

The Impact of Media Coverage: The Issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and Inter-Relations between the Eastern Nile Basin Countries

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Abstract

In 2011, the Ethiopian government commenced the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Blue Nile in Ethiopia, trans-boundary River with tense political confrontation with Sudan and Egypt. That received great coverage from the Egyptian, Sudanese and Ethiopian mass media and on the international, regional level. The study aimed to highlights The Impact of Media Coverage on the Issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and Inter-Relations among the Eastern Nile Basin Countries and examines the Egyptian, Sudanese and Ethiopian mass media, salient frames related to the dam project and how these frames reflect Egyptians, Sudanese and Ethiopian government dominant perspectives on Nile politics. To this end, the study is based on qualitative research analysis, in order to adequately present various significant issues in the newspapers. This study reveals that same prominent frames have emerged in general and have been used by media organizations in the Nile Basin countries (Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia). These are 'Development'; 'National Image'; 'Right'; 'Victimhood'; 'Mutual benefit'; and 'War' frames. The study recommended that the mass media of Nile basin countries must set aside negative statements that can increase differences and cause problems of proposals on how to deal with the impact of the media coverage.

Keywords: Mass Media, Nile, Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia, Interrelations

Introduction

The Nile is the one of the longest trans-Boundary Rivers in the world with two major originating sources; the Blue Nile (Abay) from Lake Tana (Ethiopia) and the White Nile from Like Victoria (East African community) meet in Khartoum, Sudan and flow through North African desert before emptying in the Mediterranean. The Nile River flows through eleven African countries: Ethiopia, Burundi, Egypt, Eritrea, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo. Thus, the Nile is always a source of controversy between the Nile Basin countries.

According to the vast interest to use the river from the upper stream countries and the monopolizing by the downstream countries, the Ethiopian government announced formally the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in April 2011 (Belay (2014)).

The project caused a substantial apprehension in Egypt, which wants to maintain the historical *status qua* on the use of the river (Kamari- Mbote P (2005)) Ethiopia affirmed its interest to use the river to ensure its energy security without affecting Egypt's water supply. However, the project has become the most salient spiraling hydro-politics debate between the largest contributor to the river and the most dependent country, for almost 95% of its consumption and agricultural use, which is perhaps relevant for virtually other basin countries (support with source).

The GERD has found great coverage from the Egyptian, Sudanese and Ethiopian mass media and on the international, regional level. The media are the most effective means of forming public opinion towards issues that relate to the different spheres of life. The also media have an influential role in many issues. They are used to mobilize the people to demand for their social, political and economic rights by highlighting and addressing crucial issues through their various genres.

The media have multiple educational and instructional functions, but their most important function in crises is that they offer procedural information that provide the parties with the information they need to act and reduce the trauma. The media also give other information called "adaptation information" that helps citizens adapt to the crisis, and reduce the psychological stress and uncertainty that result from the crises. (Magdy- Abdel Magsoud M (2015)).

The background of mass media industry in Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia

Egyptian mass media industry:

Egypt has a great and long standing media experience. It is one of the countries that has been able to launch a satellite for scientific and recreational purpose since 1998 when it launched the NileSat satellite. This has enhanced its media superiority in the region. It has social, political, educational and private channels which run under strict and absolute state control, including private media institutions to link and interfere with the interests of the ruling elite in Egypt, which make the issue of advertising independence of media in Egypt in particular after the June 30 coup (Shouki- Mustapha 2013. p20).

The state owns major newspapers and appoints its editors to make sure of control, such as Al- Ahram, Akhbar Al- Youm. In addition, there are many political, entertainment and partisan newspapers.

Sudan mass media industry

The beginning of modern mass media in Sudan started in the early part of last century when the first newspaper appeared in 1903 and also with presence in the field of audio and visual media which were established in the early 1940s during the Second World War. Television opened in 1962. These devices multiplied under the supervision and control of government and the purpose of their establishment was political. Successive governments employed these devices to serve their interests and policies and shape the society according to their own policies. They operated these media under the umbrella of a central ministry (Abu baker Awad (1991)). Federalism is a system for managing the country. Each state has its own radio, visual and readable media as well as newspapers published by parties, which makes the Sudanese media more free and independent compared to the countries of the Eastern Nile Basin.

Currently, there are more than 59 political, social and partisan daily newspapers in Khartoum, in addition to the 19 private and public entertainment channels. Each state also has satellite television, some of which are broadcast via satellite NileSat, Bader, and Qulaf. Dozens of state and National radio stations broadcast in dialects and are supervised by the National Broadcasting Corporation and the Ministry of Information.

Ethiopian mass media industry:

The Ethiopian mass media developed after the end of the Ethiopian liberation war and the Federal Constitution guaranteed the nationalities right to self-government and self-determination. This right granted them the right to set up media institutions that speak local languages such as Amharic, Tigre, Oromo, Somali and Afar alongside English. On this basis, the government monitored more than 27 radio stations in local languages, in addition to 6 public satellite channels and 24 private satellite channels, including missionary and 9 national channels (www.internews.org).

Literature Review

A number of previous studies have analyzed the dimensions of the issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance (GERD) from a political, media mass perspective, addressing the dimensions of the issue and its paths and future scenarios.

Osama Al-Rashidi (2017) analyzed the speech of a number of Egyptian media in their coverage of the GERD Dam case, with some analysis of users of social networking Websites. A classification of the most important letters and their roots in Egyptian thought, and caused several problems in relations between Egypt and Sudan and Ethiopia. The study is based on the methodology of analysis of media discourse, which allows the researcher to read deeper, more comprehensive and analytical than the surface survey, and this approach allows to address the discourse and its historical, cultural and political reasons, and also link the coverage of more than one media at the same time and how can be A number of media promoted the same speech.

Ibrahim (2015) analyzed the Egyptian foreign policy towards the issue of the dam and found that the issue revealed the decline of the Egyptian role in Africa, which

in turn changed and became a "competitive environment" for many countries, And proposed the formation of a national crisis management committee to deal specifically with GERD Dam and the need for Egypt to participate in the various stages of implementation of GERD Dam to become a key partner for Ethiopia.

As for the Egyptian media discourse, the study recommended adopting a conciliatory media discourse towards Ethiopia and the Nile Basin countries, and avoiding the language of escalation and threat which is always counterproductive, and focusing on the issue of the Nile River as a source of cooperation among the peoples of the basin countries. However, the study called for the use of what it called "means of encouragement and intimidation" including "diplomatic and intelligence pressure tools", which is in contradiction with the previous demand to refrain from using the language of escalation.

Bilay (2014) examined the Ethiopian media coverage of GERD Dam, which concluded that "the media tends to put the subject in a negative context and offer more reports about the possibility of war. A photographer of the political history of the Nile in the context of tensions and lack of confidence and diplomatic confrontation between the upstream and downstream countries, and this is portrayed in different ways in terms of blocking the Renaissance. In addition to focusing on the hostile statements of Egyptian politicians, and raises concerns about the possibility of Egypt's military action to destroy the dam.

The "Vision for Public Opinion Studies" Found that the Sudanese press was affected by the Egyptian media rejecting the dam, but the official assertion that Sudan was not affected by the dam contributed to changing the media discourse after that. The report blamed the Egyptian media for the publication of inaccurate statements by the Sudanese ambassador in Cairo, Kamal Hassan Ali, that Ethiopia's decision to divert the Nile was "shocking" in order to force Sudan to take a stand opposing the construction of the dam.

The attitude of the Nile Basin countries towards the project:

The GERD Dam will become the largest hydroelectric dam on the African continent and the tenth largest in the world. It is the world's largest power generation dam after completion. The cost of completion is estimated at US \$407 billion. It is one of three dams built for hydroelectric power generation in Ethiopia. There is concern among Egyptian experts about its impact on Nile water flow and Egypt's agreed share (support with source(s).

The GERD Dam is a complex regional problem, considering the fact that this project represents an important political and economic program for Ethiopia which has sought to set up a number of similar water projects on the Blue Nile and the Takizi River (Atbara River). It offers stability and ushers in economic benefits in the production and export of electric power, which is thus seen as an important issue for the Ethiopian people (support with source(s). The Sudanese position on the issue coincides with that

of the Ethiopians because the project will be of immense benefit to Sudan. The Sudanese reservoirs on the Blue Nile such as the reservoir and the Sennar reservoir which was created as a result of the dam reduces the percentage of electricity produced in these dams and impedes the efficiency of production as well as other benefits that may accrue to the countries of the region. Other advantages include reducing the risk of floods that keep occurring in the region (support with source(s)). Furthermore, the dam is a solution to the problem of electricity and there is the possibility of establishing joint projects in the agricultural sector and benefiting from regular flow of water throughout the year. The benefits accruable have made the State of Sudan stand neutral in the Ethiopian–Egyptian conflict on the issue (Beheiry, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

This article employed framing theory. As developed by Goffman and Gitlin (1974); Gitlin (1980) used to explain how media define issues for its customers in terms of both what is significant and how to think about the event. It is certain that scholars have applied framing theory to media research and developed various definitions. The concept of framing remains what (Entman, 1993) opines as ‘a scattered conceptualization’, lacking straightforward clear conceptualization that can be generally applicable throughout the social sciences, to political science to linguistics and communication studies.

In this article, framing is defined as a way in which a set of ideas is organized and presented to readership to articulate a particular perspective (Goffman, 1974; Gamson and Modigliani, 1989). Frames are crucial devices that help to organize ideas; so as to make sense of important events and to suggest ‘what is the issue at stake (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989) and ‘what the event is’ (Tankard et al., 1991). Frames ‘define problems’, ‘diagnose causes’, ‘make moral judgments’ and ‘suggest remedies’ (Entman, 1993).

Framing involves ‘selection, emphasis, and exclusion’ of issues (Gitlin, 1980; Tankard et al, 1991) . Entman, (1993) interestingly describes Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item describe.

Framing involves highlighting, emphasizing and making some aspects of the issue more memorable, noticeable and meaningful while marginalizing and discarding others (Entman, 1993). It is a process of categorizing the issue in a specific way, paying more attention to some aspects and disregarding others, and deciding what it means and/or how it came about (Kitzinger, 2007).

The theory of media framing is highly relevant to the study of media in politics (Reese, 2001) in order to analyse the most salient frames that are crucial for determining reader’s reception as media frames influence not only the most prominent and salient elements but also interpretations. This can be done through content analysis of articles,

which refers to the study of the content of media outlet with reference to the meanings, contexts and intentions contained in it (Prasad, 2008). It is used to extract information, content and categories by objectively identifying specific characteristics of the communication (Smith, 2000).

Method

This study is based on a longitudinal qualitative research conducted independently (without sponsorship) by the author in order to adequately present various significant issues in the newspaper. It has employed a content analysis, an important tool of media researches since the 1940s, which involves systemic study of the content of communication messages (Smith, 2000; Stacks and Hocking, 1992) in collecting, selecting and analysing the data consisted of online news articles published from 2013 to 2017. These dates were purposively selected to see media framing before and after Egyptian, Sudanese and Ethiopian government announcement of the diversion of the Nile from its natural course on May 2013. The methodology, selection of online articles, is justified by the idea that online media accounts can reach worldwide readers where as a printed newspaper can easily afford to only a fraction of its users, mainly domestic once. The data was collected through an electronic database search engine using key words such as Ethiopian renaissance dam and GERD from <https://www.thereporterethiopia.com> website, <https://www.sudanakhbar.com/author/akhirlahza> website, <http://www.middleeastmonitor.com> website, www.albwaba.com/News website, <http://www.egyptiannewspapers.com/pages/Newspaper/Shorouknews.html> and <https://www.sudanakhbar.com/author/alintibah> website...etc.

The search generated a total of 75 articles ranging from headlines of Egyptian, Sudanese and Ethiopian newspapers, in depth analysis, editorial, interview, commentary, viewpoints, and latter to editors. Purposively selected 30 articles consisted of 12 Headlines, 4 editorial, 4 in depth and 10 commentaries with in depth coverage of the dam as the main news story were taken as the unity of analysis in order to solicit adequate information on the issue.

This study has employed inductive approach in identifying dominant frames used in newspaper articles by refraining from analysing news stories with prior defined news frames in mind. It examined frames emerge from the selected articles itself during the process of data analysis and interpretation. After data selection, a preliminary examination of articles was conducted during which certain dominant categories or frames identified on small scale and further refined through detailed readings. Finally, the dominant salient frames used by the journalists, editorial and commentaries were identified and analysed.

Findings and Discussion

The section examines the dominant frames that have been identified from selected articles and provides a detailed analysis. The findings indicate that six most salient emerged that rendered certain aspects of the dam construction more imperative, than others, each framing employed in various ways to depict and make prominent Egyptian, Sudanese and Ethiopian governments political perspectives on Nile politics.

Egyptian media

1. based on the press articles on which the study relied, most of the Egyptian media used coverage of the GERD Dam issue to three frameworks. This framework was based on the fact that Egypt has the exclusive right to use the Nile without other Nile Basin countries. According to the old agreements related to the Nile.
2. The Egyptian media also used the framework of the victim, considering that Egypt is targeting both Sudan and Ethiopia to destabilize its water security.
3. The Egyptian media used the framework of the war more than other frameworks to resolve the case and destroy GERD Dam.

Ethiopian media

1. According to the articles in the study, the Ethiopian media has formulated more positive stories that would affect and unite the Ethiopian people and enlighten readers about the possibility of the dam project, although some articles revealed a military attack or potential sabotage by the Egyptian government and despite the emergence of the military option since the beginning of the dam, the newsrooms have not been completely replaced by the framework of war on the other prominent frameworks.
2. The coverage of the journalists to GERD Dam was mixed, and the Ethiopian media focused on the internal front to unite the energies around the dam.
3. The Ethiopian media categorized Egypt as a representative of historical and self-centered injustice and a threat to development projects on the Nile, which wants to monopolize the Nile. The Ethiopian media tried to put readers in the picture to see the demands raised by the Egyptian government clearly.

Sudanese media

1. Based on the articles in the study, the Sudanese media has formulated a more positive picture of the building of GERD Dam and painted a picture of a bright future to the home front stressing that Sudan will not be affected by the construction of the dam, but is the biggest beneficiary to ensure the flow of blue Nile during the whole year and reduce natural disasters such as floods and silt that hit Sudan from behind the Nile every year.
2. The Sudanese media did not turn to the war propaganda after receiving intelligence reports indicating the presence of Egyptian forces in Eritrean territory which led to the closure of the border and the declaration of a state of emergency on the border state with Eritrea. However, the Sudanese media did not focus on the war. Mutual cooperation

between the Nile Basin countries greatly encourages negotiation, cooperation and reducing tensions in the region.

3. Sudan's real support for the dam has been confirmed in recent years.

The media coverage of the Nile Basin countries' of the dam project and its implementation, (Egyptian, Sudanese and Ethiopian mass media)

The Egyptian media coverage of the dam issue

The issue of GERD dam remains a potential center for water wars in the 21st century from the point of view of researchers and high education institutions.

The Egyptian media coverage of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) caused wide spread reactions due to its future impact on Sudan and Egypt (Al-Rashidi–Osama,2017). Egyptian reactions differed or varied on the dam project between official discourse issued by state institutions and discourses from political parties and the media, *Al-Azhar*, the *Church*, *civil society* organizations, social networking sites and others (Al-Rashidi –Osama,2017) There were also different perspectives on views according to the change of regime since the era of ousted President *Hosni Mubarak*, through the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces after the January Revolution, then the isolated President *Mohamed Morsi* and now under President *Abdel Fattah al-Sisi* .

The following excerpts from a commentary by Osama Al Rashid of the Egyptian media and crisis industry (July 2017) illustrates,

- Although the *Sisi* regime adopted a quiet foreign policy aimed at dialogue and understanding with the Ethiopian side, the media treatment converted this diplomacy to emotional demands and even contemplated using force to hit the dam. (dinar- Ibrahim (2015)) Politicians and parliamentarians also used the same speech. (Raji- Pappers(2015)) Some newspapers published the scenario of hitting the dam (Yisshuas- Pillay (2014)), and the media explained that President *Sisi* had made a deal for the army to procure the weapons to be used to hit the dam.(Emad- Hamdi (2016)). Without envisaging the possibility that the strike could fail to destroy the dam or cause harm. There is the possibility that the use of Egyptian military option could lead to a retaliatory Ethiopian reaction that could extend to the bombing of the High Dam and other vital places. (Badr- Shafei (2015)). The continuous claims of hitting the dam and using force against Ethiopia was linked to nostalgia of the Egyptian colonial past on the African continent and has been specifically linked to five former Egyptian leaders. They are: Mohamed Ali, Khedive Ismail, Jamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat, and Hosni Mubarak. The Egyptian historical literature glorifies Egyptian colonial history; the Seventh Day Newspaper stated that the construction of the high dam built by Nasser scuttled the United States'

attempt to build a dam to store water in Ethiopia. (Shehata- Awad (2016)). The historian and writer Abbas al-Tarabili praised the conquests of Khedive Ismail who aimed to "discover the sources of the Nile" and entered two wars with Ethiopia in 1875 to "discipline it" as he put it (Mai- Ghaith (2013)).

- In December 2016 demonstrations broke out in the Oromia region of Ethiopia in protest against the authorities' intention to forcibly expropriate and forcibly evict Oromo territory. About 140 protesters were killed after the security forces opened fire, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW (2016)). However, the Egyptian media misrepresented most of the details of these protests, claiming that the reason for these protests was to object to the construction of the dam (Masrawi (2015)).

After that, the scenario of the Ethiopians virtual revolution expanded according in the Egyptian media which simulated the scenario of the Egyptian revolution in January 2011. The demonstrations of the "Ethiopian Spring" and the news of the Ethiopian government cutting off communications from demonstrators¹ and the joining of army and police officers in Ethiopia to the ranks of the rebels (Al – Bawaba News (2015)). The demands of the demonstrators had evolved to include the demand that the demonstrators topple the regime. (Al-Wafdi Gate (2015)). Several newspapers published a picture of a group of Ethiopians raising the Egyptian flag claiming that it was one of the last demonstrations. (Liberation News (21, Dec, 2015)). However, it turned out that the picture was old and belonged to Ethiopians refugees in Egypt and had nothing to do with the protests.

- However, the media outlets stepped out of this consensus and added other countries allied to the *Sisi* regime. *Al-Tahrir* wondered whether *Saudi Arabia* and the *UAE* were financing the dam (Liberation News (7, Dec, 2015)), and accused the two countries of setting up hundreds of projects that pumped hard currency into the Ethiopian market to finance the dam. *Al-Shorouq* newspaper quoted official *Sudanese* sources as saying that companies belonging to a *Saudi* businessman were managing the dam project with an *Italian* company (Al-Shorouk, 2015).

The Sudanese media coverage of dam Issue

The Sudanese media dealt with the issue with cautious optimism having witnessed rise in tensions in the recent talks among the three countries. The file of *GERD Dam* did not occupy much of the press because it did not matter much in public opinion and the information published confirmed that Sudan had not been affected by the dam. Sudanese newspapers discussed the signing of a memorandum of

¹⁵. For Oromo: Ethiopian government cuts off all communications about protesters, "Vito, 21 December 2015.

understanding on the *GERD Dam* and Nile water during the tripartite meeting between Sudan, Ethiopia and Egypt in Khartoum within a limited framework through its pages. (Ahmed–AlNor, 2015)

The Sudanese newspapers, while commenting on *GERD Dam*, confirmed that the signing of the principal document on *GERD Dam* would not affect Egypt's share of water and that the differences would be in the political framework only. The journal pointed out that the document committed the three countries to the recommendations of the International Advisory Office for studies on *GERD Dam* and amended the specifications of the dam when it established damage in the report of the Advisory Office, the document included frameworks for the use of water after the dam started operation. A joint committee of four persons from each country was to follow up the implementation of the document after signing it and the establishment of technical rules with co-experts consent of the three countries to prevent and avoid the damage of the dam.

The document included the establishment of a technical committee to manage the waters of the Blue Nile, adherence to the principles of international relations and respect for international water law and the obligation to notify everyone while not harming the existing projects through the work of the dam and the obligations to avoid any damage to the countries passing by while the other parties are committed to dealing and cooperating at the same pace. The document also included a commitment to Ethiopia to avoid any damage from the dam to Egypt.

Al-Shurooq discussed President Omar al-Bashir's speech to the Egyptian media and his assertion that the signing of the Declaration of Principles on the *GERD Dam* between the three Presidents will set up a new phase of cooperation between the countries of the Eastern Nile Basin. *Al-Bashir* stressed that Sudan would not accept the violation of Egyptian water rights and interests, and fully understood the Egyptian concerns about the dam and the need to protect the body of the dam and its validity, so as not to pose a threat to Sudan and Egypt, pointing to the role of technical committees, and the International Advisory Office in this regard.

President *al-Bashir* told the media about the disadvantages and advantages of the Ethiopian dam. He pointed out that there is no suitable area for the dam than what obtains now and that the dam will be for electricity, which will benefit Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia.

The newspaper known as "Last Moment" spoke in a special report on the fears and warnings associated with blocking the Ethiopian Renaissance *GERD Dam*, and quoted warnings by water resources expert *Haider Youssef*, that Sudan would be a disaster because of the size and height of the dam, and that Ethiopia would not be affected by that. The water would flood the whole Sudanese territory and considered that the signing of the framework agreement cancellation of the Convention in 1902.

The newspaper quoted the director of UNESCO for water *Professor Abdulla Abdul Salam*, who spoke about the size of the dam, criticizing the silence of officials on

the information and confidentiality surrounding the dam and the blocking of experts and public opinion. He stressed that much information was not available to them as experts. He opined that it is not without the disadvantages that could be affected by Sudan and Egypt in the future, and the benefit of the dam to regulate the flow of the Blue Nile, of the floods and evaporation rate will be less than the High Dam and reduce the amounts of silt, but confirmed that for a limited period estimated five years only (Al Ajil-Mohammed,2015).

It can said that the Sudanese audible, readable and visual media deals with the issue of filling GERD Dam with a reservation and a strong sense of balance in covering the issue of the Nile waters in general and GERD Dam in particular. This is due to the Sudanese attitude on the issue in which Sudan is not a major part.

The Ethiopian media attitude towards the GERD Renaissance Dam

The GERD is a fact of life. In discussing how the Ethiopian mass media dealt with the GERD issue, it is necessary to refer to the beginning of the case which received a large coverage of the local and international media.

The following excerpts from a commentary by Yeshiwas Degu Belay, Mass Media in Nile Politics: The Reporter's Coverage of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

- The Reporter (06th April 2013), which reveals the socio-cultural and symbolic value of the Blue Nile (Abay) as a source of arts and myth, illustrates the vast economic gains more than the symbolic attachments to the river; "it's not because the dam is being built on the Blue Nile that we attach special importance to it; it is because of the significant benefits that can be derived from the dam once it is completed. The dam will be a dependable source of energy. As such, it will play a crucial role in the growth of industry, agriculture, transportation, technology, and a host of other social services.
- The Reporter (06th April 2013) writes, Beginning from planning to all the way to financing and execution we have taken charge of the entire process despite the reluctance and sometimes downright opposition of donors and lending institutions, we are the masters of our future. The Renaissance Dam provides with the perfect opportunity to show this to the world. The Ethiopian media used the case as part of the national reputation.
- APA-Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) (November 2017) writes: The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam "is being funded only by Ethiopians, not by any country or financiers", Ethiopia's foreign ministry spokesperson went on, adding the reports have no impact on the construction of the dam

“Ethiopia does not need to get permission from anyone to use its own natural resources, including to build the dam, which currently has reached 60 percent,” Alem declared (APA News (November 23, 2017 to 15:20)).

Regarding some media reports about Ethiopia receiving funds from the State of *Qatar* for the project, *the Prime Minister said that his country does not want any assistance from foreign sources for this particular project and that this project belongs to the Ethiopian citizens who finance the project.* Ethiopia's attitude on the financing of the mega project and its completion with local sources would not be jeopardized. *Hill* said the visit to *Qatar* was not related to blocking the great Ethiopian renaissance, but was meant to discuss other areas of cooperation. . As for the rumors published by some foreign media that Ethiopia will not complete the construction of the dam itself, the *Prime Minister* replied: *I am confident that the construction of the dam will be completed without outside assistance.*(Ethiopian News Agency,2017)

- This aspect reinforces and gives greater importance to Ethiopia's right to use the Nile and reveals critical reactions to Egypt's distinct interest in the Nile. The suspension of Carandolo Cadome, the reporters in 9 March 2013, is the most visible framework for the Nile's policy of challenging and marginalizing the dominant narratives (for Egypt as a gift of Nile and Nile as a gift to Egypt). The comment reinforces the idea that the Nile waters are a gift to all people in the Nile Basin and does not have the exclusive right to prevent others to enjoy this gift of nature. In another article, Salman Mohammed points out that (Mohamed s (2013)) (No one can deny Egypt's full dependence on Nile waters, but on the same scale, no one can deny the rights of other countries to develop and use the Nile, but the duty of those countries to fight hunger, darkness and thirst among their people using Nile water).
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' remarks on Thursday came after Egypt's president called water ‘a matter of life or death’ for his country. According to AP, Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan recently failed to approve a study on the dam's potential effects.
- “The dam will be Africa's biggest hydroelectric power plant. Egypt has long said the dam will cut its supply of Nile water and lead to shortages. Ethiopian officials have said the dam along the Sudan border is more than 60 percent complete.
- “The ministry says Ethiopia ‘will continue to work with Sudan and Egypt for a fair and equitable use of the Nile water.’”

The Reporters on 29 June 2013 (*although they are opponents and seek to overthrow the Revolutionary Front of the Ethiopian people they only believe the construction of the dam is in the national interest and was not there to act as a tool for the country's enemies*). This frame gives a sense of political cooperation, harmony and unity between the general public and politicians.

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- A number of journalists and writers who discussed the Nile Agreement in 1959 between *Egypt* and *Sudan* pointed out that the upstream countries are victims of exclusion political negotiations and deprived of their share of the river. Ethiopia has been the victim of another common framework in which news coverage on Nile politics has generally exposed the suffering of upstream countries with exclusive concessions to downstream countries in the Nile.
"The Nile Water has been widely exploited by the two countries - *Egypt* and *Sudan*".(The reports (8 Jun 2013)).
- Another article on the issue, "The Reporters" (June 25, 2013) *In 1959, allocating 55.5 billion cubic meters of water to Egypt, 18.5 billion cubic meters of water to Sudan and 10 billion cubic meters of water for evaporation*, the suspension of *Mimar Iyalio* (the reporters (25 Jun 2013)), shows that the use of *Egypt* and *Sudan* imposed a legal obligation and restriction on upstream countries from the use of any cubic meter Of the river,
- Another comment by *Henok Tadeel* (Tadel H (2013)), illustrates *the imbalance that the Nile Convention has done. Ethiopians even deserve drinking water from the Nile has created a deep sense of treason and hostility in the hearts of generations of Ethiopians since then towards the mastermind of the deal.*) The analysis shows that the paper envisioned the agreement as a practice of institutional marginalization of other Nile Basin countries to participate in political negotiations affecting the national interest.
- Since, the newspapers have been presenting and highlighting the military conflicts and disagreements between *Ethiopia* and *Egypt*, which have been highlighted at the national level. The emergence of the military

framework in Ethiopian newspapers and in the correspondent newspaper was examined inductive form in relation to news coverage of threats of war or a tense military and diplomatic confrontation around the dam. (Nagush ya (2013)) Commentary *Mimar Ialio*, (Demark MA (2013)) Water Diplomacy or Water War? What is the way ?, (June 8, 2014) shows that politics in the waters of the Nile is full of tensions, distrust, anxiety, ambiguity and diplomatic confrontation between the countries on the banks of the river and the estuary on the high reaches of the river since time immemorial.

The impact of media attention on the relations of the Nile Basin countries:

The construction of the *GERD* comes at a time when the Nile Basin countries are facing sharp differences over the framework agreement for cooperation concerning the redistribution of the Nile waters. These disputes broke out at the ministerial meeting of the basin states in Kinshasa after the seven countries of the tropical basin called for reviewing the issue of water distribution and canceling the 1929 agreement.

However, Egypt rejected this proposal, and Sudan submitted a compromise proposal that the differences be referred to the heads of the basin countries, but referred the discussion of this issue to the Alexandria meetings with the participation of the ministers of the basin countries. Even after the ministers met in Alexandria, the issue is still pending and the differences continue. The ministerial meeting in Alexandria was canceled without the intervention of Sudan and a compromise proposal that was unanimously endorsed by the Nile Basin countries. The Sudanese proposal stipulated that the controversial issues on the framework agreement be subject to further discussion within six months in order to reach a collective agreement. (Public Opinion Journal (2009))

The media has reported Ethiopia, Egypt, Sudan and most of the world's leading news networks such as *BBC*, *CNN* and *Al Jazeera* on the event with a great deal of coverage from the views of the Ethiopian, Egyptian and Sudanese governments.

The media negatively affected and created political and diplomatic tensions between the countries of the Nile Basin, particularly Ethiopia and Egypt. This led to the stalemate of the situation to the point of talking about future wars in the region and creating a hostile spirit. A new newspaper, Middle East journal reported on 24 November 2017 that President *Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi* said that "*no one can touch Egypt's share of the Nile, stressing that the issue is life or death*". (the middle East Monitor (24 Nov 2017))

While the *Sudanese* army deployed thousands of troops on its border with *Eritrea* after *Egypt* sent troops in coordination with the *United Arab Emirates* to an Eritrean base in *Sawa*. *Al-Jazeera* said Sudanese forces had already reached the border guard in *Kassala*, (the Middle East Monitor 6 Jun 2018)), while Sudan and Ethiopia closed their border with Eritrea.

The government of Ethiopia's western region had sent military reinforcements to the border triangle with *Eritrea* and the *Sudan*, the Ethiopian newspaper *Siyha* quoted Ethiopian sources as saying. The sources revealed details of Eritrean military reinforcements backed by Egypt, as well as rebel movements from the Darfur region of western Sudan, and gathered near the Sudanese-Eritrean border. The Sudanese Foreign Ministry announced in a brief statement that it had decided to recall Sudan's ambassador to Egypt *Abdel Halim Mahmoud* to Khartoum for consultations. The ambassador's remarks came after renewed tension between the two countries against the background of the visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Khartoum. (Middle East monitor (29 May 2017))

Ethiopia accused Egypt of forming an African lobby. The African lobby will work with a coalition of African countries and will be charged with monitoring the crisis caused by Ethiopian water projects, the Egyptian daily *Ashrouk* reported. "The construction of the dam will not stop at the dam for one minute. This is our country's consistent position. It is a fundamental right for Ethiopia to make use of its water resources to produce energy for development and poverty eradication," he said.

When looking at the media statements by officials in the countries of the Eastern Nile Basin, it can be said that the region in the crater of a volcano may explode at any moment and this is due to the media attention that negatively affected the relationship of these countries with each other and the war of words across the various media is the attribute Salient.

Conclusion

The differences between the countries of the Eastern Nile Basin are old and renewed, and it is clear that cooperation is the strategic option for all the Nile Basin countries which believe in this option, but they altered their positions to maximize their interests. These disagreements are an agreement on cooperation. This is evident in the 1990s after disputes broke out in late 1997 between the basin countries and there were no clear options to bring them closer. However, through continuous dialogue, the basin countries succeeded in reaching an agreement on the so-called joint vision projects to be benefited by them.

The uncontrolled media coverage of the GERD Dam has led to a deepening of the dispute between the countries of the Eastern Nile Basin to the extent of the threat of war and the use of force. The Ethiopian side considers the project to be crucial and depends on the development wheel in the country. It is a national and strategic project that cannot be waived. The Egyptian side said that the dam is seriously threatened by the Egyptian water security. Egypt has maintained its position of rejecting the violation of historic rights in the Nile waters and not allowing the establishment of any projects or dams on the Nile except with the consent of the two downstream states. Sudan stands as a neutral party trying to reconcile the situation between the two countries.

Recommendations:

1. The official and private media in the countries of the Eastern Nile Basin must set aside negative statements that can increase differences and cause problems in the region.
2. The media in the three countries should work to deal with controversial issues in an objective and balanced manner in order to serve the interests of the peoples and keep them away from conflicts.
3. The governments of the Eastern Basin countries should establish a media honor code that respects the peoples, rights and specificities of each country.
4. The three governments should take decisive decisions not to deal with the issue in the manner in which the subject has been dealt with, especially the Egyptian media, in order to preserve the space available to solve the matter in the framework of negotiation and peaceful understanding

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