states and the global community at large. Shared resources can easily pave the way for cooperation when there is power symmetry among members. Thus, the existence of symmetric or balanced power relation between riparian states encourages cooperation between Egypt and Ethiopia. So, GERD is an important project that will help Ethiopia to change the existing power asymmetry that leads to symmetric power relation with Egypt.

Every transnational river basin is capable of cooperation when the upstream state is prepared to implement the criteria of equitable and fair use, and no serious harm. Accordingly, the position

of Ethiopia as an upstream state will provoke the cooperative capacity of the Eastern Nile Basin riparian states. As a result, cooperation is anticipative and the dam will further integrate the riparian states of the Eastern Nile Basin. For instance, recently the Nile basin countries have shown their inspiration to use the existing water resource in reasonable and equitable manner through the help of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) and Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA). This agreement has assisted Ethiopia in the development of the GERD project on the Blue Nile. Therefore, the presence of such treaties in the Basin is becoming a driving force for Egypt to come into negotiation for equitable and reasonable use of the Nile River.

To sum up, in this thesis, cooperation refers to the willingness of parties to negotiate and harmonize their divergent interests through the establishment and signing of an all-inclusive binding treaty to set peaceful distribution, utilization and management of shared water resources.

2.1.3. Conflict

There is no one single universal definition of conflict all over the world. Thus, different scholars define the term differently depending on their viewpoints. According to Wallenstein Conflict is a social event in which at least two players compete for an available set of scarce resources at the same time (Wallenstein, 2009). While, Jeong (2000) defined as conflict occurs when two or more groups struggle for values and claim status, power and resources whose enemy's goal is to neutralize, harm or eliminate rivals. Therefore, the presences of people or individuals who want to be superior or more beneficial than others make conflict inevitable and always happen in the normal course of life.

Furthermore, Conflict is a broad term that embraces a wide range of events from minor disagreements and competition that has escalated to the extent of violent war, which is a threat to the international peace and security (Vinogradov, 2003). According to realists conflict is an inherent feature of states which emanates from anarchic system. Similarly, more or less, the hydro political relationship between Egypt and Ethiopia is characterized by conflictive and unilateral use of water rather than cooperative and multilateralism. Unilateralism is a process of acting, reaching a decision, or adopting principles independently. Thus, it is a principle or agenda that supports one-sided action or decision. Such actions or decisions may be ignored by other parties or as a statement of their obligation to take instructions that may offend other parties. The

Eastern Nile Basin countries are characterized by the existence of unilateralism throughout their history of water utilization (Waterbury, 2002).This unilateral position of riparian states hinder cooperative relationship between them. Elsewhere almost all water agreements and treaties of Nile favored to Egypt that provided surplus water to her. This laid the Basin states to have asymmetric relationship (Cascao, 2009).

Moreover, in Eastern Nile Basin, Egypt is a dominant riparian state that has been arbitrarily utilized water resource of the Basin for hundreds of years (Motlagh, 2018). While Ethiopia is the largest contributor to the Nile water resource, it has been denied from utilizing its water resource. Although asymmetric relationship is common in the normal relationship of human beings, but the case of Eastern Nile is unique in asymmetric contribution of Ethiopia with asymmetric benefit of Egypt (Yacob, 2007). This asymmetric historic use may not produce symmetric right. Therefore, conflict is a struggle or contest between riparian states with opposing desires, ideas, values or goals on the utilization of shared water resources. In this thesis, conflict refers to disputes, confrontations and threats which may not necessarily equate to physical violence or military deployment.

2.1.4. Hydro-Hegemony

Before defining hydro hegemony, first it is vital to understand the concept of hegemony. Accordingly, Hegemony, unlike armed force, is a political power generated from intellectual and moral leadership, authority or consensus (Gramsci, 1971). Hegemony is founded on the power of ideas and knowledge rather than physical might. Moreover, Gramsci (1971) argued that it was a relation of consent by means of ideological and political leadership rather than domination by force. Without an imbalance of power in the world, a hegemonic situation could never occur. Hence, it is an asymmetrical power relation between two or more actors.

Furthermore, Cascao defined as "Hegemony is the articulation of ideas with material forces, seeking consent through the power of ideas rather than force" (Cascao, 2008). Thus, hegemony constructs common sense and legitimacy through instilling discourses, ideas, beliefs and knowledge (Ibid, 2008). Therefore, hegemony is an integration of ideas with material forces, with the goal of maintaining and consolidating the status quo by establishing legitimacy and consent via the force of ideas and knowledge rather than armed force.

The concept of hydro hegemony is taken from Antonio Gramsci's hegemony concept. As a result, hydro-hegemony is described as the control of transnational water resources by one riparian country via water resource management tactics, such as resource capture, integration, and containment (Zeitoun and Warner, 2006). The strategies are implemented via a collection of tactics such as coercion, treaties, knowledge building, etc. that are made possible by taking advantage of the asymmetry of existing power in a weak international institutional context (Ibid, 2006). Thus, the more powerful riparian state can use its position in a variety of ways to ensure that the configuration is favorable to it. Both the strongest and weakest riparian states will be involved in one of the three scenarios: shared, consolidated in favor of the stronger riparian, or contested (Ibid, 2006).

According to realism power is the ultimate determinant of the outcome of a competition for a trans-boundary water resource. In hydro-hegemony, cross-boundary water resources are even more direct challenge to the sovereignty of basin state that the 'who/what/when/where/how' question would address uneven power relations (Cascao and Zeitoun, 2010). While hegemony is usually strong in all areas of power in various forms, but in reality non-hegemony states are not always powerless. Thus, non-hegemonic riparian countries have bargaining power, which can be a key component of counter-hegemonic strategy. Accordingly, non-hegemonic riparian country can theoretically balance competitive conditions, influencing regional agendas and negotiations, and changing the hegemonic composition of catchments via increased use of bargaining power (Ibid, 2010).

Therefore, the term hydro hegemony in this thesis can be defined as the control and monopoly of cross-boundary water resource by a single riparian country via coercion rather than consent.

2.1.4.1. Dimensions of Hydro-hegemony

Geography, material power, bargaining power and ideational power are the four forms of power used to assess hydro-hegemonic situations (Zeitoun and Warner, 2006; Cascao and Zeitoun, 2010).

I. Geography: it is one of the most important types of overt power of riparian state. Accordingly, a riparian state's location allows to control the headwaters of international rivers, as well as it is a non-dynamic or static type of hydro political leverage that upstream countries

can use to influence the lower riparian countries. Thus, geography provides a distinct advantage to upstream state to manipulate the flows of Cross-boundary Rivers, the construction of dams and divert the regular direction of Rivers (Ibid, 2010). As a result, geographical power is the most important and easiest means to have hydro hegemonic power. Ethiopia has greater geographical power advantage, which it could employ in times of severe water scarcity. Unfortunately, until the recent time Ethiopia did not use its geographical power position to control the Nile water. However, now Ethiopia is countering the Egyptian hydro-hegemony by using geographical and other forms of powers.

Unlike Ethiopian position in Eastern Nile, upstream states has geographic power to control water resource which emanated from their territory and flow to other states like Turkey has been used geographic power in Tigris and Euphrates River Basin. Ethiopia's position in the Nile River Basin has been shown that geographic position can be less vulnerable in hydro-hegemony, while the position of Turkey in Tigris and Euphrates River Basin has been revealed that geographic power or position is influential for hydro hegemony (Ibid, 2010). As a result, the hydro hegemony of Egypt in Eastern Nile basin is not based on geography rather by other means of power, such as material, ideational and bargaining powers (Cascao, 2009).

II. Material power: it is a visible type of power that encompasses economic, military and technological capabilities. The control of trans-boundary water resources can be influenced by material power imbalances. This power asymmetry can easily help for hegemony state to use its material wealth for the control of weaker riparian state. It also helps hegemony state to trigger fear or threat on weak riparian state. In Eastern Nile, Egypt has been using its military power to threaten weaker riparian states, mainly Ethiopia (Cascao, 2008).

Therefore, Egypt has been the hegemony and has enjoyed unchallenged access to the Nile River water resource for the last decades. Egypt has had an experience of the arbitrary use of the Eastern Nile River water resource for economic, social and political purposes. Accordingly, the former president of Egypt Anwar Sadat declared that "the only matter that could take Egypt to war again is water." This speech is becoming displaying by the current leaders of Egypt. Thus, such trajectory can impose threat and fear of insecurity by the rest of basin countries. This has been one of the reasons that Ethiopia refrained from using the Nile Water resource (Ibid, 2008).

III. Bargaining power: it refers to actor's ability to influence the rules of the game and set agendas to the organization or basin states. Moreover, it is the capability of actors to control the terms of discussions and agreements, through their ability to divert the attentions of other riparian or mediators by using its skills, knowledge, experiences and international acceptance to the rules of the game, or the ability to provide incentives that may encourage weaker parties to comply. Riparian state's bargaining power is a source of aid, loan or other supports to help their development efforts or help to construct their projects (Ibid, 2010). As a result, Egypt's bargaining power in the Nile basin helps to get international support from international organization and states.

In addition, Egypt's bargaining power hindered Ethiopia to get loan and aid from international financial organization for hydroelectric project of GERD. As a result, Ethiopia lost its recognitions and financial support from different international institutions and organizations to construct the GERD due to Egypt's sanctioned discourse.

IV. Ideational power: it literally means 'power over ideas.' Thus, it is a riparian state's ability to impose and legitimate specific ideologies and narratives. As a result, the hegemonic riparian state can dominate and shape people's perceptions of the common resource distributive structure at the national, regional (at the basin) and international levels (Ibid, 2010). Therefore, it is a non-material power that is utilized via knowledge constructions, sanctioned discourse and narrative imposition. By establishing such forms of ideation power, Egypt has been the Nile Basin's hydro hegemony for decades (Ibid, 2008).

However, upper riparian countries, notably Ethiopia, have begun to reject and contest this dominating ideational influence by introducing beneficial principles such as equitable and reasonable use of water. Accordingly, Ethiopia uses this principle to enhance and expand its ideational power, claiming its share of Nile water and using it as a weapon to counter Egypt's hydro hegemony. In this regard, Ethiopia has been effective in mobilizing upstream states and adopting this concept into the NBI and CFA as one of the basic negotiation agenda for water allocation concerns in the Nile Basin region. In a nutshell, Egypt is strong enough in using the last three powers that secure its hegemony over the Nile basin. As a result, Egypt monopolized and utilized the Nile water for more than hundred years.

2.1.5. Counter-Hydro hegemony

If hydro hegemony produces unjust, inflexible and unsustainable results, non-hegemonic riparian countries can use a variety of strategies and tactics to change the rules of the game (Gashaw, 2019). However, countering the historically rooted hydrological authority of the basin and working towards a more impartial arrangement is not a straightforward task (Cascao, 2008). As Cascao stated that the major purpose of counter hydro hegemony is to challenge and change the existed hegemony. To achieve these purposes, counter-hegemonic techniques often rely on three pillars; such as challenging the hegemonic status quo, contesting hegemonic legitimacy, and constructing innovative forms of resistance (Ibid, 2008). Therefore, the process of anti-hegemony begins by undermining the hegemonic build of common sense and legitimacy, and building an alternative status quo (Ibid, 2019). Therefore, the concept of counter-hegemony brings about great effort against the existing domination for the purpose of creating symmetric power among riparian states by raising smart alternative ideas and issues.

More importantly, the processes of hegemony and counter-hegemony are occurring simultaneously. Accordingly, Cascao and Zeitoun identify three mechanisms of contest: these are coercion, leverage and liberating (Cascao and Zeitoun, 2010 cited in Henok, 2016).The tactics of coercion refers to using force to threat others, While the leverage tactics refers to strategies developed by non-hegemony to increase political leverage and bargaining power in the Basin (Ibid, 2016). These leverage tactics used by non-hegemonic state are increasing influence, water diplomacy, unilateral construction of infrastructure, coalition with other non-hegemonic riparian states and formation of basin-wide institutions and agreements. The liberating counter hydro-hegemonic mechanisms refer to the contestation strategies that aim to confront the legitimacy of the hegemonic order, and to weaken the ideological basis of the hydro-hegemonic order by bringing an alternative discourse and knowledge (Ibid, 2016).

Ethiopia has been challenging the hydro hegemony of Egypt with the idea of equitable and reasonable usage and management of the Eastern Nile Water resource. In this regard, Ethiopia has been signed the CFA and created an alternative idea and agenda, and opened up new discourses and arrangements via equitable rights and reasonable utilization principles (Wuhibegezer, 2020). Such ideas help Ethiopia to construct the GERD project on the Blue Nile River. Thus, the commencement of GERD by Ethiopia can be seen as contesting and liberating

the hegemonic situation. Ethiopia's strong position on the principles of 'equitable and reasonable use' helps to gain the support of the majority riparian states of the Nile basin (Ibid, 2016). This demonstrates that the Eastern Nile Basin States have a great deal of potential for cooperation.

In a nutshell, Counter-hydro hegemony is a strategy of non-hegemony riparian states to influence the hegemony state in order to realize fair and equitable use of trans-boundary water resources. Therefore, in this thesis, counter-hydro hegemony means the struggle against the existing water monopoly by providing an alternative agenda and ideas to ensure equitable and reasonable utilization over the shared water resource. Accordingly, the counter hydro hegemonic strategy of Ethiopia is the response of the ultimate aspiration of generations of Ethiopian to utilize the Blue Nile water for eradicating abject poverty and nation-building project, which is a question of Ethiopian survival rather than for becoming a regional hydro hegemony in the Basin.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. Realism

Realism is one of the most influential schools of thought in the international relations, which was developed by Machiavelli, Hobbes, Morgenthau and Waltz. Accordingly, realists interpret and explain world politics in terms of power. State is an autonomous rational actor in the international politics which maximize its relative power in relation to other states (Rumki Basu, 2012). Since the international system is anarchy which is characterized by mistrust, self-help and insecure, which lacks one supreme sovereign authority. So, the absences of one central sovereign authority that enacts and enforces binding agreements in the international system make the whole political life of a nation with an endless struggle for power (Baylis & Smith, 2004). Hans Morgenthau (1948) argued that the ultimate goal of international politics is power. As a result, the objectives of economic, financial, territorial or military policies are to increase the power of the nation pursuing them with regard to other nations. So, policymakers use various instruments, such as diplomacy, economic power and ultimately military force to achieve the goals of foreign policy in the continuous struggle for power on the global politics (Ibid, 2012).

Therefore, in order to protect national interests and survive through security, independence and trustful, the state must be strong. Here we can understand that states in their interactions with other states show distrust and self-help rather than trust and cooperation. It is true that the hydro

political relationship between Egypt and Ethiopia is characterized by distrust, self-help, fear, suspicion, competition, and conflict rather than trust, mutual and cooperative interaction. Thus, the nonexistence of cooperation between Egypt and Ethiopia over the utilization of the Nile water is usual according to realistic assumptions since it is expected from the aggressive and selfish behavior of the state. As a result, realists believe that the anarchy of the world system has forced nations to prefer only the realization of their national interests over mutual cooperative interests.

Furthermore, Morgenthau (1948) points that national resource is an element of national power. Accordingly, access to water is a strategic and vital resource for the survival of nations, which promote development and relative political influence (Maryann, 2018). As a result, ensuring long-term access to water resources has deteriorated into a zero-sum game, in which shared water allocation becomes a centerpiece for competition and conflict among riparian countries (Ibid, 2018). In Similar vein, the water of Nile is one of the most important natural resource for the riparian states, mainly for Egypt and Ethiopia that leads to conflict between them. Since Egypt saw the waters of the Nile as a national security issue and refused to share it with Ethiopia. Thus, by using its economic, bargaining and military power, Egypt has monopolized and used the Nile water unilaterally without considering the contribution of water and interests of Ethiopia. While, weak power position of Ethiopia hindered to utilize the Nile water and makes an observer of the basin for a long period of time. Since power plays a pivotal role in determining the position of riparian states in utilizing the shared water resource. So, according to Realists the unilateral action or conflict over water resources could be considered as a reasonable choice for countries. Accordingly, the unilateral construction of GERD by Ethiopia is a rational choice and conflict over this dam is an expected episode from states.

Therefore, Kenneth Waltz (1959) argues that international laws and institutions are established by powerful states, and they exist as long as they promote the main interests of their architects. Since international laws, treaties, agreements and international organizations are tools of powerful states to maximize and protect their own interests that have the capability to influence their will on the weaker states. Even though most of the international principles of water laws do not prohibit Ethiopia's right to utilize the Nile water resource; however Egypt is trying to prohibit Ethiopia's sovereign right by using its diplomatic and military power. Since power

maters a lot that plays a vital role in determining the utilization of shared water resource either unilaterally or mutually among the Nile Basin riparian states.

Therefore, this theory is relevant to this study, since realism is the most preferential theory in realizing the real behavior and interests of states in international relation in general and cross-boundary river basin in particular. Thus, the reason behind conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia on the use of the Nile water is the existence of power asymmetry or unbalance power relation. As a result, balance of power is an important mechanism to ensure mutual benefit between Egypt and Ethiopia on the Nile River. In this regard, GERD has a great contribution to change the existing power asymmetry and bringing balance of power in Nile Basin.

In a nutshell, to analyzing the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relations over the GERD project the study used the assumptions of realism perspective.

2.3. Doctrines of Water Right on Shared River Basins

2.3.1. Absolute Territorial Sovereignty: It is called Harmon Doctrine, refers to the principle that national sovereignty is reserved to maximize the use of all water resources flowing inside its territory, regardless of its effect on other countries and without obligation to consult (Yacob, 2007). Thus, upstream countries are permitted to divert all water from a shared water resource without considering the downstream states' interests.

Therefore, Ethiopia has full right not only to build GERD, but also to change the direction of the Blue Nile. Even though this principle gives absolute right and exclusive ownership of the Nile water for Ethiopia to utilize it independently of downstream countries, but this right is not being exercised Ethiopia. Ethiopia, on the other hand, attempts to ensure long-term socioeconomic development by utilizing the Nile water resources in a fair and rational manner. Thus, Ethiopia, as an upstream state in the Nile River Basin, has been denied access to water resources flowing from its territory makes the Eastern Nile Basin is unique from other trans-boundary river basins.

2.3.2. Absolute Territorial Integrity: It advocates that riparian states cannot change the natural flow of rivers. Accordingly, riparian states are prohibited from stopping or diverting the flow of rivers from their own country to neighboring states (Yacob, 2007). As a result, lower riparian countries have legal right to claim continuous and uninterrupted water flow from upstream

countries' territory. Thus, countries of lower riparian have an absolute right to ensure uninterrupted river flow from the area of the upstream countries regardless of priority (Ashumar, 2020). Accordingly, Egypt has the right to fully utilize the Nile water without divert and interruption of the flows of the river by the upstream states such as by Ethiopia.

The principle of absolute territorial integrity can be seen as the direct opposite of the principle of absolute territorial sovereignty. Therefore, relying on either of the above two doctrines hinder the cooperative efforts and sustainable management of the Nile water resource between Egypt and Ethiopia, and also causes for conflict between them. Since both doctrines argue the right to decide on development programs and utilization of water only by a single riparian country of Trans-boundary Rivers.

2.3.3. Community of property in the water: It advocates for the equitable sharing or use of the Trans-boundary River by all riparian countries without causing unjustified harm to other riparian countries. Accordingly, Trans-boundary Rivers are common property of all states where water flows. Thus, the state should not intervene to reduce water resources for others that share it (Yacob, 2007). This doctrine argues the need to find a balance of interests by taking into account the requirements and uses of the water from all riparian States, and riparian countries have equal rights and shared sovereignty over the Trans-boundary rives (Ibid, 2020). Accordingly, both the upper and lower riparian states of the Nile river basin such as Ethiopia and Egypt have the right to use the Nile water in an equitable and reasonable manner without harming each other.

Moreover, the doctrine argues that water should be treated as a common property. Accordingly, it stated that a country's sovereignty is limited by the rights of other countries that share the same basin. Ethiopia uses this theory as the basis for the general principles and output of foreign policy on the use of Nile water (Habtamu, 2011).

Even though this principle is mostly the issue of downstream states like the Euphrates and Tigris river basin, however in the Nile river Basin this principle is raised by upstream states mainly by Ethiopia. Therefore, the unusual position of upstream country, Ethiopia, in seeking the implementation of this doctrine in Eastern Nile Basin, has a great hope to promote cooperation among riparian countries (Ibid, 2020). Even if the cooperative position of Ethiopia shown a great hope for cooperation, however the rigid position Egypt in realizing non-binding treaties and

historic rights has been a threat of conflict in the Eastern Nile Basin. So, this theory is more suitable to alleviate the current Ethio-Egyptian conflict on the utilization of the Nile water resource in an equitable and reasonable manner. It will inspire cooperation between Ethiopia and Egypt over the GERD.

2.3.4. Limited Territorial Sovereignty: It limits state sovereignty and riparian states are required to share water supplies based on past diversion, cultivated land and population. Thus, it further argues that riparian country has the right to vote in deciding which measures will be taken within the entire river, disregard with whether the international river originates in its territory or passes through it. However, the states that use the longest water have certain priorities (Yacob, 2007).

Furthermore, this doctrine is based on the claim that every state is free to use the trans-boundary Rivers that flow from its territory, as long as it does not violate the rights of other riparian countries. As a result, the doctrine of limited territorial sovereignty encompasses fair and reasonable use criteria, as well as the responsibility not to cause significant harm. It is the only universally accepted water law that has served as the foundation for present international water law (Ashumar, 2020; Wuhibegezer, 2020).

This doctrine protects previous use because it supports the condition of using water in the first place, rather than the condition of upstream or downstream. Therefore, all states along the cross-boundary river water create the privilege of using a certain amount of water based on the date when this water use began (Ibid, 2020). Accordingly, in the case of the Nile basin, this doctrine is more favorable to Egypt as it focuses on the criteria of prior use, arable land and population growth or size. As such, no riparian have the right to divert the natural flow of Cross Boundary River. As a result, Egypt has historical advantages in using the Nile water. Thus, this doctrine gives more privileges for Egypt than Ethiopia.

Therefore, Egypt has tried to implement this principle to maintain its monopoly of the Nile water. However, the rise of population in upper riparian states mainly in Ethiopia increased its interest of using the water resource of Easter Nile to satisfy its economic and social needs. This factor has forced Ethiopia to challenge the unilateral use of the Nile in Egypt by replacing the non-binding historical rights of the downstream state of Egypt. To achieve this, Ethiopia led the

upper riparian countries of the basin to sign a multilateral agreement on the NBI and later on the CFA, with the principle of fair and equitable utilization (Cascao, 2009).

Thus, although the downstream states of the Eastern Nile basin Egypt and Sudan eager to implement this principle, but nothing hinders Ethiopia to utilize the Nile River. Since Ethiopia has a large population compared to other watershed states. According to the 2019 World Population Prediction revision, Ethiopia's total population in 2018 was 109,224,414, whereas the current population of Egypt based on word meter elaboration of the latest UN data was 102,189,071 large as of June 2020. Therefore, this doctrine does not prohibit Ethiopia from constructing the GERD project.

2.3.5. Optimal development of the river basin: It argues that the development of river basin regardless of considering national boundaries. This theory embodies controversial terms of allocation criteria, such as optimal, equitable and reasonable. In addition, this doctrine presupposes the existence of basin-wide institutions. This doctrine is closest to the economic theory that aims to use the water in the basin efficiently (Yacob, 2007). Therefore, this theory applies the concept of optimal water use to all riparian nations along cross-border Rivers. This approach extends beyond reasonable and equitable use and includes the possibility of integrated development and collaborative governance of rivers and ecosystems. It also suggests the establishment of a supranational system or institution to mediate between the riparian countries, which may have different compositions, authorities, and obligations (Ashumar, 2020).

Furthermore, this principle also encourages the sensible and equitable use of the available water resources. It also helps states to redesign their rigid position of benefit sharing with the idea of cost sharing. As a result, this theory benefits Egypt and Ethiopia to work together. Accordingly, the GERD is intended to provide cheap hydroelectric power to the neighboring countries including Egypt if she wants, which promote economic and political integration and cooperation.

To sum up, in the controversy over water rights, the states have preferred the doctrine that most justifies their claims according to their position in the river system. Thus, one of the key causes of conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia was the absence of a comprehensive legal and institutional framework.

2.4. Literature Review

In the modern world, the Nile Water resources have become very important to alleviate economic, social and political problems of riparian states of the Basin. In solving such problems and bringing development, building Dams on such cross-boundary River plays a vital role by generating hydro power and other services for the riparian states. As a result, dams have been a major source of tensions between or among riparian states. Such tensions have been raised into conflicts over the rights and obligations of riparian nations over Cross-boundary Rivers (Salman, 2001). Accordingly, studying and understanding the impact of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the hydro political relation between/among Eastern Nile Basin riparian states in general and Egypt and Ethiopia in particular become a scholarly interest. Therefore, the researcher tries to review those empirical literatures related to this thesis in the following way.

Hana Attia and Mona Saleh (2021) argue that the failure of recent GERD talks has heightened tensions between Ethiopia and downstream neighbors, Egypt and Sudan. They emphasized that the unilateral construction of GERD on the Blue Nile escalated the Nile dispute between Egypt and Ethiopia (Hana Attia &Mona Saleh, 2021). The study only focused on the risks of GERD and fails to see the role of GERD in changing the asymmetric relation between riparian states of the Basin that helps to promote economic integration and cooperation among them.

In similar vein, Hagar Elbarbary (2021) conducted a thesis entitled "Hydro-conflicts in the Nile Basin: An Analysis of the Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam (GERD) Project" examines the ongoing water struggle between the three Nile Basin Riparian countries of Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) by using conflict analysis techniques. The author emphasis that Lack of trust and transparency between the three conflicted countries is one of the major factors that led to the escalation of the conflict and turned it from a possible win-win situation into a lose-win situation (Ibid).

More importantly, the author points that the postponing of Ethiopia to sign any binding agreement with the downstream countries was one of the main reasons that ignited the conflict between them (Ibid). Accordingly, he stated that the rejection of Ethiopia to slow the filling of the dam's reservoir, and the absence of transparency in sharing all the related data of the GERD's safety and the reservoir filling scenarios are the major causes of triggering conflict and pushing Egypt to choose for military options in order to maintain its water share (Ibid).

However, the author fails to examine the roles of the GERD in changing the asymmetric power relation between riparian states and promotes balance of power which leads to economic integration and cooperation among them. Since the major factor that hinder peaceful use of the shared water is the existed power asymmetry between Egypt and Ethiopia. Therefore, the researcher tries to fill the gap of his thesis by examining the roles of GERD in changing the existed hydro hegemony through realism theoretical framework.

In contrast to the above, Ana Elisa Cascao and Alan Nicol (2016) in their article entitled "Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: new norms of cooperation in the Nile Basin" argue that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam was built as a result of several shifts in the Nile basin's hydro political dynamics prior to 2011, and it also serves as a catalyst for future Nile Basin collaboration. Thus, the authors attempt to assess how the GERD's 'cooperation process and norms' have actually contributed to changing the status quo in the basin, as well as how they have implicitly and explicitly contributed to the GERD's status as a significant new factor in the broader hydro political landscape (Cascao and Nicol, 2016). They point out that cooperation initiatives that began in the 1990s ultimately helped to lessen asymmetry between Egypt and Ethiopia, as well as shift the power balance between upstream and downstream riparian countries (Ibid).

Moreover, they argue that the GERD plays a significant role in laying the foundations for extensive regional economic and political integration, ultimately benefitting all regional economies through increasing the availability of energy production in the Eastern Nile countries. As a result, the authors concluded that the GERD represents a relative shift in power within the basin in favor of upstream countries, and it opens a door to true basin-wide cooperation among Eastern Nile Basin states (Ibid). However, the authors fail to critically examine the determining factors that influence the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relation following the commencement of the GERD project. Therefore, the researcher tries to fill the gap by analyzing the major determinant factors that influence the current Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relations.

Jiregna Tadese (2020) argues that the GERD is a "game changer" that challenges Egypt's dominative hegemony over the Nile Basin. He emphasized that the political dynamics of the Basin, the announcement of GERD and internal instability in Egypt are changing the hydro-hegemony of the Nile River that forced Egypt to change its foreign policy from war mongering

to negotiations and cooperation (Ibid). Moreover, the author stated that the Arab spring is the most significant factors that change the power dynamics of the Nile Basin, and forced Egypt to changing from hard power into soft power. The study however merely focused on the dynamic political changes and the potential forces of cooperation in the Nile Basin. Thus, the author fails to point out the major factors that cause for conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia on the utilization of Nile River.

In a similar vein, Rawia Tawfik (2016) argues that the GERD is a "game changer" that challenges Egypt's long-held hegemony over the Nile Basin. The author stated that the GERD represents a shift in Ethiopia's counter-hegemonic approach from reactive diplomacy, which involves irregular contestation of Egypt's Nile policy, into proactive diplomacy, which involves the creation of new facts on the ground (Tawfik, 2016). As a result, for the first time, the GERD obliged Egypt to accept a project built unilaterally by upstream states of the Nile Basin (Ibid). More importantly, the author points that the GERD would increase the volume of power commerce between Nile Basin countries, as well as control floods and regulate the water flow (ibid). However, the study was not well addressed the way how the two riparian states solve their persistent mistrust between them in order to promote long term cooperation.

Dawit Hailu (2013) conducted a thesis entitled "Ethiopia's Emerging Counter-Hydro Hegemonic Influence: Changing the Tides of the Blue Nile waters for an equitable Basin-wide system (cooperation and Integration)." Accordingly, the author examines the major driving forces behind Ethiopia's emerging counter-hegemonic influence against Egypt's hydro-hegemonic influence, as well as how Ethiopia continues to challenge the status quo and change old aggressive geopolitical rhetoric via the idea of cooperation for equitable and sustainable Blue Nile water usage and management (Dawit, 2013).

He emphasized that since 1991, Ethiopia has grown strongly to challenge and influence Egypt's water hegemony via various anti-hegemony strategies (Ibid). Accordingly, to compensate for its relative lack of economic and military power in relation to Egypt, Ethiopia has heavily relied on ideational power (soft power) in the form of constructing new knowledge and ideas surrounding the sharing of the Nile Rivers economic benefits (Ibid). He argues that Ethiopia's new multilateral-legal regime in the Nile basin faces substantial challenges due to historical colonial-

legal accords. Since it is impossible to change the current status quo without changing the legal paradigm of the past that existed today (Ibid).

Therefore, the author concluded that Ethiopia's relatively successful achievement of ongoing negotiations and cooperation for basin-wide "benefit-sharing" contributes to long-term socio-economic and political stability in the Horn of Africa (Ibid). The researcher supports Dawit's argument on GERD has an impact in promoting Basin-wide cooperation through changing the existed status quo. However he fails to analyze the real behavior or interests of riparian states and the root causes of conflict by using the dominant international relation theories as theoretical framework. Since he used the theory of hegemony and counter hegemony, which dictated that hegemony is sign of leadership through idea and knowledge rather than dominance. Therefore, the researcher wants to fill the theoretical gap which was observed in Dawit's thesis by using the dominant international relation theories, realism and neo-liberal institutionalism as a theoretical framework.

Ejigu (2016) in his thesis entitled "Construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Nile: Cause for Cooperation or Conflict among Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan" investigating whether the GERD is causing conflict or promoting cooperation among the riparian states by using the framework of hydro hegemony. Accordingly, he points that the construction of the GERD is increasing open discussion, trust building and cooperation on water sharing issues among Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia. The author concluded that the existence of such talks contributes to the long-term sustainability of peace, security, and collaboration in the Eastern Nile basin rather than worsening conflict and friction (Ejigu, 2016).

However, he fails to point out the roles of GERD in changing the existing hydro hegemony rather he merely focused on conflict and cooperation. Hence, power plays a significant role in triggering conflict or cooperation. Thus, without changing the existing asymmetric power relation among riparian states, it is difficult to promote cooperation in the Eastern Nile Basin. Therefore, the researcher examines the roles of GERD in changing the existing hydro hegemony which leads to cooperation, and tries to fill the gaps of Ejigu's hydro hegemonic framework by using realism theoretical framework.

Henok Seifu (2016) in his thesis entitled "Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and Changing Power Relations in the Eastern Nile Basin" examined the change in the power relation among the Eastern Nile riparian states and the counter hydro hegemonic instruments employed before and after the inauguration of the GERD by using hydro hegemony and counter-hydro hegemony theoretical framework. Thus, the author stated that Ethiopia employed both leveraging and liberating counter hydro hegemonic strategies at the same time in the Basin (Ibid). He argues that Ethiopia has countered Egyptian hydro hegemony by playing a leading role in the Basin's hydro politics by bringing the legal issues of "equitable and reasonable" into the hydro politics of the Nile Basin (Ibid).The author concludes that the GERD enables Ethiopia to leverage on the hydro politics of the Basin, and further to narrow the existing power asymmetry that will lead to a change in power relation (Ibid).

However, the study merely focused on the roles of GERD in changing the asymmetric power relation among the Eastern Nile Basin riparian states. As a result, he fails to point out the socio-economic significances of the dam beyond counter-hegemony strategies. Changing power relation is a system of replacing previous hegemony by new hegemony. This will not promote long-term cooperation in the basin, rather identifying sources of conflict and opportunities of cooperation can help the basin for long-term cooperation.

So, the researcher tries to fill the gap which is observed in Henok's thesis, by investigating the major factors that influence the Ethio- Egyptian hydro political relations, and the contribution of the GERD in changing the existing asymmetric relations, which promote long term socio-economic and political integration and cooperation in the Eastern Nile Bain. Besides, he fails to show the realities on the nature of riparian states by focusing hydro hegemony and counter hydro hegemony theoretical framework. Then the researcher also fills the theoretical gaps of this study by using realism and neoliberal institutionalism theories as a theoretical framework.

To sum up, the study therefore tries to fill the gaps which were observed in the above studies. Therefore, the researcher investigates the impact of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissances Dam (GERD) in shifting the hydro political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia. Since the construction of GERD is an ongoing process; it is difficult to determine its real repercussion on the relation between Ethiopia and Egyptian water politics.

CHAPTER THREE

The Historical Background of Ethio-Egyptian Hydro-political Relation, Water Related Treaties, and Legal Frameworks

3.1. The Ethio-Egyptian Hydro-political relations

The Ethio-Egyptian hydro-political relation shares a long history of both peaceful and conflictive interactions that went back to the early years of Axumite kingdom (Yayew, 2018). Historically, religion and water are the two most significant elements of the Ethio-Egyptian relations (Yacob, 2007). As a result, religion is the major factor that determines the relationship of the Ethiopian and Egyptian Orthodox churches. Ethiopia received bishop from Egypt and the Egyptian Coptic bishop who had been appointed as the religious head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (Wuhibegezer, 2020).

Moreover, Egypt is fully relied on the Nile water that comes from Ethiopia. Since Ethiopia is the source of the Blue Nile, which provides 86 percent of water to the Nile River. Therefore, the Nile water is the most crucial catalyst in the Ethio-Egyptian relationship. However, the geographical location of Ethiopia at the headwaters of the Nile marked the relation is full of mistrust (Gashaw, 2019; ibid, 2020). As a result, to control the Nile water and building hegemonic power over it, Egypt used various methods since ancient times. Accordingly, Egyptians recognize that Nile as "the father of Egypt, the savior of Egypt, the giver of life, the creator of Egypt, and Egypt is the gift of Nile" (Gashaw, 2019).

On the other hand, Abbay in Ethiopia is named Gihon, a biblical river mentioned in Genesis. Accordingly, Ethiopians believe that Abbay (Gihon) as "the Holy River flowing out of the Garden of Eden from where it was divided into four headwaters. ...And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it covers the entire land of Ethiopia" (Genesis 2:10-13 quoted in Gashaw, 2019). In line with such biblical version, Abbay or Gihon is considered as heavenly and the shibboleth is that 'Gihon feeds the heaven' contrary to the Egyptian perception of Nile as earthly and sacred that feeds Egyptians (Gashaw, 2019). Thus, such religious belief has its own impact on "thinking about arresting Abbay was equivalent to offending the creators of the universe" (Wuhibegezer, 2016). As a result, such ideas have forced the Ethiopian people to

"respect the heavenly River" which has the role of nourishing the heaven; and the indigenous traditional beliefs and the public worship of Abbay have caused extreme fear of the river, "don't touch Abbay" (Ibid, 2019).

In a nutshell, Egypt's dependence on the Nile (Ethiopian river) is a natural dependence because the Nile is natural, but Ethiopia's dependence on Egypt is not natural, rather it was manmade dependence (Ibid, 2007). Therefore, from the appointment of Abune Selam's first patriarchy of Ethiopia until 1959, Ethio-Egyptian relations were grounded on the two-way concept that "Ethiopia is the source of the Nile in Egypt and Egypt is the source of Ethiopian bishops" (Erlich, 2002). As a result, the Nile water and the Coptic Church shape the whole processes of the interstate relations of Egypt and Ethiopia.

When Mohammed Ali came to power in Egypt in 1805, he shifted Egyptian insights of Nile water. Accordingly, Mohammed Ali (1805-1849), the first leader of modern Egypt and all his successors are persistently working to control the source of the Nile river and ensure uninterrupted water flow which is the only means for the continuity of Egypt as a State (Yacob, 2007). Hence, Egypt wanted to control Ethiopia primarily, because Ethiopia dominated the source areas of the Blue Nile River which contribute 86% water to the Nile River. This comes from the idea that Egypt would not feel secure as long as other powerful nations control the source of the Nile, the country's lifeline. Therefore, Egypt's main security interests are closely related to the waters of the Nile and sensitive to what could happen in upstream countries, mainly in Ethiopia (Ibid, 2007).

Therefore, the Nile water is the source of tension, competition, mistrust and conflict in the relation between Egypt and Ethiopia. As history shows that, Egypt under the leader of Khedive Ismail (1863-1879) had invaded the northern Ethiopia to control the source of Blue Nile and make it an Egyptian river (Daniel, 1999). However, Ethiopia under the leader of Emperor Yohannes IV successfully defeated Egypt at the battle of Gundet (1875) and Gura (1876) (Endalkachew, 2015).

After Egypt was defeated at the battle of Gura, conflicts between the two countries changed from direct military attack to a series diplomatic and proxy intervention (Ibid, 2015). Thus, to create instability in Ethiopia, Egypt has followed destabilizing policies, from supporting the rebellion groups to war by the agents (Ashumar, 2020). Accordingly, Egypt has backed various insurgent

groups, such as Eritrean People Libration Front (EPLF), Tigrean People Liberation Front (TPLF) and other Ethiopian Armed forces. Therefore, by supporting the Eritrean insurgency, Egypt ensured that Ethiopia focused both its attention and resources on putting down the Eritrean insurgency. Egypt has effectively weakened Ethiopia by providing the necessary military, idealistic, political and diplomatic support for the rebellion. In addition, Egypt's hostile policy was also revealed in an attempt to change the Red Sea into the Arabian Sea with the aim of making Ethiopia a landlocked country (Ibid, 1999).

Generally, in the history of Egypt and Ethiopia relation, it can be understood that Egypt keeps Ethiopia under constant pressure to monopolize the Nile water and build its status quo through different mechanisms while Ethiopia would not threaten the continuous flow of the Nile River. Therefore, the upper riparian states, mainly Ethiopia, which provides 86% of the Nile's water, has not utilized properly. On the contrary, Egypt has taken the lion's share of utilizing the Nile water without any water contribution to the total amount of the Nile River. To this end, Egypt developed a strong commitment to the 1929 and 1959 colonial agreements and its historical status quo. Thus, Egypt has successfully used and monopolize the waters of the Nile by using such discriminatory colonial and bilateral agreements as a legal basis (Yacob, 2012).

However, current moves from Ethiopia and other upstream countries have rocked the Stability of hydro-hegemony in the Nile basin. Thus, Climate change, population growth, relative political and economic stability, the demand of water for development and inadequate water management are one of the factors that have brought together upstream nations to discuss how the Nile water could be used for sustainable development in the Basin. As a result, upstream countries show their commitment for reasonable and equitable use of the Nile water that challenges the strong position of Egypt on the use of Nile water. Here there is a clear disagreement between the need to maintain the status quo by Egypt and the need for cooperation on the use of the Nile River by the upper riparian states, notably by Ethiopia (Ibid, 2015).

Therefore, Egypt and Sudan refused to sign the cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA), and Egypt wants to defend its monopoly on the utilization of the Nile river Basin, and fears to it would nullify its historic and natural right. Accordingly, following the refusal of downstream states to sign and accept CFA led countries to restore into unilateral measures within their jurisdiction (Yacob, 2012; Negasa, 2021). Thus, the rejection of Egypt to signed CFA has led to

unilateral actions of GERD by Ethiopia on the Blue Nile. Following CFA, Egypt's long-held hydro hegemony was challenged by the launch of the GERD in 2011(Ibid, 2021).

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) was laid down on April 1, 2011, on the Blue Nile by the let Prime Minister Meles Zenawi at Guba; Benishagul Gumuz region, Ethiopia. Thus, immediately after the inauguration of GERD and the concurrent move to ratify the CFA, a high-level delegation of public diplomacy led by Mustafa El Gendy was came to Ethiopia. Therefore, by the request of this delegation, and with the intention of alleviating the bad feelings nurtured by the Egyptian political elite, Ethiopia agreed to establish a tripartite technical committee that oversees the dam and also postpones ratification of the CFA for a year.

Therefore, starting from the exchange of public diplomacy between Egypt and Ethiopia, and the establishment of the International Panel of Experts and the Tripartite National Committee, a series of tripartite ministerial and Technical negotiations on the GERD were took place for about a decade, among Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan (Ibid, 2020). However, the tripartite negotiation on the filling and annual operation of the GERD has not yet reached an agreement.

Therefore, regardless of Egypt's insistent on her long-held selfish interests, the signing and ratification of the CFA, the commencement of GERD and starting to generate hydroelectric power are the major dynamic changes in the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relations, which are a means to shift the unjust utilization of Nile water by Egypt into fair and reasonable utilization of the common shared water resource. Thus, the ongoing construction of GERD by Ethiopia is one of the major attributes of declining the old game and the beginning of a new game on the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relation that will benefit both riparian states equitably and reasonably.

3.2. Water Treaties in the Eastern Nile Basin

According to Yacob (2007) the Nile water treaties were categorized into three; agreements between colonial powers, agreements between colonial powers and riparian states of the basin, and agreements between riparian states of the basin.

3.2.1. Agreements between colonial powers

3.2.1.1. The Anglo-Italian Protocol (15 April 1891)

It was the first colonial protocol in the waters of the Nile, signed by the colonial powers of Great Britain and Italy on April 15, 1891. Article three of this Protocol prohibits Italy, the colonial nation of Eritrea, from using the Atbara waters (Henok, 2016). The Protocol was only a treaty of colonial powers without taking account the third parties and the representation of any concerned riparian states of the Nile basin, notably without considering the interests of Ethiopia (Wuhibegezer and Sheferawu, 2014). Therefore, the protocol was invalid and lacks inclusiveness since it held only by the two colonial powers without considering the interest of the riparian states.

3.2.1.2. The Tripartite Treaty (13 December, 1906)

It was signed among the colonial powers of Britain, France and Italy in London on 13 December 1906 aiming Ethiopia for a colonial arrangement. The purpose of those powers was to establish a legal framework and procedures for regulating the sphere of influence in response to the problems expected after Menelik II's stroke. According to Article 14 (a) of this Convention, the three colonial powers undertook to work together to preserve Britain's and Egypt's interests in the Nile Basin (Ibid, 2014). Therefore, the treaty recognized the Ethiopian territory of the Nile basin as a British sphere of influence (Ibid, 2007). However, the treaty was invalid and has not legal effect on Ethiopia in utilizing the Nile water.

3.2.1.3. The Anglo-Italian Agreement (1925)

It was signed in 1925 between the colonial power of Britain and Italy. As a result, Italy acknowledged Britain's interests in the Ethiopian Nile basin in terms of continuous water flows into Sudan. And in turn Britain agreed to support Italy to continue with their colonial aspirations over Ethiopia and to build roads and railways on the Ethiopian territory that connecting the then Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somalia (Ibid, 2007). Therefore, the colonial treaties excluded Ethiopia on the use of water from the Nile, regardless of where the waters originate. However, the colonial treaties were invalid and have not legal effect, and did not prevent Ethiopia from using its Nile water resources.

3.2.2. Agreements between Colonial Powers and Basin States

3.2.2.1. The Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty (15 May 1902)

It was signed by the colonial power Great Britain and the riparian country Ethiopia in 1902 at Addis Ababa to determine the border line between Ethiopia and Sudan. However, Article three of the treaty was focused on the Nile waters rather than boundaries. This treaty is the most controversial in the history of the Nile agreement and has different meanings in the Amharic and English versions. The Amharic version indicated that totally blocking the flow of water from the Blue Nile was impossible, while the English version stated that it was impossible for Ethiopia to build a dam in the Blue Nile (Ibid, 2014). Daniel (1999) stated that the agreement's binding force was void because neither the British Parliament nor the Ethiopian Crown Council had ratified it. There was no evidence that Ethiopia recognized the meaning of the word "arrest" by not using water. Therefore, the agreement is illegitimate and does not bind Ethiopia.

3.2.2.2. The Anglo-Egyptian Agreement (7 May 1929)

It was signed between Egypt and the colonial power Great Britain representing Sudan on 7 May 1929 aiming to ensuring the Nile water for Egypt by reducing Sudan's rights and rejecting the other Nile Basin riparian states (Wuhibegezer, 2020). The agreement specifies an annual water distribution of 48 billion cubic meters (BCM) to Egypt and 4 billion cubic meters (BCM) to Sudan (12:1allocation), which provides the total available annual runoff of the Nile river (Ashumar, 2020). The agreement was given veto power to Egypt on the common natural resources of the Nile River, and ignoring the rights of the remaining riparian states of the Nile Basin. Accordingly, Egypt monitors all water-related activities throughout the basin, and the United Kingdom recognized Egypt's "historical" and "natural" rights to the Nile water (Yacob, 2007). Thus, this agreement was one of Egypt's primary tools for maintaining its hegemony over the Nile water.

However, the newly independent states of the Nile basin have stated that the agreement was rejected and followed the so called Nyerere doctrine, which argues that colonial agreements are null and void except when they enshrine principles recognized by international law. This doctrine relates to the so-called "clean slate (tabula rasa)" doctrine, that the new independent state does not respect the contractual rights and obligations of the old state from the norms of customary international law (Ashumar, 2020). Therefore, such agreement is invalid under international law (Ibid, 2014). Even though this agreement is one of the major causes of conflict

between Egypt and Ethiopia on the use of the Nile water, but it has no legal effect on Ethiopia. Since Ethiopia had never been a British colony. So, the agreement did not ban Ethiopia from utilizing the Nile River.

3.2.3. Agreements between Independent States of the Basin

3.2.3.1. The 19 59 Nile water Agreement

It was the first agreement of sovereign riparian states of the Nile Basin, signed in Cairo on November 8, 1959 between Egypt and Sudan on the "full utilization" of the Nile water by replacing the 1929 agreement. As a result, the agreement permitted Egypt and Sudan to share the overall average annual flow of the Nile, with each sharing 55.5 and 18.5 BCM, respectively and continued to maintain the veto power over any upstream projects (Wuhibegezer, 2020). The monopoly of water use in the Nile basin was institutionalized by this agreement. It also approved the preceding agreements and entirely ignored the rights of the rest of the riparian states of the Basin. Even though Ethiopia supplies 86 per cent of water to the Nile River, however Ethiopia's rights have been completely excluded and ignored by this agreement (Ibid, 2020).

Therefore, the agreement violated the idea of fair and equitable use of shared water resources, and thus became a major source of controversy between Ethiopia and Egypt over the Nile water utilization. Since, Ethiopia has expressed its disappointment with the 1959 water agreement and had rejected its validity and recognized the right to use its waters within its own territories. On the other hand, Egypt wants to defend its historic right by the 1959 bilateral water agreement in multi riparian states of the Nile basin. Accordingly, even if the agreement lacks validity and did not prohibit Ethiopia from utilizing the Nile water, however it has negative influence on the current Ethio-Egyptian hydro-political relations.

3.2.3.2. The Framework for General Cooperation between Ethiopia and Egypt

It was the first bilateral framework for cooperation signed between Egypt and Ethiopia in Cairo on 1 July 1993 over the use of the Nile water mutually. Accordingly, they agreed to utilize the Nile water based on the rules and principles of international water laws (Yacob, 2007). Moreover, the agreement indicates the commitment of peaceful resolution of the disputes and not to cause any serious damage. Therefore, the 1993 Agreement can be seen as a "sign of positive rapprochement" that has paved the way for a clear and optimistic dialogue to replace the foggy diplomacy between them since the 1960s (Wuhibegezer, 2020). However, the agreement did not

prove to be a panacea for resolving all disputes between the two countries. Thus, the agreement was neither a binding document nor solving all the disputes between the two countries. It was more frameworks for future negotiations (Ibid, 2007; ibid, 2020).

3.2.3.3. The Declaration of Principles (DoP)

It was signed for the first time in the history of the Eastern Nile Basin on March 23, 2015, by Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan, and is viewed as a step forward in increasing cooperation in the Basin (Henok, 2016). The Declaration of Principles is a compromise reached by the Eastern Nile Basin countries. As a result, the DoP includes a set of principles that strike a balance between the rights and interests of the signatories. Since in fact no country got all what it demands, or agreed with an absolute loss. As a result, the DoP handles important issues such as cooperation, confidence building, data and information exchange, and peaceful conflict resolution. The signing of the DoP can be considered as an improvement having a capacity to change the strain challenging regional relations in the Eastern Nile Basin. However, in fact the DoP was treated as manifesting political instead of a legal dedication of the signatories (Ibid, 2016).

The DoP also include some significant articles that help to improve interstate cooperation in the Eastern Nile basin by alleviating tensions and build confidence of downstream riparian countries. These includes the guideline and rules of the first filling and creating coordination of the GERD and downstream (HAD) reservoirs. DoP also provide prioritizes for lower riparian countries to purchase electricity when the project is completed and power generation begins (Tawfik, 2015).

Therefore, the Declaration of Principles has a positive effect on the hydro-political relation of Egypt and Ethiopia, which enforces that the two countries come together to discuss on how to use the common Nile water in a fair and reasonable way. As a result, unlike previous colonial and bilateral agreements, DoP takes into account the interests of Ethiopia and recognizes the importance of the Nile water for its development.

3.3. Attempts of Cooperation to Establish Basin-wide Institution

Despite the tension between the upper and lower riparian states, since 1967 Nile riparian states attempts to form a basin-wide institution that helps to bring together and discuss water issues, and develop joint initiatives (Atwan, 2018).

3.3.1. Hydromet (1967–1992)

The Hydro-Meteorological Survey (Hydromet) was the first initiative that created in 1967 with the backing of United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The initiative's goal was to gather and evaluate meteorological data from equatorial lakes and rivers, and then share the findings to member countries (Yacob & Imeru, 2005; ibid, 2018). All the riparian countries of the Nile basin joined the Hydro-met, but Ethiopia and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) refused to join, objecting on the absence of the water redistribution issue from the organization's mandate (Ibid, 2018). Since, the real aim of this initiative was not to bring a common framework on the utilization of the Nile River by all riparian states, rather the initiative aims to impose Egypt's dominance and maintain its status quo in the Nile basin (Ademnur, 2003). As a result, the Hydromet project was failed to develop an effective basin-wide regulations and ended in 1992 (Henok, 2016). So, it was served as an instrument for maintaining Egypt's status quo, to continue a hydro-hegemony riparian state on the Nile Basin.

3.3.2. UNDUGU (1983–1993)

"UNDUGU" is a Swahili word meaning "brotherhood". The Undugu Forum was founded in 1983 at Khartoum, Sudan, under the leadership of Egypt. Accordingly, Egypt, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda and the Central African Republic were the founding members of the forum (although the Central African Republic was not a country in the Nile basin). The purpose of the forum was to build cooperation in the following common areas such as trade, environment, telecommunications, culture, electric power and development of water resources (Yacob & Imeru, 2005; Ashumar, 2020).

Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania have an observer status in the forum. Thus, the initiative lacks active participation of all riparian states and also lacks to frame the fundamental issues of water utilization and management, and the cooperation would not be able to stay for long (Ibid, 2005). As a result, Ethiopia challenged that the Undugu had not legal status and competence to develop the plan of Action for the Nile basin as a legitimate authority (Ibid, 2020). Therefore, like the Hydromet, UNDUGU also an instrument of Egypt efforts used to maintain and consolidate its monopoly of the Nile water rather than establishing basin-wide legal institution.

3.3.3. TECCONILE (1992-1998)

The Ministers of Water Resources of Egypt, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo formed the Technical Cooperation Committee for the Promotion of Development and Environmental Protection of the Nile Basin (TECCONILE) in Kampala, Uganda, in 1992, by Egypt's initiative. As a result, they created a Nile Basin Action Plan with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). On the other hand, other four Nile Basin riparian states, such as Ethiopia, Eritrea, Burundi and Kenya started to participate as observers (Ibid, 2005; ibid, 2016).

TECCONILE aimed to assist Member States in developing a national master plan, integrating it into the Nile Development Action Plan, and constructing the infrastructure and capacity in water resource techniques required for the basin's water resources. The better achievement of TECCONILE as compared with all other previous initiatives was to explain its equitable claims. This long-term goal was highlighted by one of the projects designated as D3 that dealt with the creation of a collaborative framework that ultimately solves the problem of water distribution among the riparian states of Nile basin (Ademnur, 2003). However, TECCONILE was not successful due to financial constraints and the disagreement among the riparian states of the Nile Basin (Ejigu, 2016).

In general, like the Hydromet (1967) and Undugu (1983), the successes of TECCONILE (1992) was very limited; since they did not include all riparian states of the Nile basin, and they only emphasized on technical issues and avoid the legal challenges (Cascao, 2009). Thus, Egypt used Hydromet, Undugu and TECCONILE as a means of sustaining and consolidating its monopoly of the Nile water.

3.3.4. Nile Basin Initiative (Since 1999)

The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) was created in 1999 in Dare-Salaam, Tanzania, with the purpose of achieving long-term socioeconomic development by guaranteeing fair use and benefit from the Nile Basin's shared water resources. Accordingly, the states of the Nile basin established a transitional institution called the NBI (Henok, 2016).

Its objectives include the sustainable and fair utilization of water resources in the Nile basin in order to ensure peace for all Nile basin peoples, as well as cooperation and joint action among riparian countries, and the pursuit of mutual benefit. This was achieved by sharing knowledge between states in the Nile basin and promoting regional cooperation in the areas of water resources management, hydropower, agriculture, irrigation, watershed projects and fishery (Ashumar, 2020).

The Nile Basin Initiative also serves as a funding source for regionally focused financial institutions. This is the most significant basin-wide collaborative development of Nile waters, and its relevance extends far beyond the basin. The World Bank sponsored the NBI in collaboration with CIDA and UNDP (Yacob, 2007).

The NBI has two paths, the technical path and the legal path. The technical aspects of NBI deal with environmental, irrigation, watershed, flood and hydropower projects within the framework of the Subsidiary Action Program (SAP) and the Shared Vision Program (SVP) (Ibid, 2016). The legal path concentrates on the legal and institutional aspects of the NBI. The NBI also serves as a transitional mechanism until all riparian countries in the Nile basin sign the CFA, which would lead to the formation of a permanent Nile Basin Commission (NBC) (Ibid, 2016).

The CFA aims to improve cooperation and govern interactions among the basin countries in order to promote integrated water resource management, sustainable development and harmonious water resource utilization. It also works on conservation and protection for current and future generations, as well as the establishment of a permanent Nile River Basin Commission (Ibid, 2016). Thus, on May 14, 2010, the CFA was officially opened for signature at Entebbe, Uganda. As a result, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda signed the accord in 2010, and Burundi signed it in 2011. Egypt and Sudan, on the other hand, have refused to sign the deal. It creates a framework for interstate cooperation in the Nile basin (Nicole and Cascao, 2011).

The CFA establishes a set of essential principles for the protection, usage and development of Nile basin. The CFA lays down the principles that all Nile Basin countries have the right to use water within their territories, as well as equitable and reasonable use principles. In addition to the elements listed in the UN Watercourses Convention, the CFA includes each state’s supply of

water to the Nile basin, as well as the level and proportion of drainage areas within each Nile basin state's territory (Salman, 2013).

Therefore, since 1999 multilateral cooperation has changed significantly because all the Nile basin states, including Ethiopia, became members and actively involved. Accordingly, in the post 1990s, Ethiopia plays a strong and leading role in challenging and influencing Egypt's water monopoly status quo via cooperation with the riparian countries of the Nile Basin. The launched of NBI and signing of CFA by upstream countries of the Nile basin were the major changes in the dynamics of Nile hydro politics, which shows the growing capacity and aspirations of Ethiopia and other upper riparian states to challenge Egypt's monopoly and use the common water supply in a fair and reasonable way without causing significant harm to one another.

To sum up, upstream states, mainly Ethiopia argued that the new framework should ignore previous agreements that it was not a member, while downstream countries, mainly Egypt wants the new framework to take into account the old agreement as an integral part of the new agreement. Hence, Egypt wants to keep things as they are, while Ethiopia wants a fresh deal. Therefore, due to Egypt's greedy, selfish and rigid interests, the Nile river basin riparian countries failed to establish an inclusive basin-wide institution that promotes rational and equitable use of the shared water resource among them.

3.4. Factors which cause either Conflict or cooperation

3.4.1. Unilateralism

Unilateral water development is one of the factors which hindered the cooperative efforts of Egypt and Ethiopia on the use of the Nile water resources. As a result, unilateralism prevents sustainable use and development of water in integrated and harmonized manner, and viewed as a direct threat to effective cooperation and causes for conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia. Thus, unilateralism creates a political conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia (Tariku, 2014).

In this regard, Ethiopia's unilateral decision to build the GERD, which began in 2011 without consultation with downstream states, has rising tensions between Egypt and Ethiopia. Since Egyptians disappointed with this project fearing that it reduces the amounts of water that reach to their territory. Even though Ethiopia declared the unilateral construction of GERD since April

2011, however Ethiopia has been engaged in multilateral cooperation through different Nile Basin initiatives and tried to discuss on the impact of the dam with the riparian states (Atwan, 2018; ibid, 2020).

3.4.2. Asymmetric power Relationship

The power relationships among states sharing a river basin have a significant impact on the dynamics of interactions between riparian states and the outcome of competition for water resources (Zeitoun & Warner, 2006). Thus, geographically, upper riparian have natural capability of upper-hand to utilize and administer the waters of the River Basin. However, Powerful states do not have to be located upstream; they might be in the middle or downstream (Atwan, 2018). Accordingly, the downstream state, Egypt has been developed its hydro- hegemonic status in the Nile basin through material, bargaining and ideational powers rather than geographical power (Cascao, 2009).

However, in order to have a symmetrical influence on the basin, Ethiopia and other upstream countries are beginning to develop both human and institutional capabilities to manage information, data and communications on the Nile issue. Accordingly, they have begun to participate actively in knowledge management, agenda-setting and policy development. As a result, the existed hydro-hegemony of Egypt has been challenged by Ethiopia in various ways, with the intention of replacing it with a more equitable and upstream-friendly regime (Cascao & Nicol, 2016).

Therefore, the inauguration of the GERD project is a turning point in changing the asymmetric power relation and brings balance of power relation between Egypt and Ethiopia, which promotes cooperation rather than conflict between them. As a result, GERD is a means of realizing symmetrical power relation between Egypt and Ethiopia.

3.4.3. Divergent Interests

The existence of divergent interests and priorities between/among riparian states increases conflict intensity between/among them. Accordingly, Egypt and Ethiopia have divergent interest on the use of the Nile water. Egypt has been strongly resisting for the realization of the 1959 bilateral agreement. Thus, Egypt has been a dominant riparian state in the Nile Basin, which

wants to maintain its historic right and status quo, and constantly underlines its serious reliance on the Nile waters (Cascao, 2009; Yacob, 2012).

On the contrary, Ethiopia wants to use the Nile water resources for its development and poverty alleviation through equitable and reasonable manner with all riparian countries. Hence, Ethiopia and upper riparian countries pushing for a new agreement based on the principle of equitable utilization that could ultimately lead to a renegotiation of the 1959 agreement through a multilateral agreement (Atwan, 2018). Accordingly, the natural and historical rights versus sovereign rights over the use water resources are the main causes of conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia over the Nile water utilization. Therefore, the existence of these divergent or conflictive interests was the major factor that hinders the cooperative efforts of Egypt and Ethiopia, and cause of conflict between them.

3.4.4. Colonial Legacy and Lack of Inclusive Basin-wide Institution

The colonial powers have been shaped the history of the Nile water utilization, and have played a significant role in intensifying tensions between Egypt and Ethiopia on the use of the Nile water (Tariku, 2014). Accordingly, Britain, the colonial ruler of the region, effectively controlled the Nile through its military power during the colonial era, and effectively determined the circumstances associated with the Nile basin regime. Therefore, since 1884 the utilization of water on the Nile River has been under the control of the British Protectorate. It is important to note that in enforcing the legal system on the Nile during the colonial era, Britain made many concessions in favor of Egypt at the expense of Ethiopia and other riparian countries. To this end, Britain has made various agreements on behalf of the colonies under its control to ensure an unobstructed flow of water to Egypt (Wuhibegezer, 2020). Hence, the United Kingdom signed five basic agreements with other colonial powers and riparian states on the use of the Nile in support of Egypt.

Therefore, the Colonial Treaties adversely affected the relations between Egypt and Ethiopia and hindered their cooperation efforts in utilizing the water of the Nile. Thus, the Nile river basin riparian countries failed to establish an inclusive basin-wide institution, which promotes equitable and reasonable utilization of the common water resource by them.

3.5. The Role of Ethiopia's Counter-Hydro Hegemony Mechanisms in Changing Egypt's Hydro Hegemony

The Eastern Nile Basin has been characterized by the existence asymmetry power relation among the riparian states. Thus, Egypt has established negative/dominative hydro hegemony in the Nile river basin via dual approaches of water resource manipulate strategies, resource capture and normative instrumentation, which is completed through four tactics: coercion, utilitarian, normative and ideological hegemonic compliance mechanisms (knowledge building, securitization and sanctioned discourse) (Gashaw, 2019). Thus, Egypt's long held restrictive or oppressive hydro-hegemony over the Eastern Nile Basin makes the simply and equitable decision of the Nile water judgments an alarming task (Tekuya, 2018).

However, the hydro hegemonic trans-boundary water arrangement system can be challenged and changed rather than being a fixed reality. Thus, counter hydro hegemony refers to the response or reaction of non-hegemonic riparian states to the inequitable water arrangement created, maintained and consolidated by the basin hydro hegemonic power (Ibid, 2019). Accordingly, Ethiopia embarked on a long journey to erode the hydro political status quo, which was legally recognized by the 1929 and 1959 agreements with the intent of making Nile an Egyptian River, through using its geographical power and with the relatively increasing material and bargaining power (Ibid, 2019).

Therefore, Ethiopia has been adopting various counter hydro-hegemonic mechanisms in order to change the Egyptian hydro-hegemony (Cascao, 2008; Henok, 2016). Hence, Ethiopia advocates the principle of equitable and reasonable use, forming coalitions, raises funds for development projects and engaging in joint initiatives to challenge the status quo (Atwan, 2018). Thus, Ethiopia has taken counter-hegemonic measures such as launching the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), signing and ratifying the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA), unilaterally building the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), establishing an International Panel of Experts (IPoE) and signing the Declaration of Principles (Ibid, 2016; Tekuya, 2018).

Ethiopia has played a leading role in the signing of the CFA, starting with putting the issue of the legal framework for realizing equitable and reasonable utilization of Nile water. Accordingly, Ethiopia continued its effort to put all river basin countries under permanent, multilateral, sustainable and cooperative river basin organization. This becomes evident when Ethiopia

became the first state in the Nile Basin to ratifying the CFA by incorporating it into the national laws (Ibid, 2016). So, with the ratification of CFA and construction of the GERD, Ethiopia changed from a silent partner to an influential partner and challenged the Egyptian hegemonic power (Anwar, 2017).

Furthermore, according to Tawfik (2016), the GERD project is a "game changer" that undermines Egypt's long-held dominance in the Nile basin. It demonstrates changes in the power dynamics between Egypt and Ethiopia. Ethiopia was able to construct the GERD without the need for foreign assistance because it was able to for the first time combine the geographical strength of its upstream location with the material power of economic development (Tawfik, 2016; ibid, 2019). As a result, GERD for the first time forced Egypt to accept a project, which is constructed by Ethiopia unilaterally on the Nile water.

Ethiopia has improved its bargaining power by establishing the Tripartite International Panel of Experts (IPoE, 2013).Thus, to build trust among the three riparian countries, the government of Ethiopia has genuinely invited Sudan and Egypt to set up International Panel of Experts on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in order to reviewing the design document of GERD and finally to report the possible benefits and costs of GERD on the downstream countries (Ibid, 2016). This was the first time in the history of the Nile water utilization, which shows the unselfishness, benevolence and trustworthiness of the Ethiopian Government and its people.

Besides, Henok (2016) stated that Ethiopia increased its ideational power through an alternative discourse of 'equitable and reasonable utilization' of the shared water resources. With respect to GERD, Ethiopia also assured that 'no significant harm' will be caused to downstream countries due to the construction of GERD. Rather, Ethiopia claims that the GERD is a beneficiary project for everyone, which was confirmed by the IPoE final report (Ibid, 2016).

The GERD project is part of the Ethiopian Government comprehensive plan to expand hydropower capacity and meet growing energy demand (Wuhibegezer, 2020). Accordingly, Ethiopia's energy development strategy is critical to the country's economic progress. Djibouti, Kenya, and Sudan have all signed energy trade agreements with Ethiopia (Atwan, 2018). Thus, when the GERD project completed, Ethiopia can easily expand its influence in the Nile Basin by exchanging relatively cheap hydropower to the neighboring countries. Hence, Ethiopia desires to

be a regional energy hub and supplier to Djibouti, South Sudan, Kenya, Sudan, Yemen and Europe. The GERD project is intended as a means of achieving hydropower strategies in the region to compensate for the loss of access to the seas in Ethiopia and to maximize its geopolitical and strategic importance in the Nile Basin and international politics (Ibid, 2020).

In a nutshell, GERD is a sign of the relative power shift within the Eastern Nile basin towards Ethiopia. Hence, the commencement of GERD changes the reality on the ground. Therefore, the GERD is a means of changing the inequitable use and monopoly of the shared water into equitable right and reasonable utilization by realizing Ethiopia starts to use its water resource for its sustainable development.

CHATER-FOUR

The Impact of GERD in Shifting the Hydro political Relation between Egypt and Ethiopia

4.1. The Influence of the existed Treaties on the Ethio-Egyptian Relation

Trans-boundary Rivers are subjected to treaties among riparian states of the basin in order to establish a legal binding agreement and inclusive institution that promote cooperative use of

shared water resources. Accordingly, on the utilization of the Nile river, different treaties signed by different colonial powers and riparian states at various times. Therefore, this section attempts to examine the influence of water treaties which have been signed in the Eastern Nile Basin, with the intent of showing how these treaties shaping the current hydro-political relations of Egypt and Ethiopia.

From the 1891 colonial protocol up to the 2015 declaration of principles, different water treaties and declarations were signed between/among several countries over the use of the Nile water. In this regard, one of the key informants responded that:

> *The colonial era water treaties and the 1959 agreement were the major bottlenecks for the tripartite negotiation over the filling and operation of the GERD. Because Egypt wants to maintain it's historic and natural rights in accordance with the 1929 and 1959 agreements. While Ethiopia denounces the colonial and the 1959 agreements were unjustifiable, non-binding, illegal agreements and have no legal place on the current tripartite negotiations over the GERD project.*[1]

Likewise, other interviewee also responded that the Egyptian nationalism has been made based on the 1929 and 1959 unilateral and bilateral treaties, and these treaties are a source of National identity for Egypt, which in turn causes for conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia.[2]

Furthermore, Prof. Yacob Arsano, a senior water expert on EBC Addis Dialogue described that:

> *Based on the 1929 agreement Egypt claims historic right and thinks that nobody, no country in the basin should touch the Nile water without Egypt consent. But, it is a wrong start, a wrong history and a wrong communication between a colonial Britain and Egypt (EBC, 18 March 2020).*

From the above views, one can concluded that to maintain its economic interest, Great Britain made a historic wrong by acknowledging historic right and veto power for Egypt on the use of the Nile water, and rejecting the rights and interests of Ethiopia. Therefore, the colonial and

[1]Interview with Mr. Abebe Yirga, Bahir Dar University political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

[2]Interview with Ass/Prof. Yayew Genet, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 5th of May, 2022

bilateral water treaties completely lack inclusiveness and the major source of conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia. Since, Egypt wants to realize the colonial and the 1959 bilateral agreement, and monopolize the Nile water unilaterally. While Ethiopia rejects these agreements and wants a new legal agreement that ensure equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile water. So, the existence of this opposite interest is the major cause of conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia. Accordingly, the 1929 and 1959 agreements have negative influence on the current Ethio-Egyptian hydro-political relations, and causes for conflict between them over the utilization of the Nile water. Even though the Nile water treaties were the root of Egypt's conflict with Ethiopia, however these treaties are exclusive, invalid and irrelevant, and they lacked legal validity and status to prevent Ethiopia from utilizing the Nile water.

In July 1993, Ethiopia and Egypt was signed the first bilateral framework for cooperation on the use of the Nile water at Cairo, Egypt. Accordingly, one of the political science experts stated that even though four of the eight articles of the agreement (5, 6, 7, and 8) clearly deal with issues of the Nile water, however, the agreement was neither a binding document nor solving all the disputes between the two countries.[3] For example, article five of the agreement stated that*: "Each party shall refrain from engaging in any activity related to the Nile water that may cause significant harm to the interests of other party".* The article is interpreted in accordance with 'no significant harm' principle that stated in the UN convention. Thus, Wuhibegezer (2020) in his recent study argued that the principle is implementing only to Ethiopia and regardless of Egyptian water exploitation. He emphasized that the article is preventing Ethiopia from undertaking hydraulic works that might prevent Egypt from getting its full water share of the Nile, which favors towards Egypt (Wuhibegezer, 2020).

Moreover, article seven of the framework stated that "*The two parties will create appropriate mechanisms for periodic consultations on matters of mutual concern including the Nile waters, in a manner that would enable them to work together for peace and stability in the region."* Even if this article related with the principle of prior consultation, however as stated by Wuhibegezer (2020), Egypt did not consult Ethiopia on any of its projects, including the building of the Aswan High Dam, the Nile water diversion to the West and East of Sinai, and the mega

[3]Interview with Associate Professor Wuhibegezer Ferede (PhD), Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies lecturer and Researcher at Blue Nile Water Institute, on 08th of May 2022

project, which entails a huge diversion of Nile water to the Western desert. With regard to this, Egyptian president, Sadat stated that*: "Once I decide to divert the Nile water into the Sinai; I will not try to get permission from Ethiopia…if they do not like our measure, they can go to hell"* (Ibid, 2020).

However, Ethiopia, in contrast to Egypt, encouraged Sudan and Egypt and set up an international panel of experts to assess the implications of GERD on downstream states. This shows Ethiopia's commitment for cooperation, and goodwill for equitable and reasonable utilization without significant harm of the shared Nile water with Egypt and other riparian states.

Based on the above ideas one can conclude that the agreement was not binding and cannot solve long-held conflicts between Egypt and Ethiopia, rather it served as a platform for future discussions over the use of Nile water. As a result, it has a positive influence on Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relationship, but lacks legal validity.

To deconstruct the persistent legacies of the colonial and neocolonial impositions, Ethiopia mobilized upper riparian countries to form the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) in 1999. Accordingly, one of the key informants clearly stated that the NBI was founded with the intention of creating long-term institutional and normative frameworks that promote equitable use of the water resources in the Nile basin. After ten years of intense negotiations, NBI was transformed into the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) in 2010.[4] With this regard, Prof. Yacob Arsano indicated on EBC Addis Dialogue unlike earlier colonial treaties, the CFA guaranteed that Nile is the common resource of eleven riparian states of the basin, and that the shared water resources can be used in an equitable and fair manner without causing considerable harm (EBC, 18 March 2020*).*

In similar vein, another interviewee responded that:

> *The CFA replaced the colonial and monopolistic claim with accepted principle of international law, makes them null and void or irrelevant, and enables riparian states along the Nile basin to undertake projects without Egypt's or Sudan's authorization.*

[4]Interview with Ass/Prof. Asabu Sewunet, Debre Markos University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, On 15th of April, 2022

However, Egypt and Sudan refused to sign CFA, because they want to maintain their monopolistic water use over the shared Nile water resources.[5]

More importantly, the participant claims that Ethiopia has taken the required efforts to renegotiate and sign new agreement regarding the use and management of Nile water resources. Hence, Ethiopia has been initiating the entire basin states in general and upstream states in particular to sign and make effective the NBI and CFA which help her to construct its huge dam on the Blue Nile River. Thus, Ethiopia changes the Nile hydro politics by coordinating and mobilizing the upper riparian states, and increases its bargaining and ideational power over the utilization of the Nile water.[6]

In a nutshell, according to the above views of key informants, the signing of the CFA by upper riparian countries is a significant development in the ten-year discussions over the use of Nile water resources. Thus, CFA has a positive influence on the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relation over the utilization of the Nile water cooperatively. Despite the fact that the CFA outlines riparian states' rights and obligations based on the principles of equitable and reasonable use, no significant harm, prior notification of intended actions, and water security, however it is not a legally enforceable agreement.

In 2015 Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt was signed the Declaration of Principles (DoP) at Khartoum, Sudan. The DoP (2015) has ten provisions that addressed the question of the filling and operation of GERD. As a result, one of the experts responded that the signing of the Declaration of Principles (DoP) marks the opening of a new phase in the hydro political relationship between Ethiopia and Egypt with regard to the Nile water. Since this was the major shift that Egypt has, the first time, clearly recognized and participated in the actual water development of the Nile by Ethiopia on the ground.[7]

[5]Interview with Ass/Prof. Embiale Beyene, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

[6]Interview with Mr. Asabu Sewunet, Debre Markos University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, On 15th of April, 2022

[7]Interview with Ass/Prof. Yayew Genet, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 5th of May, 2022

In support of the above, another expert also stated that the signing of DoP was the most significant change in the Nile's water policy and was not seen before the past 50 or 60 years.[8] From the above participants view, one can conclude that the DoP affirmed the foundation of international law and equality of riparian states in using the Nile water. So, unlike the previous colonial and bilateral treaties, DoP consider the interests of Ethiopia and acknowledge the significance of the Nile water for Ethiopia's sustainable development. Therefore, it has a positive impact in shaping the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relations. Even though the DoP illustrates a relative shift in the Nile hydro politics, however it is not a binding agreement that could change the existed status quo.

To sum up, there is no single legal water treaty or agreement that recognizes and guarantees the rights of all riparian countries to utilize the common water resource in equitable and reasonable manner. As a result, the Nile river basin riparian countries failed to establish an inclusive basin-wide legal binding agreement, which in turn affects the relation of Egypt and Ethiopia and causes for conflict between them on the current utilization of the Nile water. Therefore, reaching a comprehensive agreement is a call for time to break the deadlock and find possible solutions that ensure a mutually beneficial situation for both countries.

4.2. The Dynamics of Ethio-Egyptian Hydro political Relation Since 2011

The inauguration of the GERD project in April 2011 has been worsening the hydro-political relations between Egypt and Ethiopia. Immediately since the inauguration of the GERD project, Egypt became confused and sent its public diplomats to Ethiopia. Accordingly, to alleviate the bad feelings developed by the Egyptians and create trust between riparian states, Ethiopia responded positively to establish a tripartite technical committee that oversees the dam. As a result, an International Panel of Experts (IPoE) was established in 2012, with ten members: six from each of the three states (two from each) and four international experts.[9] Furthermore, the key informant interviewee stated that Ethiopia also submitted to the IPoE all 153 design and study documents of the GERD.[10] The IPoE delivered its full report after a one-year assessment,

[8] Interview with Mr. Abebe Yirga, Bahir Dar University political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

[9] Accessed at: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/jul/14/ethiopia-grand-renaissance-dam-egypt

[10] Interview with Ass/Prof. Asabu Sewunet, Debre Markos University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, On 15th of April, 2022

and verifying that the GERD dam's safety met international standards and recommending further research on the environmental and socio-economic impacts (Yacob, 2021).

The above view infers that, in the history of the Nile water utilization, Ethiopia shows its strong commitment for building confidence, transparency, unselfishness, goodwill, trustworthiness and cooperation to ease tensions with Egypt and utilize the shared Nile water via win-win approach. So, Ethiopia attempts to change the unilateral and conflictual water use into multilateral and cooperative water use by bringing Egypt into round table negotiation.

More importantly, following IPoE's recommendation Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt formed the Tripartite National Committee (TNC) in 2013. After extensive talks the three countries signed the Declaration of Principles in March 2015 at Khartoum, Sudan. With this regard, Yacob (2021) argues that the DoP has very important provisions that would help to move forward Ethiopia to the filling of the dam can takes place parallel with the construction of dam. Accordingly, article V of DoP provides for the filling and operations of GERD parallel with the construction of the dam.

Yacob further argues that even if the three countries can solve their differences via negotiation, mediation and reconciliation, however the negotiation again did not move fast and was very challenging to settle the interests of Egypt and Ethiopia. As a result of the disagreement between Egypt and Ethiopia, the three countries come together and established the Nine-Party Negotiation Platform. As a result, the Nine Party mechanism decided to establish National Independent Scientific Research Group (NISRG) and setup with five well known scientists in the field from each country, to create numerous scenarios involving the filling and operation of GERD (Ibid, 2021). Thus, NISRG recommended the filling schedule of GERD, however Egypt refused the study result and wants the dam filling should take longer time like from12 to 24 years. As a result, in August 2019 Egypt offered unacceptable proposals rather than accepting NISRG's work, and later internationalized the GERD dispute, with the US and World Bank to participate as an observers.[11]

Therefore, by the request of Egypt, the tripartite GERD negotiations with the US government and World Bank as observer took place from November 6, 2019 up to February 28, 2020.

[11]Accessed at: https://www.ethiopia-insight.com/2019/10/29/grand-nile-compromise-a-sisyphean-task/

However, the US changed its role from observer into mediator role and worked as provides of draft agreement favoring with Egypt's position. As a result of the partial involvement of USA on the tripartite negotiation, Ethiopia forced to withdraw from the negotiation process which clearly violated her sovereign interest (Ibid, 2021). Therefore, following Ethiopia's withdrew from the negotiation, Egypt and Sudan stand together and said there should be a binding agreement before the filling and operation of the dam. While Ethiopia rejected the signing of any binding agreement which does not considered the DoP (2015) agreement, since the dam is constructing in accordance with the Declaration of Principles.

Therefore, Egypt and Sudan took the GERD matter to the United Nations Security Council in May 2020, asserting that the dam threatens their respective national security as well as regional and international peace and security.[12]Accordingly, the former Ethiopia's Minister of water, irrigation and energy, Dr. Silesh Bekele on the UNSC addressed that:

> *For the first time, since its establishment, this Council is being asked to pronounce itself in a water development project. The Security Council is a political and a security organ. It is unhelpful and misguiding to present an issue that requires a hydro technical solution to this Global Security body. The underline problem for the difference between the three countries is the quest to preserve colonial and monopolistic statuesque over the Nile. He further told that we urge our Egyptian and Sudanese brothers and sisters to understand that the resolution to the Nile issue would not come from the Security Council, rather come only from good faith negotiations with due care of the wellbeing and development of each other (FBC, 9 July 2021).*

Therefore, the above Minister's speech demonstrated that the GERD project is an economic development project, not a nuclear bomb project that threaten the global peace and security, and that can be solved by the regional organization like AU rather than the global peace and security organization. As a result, Ethiopia defended that the dam is an economic development project that can be negotiated under the auspices of the African Union with the framework of 'African

[12]Accessed at: https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14576.doc.htm

solution for African problems,' and that both the African union and the DRC are perfectly capable of finding win-win solutions to all of the concerns.[13]

Therefore, the UNSC granted the requests of Ethiopia's and it referred the matter to the African Union to serve as an observer to GERD negotiation. The last round of negotiation was held on April 6 2021 in Kinshasa, DRC, but concluded without solution.[14]

Therefore, even if negotiation passes through at various levels and periods, however all of these periods were ended without concrete solution. In this regard, Ambassador Dina Mufti, spokesperson of Ethiopia's foreign affair minister on EBC Addis Dialogue indicated that:

> *Egyptians in all years of negotiation have been focusing on one thing i.e., realizing the unjust colonial treaties which allot the major share of the Nile water to Egypt and small amount to Sudan. Since Egyptian would like to bring it directly or indirectly the very essence of these treaties (EBC, 6 August 2020).*

In similar vein, Omer Redi, Analyst and Media commentator on African Affairs on EBC Addis Dialogue told that throughout the trilateral negotiations on the GERD, Egypt didn't show uniformity of stance rather its position has been shifting the beginning of the construction of GERD. Hence, first Egypt stands against the building of the dam and says the dam should not be materialized. Eventually, after few years, when it has become clear that the dam become constructed and to be a reality, Egypt changed its position and try to negotiate the dam's size, height, capacity and the need for a long duration of time. He further stated that Egypt has not a good will, consensus and does not want a fair and equitable use of water. Rather Egypt always wants to have veto power over the Nile water particularly in the upstream countries (EBC, 6 August 2020).

More importantly, Wuhibegezer (2020) stated that when the GERD becomes an unstoppable fact on the ground the dissenting strategy of Egypt was changed into institutionalization of the statuesque via the pretext of signing a binding agreement.

[13]Accessed at: http://onflix.dyndns.tv/content-https-addisstandard.com/2021/03/

[14]Accessed at: https://www.reuters.com/article/ethiopia-dam-egypt-int/three-way-talks-over-ethiopian-dam-fail-in-kinshasa-statementidUSKBN2BT1HU

According to the above views, Egypt has been changed its position periodically to preserve its self-centered, unjust and rigid interest. As a result, Egypt's pessimistic and selfish interest over the shared Nile water has been the major factor that causes the deadlock of the decade-long tripartite negotiations over the GERD.

Even though the GERD has a positive impact on the hydro political relations and diplomatic involvements of the Eastern Nile Basin countries by initiating trilateral diplomatic negotiation over the Nile issue, which is a positive step in the direction of institutional cooperation and regional integration. However, since the announcement of GERD there were ups and downs in GERD diplomacy and predictions have been made towards a continuance of water diplomacy or turn backs to water war (Wuhibegezer, 2020). Therefore, with the failure to reach an amicable solution over the GERD controversy, absence of a binding legal system, and an aggressive and unfair external intervention, the possibility of a water war between Egypt and Ethiopia has become more plausible.

For instance, when Ethiopia completely rejected the US-drafted agreement and officially declared that the filling and operation of the dam would be based on the provisions of DoP and the former US president Trump said that Egypt can blow up the dam combine with Egypt's president Al-sis warned *"the waters of Egypt are untouchable and touching it is a red line,"* the conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia over the GERD project reach at high climax and expectations for the occurrence of water war is increased. Accordingly, the researcher asked the key informant interviewees that do you think Egypt would take military action on the GERD? The key informants responded in the following ways:

One of the experts, Yayew argues that Egypt does not take direct military action on the GERD because the international law doesn't allow in taking military measure and now the GERD can keeps itself. Because the dam saves water that has an adverse effect on the downstream countries, if Egypt tries to attack the dam. Rather, Egypt invaded indirectly through proxy war by supporting TPLF and Gumuz militants. So, to stop the construction of GERD and to divert the attentions of the central government, Egypt uses its old destabilizing strategies which are supporting different insurgent groups like TPLF, and GUMZ militant.[15]

[15]Interview with Ass/Prof. Yayew Genet, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 5th of May, 2022

Similarly, Abebe also argues that:

> *Egypt will not take military measure, because the topography is not allowed to take military action. Instead Egypt continues in its old strategies of supporting different insurgent groups like TPLF, Gumuz militant, OLF and other rebellion groups. He further stated that Ethiopia has strong defense force and built enough internal capability to defend any threats of Egyptian. So, he commented that the Nile issue is not solving by war and Egypt has not the political, military or geographic position for solving the Nile problem via a water war.*[16]

Furthermore, Embiale argues that there is no lasting solution in water war and also which one is defeated is unknown. He further stated that starting from the 1979 Camp David agreement there was war narration by Egyptian leaders. War is not fit in strategically, economically and hydro logically, and will not bring a lasting solution. But, Egypt normally declared war on Ethiopia through proxy war by supporting TPLF, OLF and Gumuz militant groups. [17]

More significantly, Prof. Yacob Arsano, a senior water expert on Aljazeera argued that:

> *Water war is a false theory, the theory propagated by politicians not by a researchers or academicians, there is no reason or backing they can be water war on the Nile Basin. They are dependent on each other, they come to cooperate. Water will continue forever for bigger population, for bigger economic need and for bigger economic activity. The only thing is think seriously and to think emphatically, cooperate and to consult how to utilize the water resources where it best benefit countries and the nation in the Basin (Aljazeera, 12 June 2011).*

It can conclude from the views of the above participants that the expectation of water war between Egypt and Ethiopia is unlikely. Since water war will not bring final solution over the use of the Nile water resource. So, the only solution is building trust and cooperation to promote mutual benefits, but Egyptian mentality did not accept cooperation and mutual benefit. As a result, to destabilize Ethiopia and delaying the GERD project, Egypt uses the political dispute

[16]Interview with Mr. Abebe Yirga, Bahir Dar University political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

[17]Interview with Ass/Prof. Embiale Beyene, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

between TPLF and the central government as an opportunity to put an aggressive pressure on Ethiopia by supporting dissatisfied groups in Ethiopia. Therefore, the Nile water war which was forecasted to take place over the GERD is now looking unlikely even if the decade-long negotiation ended without final solution due to the rigid position of Egypt.

In a nutshell, one can deduce from the above discussion that in the whole processes of GERD negotiation, Ethiopia has shown its flexibility, trustworthiness, solid commitment to utilize the shared Nile water resource cooperatively in accordance with internationally accepted principles, such as equitable and reasonable utilization, no significant harm, and negotiation with good faith. Since GERD is a unilateral dam financed by Ethiopians but Ethiopia invited Egypt and Sudan to discuss on the impact of its water infrastructure. Accordingly, Ethiopia creates engaging and participatory environment on the Nile hydro politics. Therefore, the GERD plays a significant role to bring new legal regime on the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relation.

On the other hand, Egypt shows its inflexible position, mistrust, aggressive, self-centered national interest and strong commitments to impose its unjust claims to maintain the historical rights and current use status quo. So, as a result of the existed divergent interests of Egypt and Ethiopia over the common water resource, the absence of a legal binding treaty and established inclusive water institutions, they failed to reach a final solution (See Chapter Three).

To sum up, the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relation over the GERD negotiations were characterized by irregular involvement, repeated stalemates, new beginnings, verbal warfare, sabotage, mistrust, hopeless deliberations, unfair external intervention and aggressive threats.

4.2.1. Factors that Influence the Ethio-Egyptian Relations over the GERD

4.2.1. Domestic Politics

One of the key informants, Embiale responded that the fundamental determinant factor that influences the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relation over the GERD project is domestic political factor. He further explained that riparian states have poor and contradictory water governance over the use of the Nile water. For instance, the preamble of Egypt constitution says that “Nile is the gift of Egypt” and Article 44 the constitution also stated that “the state enforces to protect the Nile water and maintaining Egypt’s historic right.” Accordingly, the Egyptian constitution forces the government to preserve Egypt’s historic right and veto power over the

Nile Basin. As a result, Egypt comes to discussion and negotiation to maintain its historic right and monopolistic status quo rather than using mutually and cooperatively. But the truth is Nile is shared by eleven riparian countries. So, there is no historic right and veto power.[18]

In support of the above, Zerihun Abebe, a diplomat and member of Ethiopian GERD negotiation team on EBC interview told that Egypt wants to use the negotiation of GERD as an opportunity to maintain colonial era treaties and to block Ethiopia from using Nile in the future, and also to make the GERD as the only share of Ethiopia. It is unacceptable for Ethiopia (EBC, 02 October 2020).

With this regard, another political science expert responded that Egypt forced Ethiopia to enter a binding agreement before the filling and operation of the GERD and claimed 40 BCM guaranteed flow to release water from GERD. This indicates an indirect attempt of imposing the colonial era treaties on the GERD negotiation as a means of sustaining the water use status quo.[19]

Furthermore, other experts responded to the interview in similar ways:

> *Politicization and securitization of technical issues of the dam are the major factors that cause for conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia. Since technical issues of the dam such as dam safety, filling and operation are solvable and the periodic deadlocks are caused by securitization of the dam. Hence, Securitization of the Nile water as Nile is the gift of Egypt and Egypt has not life without Nile discourse is the major causes of conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia over the equitable and reasonable utilization of the shared water resource. Due to this reason, Egypt argues that GERD is an existential threat of Egyptians.*[20]

According to the above views of participants, the domestic politics of Egypt is the major determinant factor that influences the hydro political relations of Egypt and Ethiopia over the GERD project. Since the constitution of Egypt enforces the government to maintain the historic right of Egypt which is deep-rooted under colonial and bilateral treaties and stated that Egypt has

[18] Interview with Ass/Prof. Embiale Beyene, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

[19] Interview with Mr. Abebe Yirga, Bahir Dar University political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

[20] Interview with Ass/Prof. Yayew Genet, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 5th of May, 2022

historic and natural rights over the Nile water. As a result, Egyptian leaders are guided by this legal frame work, in turn throughout the Nile water diplomatic negotiations, political elites working towards maintaining the historic and monopolistic status quo unless they face popular opposition. Therefore, Egyptian leaders politicize and securitize the GERD as an existential threat of Egyptians for the purpose of healing domestic political wounds, gaining popular support and legitimacy in the domestic politics of Egypt. Indeed, this makes Egypt to be the prominent aggressor on the issue of equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile Water.

Therefore, as a result of the above determinant factor Egypt remains stubborn that a drop of water what it currently uses is untouchable. With this regard, Egyptian president Abdel Fattah al-Sissi told that there could be 'regional consequences' if Egypt's water rights are violated.

> *He also warned of instability that no one can imagine if the dam was filled without a proper agreement between the three countries. No one can take a single drop of water from Egypt, and whoever wants to try it, let him try, No one imagines that it will be far from our capabilities. I repeat that the waters of Egypt are untouchable, and touching it is a red line, (Aljazeera, 31 March 2021).*

Thus, the above speeches of the president clearly demonstrates that Egypt's unwillingness, zero-sum game thinking or win-lose approach that is guided by realists' perspective, highly securitization of water, unjust claim over the equitable and reasonable utilization of the shared Nile water.

On the other hand, Ethiopia responded that the claim of Egypt to maintain the unjust status quo and rejecting Ethiopia's water use right under the pretext of concluding a binding comprehensive agreement is intolerable. Accordingly, Ambassador Dina Mufti, Ethiopia's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson said that:

> *"Ethiopia has no interest in harming downstream Nile Basin countries and has always been committed to resolving issues through negotiations. Ethiopia has legal and sovereign right to use the Nile water for its development fairly and utilize it equitably.*

Ethiopia's running argument has been that any negotiations on the Nile must ensure the rights of the current and future generations of its people to use their water resource."[21]

The above quoted statements demonstrates that Ethiopia's strong commitment for solving tensions via peacefully, willingness for mutual benefit or win-win approach, generosity, just claims over the shared Nile water resources. Thus, Ethiopia is guiding by the perspectives of neo-liberal institutionalism perspective for achieving the common interests without undermining Egyptian national interest.

Thus, even though Ethiopia needs to apply a win-win approach over the utilization of the shared Nile water resource and attempting to bring Egypt into a round table negotiation to create mutual benefit via cooperation, however Egypt failed to cease its long held zero-sum game politics that has been playing for centuries. Hence, Egypt's aggressive and self-centered attitude for the need to monopolize the Nile water never fades away at this twenty first century where the world has been attempting to be integrated economically and cooperate for mutual benefit.

In a nutshell, from the above discussion, one can conclude that the primary cause of conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia rests on the existence of divergent interests over the shared Nile water resource that emanated from their domestic policies.

4.2.2. Sudan's Political Change

The position of Sudan on the GERD is another determinant factor that influences the hydro political relations of Egypt and Ethiopia by widening or minimizing the balance of power relation between them. Accordingly, as one of the interviewees responded that at the beginning of the construction of GERD project, Sudan has an optimistic view about the expected benefits of the dam and noticed that the GERD is an important for Sudan and considered as its national project. Since the GERD will help the country in Silt reduction in its dams, providing cheaper and clean affordable hydroelectric power, controlling floods and regulating the flow of water, and enhancing it's irrigate agricultural lands.[22]

[21] Accessed at: https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/04/has-diplomacy-run-out-cards-play-end-nile-dam-dispute

[22] Interview with Ass/Prof. Embiale Beyene, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

In support of the above view, another participant explains that even though Sudan's position during the Omer Elbeshir regime was pro-GERD and supported the construction of the GERD project, however following the overthrow of Omer Elbeshir from power and its rapprochement with USA Sudan stands against the GERD and sided with Egypt.[23]

Furthermore, other key informant argues that Sudan's relation with Ethiopia has been deteriorated by the border dispute over the use of the al-Fashaga farmland near their common border, which in turn escalating the Ethio-Sudanese disagreement over the GERD project. Although the border dispute, rooted in historical disagreements, but now exacerbated by the weakening relation between the two countries' new leaders. Since loss of trust between the new governments of Sudan and Ethiopia, Sudan's support to the TPLF and being the host of TPLF military training escalating the Ethio-Sudan conflict over the GERD. Therefore, Sudan's political turmoil is the major factor that complicating and worsening the hydro political relations of Egypt and Ethiopia over the GERD.[24]

More importantly, Sudan opposes the GERD and has pledged to collaborate with Egypt at all levels to push Ethiopia to engage seriously on an accord. After African Union-led talks stalled, Sudan called on the international community to intervene. Accordingly, Sudan has asked the UN Security Council to push Ethiopia to halt the unilateral filling of the dam, which it says is exacerbating the conflict and endangering regional and international peace and security.[25]

What we can deduce from the above views is that the position of Sudan is also the major determinant factor that influencing the hydro political relations of Egypt and Ethiopia over the GERD. Accordingly, Sudan's domestic politics has great impact either in exacerbating or lessening the Ethio-Egyptian controversy over the GERD project. For instance, during the Omer Elbeshir period Sudan was pro-GERD and largely supported the GERD project in the course of the tripartite talks and played a positive role in pushing the trilateral negotiations forward. Thus,

[23]Interview with Mr. Abebe Yirga, Bahir Dar University political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

[24]Interview with Ass/Prof. Yayew Genet, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 5th of May, 2022

[25]Accessed at https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/egypt-sudan-urge-ethiopia-negotiate-seriously-over-giant-dam-2021-06-09/

the support of Sudan has an influence on Egypt to come together with round table negotiation and signed the DoP in 2015 by the three countries.

Unfortunately, after the overthrow of Omer Elbeshir and its rapprochement with USA, Sudan changed its position with Egypt and become anti-GERD. Thus, Sudan and Egypt stand together and internationalize the GERD issue. So, the non-commitment position of Sudan on the construction of GERD shows that the existence of enduring national interest but not permanent relationship between countries.

Therefore, the political change in Sudan and its border conflict with Ethiopia combined with its rapprochement with USA make Sudan to have non-commitment position on the GERD, and shifts the balance of power, and worsening the hydro political relations of Egypt and Ethiopia over the GERD.

4.2.3. Unfair External Intervention

The other major determinant factor that influences the hydro political relation of Egypt and Ethiopia over the GERD project is internationalization of the GERD issue by Egypt. Accordingly, to conclude an agreement based on its best interests by exerting undue pressure on Ethiopia, Egypt used its geopolitical advantage, which is a very proximate with the Middle East and gain support from USA, World Bank and Arab countries. Accordingly, as the key informant interviewee stated that for the sake of their geopolitical interest in the Red Sea and Middle East, different countries mainly USA and Arab countries intervene on the GERD issue and GERD became the only agenda for UNSC.[26]

Furthermore, another participant stated that Mediators have national and personal interests that they bring to the negotiations. It is better to understand whose interests are represented when mediators are involved. Accordingly, the US Treasury Department as a ’self-appointed mediator’ was aggressively working to trade-off Ethiopia’s dam to secure the President Trump’s deal of the century in the Middle East peace negotiations. As a result, the USA through its Treasury exerts pressure on Ethiopia and took up a biased position on the side of Egypt. The partial intervention of USA was resulted from Ethiopia’s diplomatic weakness to agree on third party intervention.

[26] Interview with Ass/Prof. Embiale Beyene, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

So, allowing the involvement of USA on the GERD negotiation was a great mistake and an ill-informed decision that brought crises.[27]

More importantly, one of the key informants responded that USA is siding with Egypt and requesting Ethiopia to extend the filling time of GERD before reaching an agreement with Egypt and Sudan. Accordingly, the former USA president said that Ethiopia should get approval from Egyptian government before starting the first round filling of GERD. The US government will take all necessary measures unless Ethiopia is prepared to do so. As a result, if the dispute is not settled and an accord is not reached, the US has threatened to withhold development funds to Ethiopia. Accordingly, USA passed sanction on Ethiopia and 130 million dollars aid was diverted.[28] Moreover, Donald Trump suggested that Egypt would eventually bomb the GERD if an agreement is not reaching over the filling and operations of GERD (Aljazeera, October 2020).

According to the above views of key informant interviewees, Egypt's unfair interest over the use of the Nile water has got diplomatic support from USA and World Bank, targeting for stopping the filling and operation of the dam without binding agreement and delaying its period of filling in accordance with the needs of Egypt.

Therefore, the unfair intervention of USA and others like World Bank, Arab league and UNSC on the development project of Ethiopia demonstrates that the world politics is guided by realist perspectives. For instance, Ethiopia claims its legitimate and sovereign right to use the Nile water in accordance with international law. On the other hand, Egypt claims maintaining its historic and monopolistic status quo over the Nile water regardless of the international law. As a result, even if there is no moral or legal law that prevent Ethiopia from utilizing the Nile water, however USA, and other regional and international institutions tries to exert undue pressure on Ethiopia to achieve their selfish interests. Thus, the partial intervention of USA on the GERD negotiation is aims for maintaining its geopolitical interest of the Red Sea and Middle East.

Besides, the actions of World Bank and UNSC illustrates that regional and international organizations and laws are established to promote the interests of powerful states rather than

[27] Interview with Mr. Abebe Yirga, Bahir Dar University political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

[28] Interview with Ass/Prof. Yayew Genet, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 5th of May, 2022

promoting cooperation and mutual benefit. Therefore, one can understand that power matters a lot to realize the national interests of a particular state. With this regard, Egypt by using its geo strategic importance to the international politics and diplomatic superiority gain unjust support from different countries and organizations to maintain its unfair claims.

Therefore, internationalization of the GERD agenda and the unfair intervention of USA towards Egypt complicated and worsening the equitable and reasonable utilization of the shared Nile water by widening the balance of power between Egypt and Ethiopia, and causes for the deadlock of the tripartite GERD negotiations.

To sum up, despite Egypt's rigid and egocentric interest, and unfair external partial intervention of USA,WB and others, Ethiopia continuing the construction of the GERD and completed the first and second phase filling of the dam, and starting the partial generation of hydroelectric power. This indicates Ethiopia's solid commitments to change the unjust utilization of the Nile water in to fair and reasonable utilization, which in turn enhances Ethiop's sphere of influence and capability on the regional and international politics. Therefore, the GERD deconstructs the perceptions of monopolizing the Nile water on the basis of colonial agreements. As a result, resisting the unfair external interventions and returning the negotiation into AU under the frame work of African solution for African problems shows the relative growing bargaining power of Ethiopia, which in turn changes its image and status on the regional and international politics, and realize its sovereign right over the utilization of the Nile water.

4.3. Why Egypt always opposes the GERD?

Ethiopia considered the GERD is as a matter of life and death for Ethiopians and a national survival project supposes to herald its renaissance initiative, and a means of cooperation among the riparian countries. However, Egypt says that the dam is an existential threat of Egypt and the Nile water is untouchable (Aljazeera, 31 March 2021). Therefore, this section mainly attempts to examine the major causes that why Egypt continuously opposes Ethiopia's sovereign right to utilize the Blue Nile River, mainly the construction of the GERD project.

According to one of the key informant experts, Wuhibegezer stated that the primary reason that Egypt always opposes the construction of the GERD project on the Blue Nile River is fear of losing its hydro strategic and Power influence on the region. Since Egypt wants to be the

governing power of the region. Thus, Egyptians believe that the development of Ethiopia is the under development of Egypt. Hence, Egypt thinks that the GERD is considered as a means of getting hydro strategy in the region that enhancing Ethiopia's geopolitical and strategic significance in the regional and international politics. So, Egypt fears that Ethiopia will use the GERD as a means of geo-strategic for ending Egypt's hegemony by controlling the valuable Nile water through the large storage capability of the dam.[29]

In support of the above view, Dr. Fiseha Behulu, a senior water expert on EBC Addis Dialogue stated that:

> *The reason behind Egypt always crying over the safety of Ethiopian dam is to maintain the old fashion hydro hegemony over the Nile basin. Since Egyptians throughout the process of GERD construction, they oppose at every development of the GERD project. He further argues that opposing any development in the Nile Basin is the behavior of Egyptian (EBC, 6 August 2020).*

Furthermore, the threats of Egypt that always challenging the GERD project is that Ethiopia's success will be a lesson for other upstream countries and create a model for various similar claims. Indeed, once the untouchable status quo had been effectively challenged by the GERD project, other upstream countries will start doing such kind of activities.[30]

From the above views, one can infer that the foremost factor that Egypt always opposes Ethiopia's legitimate and sovereign rights of utilizing the Blue Nile water, particularly the GERD project is the matter of power rather than water. Hence, Egypt wants to maintain its historic right and current use, and consolidating the dominative hydro hegemonic status quo. Thus, Egypt always wants to be continuing the only powerful state over the regional politics, and always considered only its own interests in advance.

Therefore, Egyptian negotiation mentality is depends on realistic perspective of win-lose approach, taking everything from others rather than win-win approach. As a result of this zero-

[29]Interview with Associate Professor Wuhibegezer Ferede (PhD), Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies lecturer and Researcher at Blue Nile Water Institute, on 08th of May 2022

[30]Interview with Mr. Asabu Sewunet, Debre Markos University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, On 15th of April, 2022

sum game mentality, Egyptians believe that Ethiopia is the 'natural enemy of Egypt,' but the truth is the reverse.

The other factor that Egypt always challenges Ethiopia's legitimate right to utilize the Nile water is fear of reducing the flow of the Nile water. Historically, Egypt, the dominant user of the Nile water, stress that the GERD reservoir will control the flow of Blue Nile and reduce its access to water, which leads to water shortages (Aljazeera News, 31March 2021).

For the claims of Egypt that the GERD reduces the flow of the Nile water, the key informants confirmed that Egypt's water stress claim is not empirically grounded because the GERD is a non-water consumptive hydro power dam project, which will not cause significant harm to the water levels. For instance, the first and second years filling of the GERD reservoir showed that the project has no significant harm to Sudan and Egypt. Accordingly, Ethiopia argues that the GERD have a positive impact on Egypt and Sudan.[31]

More importantly, in support of the above view, another interviewee responded that unlike Ethiopia, Egypt is the first state that has abundant underground water resource and technological capability of establishing a desalination plant to utilize the Mediterranean and Red Sea water.[32] With this regard, Zerihun Abebe, member of Ethiopian GERD negotiation team on EBC told that:

> *Egypt is the richest country in the world in the underground water availability. It has more than 55,000 BCM and which is equivalent to more than 500 years of flow of Nile. He also argues that Egyptians focus on the desalination of both the Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea coastal lines (EBC, 02 October 2020).*

Therefore, the above views infer that Egypt has untouchable underground water potentials, and the Egyptians threats of reducing the flow of Nile water lacks scientific reason rather the claim rests on water stress phobia that emanated from its Zero-sum game thinking and mistrust rather than on any actual threat. So, the major reason that Egypt always opposes the GERD project is fear of losing the status quo on the region.

[31]Interview with Mr. Abebe Yirga, Bahir Dar University political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

[32]Interview with Ass/Prof. Embiale Beyene, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

4.4. The Role of GERD in Changing the Existed Hydro Hegemony

As discussed in chapter three, the Eastern Nile Basin is characterized by the existence of two opposite asymmetric relation, which is the largest contributor is the least user and a country that contributes nothing is the largest user. Accordingly, Ethiopia contributes 86 percent of water to the annual flow of the Nile River without benefit from it. On the other hand, for a long period of time Egypt monopolize and dominated the Nile River without any water contribution. However, in recent times Ethiopia shows its strong commitment to utilize the Nile water to alleviate extreme poverty, and realizing its equitable right and reasonable utilization of the Nile water resources. Therefore, this section attempts to examine the role of GERD in changing the existed monopoly and dominative water utilization into fair and reasonable utilization. It further explains the impact of GERD for regional integration and cooperation.

According to Mahemud Eshtu Tekuya (2018) Egypt controls and monopolizes the Nile water for a long period of time unilaterally and established an oppressive or restrictive hydro hegemony through various mechanisms. Similarly, Gashaw Ayferam (2019) also argues that Egypt has been established negative or dominative hydro hegemony in the Nile river basin via various strategies and tactics. More importantly, Ana Elisa Cascao, one of the notable experts in studying the Nile hydro hegemony and counter hydro hegemony, also argues that Egypt is the Nile hydro hegemony riparian state that has been established its hydro hegemony through material, bargaining and ideational of powers (see Chapter Two and Three). This assertion is also shared by one of the key informant experts, Yayew and he responded that:

> *Egypt is a hegemonic riparian state in the Nile Basin and monopolizes the Nile water unilaterally via a combination of material, bargaining and ideational powers. He further stated that to control and monopolize the Nile water Egypt has security and military superiority on the past years. As a result, Egypt sponsored different insurgent groups like EPLF, TPLF and proxy wars to divert the attention of Ethiopian government from development into ensuring peace and security. Moreover, Egypt has economic and technological superiority in constructing different water infrastructures and exploiting the Nile water unilaterally. Egypt also uses ideational and bargaining powers to influence different international institutions that did not provide loan and aid to construct hydroelectric project for Ethiopia. Thus, Ethiopia lost its recognitions and financial*

support from different international institutions to construct the GERD as a result of Egypt's sanctioned discourse.[33]

Similar to Yayew, Wuhibegezer, one of the key informant experts, responded that Egypt is the hydro hegemony riparian State in the Nile Basin, which was established and consolidates via various strategies and mechanisms at different times.[34]

Based on the views of the above participants and literature review, one can conclude that Egypt has been established dominative hydro hegemony and monopolize the Nile water for a long period of time unilaterally.

Contrary to the above argument, other key informant experts, Abebe and Embiale shared similar ideas and argue that:

There is no hydro hegemony in the Nile Basin rather there is hydro colonialism because hegemony is based on consent. Accordingly, Egypt is not the hydro hegemonic riparian state, and Ethiopia never gives its consent for Egypt's hydro-hegemony. Accordingly, the current movement of Ethiopia is not a counter hydro hegemony strategy.[35]

The researcher argues that even if Ethiopia has never been accepted the Nile hydro hegemonic order and continuously expressing its discontent via diplomatic and legal campaigns since the imperial regime, however Egypt has been monopolized and dominated the Nile water unilaterally, and established coercive hydro hegemony and weakening Ethiopia's capacity to utilize the Nile water by using its material, bargaining and ideational powers superiority (See Chapter Two & Three). The researcher further argues that the counter hydro hegemony measure of Ethiopia is not for becoming a regional hydro hegemony riparian state in the Nile Basin rather it is the response of the ultimate aspirations of generations of Ethiopian to utilize the Blue Nile water for alleviating extreme poverty and bringing sustainable development that ensures the Survival of Ethiopia.

[33]Interview with Ass/Prof. Yayew Genet, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 5th of May, 2022

[34]Interview with Associate Professor Wuhibegezer Ferede (PhD), Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies lecturer and Researcher at Blue Nile Water Institute, on 08th of May 2022

[35]Interview with Mr. Abebe Yirga & Ass/Prof. Embiale Beyene, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturers, on 20th of April, 2022

In relation to the role of GERD in changing the existed hydro hegemony, one of the key informants argues that:

> *The GERD is changing the game of the Nile water politics from unilateralism into round table discussion. Since the GERD brings Egypt into round table negotiation on the utilization of the Nile water. So, it enforces Egypt to accept fair and reasonable utilization of the Nile water resources either willingly or unwillingly. Accordingly, Egypt recognizes the construction of GERD and accepts fair and reasonable utilization of the shared water resources under DoP (2015). Therefore, GERD changes the Egyptian dominative hydro hegemony into win-win approach or equitable and reasonable utilization of the shared water resources.*[36]

Similar with the above, the other interviewee also responded in the following ways:

> *The inauguration of GERD in 2011 by Ethiopia manifested as a turning point that showed an open counter hegemonic action against Egypt's Nile water monopoly in the hydro political history of the Nile Basin. Accordingly, GERD is a counter hydro hegemonic measure of Ethiopia, which shows the beginning of changing the existed Nile water hydro hegemony order into equitable and shared control. However, the GERD project alone cannot be considered as 'alpha and omega' for the effective change of the foundations of the hydro hegemonic order; rather it is one means of changing the existed hydro hegemony into equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile water. He commented that, to ensure a sustainable equitable and reasonable water utilization order, all riparian states of the Basin should actively participated to struggle the old unjust exploitive water utilization of the Nile water, and establish a legal binding agreement and an all-inclusive institution.*[37]

According to the above views of participants, GERD changes facts on the ground, and bringing Egypt into roundtable negotiation and acknowledge it as one of water infrastructure project that is being constructed by Ethiopia. Accordingly, it is a means to change the win-lose approach into

[36]Interview with Mr. Asabu Sewunet, Debre Markos University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 15th of April, 2022

[37]Interview with Associate Professor Wuhibegezer Ferede (PhD), Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies lecturer and Researcher at Blue Nile Water Institute, on 08th of May 2022

win-win approach and reasonable water utilization among the riparian countries. Therefore, it is one means of changing the existed dominative and coercive hydro hegemony into equitable right and reasonable utilization of the shared Nile water resources. However, the GERD by itself cannot change the Nile hydro hegemony, changing the status quo needs a binding legal agreement and basin-wide institution through the active involvement of all riparian states of the Nile Basin.

Furthermore, other interviewees also demonstrate the role of GERD in changing the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relations. Accordingly, one key informant explains as follows:

> *Negotiation on the utilization of the Nile water in a single round table was a dream before 50 or 60 years. But now whether they success or not, Egypt and Ethiopia became together to negotiate, and negotiation in a single round table became a trend on the Nile hydro politics. Accordingly, the GERD forces Egypt to come into round table negotiation with Ethiopia and signed DoP in 2015. The DoP nullifies the 1959 agreement and Egypt acknowledges Ethiopia's right to utilize the Nile water and the constructions of the GERD project.*[38]

From the above participant views, one can conclude that the GERD project brings a new opportunity for the Eastern Nile riparian countries to come together to negotiate over the utilization of Nile water. In this regard, Ethiopia plays an influential role in enforcing Egypt and other riparian states to come into roundtable discussions and accept the principles of equitable and reasonable water utilization.

In addition, as the participants responded that Ethiopia relatively increasing its bargaining power by setting agenda and actively leading the GERD negotiations. Furthermore, as compare with its previous position, Ethiopia's ideational power is relatively increased through training domestic water scientists and expertise for alternative vision, discourse and knowledge, and building of infrastructures. Thus, by funding the dam through a national bond and domestic investments, Ethiopia walked outside the game controlled by Egypt and her allies, and established a new

[38]Interview with Mr. Abebe Yirga, Bahir Dar University political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

course of action. So, these growing bargaining and ideational powers are one means of changing the asymmetric power relation with Egypt.[39]

Likewise, another interviewee also responded that GERD changes the Egyptian historical narratives and has an implication on other upstream riparian states can construct such kind of dams without Egypt's consent and foreign aid. Since Ethiopia changed the Egyptian sanctioned discourse by constructing the GERD via its domestic finance, and establishes new facts on the ground. Ethiopia's ideational power is increasing through constructing the GERD by its own experts. Since Ethiopia's expertise and knowledge to construct dams are increasing.[40]

According to the above participants view, there is relative growing bargaining and ideational power of Ethiopia and have an impact in changing the asymmetric power relation of the Eastern Nile Basin. However, Ethiopia did not bring a significant improvement of ideational power that changes the rule of the game.

Most significantly, as Wuhibegezer (2020) stated in his recent study, the GERD is expecting to have a comprehensive positive impact on Ethiop's economy development. Thus, the GERD will increase the supply of energy that facilitates the beginning of modern technology, which could change the agricultural sector and bring structural change in the industrial sector. The GERD is also expecting to diversify Ethiopia's export earnings and reduce shortage of foreign currency by generating one billion US dollar in a year via supplying clean affordable energy for neighboring countries.

Furthermore, the impact of GERD cannot be examined solely as a means of generating ample hydropower; rather it is the manifestation for an emergent new undefeatable Ethiopia (Wuhibegezer, 2020). Thus, GERD creates a sense of the possibilities of doing other forms of grand projects and technology transfer. Similarly, Embiale argues that when the GERD completes, it brings a revolution in Ethiopia's water utilization and management. The GERD changes the image and status of Ethiopia on the regional and international politics and realize the sovereignty of Ethiopia. It also plays a great role to decolonize the thinking of monopolizing the

[39]Interview with Associate Professor Wuhibegezer Ferede (PhD), Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies lecturer and Researcher at Blue Nile Water Institute, on 08th of May 2022

[40]Interview with Ass/Prof. Yayew Genet, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 5th of May, 2022

Nile water on the basis of the colonial agreements. In this regard, the GERD can be considered as a second Adwa.[41]

Furthermore, another political science expert, Abebe explains as follows:

> *The spillover effect of electricity on the economy is also high. As a result, Ethiopia will gain more than 40 billion annually both directly and indirectly from generating electricity. Accordingly, GERD is not only a water infrastructure project; it is beyond that for Ethiopians. Most significantly, Ethiopia has shown its strong commitment of saying yes what believes it and no what does not believing it, and of utilizing its water resource for its development by resisting the partial intervention and undue pressures of USA, World Bank, UNSC, Arab countries etc. Even if taking the negotiation into USA shows Ethiopia's diplomatic weakness, however returning the negotiation into AU under the frame work of African solution for African problems is the strengths of Ethiopia diplomatic capacity, which shows the relative growing bargaining power of Ethiopia. Thus, it enhances Ethiopia's sphere of influence and strategic importance on the regional and international politics.*[42]

According to the literature reviewed and participants view, the GERD plays a significant role in enhancing Ethiopia's material power and strategic importance on the regional and international politics, which in turn has contribution for changing the asymmetric power relation with Egypt. Thus, the GERD is considered as a new Adwa for Ethiopia in gaining victory over the fight against poverty by connecting all Ethiopians together from all corners of the country regardless of their cultural and political differences. So, the GERD is a flagship project that creates a sense of oneness among the Multicultural Ethiopians. Besides, the GERD is taken as a new Adwa in realizing Ethiopia's sovereign and legitimate rights on the use of the Blue Nile water through defending and resisting the unjust partial intervention of USA, World Bank, Arab League, UNSC siding with Egypt.

[41] Interview with Ass/Prof. Embiale Beyene, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

[42] Interview with Mr. Abebe Yirga, Bahir Dar University political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 20th of April, 2022

Therefore, Ethiopia becomes a major game player on the Nile hydro politics and demonstrates its solid commitment for the equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile water by resisting the unjust clams of Egypt and the partial intervention of USA and other countries. Therefore, the GERD changes Ethiopia's position from silent partner and observer into influential partner and game changer, and open a new chapter in the Nile hydro politics by establishes facts on the ground.

4.4.1. The Impact of GERD for Regional Integration and Cooperation

As discussed in the preceding section, Ethiopia has an expected potential capacity of 45,000 megawatts of hydroelectric power from water, which in turn makes it the center of an emerging energy supply across the markets of the region. In this regard, one of the key informants responded that GERD is a means for deepening regional market integration in line with AU's guiding principles that aspires for establishing a continental free trade area. Thus, Ethiopia has defeated Egypt's zero-sum movement in Africa through its economic diplomacy, based on collective decision-making and mutual benefit. However, the relationship with that neighbor is not yet fully established.[43]

In support of the above idea, one of the key informants argues that GERD plays a significant role to promote energy-led regional economic integration and cooperation among the riparian countries. Accordingly, GERD increases hydropower diplomacy by interconnecting each other through energy. Thus, it interconnects the region in security, trade, tourism etc. Moreover, it helps to achieve the AU's Agenda 2063 and the sustainable development goals of United Nation. As a result, it increases Ethiopia prestige on the region.[44]

Therefore, in line with the above views, the researcher infers that the GERD plays a paramount role in changing the East Africa economies and promoting energy-led regional economic integration. Since Ethiopia become the net exporter of environmentally clean and affordable energy to Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya, South Sudan, and for other neighboring countries and stimulate the region's economic development. This in turn enhances Ethiopia's economic

[43]Interview with Associate Professor Wuhibegezer Ferede (PhD), Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies lecturer and Researcher at Blue Nile Water Institute, on 08th of May 2022

[44]Interview with Ass/Prof. Yayew Genet, Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies Lecturer, on 5th of May, 2022

development and its sphere of influence on the region, and changing the asymmetric power relations.

In addition, the construction of GERD with the aim of alleviating poverty and achieving sustainable development goals help the region to ensure food, health and energy security. This also increases regional interdependence and promotes the vision of regional and continental unity in realizing the sustainable development goals. As a result, GERD can be an instrument in pan-Africanization of the Nile Basin and ensuring sustainable development.[45]

Therefore, the researcher concludes the GERD is a means of creating economic and security interdependence among African Countries, mainly the Nile Basin states and promotes cooperation for their mutual benefits. According to recent studies, the GERD is a means of cooperation among the Eastern Nile riparian countries. Thus, GERD will bring an opportunity for Egypt and Sudan in playing a vital role in reducing reoccurring flooding threats and harvest loss (Wuhibegezer, 2020). So, GERD is a means of changing the conflictive relationship into cooperation. Since, Ethiopia's strong position on the principles of equitable and reasonable utilization of cross-boundary water resource triggers cooperation in the Nile Basin.

To sum up, the findings of the study indicate that the GERD plays a significant role in changing the hydro politics of the Nile Basin into a new chapter by enforcing Egypt to come into round table negotiation with Ethiopia over the use of the shared Nile water through establishing facts on the ground. As a result, for the first time Egypt acknowledges the construction of dam by Ethiopia on the Blue Nile. The GERD deconstructs the perceptions of monopolizing the Nile water on the basis of colonial agreements. The completion of the GERD and the beginning of power generation will boost Ethiopia's sphere of leverage in the Nile basin in particular and in the region in general. Thus, the GERD is one means of shifting the existed dominative hydro hegemony and monopoly of the shared water into equitable right and reasonable utilization among the riparian countries of the basin. However, GERD by itself does not shift the existed hydro-hegemony. Therefore, unless the existed asymmetric power relations and Egypt's domestic water governance policies are changed, cooperation may not exist.

[45] Interview with Associate Professor Wuhibegezer Ferede (PhD), Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Studies lecturer and Researcher at Blue Nile Water Institute, on 08th of May 2022

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1. Conclusion

The Nile river basin is one of the Trans-boundary Rivers where the demand for water is intensifying alarmingly. Accordingly, Ethiopia and Egypt are the major actors in the Nile politics, which have divergent interests over the utilization of the Nile water resource. Thus, the Nile water is the most important catalyst that binds Ethiopia and Egypt, and determined their hydro-political relations. Therefore, the overall objective of this study is to investigate the impact of the GERD in shifting the hydro political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia.

According to the findings of the study, from 1891 up to date, several treaties, agreements and declarations have been signed over the use of the Nile water. However, most of them have served as to maintain and sustain the hegemonic position of Egypt. Accordingly, twisted colonial treaties have been instrumental in maintaining the hegemonic position of Egypt. Therefore, treaties which were signed before the 1990s have negative influence on the hydro political relations of Egypt and Ethiopia, and becoming a center of conflict between them.

In the post 1990s, Ethiopia becomes an influential partner and playing a significant role for the establishment of NBI and the Signing of CFA by the riparian countries. The CFA, a process that held out the promise of a new water era in the Nile Basin, delayed due to the stubborn position of Egypt. The impasse of CFA pushed Ethiopia to return into unilateral measures of GERD, which is part of its macro-economic transformation plan. Thus, the GERD is a non-water consumptive hydroelectric power dam project, which will not have significant harm on the water levels of Egypt. However, Egypt is persistently attempting to deny Ethiopia from constructing the GERD. As a result, to build mutual trust, confidence and reach consensus, Egypt and Ethiopia held several water negotiations on the tripartite GERD negotiation platform since the announcement of the GERD project.

The decade-long tripartite GERD negotiations passed through at various levels and periods, however all of these periods were ended without reaching amicable solution. Accordingly, in the whole processes of the decade-long GERD diplomatic negotiations, Ethiopia shows its solid

commitments for the equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile water. On the contrary, Egypt demonstrates its inflexible position and solid commitments to impose its unjust claims to maintain the historical rights and the monopolistic status quo. The study revealed that the Ethio-Egyptian hydro political relation over the GERD negotiations were characterized by irregular involvement, repeated deadlocks, new beginnings, verbal warfare, sabotage, mistrust, hopeless deliberations, unfair external intervention and aggressive threats.

In this study, the participants' and media outlets explained that the major determinant factors that influence the hydro political relation of Egypt and Ethiopia over the GERD project. Accordingly, the domestic politics of Egypt, Sudan's political change and unfair external partial interventions are the major determinant factors that influence the Ethio-Egyptian relation, which causes for the deadlock of the tripartite GERD negotiation. Thus, the finding of the study confirmed that Egyptian leaders politicize and securitize technical issues of the dam, and argued that the dam is an existential threat of Egyptians. Therefore, Egypt uses the GERD negotiation as an instrument to maintain an ill-informed colonial era treaties and blocking Ethiopia from utilizing the Nile water as well as make the GERD as the only share of Ethiopia, but it is never accepted by Ethiopia. As a result, Egypt's and Ethiopia's vision for basin-wide cooperation remain completely incompatible.

In addition, the political change of Sudan combined with its rapprochement with USA and the Ethio-Sudan border conflict deteriorated the Ethio-Sudan relation, which in turn worsening the hydro political relation of Egypt and Ethiopia. Accordingly, following the overthrow of the Elbeshire regime Sudan stands against the GERD project and sided with Egypt and exacerbating the Ethio-Egyptian relation by internationalizing the GERD project as threat of national, regional and international peace and security.

Furthermore, the unjust partial interference of external actors, notably US Treasury and World Bank undermining the long-term water right of Ethiopia, and escalating the Ethio-Egyptian conflict over the GERD diplomatic negotiations. Thus, absence of durable and reliable third party mediator has negatively affected their relations and leads to the impasse of the tripartite GERD negotiation. The change of Sudan's position and USA's partial intervention are attributed to the influence of Egypt and the weakness of Ethiopian diplomacy. However, despite the rigid

position of Egypt and unfair external intervention, Ethiopia continuing the construction of the GERD that reaches 85 percent to complete and starting partial generation hydroelectric power.

The other main finding of the study, which was backed by key informants, media outlets and most literature reviews was that the foremost reason that Egypt constantly opposes the construction of the GERD project is fear of losing its status quo and Power influence on the region rather than water. Thus, Egypt always wants to be continuing the only powerful state over the regional politics, and always considered only its self-center interests in advance. As a result, the Egyptians threats of reducing the flow of Nile water lacks scientific reason rather the claim rests on water stress phobia that emanated from its zero-sum game mentality and suspicion. Therefore, Unlike Ethiopia, Egypt has abundant underground water resource, which is not absolute dependent on the Nile water.

In line with the role of GERD in changing the existed hydro hegemony, this study found that the GERD is one means of changing Egypt's dominative hydro hegemony into equitable right and reasonable water use on the Nile Basin. Accordingly, the key informants and literature reviews approved that GERD changes facts on the ground and bring new opportunities for the Eastern Nile Basin riparian countries to negotiate on the use of the Nile water. Thus, the GERD forced Egypt to come into roundtable discussion and recognized it as one of water infrastructure project that is being constructed by Ethiopia on the Nile water, even if she insisted on her long-held static selfish interests. The GERD deconstructs the perceptions of monopolizing the Nile water on the basis of colonial agreements. As a result, the GERD changes Ethiopian position on the Nile politics from observer and silent partner into game player and influential partner.

In general, as argued by most key informants and literature reviews, GERD is one means of changing the Nile hydro-hegemony, and asserts greater power in the Basin when completed. This fact on the ground empowers Ethiopia to leverage the Nile hydro politics, and further to narrow the existing asymmetry power relation that will lead to balance of power relation. Thus, the completion of the GERD and the beginning of power generation will boost Ethiopia's sphere of leverage in the Nile basin in particular and in the region in general. Thus, the study confirmed that GERD shows the beginning of changing the existed hydro hegemony of the Nile Basin into equitable right and reasonable utilization. However, the counter-hegemonic role of GERD is unlikely to bring a lasting equitable and reasonable order in the Nile Basin. Therefore,

cooperation may not prevail unless the existed asymmetric power relations and all-inclusive legal binding agreement is established.

The Nile water war which was forecasted to takes place over the GERD is now looking unlikely. However, Conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia will continue in a new manner even after the dam is completely filled. As a result, the solution for the centuries-old Nile basin hydro political conflict is establishing an all-inclusive legal binding agreement with the active participation of all eleven riparian countries of the Nile Basin.

5.2. Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher forwards the following recommendations. Egypt and Ethiopia have divergent interest on the use of the Nile water. Thus, to harmonize their incompatible interests and expectations, and promote cooperation and solidarity between Egypt and Ethiopia in particular, and the basin at large, the researcher proposes the following plausible solutions:

First, Ethiopia should solve its domestic political problems and enhance its diplomatic capability to address the truth for Egyptians, riparian countries and the international communities. Moreover, to study the interests and aspirations of Egypt proactively, and create new discourse that change the rule of the game, Ethiopia should establish a center of water knowledge production via water education and inclusion of water issue in the educational curriculum at all levels of school.

Second, Water sector reform in Egypt is the basic solution for the existed conflict. Accordingly, Egypt should change its domestic water governance and establishes institution that promotes effective and efficient water utilization.

Third, Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia should build trust among them and they understand that cooperation is the only solution for their mutual benefit. Accordingly, they promote open dialogue and transparent information sharing in order to strengthen the level of trust and confidence among them.

Forth, Africa Union should take a significant impartial role to resume the tripartite GERD negotiation by forcing the three countries to come together with good faith negotiation and reaching an amicable solution.

Fifth, the entire upper and lower riparian countries of the basin should sign CFA, and establish Nile basin commission by the resumption of full negotiations for Nile water benefit-sharing under the CFA framework. They also identify their comparative advantages, and believe that Nile is the common resources of all eleven riparian countries of the Basin rather than one country.

Sixth, super powers like USA and others should take an impartial position, and exert positive influence on Egypt and Ethiopia to reach consensus on the basis of international accepted water use principles.

Ultimately, this study proposes future research on an effective water governance system. The countries of the Nile Basin have attempted to establish governance institutions to govern the Nile issues, but these efforts have not been effective enough to meet the interests of all Nile riparian countries. Since riparian states along the Nile cannot agree on the 2010 CFA. Thus, an effective governance system is an absolute necessity for any long-term water cooperation. As a result, further future research is needed to develop successful legal systems for the Nile Basin states that guarantee and ensure fair benefits for all riparian states.

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APPENDIXES

Debre Markos University
College of Social Science and Humanities
Department of Political Science

Appendix –I

Interview Guiding Questions for Political Science Experts (Academicians)

Dear Interviewee! This interview guide is prepared by **Yaregal Wondu** to collect an intended data for the thesis entitled **"*The Impact of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in shifting the hydro-political relation between Egypt and Ethiopia*"**. The study aims for the partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Art in political science. Thus, you are kindly requested to provide genuine explanation for it. Accordingly, it will be used for only an academic purpose. So, I am grateful for your cooperation kindly to devote your valuable time to respond my research interview. As a result, the interview questions are formulated as follow:

1. How the previous colonial treaties and bilateral agreements would have influence on the decision making processes of Egypt and Ethiopia over the GERD project?
2. What are the major determining factors that influence the Ethio-Egyptian hydro-political relation following the commencement of the GERD project?
3. Why the tripartite diplomatic negotiation over the filling and operation of the GERD failed to reach a final solution and became deadlock?
4. Are there any legal or moral factors that prevent Ethiopia from utilizing the Nile water? If not, why Egypt always opposes Ethiopia's sovereign right to utilize the Nile Water resource?
5. Do you think that the GERD is capable in shifting the existed hydro hegemony of the Nile Basin, into fair and reasonable utilization? If so, how? If not, why?
6. How do you explain the growing bargaining and ideational power of Ethiopia in the Eastern Nile Basin? Does it have an implication in changing the power asymmetry of the Nile Basin? If so, how?
7. Do you think that the GERD is considered as a second Adwa for Ethiopia that shifts its political economic capability and images on the regional and international politics? If so, how? If not, why?

Thank you so much for your cooperation!!!

Appendix-II: List of Key informant Interviewees

No.	Name of Participants	Position	Place	Date
1	Mr. Abebe Yirga	M.A in Water Governance	Bahir Dar University	on 20th of April, 2022
2	Mr. Asabu Sewnet	M.A in Political Science and International Studies	Debre Markos University	On 15th of April, 2022
3	Ass/prof. Embiale Beyene (PhD Candidate)	Assistance professor in Political Science and International Studies	Bahir Dar University	on 20th of April, 2022
4	Prof. Wuhibegezer Ferede (PhD)	Associate professor in political science and International Studies, and Researcher at Blue Nile Water Institute	Bahir Dar University	on 08th of May 2022
5	Ass/prof. Yayew Genet (PhD Candidate)	Assistance professor in Political Science and International Studies	Bahir Dar University	on 5th of May, 2022