



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE STUDIES, JOURNALISM &**  
**COMMUNICATION**

**Ethiopian and Egyptian Media Coverage of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam  
Tripartite Negotiation: The Case of Reporter Newspaper and Ahram Online**

Selam Mulugeta

A Thesis submitted to the Graduate School of Journalism and Communication Presented in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and  
Communication

July 2021

Addis Ababa University

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**APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This study set out to examine how The Reporter Newspaper and Ahrām Online framed the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam tripartite negotiation, between January 08, 2020 and August 25, 2020- in purposive sampling selected. Guided by the time frame, all news articles that entertain the GERD Tripartite negotiation downloaded from the two media websites. Theories of agenda setting and framing have been employed as theoretical frameworks for this study. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather and analyze the data. Purposive sampling was used to select the media and the news items for this research. The study revealed that Right frame, development frame, technical frame, internationalization frame and distrust frame were used by the two media outlets.*

*In order to structure the stories related to the tripartite negotiation it was found out that internationalization frame was the most predominant frame used by Ahrām online and used secondly by the Reporter newspaper. Ahrām online has used internationalization Frame in its reports for three purposes. The Reporter predominantly used the water rights frame. It remarks that Ethiopia has a natural and sovereign right of using its natural water resources. On the contrary, the right frame helped Alahram to demonstrate the negative consequence of GERD on the " historical " water right of Egypt. It is important to create a platform that can help Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan media professional work together in order to capitalize the positive contribution of media in resolving tension and to build trust among the three countries people.*

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## **List of Acronyms**

AAU- Addis Ababa University

AP- Associated Press

BBC- British Broadcasting Corporations

CFA- Comprehensive/Cooperative Framework Agreement

EBA- Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority EC Ethiopian Calendar

EEPCo - Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation

ENA- Ethiopian News Agency

EN-SAP Eastern - Nile Subsidiary Action Programme

ENTRO- Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office

FDRE- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

GDP- Gross Domestic Product

GERD - Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

IMF -International Monetary Fund

MoWR - Ministry of Water Resources

NBC -Nile Basin Commission

NBI- Nile Basin Initiative

NEL-SAP Nile Equatorial Lakes - Subsidiary Action Programme

Nile-COM Nile - Council of Ministers Nile

PoE- panel of experts

SEC Nile - Secretariat Nile-

TAC Nile - Technical Advisory Committee PE Political

TNC- technical national committee

TECCONILE Technical Cooperation Committee for the Promotion of the Development and Environmental Protection of the Nile Basin

UN- United Nations

UNSC- United Nations security council

### **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and all the sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

### **Candidate**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of submission: Addis Ababa

Date of Submission: July 2021

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The Nile is the longest river in the world with a total length of 6,500 km. Its annual flow rate is 84 billion cubic meters. Nile River is a shared water resource between eleven countries namely: Burundi, the Democratic Republic Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda (NBI, 2016: 3-4). The past agreements signed between the colonial powers, between colonial powers and riparian states and agreements between independent states of the basin have been a source of disputes among the basin countries. For instance, in 1929 Britain and Egypt signed an agreement that give a veto power for Egypt to utilize and control the entire basin system. in 1959, similarly Egypt and Sudan signed agreement to allocate the total amount of the water alone by excluding other riparian states. This agreement is not recognized by most of the Nile basin countries, including Ethiopia. unfair use of water on the Nile River is a source of conflict and tension in the country. Ethiopia, in particular, has tried a lot to establish a legal mechanism to ensure equitable utilization and cooperation along the basin states.

The crux of the Nile problem can be explained, from an upstream perspective, first and foremost, by Egypt's intractability to accept the principle and procedures of equitable benefits to all riparian countries. Hence, unilateral and exclusionist approaches have prevailed on the question of the utilization of the Nile waters ( Yacob, 2007: 103).

Ethiopia contributes 86% of the Nile River annual water. Although Ethiopia has 45.000 megawatt of estimated hydroelectric potential, it still uses not more than 3% of the resource (NBI, 2012: 13-18). Among the Nile basin countries, Ethiopia is one of the most popules nation and most of its people live in poverty. The fundamental reason for the start of the construction of the Grand Renaissance Dam was mainly due to the fact that electricity is crucial to achieve socio economic development.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is constructing on the Blue Nile River, which is the major tributary of the Nile River with annual discharge of 49 billion cubic meter out of 84 billion cubic meters of the Nile River annual total amount (IPoE, 2013). GERD is located in western tip

of Ethiopia in Benishangul Gumuz regional administration at the place called Guba. The dam has 145 meters Height and 74 billion cubic meters water reservoir capacity (Kevin, 2017: 4-5).

It has a total capacity of 6,400 Megawatts of hydroelectric power production. The Ethiopian government announced on April 2021 that the Construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam reached 82% and it is expected to start generating electricity by September 2021. GERD will double the current Ethiopian electric production, which is 4,100 megawatts. It will also benefit neighboring countries in providing electricity with cheaper price (IPoE, 2013: -).

The benefits of GERDP are not limited with power supply, it can also benefit the downstream countries mainly Sudan and Egypt by removing silt and sedimentation, by regulating the water flow and by conserving water in Ethiopian highlands. In the following section, the benefits of GERDP are described in detail. (Belachew, 2013: 5-11)

The two downstream countries, Sudan and Egypt reacted immediately after the announcement of the beginning of the construction, requesting the project to be halted. However, the Ethiopian government did stop the construction, the tripartite talks has begun soon after and the three countries have formed technical national committee to deal solve the differences.

Ethiopia wants the GERD for hydroelectric power and industrial development, while Egypt fears the project will reduce its water supply. Sudan, on the other hand, hopes the dam can help it substantially expand agricultural production by better regulating (Crises Group, 2019: 4-9).

Since the start of the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, on the Blue Nile River the relation between Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan is worse than ever. Of course, there is no legal framework or agreement between the riparian countries on the use of Nile River water. As a result, the countries have spent years rivalries (NBI, 2016).

The GERD and Nile has become the centerpiece of the world politics and to solve the disputes the negotiation has been taking place for ten years. The signing of the declaration of principles on march 24, 2015 is taken as the major achievement of the tripartite negotiation so far.

In the past five years, the negotiating parties have not succeeded to reach an agreement on rules and mechanisms for the implementation of DOP. During this period, the US government and the world bank intervened and had taken the negotiation to Washington, but finally have failed to reach agreement. In June, 2020 Egypt appealed to the United Nations security council (UNSC) to stop Ethiopian move of unilateral water filling. Egypt complaint did not prevent Ethiopia from carried out the first round-first year reservoir water filling.

Carnegie (2021: February, 12) said that " from the Egyptian perspective, now that the country has accepted the inevitability of the dam going operational". It also stated that the negotiation is taking place focusing on detail issues of the dam water filling, long-term operation and on dispute resolve mechanisms. The tripartite negotiation is yet to reach on tangible result but still proceeding under the auspicious of the African Union.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The Ethiopian government has been negotiating with Egypt and Sudan since the beginning of the construction of the Renaissance Dam in March 2011. Kevin (2016:8) underlines that GERD is hydroelectric power plant that does not cause significant effect on the water flow of the river Nile. It is known that hydropower dams don't consume water. On the other contrary, the Renaissance dam will not have a significant harm on the downstream countries, rather it benefits them. For example, it prevents sedimentation and flooding, maintains a balanced flow of water, reduces water loss due to evaporation, and helps to socio economic integration through energy infrastructures.

Egypt and Sudan are saying that the Renaissance Dam will have a significant effect on their water share of the river Nile (Walaa Y 2017; 5-6). The two countries have been engaging on technical negotiation with Ethiopia for the past ten years to resolve the differences. However, they have so far failed to reach an agreement (Mohyedeem, 2021: 2-4)

The signing of the Declaration of Principles in 2015 between the three countries is mentioned as the only notable achievement. They held a series of talks between 2015 and 2017, but failed to agree. For around a year the tripartite negotiation has been suspended because of disagreements. In 2019, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in the Russian city of Sochi have agreed to resume tripartite talks (the African report, 2020).

Although the tripartite negotiation has resumed with the involvement of third party, the negotiating parties have not yet agreed on key issues. Since May 2020, the tripartite negotiations have been taking place under the auspices of the African Union and Ethiopia unilaterally carried out the first round first year water filling in August 2020 (Africa union, 2020; may 22). This situation has exacerbated tensions between Ethiopia and Egypt. Particularly the relations between the two countries have been strained over the past decade and there are fears that Ethiopia and Egypt could go to war (WPR, 2021: April 9).

According to Al Jazeera (2020: march 20) The tension between Ethiopia and Egypt over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is one of the top agendas of international media. Media is portrayed as the other major battle field of GERD contention between the negotiating parties. Patrick (1993: 142 -151) puts media as a primary of non-state actor in foreign policy decision making. Especially in conflict resolution process media plays significant role.

According to Etan (2001: 45-53) State and non-state actors use the media to communicate, build confidence and advance negotiation and to mobilize support on agreements. Within Political Communication literature, there has been a growing realization that the media have an impact on the practice of diplomacy (Archetti, 2010: 19).

The independent (march 14, 2020) reported that war is imminent between Egypt and Ethiopia over the Nile and it will be the Africa water war. It noted " The Nile, one of the wonders of the natural world, finds itself the subject of an escalating war of words. It could turn the river from a source for civilization and peace to a source of conflict " (the independent, 2020; march 14).

The Renaissance Dam is a major national agenda for both Ethiopia and Egypt. According to muez (2012; 142) local media take into account their national interests when covering such important national issues. This challenges them from adhering to basic journalistic principles.

Although the tripartite talks focused on a number of issues, most media outlets reported in political and security aspects. As ENA (2020; July 17) reported that GERD for Ethiopia is beyond hydroelectric project. It is a national flagship project that symbolizes unity and national pride of the people of Ethiopia. The Egyptians, on the other hand, viewed it as a threat to their national security.

Researches have been conducted on media reports on the construction of Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam. For instance, a study by Muez (2012) investigate Addis Zemen, Alharam weekly and Sudan vision coverage of Ethiopia's decision to construct the GERD project on the Nile River. The findings show that international media reporting on GERD have had tendency towards favoring their country's national interest.

The other study was conducted by Dessalew (2018) which examine the media coverage and roles of Ethiopian print media in achieving consensus regards with the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam building. The study is conducted on the case of Addis Zemen and Amharic Reporter Newspaper reports. The study concluded that the two media have less contribution by giving continuity media coverage and in creating consensus due to internal and external factors.

As the researcher knowledge media reporting on GERD tripartite technical negotiation is unavailable. hence, this research is conducted to fill this gap through examine the Reporter Newspaper and Ahram Online media coverage of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam tripartite negotiation. Since GERD is national agenda for both Ethiopia and Egypt, this study would evaluate to what extent the two media outlets are practicing basic journalism principles in their coverage of tripartite negotiation.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The main objective of the study is to examine how the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) tripartite negotiation was framed by the Reporter Newspaper and Al-Ahram online.

#### **1.3.2 Specific objectives of the study are:**

- To explore how the Reporter Newspaper and Ahram Online framed Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Tripartite Negotiation
- To identify the major frames used by the two media coverage of the GERD Tripartite Negotiation.
- To identify the major emphasized issues of in their coverage GERD Tripartite Negotiation.

- To examine the similarities and differences among the media organizations in framing the negotiation

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

In order to assess the media coverage of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam tripartite negotiation by the Reporter Newspaper and Ahram online, the research addresses the following research questions.

- How did the Reporter Newspaper and Ahram Online framed the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Tripartite Negotiation?
- Which frame was frequently used by the two media in their coverage of the tripartite negotiation?
- What are the major emphasized issues of the two media coverage of GERD tripartite technical negotiation?
- What were the similarities and differences between the media organizations in their framing of the GERD tripartite negotiation?

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study deals with the coverage of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam tripartite negotiation by the Reporter Newspaper and Al-Ahram online. The coverage of the tripartite negotiation by the selected media would be analyzed within the time frame of January 08, 2020 and August 25, 2020. Although the three countries are participating in the tripartite talks, this study focuses on the Ethiopian and Egyptian media. The researcher chose to conduct this study on the Reporter Newspaper and Ahram Online, because the two media provide extensive and consistent coverage on the issues. The study used GERD Tripartite Negotiation related news, articles, interviews, editorials appearing within the specific time period.

#### **1.6 Significance of the study**

Media plays a great role in strengthening good relations as well as exacerbating conflicts between nations. media as a fundamental instrument of diplomacy, it must be managed professionally in order to have a positive contribution. In this regard, this study would primarily help the media outlets to examine framing techniques and impact of their reportings. It would provide professional solutions for journalists of the two media outlets to report in a professional

manner while maintaining professional ethics. This study is important for the Reporter Newspaper and Ahram Online, particularly helps them to fill their professional gap and would provide valuable inputs for media outlets working on water related issues, more specifically on, hydropolitics and hydrodiplomacy reportings. This study would serve as a resource documents for media and communication policy makers and researchers in the Nile Basin countries.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

Although this study focuses on the countries i.e., Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt's ongoing tripartite negotiation on GERD, Sudanese media was not included in this study. The unavailability of Sudan based English online media either governmental or privately owned, which is covering the GERD negotiation frequently, is the reason for Sudanese media not included in this study. As a result, this study is focused only on the two media of Ethiopia and Egypt which means that the findings of the study do not cover the wider perspective of the three Eastern Nile basin states.

The unit of analysis for this research is written reports which include news, articles, interviews and editorials. This study lacks frame analysis of visual contents such as photos, videos, and cartoons. During the time of conducting this study, the outbreak of COVID 19 has critically challenged the researcher in finalizing the research within the time frame.

### **1.8 Organization of the study**

The study is divided in to five chapters. The first chapter deals with the preliminary topics, and lays the basis upon which the subsequent chapters develop. The second chapter links the topic under discussion to the broader works of literature, and helps to provide scholarly insights into the study. The third chapter discusses the methodology, which guides the researcher to use appropriate methods to investigate the problem. The fourth chapter, as the body of the research, critically analyzes the data gathered. Here, this study's main concern and the research questions are answered. Finally, the fifth chapter winds up the study by providing conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Trans-Boundary River**

As indicated in several literature materials and policy documents, national and Trans-boundary rivers are the main sources of global fresh water. In broader view, trans-boundary waters may consist of the aquifers, lake and river basins shared by two or more countries. As a result, vast numbers of people and livelihoods are highly dependent on river water bodies to sustain their existence on our planet (wolf, 2003).

Due to its natural benefits and necessity, a trans-boundary river has been a top agenda across the world. According to Swain (2011) this is due to its impacts on the livelihoods of people who specifically reside across a river catchment areas and lines through which the water flows. Hence, Trans-boundary Rivers are critical water resources which requires the need for cooperation, and consistent consultation among riparian states sharing natural resources along the basin (Okurut and Othero ;2010).

Various hydrological researches Magdi ( 2011) show that there are more than 270 trans-boundary basins all over the world. But as documented by the Oregon University trans-boundary dispute data base numbered 276. The United Nations' Water body's report disclosed that 148 states share an international river basin worldwide and one third of these basins crossed more than two countries (UN-Water, 2018).

Trans-boundary river basin also covers 48.8 percent of our planet's surface. From such data we can realize that almost half of world's population resides under a trans-boundary river basin (Climate diplomacy,2014). It is also important to note that trans-boundary river basins create interdependency among states in spite of their geographical border. Cognizant to such fact two-fifth of the world's labor force works in a water-dependent sectors such as agriculture, mining, and fisheries.

These livelihoods and economies are highly vulnerable to the ever-increasing trend of water insecurity. As illustrated in a document by economy forum ( 2016; December 15), water insecurity and climate change are blamed to be the major two factors for global security threat.

A research conducted by Magdi ( 2011: 96) also indicates that 884 million people (which accounts almost 13% of the world population) do not have access to sufficient water resource. In addition, 40% of the world population, which is estimated to be 2.6 billion people, have faced shortage of safe sanitation.

Science facts indicates that abundance of fresh water doesn't meet the rising demand of water. The effect of climate change, environmental degradation and misuse of water are the dominant factors that cause increasing strain on the world water resources (Giordano, 2014). Hence, the water sector is becoming more sensitive and vulnerable to these changes. Since the past century, global population growth has quadrupled while the water use has grown almost eight folds particularly from 1900 to 2010, (Wada, 2016).

Based on UN ( 2016) estimation, by 2050 total population of the world will add close to 2.2 billion people. This number will rise our planet's population to 9.7 billion people. The absence of appropriate policy implementation to combat climate change and water scarcity impacts are expected to decrease GDP growth by 6 to 14% across much of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East by 2050 (World Bank, 2016).

Furthermore, there is evidence Gleick ( 2014) that predicts by 2025 nearly 2 billion people will live in conditions of absolute water scarcity while two third of the world in areas of water stress. So, it shows that how much cooperative management of Trans boundary Rivers is so essential.

### **The Importance of Cooperation on Trans- Boundary Rivers**

Almost half of the world's trans- boundary rivers do not have legal agreement or framework of management between basin countries (Giordano 2013; 44). As a result, the competing demands on shared water resources can lead to political instability and conflicts among riparian countries.

In 2002, former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, addressed the world that competition over the use of water may catalyze conflict.

Fierce national competition over water resources has prompted fears that water issues contain the seeds of violent conflict. If the entire world's peoples work together, a secure and sustainable water future can be ours. (UNGA, 2020; September 19)

Scholars, such as Fisher (2005) Wolf (1996) and Haddadin (2002) argue that water resource allocation can be a cause for solidifying diplomacy and cooperation among riparian countries, instead of becoming causes of curse. Along the course of human history, no major war has been held over water dispute. However, shared waters could have been dragged states in to hostile relations to certain extent. A true water war was held 4500 years ago (Wolf 2007:114- 133)

Similar studies also suggested cooperation could help greatly by reducing and averting the incident of water-led conflict in terms of the scale of severity and frequency.

When analyzing the study conducted by Magdi (2011: 87), 1,831 state to-state interactions related to water resource issues between the year 1948 and 1999 had led to conflict. According to such research only two-thirds of the incidents were cooperative and the rest resulted in formal war. Cooperation enables to bring an effective and sustainable management on the river course. It helps to strengthening mutual benefit between basin countries.

### **Water Diplomacy**

Diplomacy will create a common room to settle any international disputes by enabling the understanding of all parties to look any matter both from their own and others perspective (Cohen, 1998;2-5). Negotiation is a key component of diplomacy and it is also a channel of contact for clarifying positions, probing for information, and convincing states and other actors to support one's position( Ritto,2014; 302).

A negotiation process to establish cooperation on trans boundary rivers or shared water resource is called water diplomacy (William A., 1971; 79). Water diplomacy can be dealt with, in a formal and informal, intra and inter-state level. It is informed by technical tracks as it relies on its data. Water diplomacy has inclusive characters that require active participation of various actors through the diplomatic process to achieve and maintain effective water cooperation. There are two broad categories of actors these are called formal and informal actors. (Rodrigo, 2009; 21-25).

Formal actors encompass Ministry of Foreign Affairs, water resource ministry, and other government officials. Informal also known as non-state actors comprises representatives of civil

organizations, academia, media, and think tanks. The significant role of both actors play for the realization of cooperation through water diplomacy is very crucial (Hodgison, 2014; 88-106).

## **2.2 River Nile**

### **Geographic Feature of the Nile**

The world's longest river, Nile flows over 6,695 kilo meters , covering 3.2 million square kilo meters, which is almost equal to 10% of Africa's total land area with its annual flow of 74 bcm of water. (Aster and Seleshi ,2009; 19-23)

According to (Nbi, 2016: 23-25), Nile River is a shared water resource of eleven countries namely: Burundi, the democratic republic Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, south Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. The White and the Blue Nile are the two main tributaries of the Nile River.

### **The White Nile**

Originates in Burundi from the Luvironza River that drains into Lake Victoria.it flows through Lake Albert and northern Uganda to South Sudan border becoming Bahr al Jabal. Bahr al Jabal forms Bahr al Abyad or the White Nile with another major tributary from Ethiopia known as Baro-Akobo/ Sobat (NIB, 2012: 28).

The White Nile provides less than 10 percent of the Nile water but has a steady flow of water starting from its origin to the sea, creating a huge potential for hydroelectricity generation in Tanzania and Uganda (Swain, 2011).

### **The Blue Nile**

The Blue Nile River provides 86 % of the Nile waters. The river is sourced from Ethiopian highlands with an estimated annual flow of 74bcm.The Blue Nile River can be further understood with three sub systems.

The Abay River Sub Basin – contributes 52.62 bcm to the total annual volume of the main Nile River. However, the water flow of *Abay* River fluctuates depending on seasonal rainfall. The main rainy season on the Ethiopian plateau is from June to September. The maximum runoff is in August and is 60 times greater than the minimum runoff in the month of February. (Kevin, 2016)

The Tekeze Sub Basin - found in northern Ethiopia specifically between the border of Ethiopia and Eritrea and flows to northern Khartoum. The total annual flow of the Tekeze River accounts 8bcm.

Barro Akobo Sub Basin - is the other Nile river sub system found in the eastern Nile system. This sub system comprises Alwero, Gilo and Pivor rivers. The Barro-Akobo sub system originates in south western Ethiopia in Gambella region and flows crossing the Ethiopia- South Sudan boarder. It has a total amount of 23 bcm annual flow of water (Yacob, 2007: 85)

The Nile basin includes one third of Ethiopia, a substantial part of Sudan, almost the entire cultivated and settled area of Egypt (ibid, 2007).

### **Socio - Economic Status of Nile Basin Countries**

Various literature reveals that the Nile basin countries host an estimated 487.3 million people in 2015. Such number is projected to be doubled in five folds by 2050.

According to Nbi (2012;19), there is also huge gap in socio economic status of the riparian countries, with Egypt being at the fore front in its economic development. Ethiopia has the highest number of populations which is estimated to be 104 million, followed by Egypt and DR Congo with a population of 99.4 and 72.1 million respectively.

Egypt has the least number of populations living in rural area where as the majority of the rest 10 riparian countries population lives in rural area (Chen and Swain; 2014).

In its 2011, the World Bank report indicated that the Nile basin countries have registered robust economic growth so far. For instance, between the year 2005 – 2011, Ethiopia scored an average annual growth of 7.7%, while Tanzania registered 5.2 % average growth. The other five of the basin countries also experienced 3.2% average economic growth during the stated period. (Robbin, 2016; 83) The figure also shows that Egypt is the highest per capita income country which is 10,733 USD. This number is almost 15 times greater than Burundi which has 747 USD. The other shocking figure is, 40% of the Nile basin population is living below the 1.25USD international poverty line a day.

Agriculture is still the main source of livelihood in the Nile basin countries. It occupies 75% of the countries labor force and a source for 25% of their GDP, according to (IWMI, 2011; 112)

Until recent time, downstream countries mainly Egypt and Sudan greatly benefited from Nile waters than any other basin country. In Egypt 98% of the population is living along the Nile River valley, as well as Nile remains their main source of irrigation and drinking water (Selman & surjehan, 2010; 23-34).

Sudan is also heavily dependent on irrigational agriculture. In south western Sudan, the Gezira Scheme alone constitutes 60% of the country's foreign earnings. Most of the land in Sudan is either arid or semi-arid as the northern area of Sudan containing about 30% its surface found in the Sahara Desert. This fact has denied the country a capability to maintain rain fed agriculture. So, they highly depend on the Nile for irrigational schemes that brought most of the country's foreign earnings (Chesire, 2010: 21-24).

According to Kinef (2004; 9), both upstream and downstream countries developed 98.7% of their agricultural production through irrigation in the Nile basin. In addition to irrigation development, Nile also serves as a transportation route for these countries.

The lower riparian, Egypt and the Sudan have been exploiting the Nile water resources extensively both for irrigation and hydropower generation. In short, the upper riparian's have been the supplier and the lower riparian's the users of the Nile waters. (Kinef, 2004: 15).

The report of NBWRA (2016; 210) reveals that the hydropower potential in the Nile Basin exceeds 28 GW, of which only 26 per cent is currently developed. Electricity production per capita in all Nile riparian is relatively low, with six countries generating less than 100 kwh per person per year, compared to the world average in 2007 of 2,752. But among the basin countries Egypt's per capita electrification consumption is more than double the combined of 6 other Nile countries. (NBWRA, 2016: 53 - 58; Bakenza, 2015: 76-79).

However ineffective agriculture hasn't pulled out many from poverty. Subsistence agriculture and cattle grazing, is the primary economic activity and no state is having no strong industrial sector in the basin so far. Agriculture sector shares almost half of the basin countries economy even though, it doesn't ensure their food security (Chesire, 2010: 21- 25).

After decades of instability, the upper riparian countries have relatively become politically stable. They are on the path of improvement in national economic indicators, such as GDP growth, direct foreign investment and human development. So, the Nile basin and its water resources are central to the survival of the riparian states (Timmerman, 2005: 3).

The current realities forced the river basin countries to use the water resource to enhance their food security, to develop electricity, to produce crops, and to develop energy for economic development.

Combined with forecast high living standards and GDP growth, population growth will be the major driver for future food and water requirements in the Nile. Population growth coupled with current risks vulnerabilities and challenges posed by poverty, hunger, disease, production and consumption patterns and climate change will place increased pressure on the basins natural resources that sustain human life. (NBWRM, 2016: 72)

Based on the facts on the ground Cascao (2009: 216) argued that the new reality has forced the upper and lower stream countries to cooperate in infrastructural development, and also to build national projects.

## **2.3 Hydro Politics of The Nile River Basin**

### **Colonial and Pre-Colonial Period**

Nile is a shared water by eleven basin countries. However, there is no any major agreement made among riparian countries so far. As Yacob (1996:46) stated, the water resources of the Horn of Africa are regulated neither by law nor by common sense.

Among the riparian countries Egypt is entirely dependent on the river water sources. In the 4<sup>th</sup> BC, the Greek philosopher Herodotus had alluded to the fact that Egypt is a gift of the Nile, but knife (2004) criticized that he failed to elaborate on the source of the gift.

For centuries the Nile River has been the center of Egyptian foreign policy and security agenda. In different period many of Egyptian leaders have attempted a military action against Ethiopia to control the source of the Nile River (Berhanu, 2007: 38).

Modern Egyptians and the colonial powers made it a number one priority to stop the Ethiopians or their proxies from using the Nile waters to any meaningful degree. The Nile waters agreements and the upstream-downstream polemics express clearly that the downstream actors are firm in their positions and political-military maneuvers that the upstream nations should stay away from any substantive use of the water resources ( Arsano ,2007: 198)

Scholars like Yakob & Nowrath (1920: 32-41) boldly state about Egyptian historical attempt of controlling the source of the Nile waters. And they wanted to do it through war. Egyptian leader khedive Ismail Pasha had an extremist vision of unifying the Nile valley countries under his leadership.

Historical records also show that Egyptians had tried to influence the domestic politics of Ethiopia through appointing bishops and involving in the Orthodox Church (Haggai, 2002 and Yakob, 2007).

The main issues that may drag Nile basin countries in to conflict is absence of reaching agreement on the basis of an equitable water sharing. Upstream countries, particularly Ethiopia which provide 85% of the water of the Nile, utilize almost nothing so far. Yet the lower riparian countries contribute nothing but consumes most of it. Again, they claim to be the owner of the water (William, 2011: 31- 33).

Downstream countries, especially, Egypt has huge natural and economical potential to effectively utilizing the river than the other basin countries. Its economic advancement has enabled the country to build different projects on the river (Sandwidi and Stein, 2003: 5- 8). According to Yakob (2007) and Kiefe (2004) the relations among the Nile basin countries have been unequal, which was exacerbated by the actions of Britain since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. For such reason the sense of an equitable water share of Nile waters could not be acceptable by Egypt.

Ethiopia, which is 86% of the Nile water source, had indicated its interest to utilize the Nile water since the 1930s (Kiefe, 2004). In the late 1920s, the Ethiopian government had discussed with the American diplomatic mission on the possibility of conducting physical survey on the Blue Nile River. Upon the agreement the US government sent a company called white

engineering and a feasibility study was conducted. But Ethiopia lags behind for years to undertake any project on the Blue Nile River.

### **Colonial Period Agreements on the Nile waters**

1. **The 1891 Protocol:** was signed in 1891 between Italy and Britain. Based on such protocol, Italy pledged Britain not to conduct irrigation project on the Tekeze River.
2. **The 1902 treaty:** was signed between Britain and Ethiopia during Emperor Menelik's regime in Ethiopia. It was basically an agreement which states the need for British consultation if any water projects Ethiopia wants to undertake, especially on Lake Tana.
3. **The 1906 a tripartite treaty:** was signed among Great Britain, France and Italy. This treaty acknowledges Ethiopian territory of the Nile basin and in return marks the French and Italy sphere of influence within the Ethiopian boundary (Knife, 2004; 85).
4. **The 1929 agreement;** signed between Great Britain and its former colony Egypt. By this agreement Egypt has been given a right to take all the water, supervise the river basin and recognized its "historical" and "natural " right of the Nile water by the British.
5. **The 1959 agreement;** Sudan and Egypt agreed for full utilization of the waters of the Nile. Based on the yearly runoff the water which is 84 BCM, they allocated 55bcm of water for Egypt, 18.5 BCM for sudan and they left the remaining 10 BCM for losses due to evaporation (Nebiyu, 2013: 3- 4).
6. The bilateral agreement between Egypt and Sudan has never been recognized by Ethiopia. After their Independence in the 1960s, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya after the independence also rejected the agreements and considered the 1959 agreement as a colonial treaty ( Godana, 1985; Okidi, 1994).

### **2.4 Introduction of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam**

Ethiopia launched its flagship electric power generating dam over the Abay river on April 2011. The name of the dam is called the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The dam construction was initiated by the then Prime Minister of Ethiopia Meles Zenawi. According to experts, the dam has the capacity to generate more than 6000 MW of electricity upon completion.

Such project is the integral program of the electric power sector development of the country's growth and transformation plan of 2010 – 2015. Which aimed to generate 10,000MW of electricity from what it has been 2,000 MW (MoWIE ,2019: 5-10). Upon the completion of the project Ethiopia has a plan to exporting electricity to neighboring countries by also changing the old narrative of Egypt's historic hegemony in terms of utilizing the Nile River (Crises Group, 2019; 7).

The dam which is being built in the Benishangul Gumuz Region of Ethiopia will be the largest dam in Africa, with 1,800m long and 145m high, and the project is likely to be a significant step towards regional economic integration (NBI, 2012; Whittington, Waterbury, & Jeuland, 2014; 49-58). In addition to benefiting Ethiopian through electricity the dam will have a positive impact by reducing flood risk and siltation in Sudan by also maintaining the natural flow of the Nile River (IPoE, 2013).

However, the major raw between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia is regarding the risk of a reduced water supply in downstream countries, specifically in Egypt. And such issues should be resolved through an international abided law on trans-boundary river to ensure the benefits of all parties.

Despite such facts, the major reason behind diplomatic moves by downstream countries is also fear for reduced Egyptian hydropower, the likely loss of recession agriculture in Sudan, losses to the brick production industry that uses the sediment deposits, reduced land fertility due to the reduction of nutrient-rich sediment, and unknown environmental impacts (Beyene, 2013).

#### **2.4.1 GERD Tripartite Negotiation Process and Diplomatic Tensions**

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam has become cause for a rough diplomatic raw between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia for ten years now. The three countries cannot reach on an agreement despite the fact that they have been convening for a multiple of continental and international tripartite talks (Carnegie, 2020; march 12).

The tripartite negotiation started in 2011, right after the announcement of the GERD, but failed to reach on any binding agreement majorly because Egypt was not full-hearted to find a way for mutual benefit. Rather,

chosen to exert diplomatic pressure on Ethiopia through mobilizing western countries and institution. (coherent, 2018; 39)

After three months of the announcement of the construction of the GERD, Egyptian interim Prime Minister, Essam Sharaf, has visited Ethiopia and agreed the three countries Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan to form an international panel of experts (IPOE) to conduct a study on the dam. Such move was a meaning full step of diplomatic effort taken by the government of Ethiopia to build trust and confidence with the downstream countries over the construction of GERD (Tewfik, 2015: 10-51).

The IPoE consisted 10 experts and convened 49 meetings. They also had frequent visits in Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan to compile their firs report which took two years and released on May 2013. Their report recommended the need to take technical measures to settle diplomatic tensions of GERD (IPoE, 2013). Following such recommendation, the water ministers and experts of the three countries have held four rounds of discussion in Khartoum between November 2013 and August 2014 in order to conduct a further study recommended by the IPoE. Finally, the issue has been suspended (the economist,2015; April)

During the African Union heads of state summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, in 2014, the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia Hailemariam Dessalegn and Abdul Fatah Al Sisi of Egypt agreed to continue the suspended Khartoum meeting.

Such agreement also led the three countries to again establish a 2 member of tripartite national committee (TNC), to follow up the issues that IPoE recommended earlier. The three countries joint technical negotiation, on 23 March 2015, the joint technical negotiation committee of the three country's endorsed the "declaration of principles" for resolving their differences. Declaration of principles (DOP) is a document which focuses and calls to "cooperate based on common understanding, mutual benefit and good faith" and to take steps that prevent "significant harm" in using the Blue Nile (DOP, 2015; 4). According to Solomon (2015; 49), there was much hope by many that the singing of the DoP could have solved many of the issues.

After the declaration of principles was dropped, leaders of the three countries eventually agreed to resume Nile talks and a consulting company was hired by the three countries to carry out

research on GERD, Aswan high dam and other regional projects. Unfortunately, the consulting company also stopped its job after its involvement on issues unrelated to GERD. The countries gathered once again to amend the job description of the consulting company; however, the discussion ended without any agreement (TNC report,2020).

On July of 2018, Ethiopia came up with a recommendation to the three countries to give focus on three major points, to further step on GERD talks, which included the filling, flow and immediate effects of the dam with the presence of scientists drawn from each country.

According to the crisis group report the scientists agreed to conduct eight discussions; however, after they conducted four rounds of studies, they were able to come up with the result that they have agreed on. On September 2018, the negotiating countries ministers gathered and inspected the outcome. Egypt's demands during this point was the release of 40 billion cubic water while filling the dam and the second demand is a guarantee for the prior demand (Crises Group, 2020; April 21). This means, according to scholars, whenever the water gets lower, Ethiopia should release from the dam's reservoir till the stated amount water flow is secured. This approach of Egypt is a conspiracy to force Ethiopia to accept the colonial era agreement. The plan is immediately rejected by Ethiopia.

Then after, both Egypt and Ethiopia had been issuing press releases criticizing one another. This situation implicated the difficulty to realize a system that would yield a fair use of water and cooperation across the basin and over the dam.

After having a discussion during the recent African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopian and Egyptian leaders stated the need to resume discussion to address their difference (Noha, 2020; 26). Again after PM Abiy Ahmed and President Abdulfetah Al-sis discussed the way to advance negotiation at the African Investment Conference held at Sochi, the two leaders decided the continuation of the four sessions of technical discussions interrupted previously.

While things were proceeding this way, Egyptian government has previously requested American government for mediation. Accordingly, United State sent an invitation for the three countries, to discuss the unfinished matters on GERD.

The negotiation has resumed after Ethiopia's demand accepted regarding the status of U.S and IMF as observer was accepted. Then four rounds of negotiations were held. Two meetings in Addis Ababa and the other two in Khartoum and Cairo. At this time, Both U.S and IMF attended the four negotiations as observer (TNC report 2020).

According to the African report (2020; may 18), the negotiation which U.S was represented through its secretary of Treasury was supposed to evaluate the process and look in to the political analysis. But what happened was the reverse. And from the US side, there was no any interest to give technical details other than expecting Ethiopia to put a signature pre-maturely.

Ethiopia has refused the statement from U.S motioning the fact that the decision is against its sovereignty and right to develop its water resource. So, Ethiopia skipped the talk on March 06, 2020, because the country's delegation hasn't finished the consultation with relevant stakes at home (foreign policy, 2020).

## **2.5 The Role of Media in Diplomacy**

In 21<sup>st</sup> century, countries consider the media as a major backing instrument to help secure their interest, in their external relations (Srivastava,2009).

As is known the primary role of Media is gathering, reporting, and sharing information for the public. However, behind such main tasks it can also serve as a crucial instrument for diplomatic activities. As a result, there has been a growing realization that the media have an impact on the practice of diplomacy (Hodel & Warenner, 2012: 201)

Scholars like Kushner (2005; 167-179) argue that the different ways in which stories are framed and being told to a worldwide audience can be an important tool in implementing diplomatic agendas. In additions the number of countries which are given coverage by these international media, have its own influence in international relations. As a result, due to the impact of the media in shaping co- current international relations, it is necessary for countries to re-consider foreign policies.

The rapid expansion of access to internet, mobile phones and most recently the social networking platforms, like Twitter or Facebook, are regarded by many as a determinant factor that transforms the traditional role of media in diplomatic activities (Raju, 2016: 62-69). With more

than 2 billion people using Facebook, Twitter, Telegram, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snap chat and other social media platforms daily, digital connectivity has made the world to come close to a fingertip which eventually have changed the daily lives of billions of people worldwide.

As rightly stated by Elban (1998: 75), the traditional close door diplomacy has already been altered by the media's influence due to its vivid presence before a global audience.

According to Holmes (2001: 36), interrelated impacts of new communication technologies, have greatly changed the way we lead our politics, international relations, mass communication. It also changed the media's role in diplomacy. As Cohen (1998:52), noted that politicians use mass media in international negotiations in order to manipulate international public sphere and other governments. Before 21 century the international diplomatic activities were taking place in behind closed doors where as currently, the dynamic change of media technologies is making the practice of diplomacy more publicly.

According to Filiz (cited McNair, 1998: 177), the media would help to gain public opinion input which are pivotal on the formulation of foreign policy. The role of media in the global politics particularly in diplomatic activities can be evaluated in a variety of ways.

*First*, media technology has brought in an ever-changing globalization trend. This hence gets our world more connected than any time before. As a result, media provides more information for citizens which influence individual's perspective towards the world. *Secondly*, the media plays a crucial role by creating huge opportunity for a more interconnected world which makes dissemination of various types of information easier and more accessible globally (Boyd and Rantanen, 2001: 127). *Thirdly*, global media's most often put conflict news on top of their agenda in order to catch the attentions of their global audiences as well as to initiate them to take action against government's policies.

To illustrate the rising power of media on international relations and diplomacy, scholars have developed the concept of 'CNN Effect' and the 'Al Jazeera Effect'.

### **The CNN Effects**

The paradigm illustrated by Neuman (1996: 15-27), as CNN effect, explained that the main stream media has given extensive converge and visualization on the atrocities of the war in Iraq.

Such effort yielded a deep concern among the international community and leaders of countries like the United States. According to the writer, a case in point for such paradigm is, the decision made by President Bush for the US to intervene during Somalia's internal conflict. Such decision could have been made following the uninterrupted visualization of images of war atrocities in that countries including images of a stunted children and human right violations in abrader scale.

As Schorr (1998) defined the CNN effect by emphasizing that every breaking news we heard on the media greatly determined countries foreign policy decisions. While Livingston and Eachus (1995: 413) state such paradigm "as elite decision makers' loss of policy control to news media".

According to Livingston (1997: 4-6) Wheeler ( 2000: 300) Robinson (2002: 37-41), the CNN effect has shown three roles of media in international relations such as the agenda setting agent, an accelerant and an impediment actor.

- **Agenda setting agent:** the media houses influence the public mind through story selection mostly intertwine to national interests.
- **An accelerant:** media can have effective outcome on government officials and policy makers to speed up the decision process or increasing public awareness and anxiety, leading to pressure so as to decide on a certain issues.
- **An impediment actor:** they help to spread multiple frames, bring third parties into conflict and help to shape public opinion which in turn affect policymakers' decisions on political conflicts.

### **The Al Jazeera Effect**

The trend of empowering the silenced or marginalized nations and groups is called as Al Jazera effect. AL Jazeera is mainly composed by non-Western journalists and networks. Based in Doha [Qatar], the state-funded broadcaster was established first in 1996 in Arabica – the first independent news Chanel in Arab World - under the ownership of Al Jazeera Media Network (EL Zein, 2012; 12-23).

A decade later, the English version of the broadcasting service was commenced in 2006 with the aim of breaking the hegemony of the pro-western international news gathering of CNN and BBC

World. Within two decades the Qataris media giant has become counter hegemonic power of the western world and narratives. It provides a new perspective to the world reached beyond the lens of the West.

In its explanation Seib (2012; 24 -24) argues, the impact of Al- Jazeera's news reporting during the 2003 war in Iraq was instrumental in terms of shifting the perspectives of international relations. For one reason due to its proximity to the Arab language and sentiments of the people involved in the war.

According to Rehab (2008; 78-89), Al-Jazeera changed the status quo of Western media agenda setting monopoly internationally, by show casing the United States' offensive response in Iraq during the war. In this respect, the writer emphasized the role played by Al- Jazeera was paramount through becoming alternative voice and source of information for the global audiences. Al-Jazeera's involvement also helped a lot to uncover the untold perspective and stories by emphasizing on how issues could have been dealt with. And that is why to day Al-Jazeera can be one of the world's most influential news network.

### **Three Roles of Media in Diplomacy**

Media can affect diplomatic activity either by allowing or preventing negotiation (Gilboa ,2000; Naveh,2002: 201- 221). Furthermore, the fastest growth of media technologies are challenging the diplomats and negotiators the pace and frequency they disseminate information.

The convergence of the revolutionary changes in politics and media communication has created a new media-dominated governing system (Gilboa, 2001; 218-223). He classified three models of new role of media and journalists as instrument of diplomacy.

### **Media as a Tool of Public Diplomacy:**

Governments use the media in order to further strengthen their public diplomacy relations with in and internationally. To this end, the media is quite helpful by shaping the perceptions of the mass through the dissemination of targeted and shaped information (Gilbao, 2001: 3-8). Furthermore, government can use the media to build the good images of one's own country as well as propagate information to local community to seeking support towards their diplomatic activities.

Thus, during the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union developed and utilized public diplomacy extensively in order to shape public attitudes all over the world towards their respective ideologies (Tran Van, 1987).

In addition, both the western and the eastern blocks had used international broadcasting media as a main weapon. Some of these media were the Voice of America (VOA), Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe on the American side, and Radio Moscow on the Soviet side (Gary, 1990: 23 – 40).

### **Media Diplomacy**

According to Brian & Jan (2015), Media diplomacy refers to officials' use of the media to communicate with state and non-state actors, to build confidence and advance negotiations, and to mobilize public support for agreements. In media diplomacy, when heads of states, foreign minister or other higher government officials travel abroad, journalists also travel with them as part of diplomatic delegation.

It uses media events such as press conference and press release as a means to address the public at the end or when a breakthrough is achieved in negotiations. As Gilboa ( 2001:10-15) notes that it is widely used by officials and mediators to promote negotiation and conflict resolution.

Media diplomacy is pursued through various routine and special media activities including press conferences, interviews and leaks, as well as visits of heads of state and mediators to rival countries and spectacular media events organized to usher in new policy eras.

### **Media –Broker Diplomacy**

The concept of Media broker diplomacy implies that journalists have crucial role in resolving conflict while reporting from conflict situations. In this respect the news media can be considered as independent and should have only the role of exposing what is going on as an outsider. So, it is useful to view journalists acting independently as third parties.

Apart from the professional duties the growth of electronic media has created a new role of journalists as broker of contemporary diplomacy. Journalists act more as diplomats initiating and conducting critical diplomatic moves. (Gilboa, 2001:17)

As mentioned, peculiar examples of media broker journalists are; Ted Koppel of South Africa, for the first time brought together representatives of the government and the African National Congress (ANC) delegates to seat and debate their issues. Again, he staged similar platform by bringing the Israel and Palestinian Liberation Front (PLO) representatives to negotiate in 2001 (segueing, 2000; 221). The other journalist, Walter Cronkite from CBS News, also took the initiation by arranging Anwar Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem.

Hence, the new technological advancement and the internet-based communication channels added new trends on media role of diplomacy. In the new system of communication, citizens are no longer just consumers of communication, but also empowering to influence governments on their international affairs through various means of media communication.

According to Nye (2004: 53) the fastest speed of internet communication creates decentralized information distribution system in global affairs decreased governments agenda setting role.

## **2.6 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.6.1 Framing Theory**

What is known to be the framing theory was rooted after the sociologist Erving Goffman described the matter as interpretive designs constitute central elements of cultural belief systems. Goffman called these interpretive designs frames that we use in our day-to-day experience to make sense of the world. He described that Frames help to reduce the complexity of information, but serve as a two-way process ( Marcel,2013:407-410).

In his most influential definition Entman (1993:52) precisely defines framing as “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in communicating text in such way as to promote particular definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described”.

As Scheufele (1999:106) says, “Frames largely unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports.” Tuchman is another scholar who defined framing as important references set by the media to interpret public events.

According to maccomb (2004,:87), “framing is the selection of - and emphasis upon - particular attributes for the media agenda when talking about an object”. While agenda setting is about giving prominence to an issue, framing involves salience on the attributes of an issue. However, because frames are the central organizing perspective of an object, not all attributes are frames. These attributes attract our attention to the dominant aspect of a story which in turn organizes and structures our thought.

Furthermore, Entman (1993: 42) called for a unified framing paradigm to mitigate the wide disparity seen in conceptualizing framing. However, the call was not accepted by D’Angelo who argued that the framing literature shows the existence of three different framing paradigms which make the creation of unified paradigm unthinkable, instead he claimed that there should be an understanding of all facets of framing process (D’Angelo, 2002: 89).

According to him, the first of these paradigms is cognitive model which stipulates the works of journalists are reflected in thoughts of their audience. The second one is constructionist model which sees journalists as interpreters of their sources position. The third one of his paradiagm, sees framing as having hegemonic influence and as the value of elites (ibid, 2002).

In this definition Griffin capitalizes on making a consistent appeal to a certain aspect of an issue in every viable and related discourse in order to acquire the kind of feedback solicited from the audience.

### **Function of Framing**

The analysis of Entman ( 1993) is indicated four functions of framing a story by media organization when reporting a certain issue. He described them as, problem definition, causal interpretation (diagnostic causes), moral evaluation, and suggesting remedies (solutions). He also illustrated his four classifications as the following.

1. Define problems—determine what a causal agent is doing and costs and benefits usually measured in terms of cultural values;
2. Diagnose causes— identify the forces creating the problem;
3. Make moral judgments—evaluate causal agents and their effects; and
4. Suggest remedies—justify treatments for the problem and predict their likely effects.

## **Location Framing**

According to Entman (1993: 138-151), framing in all four locations carry out similar functions- selection and salience. These functions of framing are essential to construct arguments about problems, causation, evaluation, and/or solution. The communicator- often guided by his mental organizations, perceptions and belief systems called schemata, the communicator consciously or unconsciously decides what to include or exclude in framing an issue.

The text- consist of frames which are manifested by the inclusion/exclusion or presence/absence, of certain key words, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentence that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments" (Entman, 1993; 152).

The receiver- who may have his own frames of an issue or frames that arise from internal structures of the mind/schemata, but this may or may not be reflected in the text. The culture- is demonstrated in executing common frames among the society.

Framing is not a clearly explicated and generally applicable concept. In media studies, there is a wide gap on how framing should work. The other scholar Gibert (1999; 111) has named framing as "a scattered conceptualization," and calls on scholars to reach a common understanding. Similarly, Matthes ( 2009; 201 ) in his exploratory study also found that most of the studies done on framing from 1999- 2005 lacked either clear operational definitions or weaknesses of translating framing definitions into operational steps.

## **Process of Framing**

Frame processing includes, frame building, frame setting, and individual and societal level consequences of framing (Entman, 1993, p.152). Frame building refers to the factors that influence media institutions or journalists in the process of creating news frames. These factors can be internal or external to journalism. Factors internal to journalism can be journalists' ideology and organizational culture (Fortunato, 2005; 201). Factors external to journalism, for example, the continuous interaction that journalists form with elites may influence journalists' judgment in constructing frames.

Frame setting refers to the interaction between media frames and individuals' prior knowledge and predispositions (de Vreese, 2005). In short, it deals with the effects of media frames on the audience. The consequence of framing refers to the impact of media frames on the individual's

attitudes towards a certain issue. On the societal level, frames may contribute to shaping society's political actions and decision-making processes.

### **Types of Generic Frames**

**The conflict frame** used to reflect conflict and disagreement among individuals, groups or organizations as a means of capturing audience interest. In particular, is commonly used that focuses on the media's role in defining the dispute and altering the naming and blaming among constituents.

Parties construct them through a continual process of assessing and reassessing issues in light of attacking arguments, information exchange, and interpretations of events. In effect, stakeholders, and particularly the media, frame issues through naming what the conflict is about, exploring causes for it, and providing explanations for on-going events.

**The human-interest frame** brings a human face, an individual's story, or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue or problem. It refers to an effort to personalize the news, dramatize or emotionalize the news in order to capture and retain audience interest; employs adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy caring, sympathy, or compassion.

**The responsibility frame** presents an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for causing or solving to either the government or to an individual or group.

Since frames reflect a specific viewpoint or mind set, therefore, the purpose of conducting framing analysis is to determine how stories are framed involves looking at a story's content and seeing how reporters connect its topic to the typical stories that already exist within people's minds (de Vreese, 2005: 52).

**The morality frame** interprets an event or issue in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions. puts the event, problem, or issue in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions.

**The economic consequences frame**, finally, presents an event, problem or issue in terms of the economic consequences it will have on an individual, group, institution, region or country (de Vreese, 2005, p.56).

News is often framed in terms of the actual or potential economic impact or consequences on the audience 28 (Neuman et al., 1992). The economic impact of an event has an important news

value (Graber, 1993), and it has been suggested that news producers often use the consequence frame to make an issue relevant to their audience (Gamson, 1992; 106).

### **2.6.2 Agenda Setting**

Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, explains agenda setting by comparing, the relationships between the emphasis that the mass media place on issues and the importance that media audiences attribute to those issues. While agenda-setting theory started out as an explanation of media impact on political behavior and attitudes during election years— specifically, the ways that news media coverage can prioritize issues, or set the agenda, for the public. (Andreessen, 2013; 100).

In other words, the idea behind McCombs and Shaw’s original notion of agenda-setting theory is that while the media do not tell us what attitudes or opinions we should have (what to think) and do not set out to deliberately or purposely engineer public opinion, they do tell us which issues we should be focusing on (what to think about) — that is, which issues are most important and therefore most worthy of inclusion on our mental agendas ( Marcel,2013: 100-105 ).

Its basic premise—that media can profoundly affect how a society (or nation or culture) determines what are its important concerns and therefore can mobilize its various institutions toward meeting them—has allowed this line of inquiry, in the words of David Protess and his colleagues (Protess and McCombs, 1991, 1991), to “flourish.” Agenda-setting pioneer McCombs has undertaken an effort to expand and develop the theory by linking it to a broad range of other media theories—for example, framing theory (McCombs and Ghanem, 2001; 1992).

Indeed, since the mid-1980s, communication scholars have published hundreds of studies showing that the media do tell us both what to think about (which issues to focus on) and what to think (which attitudes and judgments to have about them).

The Primary level of agenda setting, the idea that the issues emphasized by the media become the issues that the public thinks are important, is now referred to as the “first level” of agenda setting. Whereas first-level agenda setting focuses on the amount of media coverage an issue or other topic receives. (hand book,2010; 101). Conventional agenda-setting research has focused at the

object level and has assessed how media coverage could influence the priority assigned to objects (e.g., issues, candidates, events, and problems). In doing this, media told us “what to think about.”

The “second-level” of agenda setting looks at how the media discuss those issues or other objects of attention, such as public figures. Here the focus is on the attributes or characteristics that describe issues, people or other topics in the news and the tone of those attributes. The general effect is the same: the attributes and tone that the media use in their descriptions are the attributes and tone foremost in the public mind.

McCombs argues that second-order agenda-setting and framing share common concerns for attribute agendas (frames), the dynamics of the agenda-setting process (framing process), and agenda-setting influence (framing effects). McCombs believes that the integration of agenda-setting theory with framing theory will help clarify some of the concepts in framing theory. He advocates “explication of a more general theoretical structure describing the frames and attributes that are important to the communication process” (McCombs and Ghanem, 2001: 79). Agenda setting can also be best described by the following terms.

### **Who Sets the Media’s Agenda?**

If the news media set the agenda for the public, then who (or what) sets the media agenda? Indeed, several scholars have suggested that the public agenda has an effect on the media agenda: audiences make clear to the media (through ratings, audience studies, market research, and consumption patterns) what they want to watch and read about, and the media simply respond. In other words, the media are market driven and thus give their audiences what they know will sell. Other scholars have argued that politicians and public relations practitioners contribute to the setting of the media agenda. In any case, news organization executives do not construct the media agenda in a vacuum.

Thus, the theory of agenda setting, according to some scholars, transformed to agenda building. Agenda-building is “the often-complicated process by which some issues become important in policy making arenas” (Protess et al., 1991, 6). Kurt Lang and Gladys Lang (1983) defined

“agenda-building—a more apt term than agenda-setting—[as] a collective process in which media, government, and the citizenry reciprocally influence one another”.

In this study framing theory is employed to illustrate how the GERD tripartite technical negotiation stories are treated or portrayed by the Reporter Newspaper and Ahram Online. it is vital theoretical framework to identify selected major issues in their coverage of the technical negotiation.

Agenda setting theory is also essential theoretical frame of this study to show how the two media are highlighting some issues of the GERD tripartite negotiation and avoiding the others towards their own interest. This theory is also helpful to find out emphasizing issues and it is important to know in what way the two media are trying to form the public views over the ongoing negotiation of the dam.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research design**

The main objective of this study is to examine how The Reporter English Newspaper and Ahram online coverage of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Tripartite Negotiation. To meet this objective, this study has employed a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Designing is a crucial research framework to accurately implement the research accordingly with the designed question. According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2001:166) research design as a plan for properly identifying the subject matter, research sites, and data collecting mechanism to address the research questions. It helps and simplify a research to gather sufficient data and information at the maximum level.

Quantitative method employed here is content analysis; the qualitative methods include textual analysis. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods referred to as triangulation. According to McNeill & Chapman (2005 :23) description “triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods to cross-check and verify the reliability of a particular research and the validity of the data collected”.

It is commonly used and appropriate approach to conduct media framing research. It is well known that employing qualitative method with the support of quantitative helps to have in-depth understanding on the research problem since the two approaches address different aspects. Since this study is mainly focus on media content analysis the quantitative method has been applied with the support of qualitative method, to enable interpret data.

Quantitative method is vital for collecting numerical data to explain a certain situation. The statistical data collecting through quantitative methods needs another method to interpret those data in media research.

Qualitative research method is used to investigate problems and construct detail understanding on certain phenomenon. It enables researchers to follow the process and order of events. qualitative method particularly for content analysis is part of the study that has served for the purpose of triangulation.

### **3.1.1 Quantitative Content Analysis**

Content analysis is one of the methods employed in this research to analyze the coverage of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Tripartite Negotiations by Reporter English Newspaper and Ahram Online. As the main interest of this thesis is to investigate stories of the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Tripartite Negotiations, content analysis becomes vital in assessing the manifested texts on Reporter English newspaper and Ahram Online. The analysis is mainly carried out to collect data about media content such as topics or issues, volume of mentions, ‘messages’ determined by keywords in context (GERD, Nile, Abay ), circulation of the media and frequency.

According to Berg (2001: 233-241), quantitative content analysis as a research method is applied to any type of communication. In communication research quantitative content analysis as Kerlinger (2000) (as cited in Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 156) defines it is “a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.”

Content analysis can be again defined as “the systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods” (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005: 3). It required the establishment of guiding rules applied identically to all study entities, with the researcher’s subjective analysis and interpretation put aside. The results are bound to be quantified for reasons related with precision, generalization and interpretation and analysis (jensen, 2002: 237).

Content analysis has five purposes to serve in media and communication research (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011; 157). It is used to describe communication contents; study what might have caused media messages to have the characteristics they have; compare the compatibility of media contents with the real world; to evaluate the effects of the media and investigate representation of certain groups in the media.

Quantitatively identifying, recording and organizing the samples of news under established frames gives a permissible ground to establish common themes consequently setting a shared account to similar news in a set. However, this does not provide a complete sense of why the exact frames were implemented and provide an explanation about factors that led to the use of

such frames. Here is where qualitative method comes in handy. it involves interpretation to make sense of events and understand their social meaning: what people make of them (Thomas, 2003:1).

According to Wimmer & Domnick ( 2011:37), it is the most applicable scientific approach to the mass media research that involves a systematic and objective evaluation of information. Quantitative content analysis has several advantages among which a reliable measurement technique and longer shelf value are listed (Riffe, 2005: 211).

According to Babbie (1979: 252) content analysis has additional advantages that make it favorable for research. in relation to other data gathering methods, it is not time or money consuming, it is safe in case the researcher is required to repeat the investigation and it has limited or no effect on the subject being studied.

A content analyst depends on an oral or written text, image, etc., to make analysis. Accordingly, content analysis is limited to examining recorded communication only (Babbie, 1979 :152- 154 ). Even if the researchers achieved a high degree of validity in their coding of value orientations in the underground press and mainstream magazines, there's still a question of whether they had valid measure of the cultures those media were taken to present. (Jensen, 2002: 217-231).

In this study, the quantitative content analysis has helped the researcher in identifying the frames used in the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam tripartite negotiations coverage by the selected media.

### **3.1.2 Qualitative Content Analysis (Textual Analysis)**

Qualitative (textual) content analysis is a systematic approach which deals with analyzing, categorizing, and evaluating media texts. For Frey, Botan, Friedman & Kreps (1991 as cited in Morris, (2007: 163), textual analysis is a method used in communication studies “to describe, interpret, and evaluate the characteristics of a recorded message”. It is again a useful method to examine and interpret interviews, observation protocols, and other empirical data.

In mass communication research qualitative method relies heavily on researcher ‘readings’ and interpretation of media texts and often employed to answer the "whys" and "how's" of human behavior, opinion, and experience information that is difficult to obtain through quantitatively-

oriented methods of data collection. In addition, qualitative content analysis can give an opportunity to examine how the producers of the text view their social world (Berg, 2001: 87-93).

In the application of qualitative content analysis, there are three distinct approaches: conventional, directed and summative. The major differences among the approaches are coding schemes, origins of codes, and threats to trustworthiness. In conventional content analysis, coding categories are derived directly from the text data. With a directed approach, the analysis starts with a theory or relevant research findings as guidance for initial codes. Summative content analysis involves counting and comparisons, usually of keywords or content, followed by the interpretation of the underlying context (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; 144-151).

Since there was no pre-defined category through which to process and analyze the text, the researcher employed a conventional approach. This is because, in analyzing the text, there were no predefined categories. The study focused only on the text and on giving meaning to the text, based on the context. Moreover, as discussed in the theoretical framework (framing as theory) earlier, since the study employed inductive and issue-specific approaches, the analysis approach could directly fit with the conventional textual analysis.

Additionally, Hancock (2002; 164) asserts that qualitative researchers should support their interpretations by providing enough quotes from their sample data. While emphasizing the idea that researchers should offer detailed examples from relevant statements, Berg (2001; 87- 93) proclaimed that the researcher should incorporate independent coders to avoid subjective interpretation.

Using a blend of content analysis and textual analysis is very important for this research. While content analysis helps the researchers to show the frequencies of relevant categories, the references to qualitative part shows how the researcher examines ideological mind-sets, themes, topics, symbols and similar phenomena while grounding such examination to the data (simon, 2011; 221).

It also important to compare how the two media covered the same topics in different ways and to measure how much of the events were covered. In addition to this it helps to identify and

understand the core value of journalism by evaluating their news selection, sources, location, reporting tone, frames and prime agendas (Kohlbacher, 2006:154).

The main reason for including this qualitative method in this study is its relevance in providing quotes that document or support the frames both The Reporter Newspaper and Ahram Online used in their coverage of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam tripartite negotiations. It is suitable for studying the perspectives of the journalists in detail and also enabled to identify and analyze the similarities and differences of frames used in reporting the issues.

### **3.2 Data sources and collection**

#### **3.2.1 Data sources**

The data was sourced by the researcher from the two media outlets. The Reporter Newspaper and Ahram online websites are used as primary sources of information for this study. Since the study is focused on framing analysis, only written texts of reports are used for the content analysis. The data sources are including news reports, articles, interviews and editorials.

#### **3.2.2 Data collection method**

Quantitative approach content analysis was used to collect numerical data from the data sources to identify frame categories. In addition, qualitative approach is employed to find textual analysis that helped provide evidence in explaining how the Reporter Newspaper and Ahram Online framing the GERD Tripartite Negotiation.

### **3.3 Sampling strategy**

Sampling is the process of choosing actual data sources from a large set of population by selecting sample of data sources from the population (given, 2008). Sampling strategies are divided in two main groups: probability and non-probability sampling.

According to Kothari (2004; 232), probability sampling is used where the researcher has a significant measure of control over who is selected and on the selection methods for choosing them. Sampling methods allow for representative cross-sections, or particular groups to be identified or targeted.

Non probability sampling is used when the researcher has little initial control over the choice of who is presented for selection, or where controlled selection of participants is not a critical factor. This kind of sampling is utilized mostly in social science research. Convenience sampling, snowball sampling, quota sampling, and purposive (judgmental) sampling are types of this method (berg, 2001; 241)

According to Mason (2002:121) there are two reasons for sampling in qualitative research: first, practicality of resources and second, the importance of focus. Furthermore, the researcher should think whether the chosen sample provides access to enough data and with the right focus so that it is possible to answer the research questions. Mass media researchers prefer to use probability sampling in the form of purposive sampling (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006; 176).

Based on the above reason, for this study, the researcher employed nonprobability sampling in general and purposive sampling in particular. In purposive (judgmental) sampling, samples are selected based on the researcher's special knowledge or expertise.

### **3.3.1 Media selection**

Based on the purposive sampling used to select a representative sample, the researcher selected the Reporter English Newspaper and Al-Ahram Online, because of the two media have covered the GERD negotiations continuously and extensively in various types of story format. Furthermore, the two media are among the leading and pioneer media outlets of political, diplomatic, social, and economical and security issues in their respective countries.

Since they are operating under different geographical, societal, political and religious conditions, these media outlets could show various treatments in reporting the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam tripartite negotiations.

Regards to the different nature of the two media ownership, the Reporter Newspaper is a private media whereas Al-Ahram Online is state owned, would believe to have different treatments of the same issues. In addition to this it is also helpful to understand how the state and the public views of the negotiation were reflected on both media.

### **3.3.1.1 The Reporter Newspaper**

The Reporter is one of private media in Ethiopia owned by Media and Communications Center. The Reporter newspapers was founded in 1995 and published in Addis Ababa, capital of Ethiopia. It is one of the few oldest privately owned Newspaper in Ethiopia. The reporter has been published the last twenty-five years with the motto of ‘Free Press, Free Speech, and Free Spirit’.

Reporter Newspaper is published in Amharic and English languages, twice and once in a weekly basis respectively. The newspaper publications are also available on online platform. The online availability helps to reach wide range of readers easily locally and abroad. It entertains various types of issues both local and international; especially it focuses mainly on local politics, economic, social and cultural affairs (Skjerdal, 2012; 46). The reporter has been giving a wide coverage for the GERD tripartite negotiation since the it kicked off in 2011.

### **3.3.1.2 Al-Ahram online**

Ahram online is English language news website owned by Al-Ahram news organization and olde newspaper publisher in the middle east. Ahram online media started on 26 November 2010 but the daily Al-Ahram newspaper is in publication since 1875. Since the establishment it has been working as a mouth piece for the successive regimes.

The online medium availability has helped to increase its readership both in Arabic and English language (farook, 2018; 75). Al-Ahram is the major media out let of Egyptian government information focuses on social, political, economic and cultural issues. Al-Ahram, as owned by the government of Egypt, it provides extensive and consistent coverage of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam negotiations, as it is the top agenda of Egypt. The media reports reflect the views of the Egypt’s government. Therefore, it is appropriate media to examine the identified problem.

### **3.3.2 Time frame**

Regards with the time frame the researchers scoped the two media coverage of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam tripartite negotiation from January 08, 2020 and August 25, 2020. There are three main reasons for the selection of the time frame. First, it was the time that Egypt appealed to the United Nations Security Council to intervene in a dispute with Ethiopia

following multiple rounds of talks failed to reach tangible result. second Ethiopia carried out the first round first year water filling in July 2020. Thirdly, due to international pressure the three countries agreed on the involvement of third party for the first time since the start of the tripartite negotiation.

As a result of this, the three countries political and diplomatic tension reached at peak level during the selected time frame. Moreover, the negotiation and the Nile diplomatic issues have become major topic for the two media during the selected time.

### **3.3.3 Story selection**

A total of 214 stories/ articles were collected from the Reporter 84 and 130 from Al-Ahram in the mentioned period. Since the data is very big and very difficult to manage, the researcher used purposive sampling to reduce the data in to a manageable size. Through close reading, the researcher finally identified a total of 114 stories/articles from the two media – 50 stories/articles from Reporter and 66 from Al-Ahram. This finally selected sample data were analyzed to investigate the study.

### **3.4 Unit of analysis**

According to Babbie (1979, p. 235) units of analysis as the “individual components about which or whom descriptive or explanatory statements are to be made.” The unit of analysis of this study include news, editorial, interviews, and articles. The selected unit of analysis explicitly covered the GERD tripartite negotiation. The study focused on written texts. Since the theoretical framework of this research is the framing theory, coding sheet was prepared by the researcher to identify different frames in the view to answering the research questions.

### **3.5 Data Coding**

Coding qualitative data may also involve identifying recurring themes and ideas. According to Miles & Huberman (1994:56), Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study.

It helps researchers to reduce and simplify the evidence in order to begin to make sense of it (Daymon, 2002; 89). Coding starts after thorough reading of all the data and when the researcher begins to have an overall idea of the big picture.

Data coding is very essential when the data is big and inconvenient (Kothari, 2004; 168). So, researchers can manage their data by applying coding to reduce the data and thereby to group them in a meaningful way.

The researcher has defined and categorized variables and their categories in order to code stories. In order to test the frequency of themes and frames the researcher categorized the content based on the date of publication, types of frames, reported issues and reported media. These categories were used because they were very important to identify dominantly reported issues and frames in general as well as how specific issue is framed. The selected stories were analyzed inductively, without predefined categories at hand.

The codes used for categorization of data are based on research objectives and research questions. Therefore, to conduct this study the researcher has collected data through reading texts portrayed and finally categorized into the following five analytical categories or types of frames.

1. Right frame:

This Reports focuses on legal and right issues of the Nile. It emphasizes particularly on sovereign rights, international laws of transboundary rivers, existing treaties, and human rights.

2. Internationalization frame:

It focuses on international diplomatic campaigns relations with in the riparian countries. This framework deals presents detail reports on the involvement and impact of third parties

3. Development frame:

It demonstrates the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam as a vital development project not only for Ethiopia but also for the region . This frame explains the socio-economic impact of GERD

4. Technical frame:

It is a type of frame that focuses on technical information raised by the three negotiating parties. It more highlights on the water filling, dam operation and dam safety issues of GERD tripartite negotiation.

5. Distrust frame:

It shows the long-standing mistrust between the upper and lower riparian countries of the Nile basin. This frame emphasizes on reports of growing suspicion between Ethiopia and the two lower riparian countries since the start of the construction of the Renaissance Dam.

### 3.6 Pilot Coding

Before beginning the full-scale data coding, appropriate training was given to two data coders including the researcher. The coders piloted samples which are 20 % of 82 news articles in both Reporter newspapers and Al-Ahram online. This pilot test helped the researcher to reveal inconsistency and inadequacies in the category construction. The two coders first discussed on the coding instruction carefully and coded 17 different types (news, articles, interviews) of stories related to issues under study to check inter coder reliabilities. The agreements of the two coders were 15 on the content categories of the issues. Applying the intercoder reliability formula suggested by Holsti (1969), cited in (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011; 243), which suggested a method of computing inert coder reliability by calculating a coefficient of reliability. It is calculated by dividing the number of stories placed in the same category by dividing the number of units coded. Accordingly:

$$\text{Coefficient of reliability} = \frac{\text{Number of units in the same category}}{\text{Total number of units coded}}$$
$$R = \frac{2M}{N1+N2}$$

Where M is the number of coding decisions, on which the two coders agree, and N1 and N2 are the total number of coding decisions made by the first and the second coder respectively. Thus, the two coders judged a sample of 17 stories about GERD negotiation and agreed on 15 of the categories, the calculation is,

$$R = \frac{2(15) - 30}{17+17} = \frac{0}{34} = 0.88$$

Therefore, intercoder reliability is 0.88. This means, according to Holsti (1969), cited in (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011) it is reliable and acceptable. The other purpose of test coding is to check whether the categorization fitted all the elements that have to be measured as well as the possible values to be assigned to them.

### **3.7 Data analysis procedure**

The quantitative data was properly coded, organized, summarized and cleared through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Finally, the quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentage and frequency. Tables were used to present the numeric data.

The data analysis process of this study began by providing the findings of the content analysis (statistical data) supported and accompanied by textual evidence (qualitative) and substantiating remarks identified through textual analysis.

Therefore, the analysis of this study is based on both textual and statistical evidence. The frames and themes which are inductively constructed from the news reports were discussed, to show the extent of both aspects. Then an umbrella frame category was established to make rational associations and avoid scattered findings. Lastly, the researcher attempted to show how various assumptions of the theory of framing are actually in effect when discussing how the news media used the identified frames to cover the GERD negotiation.

## Chapter Four

### 4.1 Data presentation, Analysis and Discussion

This study set out to examine how The Reporter Newspaper and Ahram online framed the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam tripartite negotiation, between January 08, 2020 and August 25, 2020. A total of 114 stories / articles collected from their websites. In the above-mentioned time range 50 stories from the Reporter Newspaper and from Aharam online 64 stories that focused on the GERD tripartite negotiation were collected.

In the process of this study the stories are including; news, articles, interviews, editorials, features, were analyzed. This initial analysis was made by implementing emergent coding to establish system categories to catalog similar-toned news. First, a content analysis of the selected articles was carried out, and, then an analysis of the frames found from the content analysis was conducted qualitatively. Additionally, textual evidence was identified using the qualitative analysis.

Through close reading, the researcher identified five types of news frames used by the media institutions to frame the GERD tripartite negotiation. These were right frame, development frame, technical frame, internationalization frame and distrust frame. These news frames (analytical tools) were identified to carry-out the analysis.

This chapter also presents the analysis and findings of the study. In this chapter, the research questions of the study are answered.

**Table.1 Dominant frames of each media**

Types of frames	Names of media			
	The Reporter		Aharam Online	
	Number of stories	Percentage	Number of stories	Percentage
Right	14	28%	12	19%
Internationalization	10	21%	21	33%
Development	10	20%	11	17%
Technical	9	18%	9	14%
Distrust	7	14%	11	17%
TOTAL	50	100%	64	100%

## **4.2 The Reporter Newspaper, framing of GERD negotiation**

### **4.2.1 Right frame**

The right frame is the dominant frame used by the reporter out of 50 (100%) of the stories, 14 (28%) of them used this frame. The reporter gave an emphasis on GERD negotiation regarding the right frame mainly based on two notions; the water share Ethiopia contributes to the Nile River and the international laws of Transboundary rivers. The Reporter stated on its reports: the right to use any natural resources in the boundary of a country depicts Ethiopia's natural right to use and develop on Nile water. Moreover, on the basis of international laws on Transboundary Rivers, the Reporter made it clear that Ethiopia's full and fair right to use the water when it portrayed Egypt's unfairness regarding the Nile water.

For instance, on March 21, 2020, the reporter wrote in its article that Ethiopia has the backing of international laws regarding GERD. The article states the three principle of international water law these are Equitable Utilization, No-harm Principle, and Cooperation Principle.

First, the need to understand the sovereignty of the states by the county's interest concept into legal rules. Second, it reminds parties to pursue a shared interest principle in the utilisation of the water use with non-zero-sum game, to be able to benefit all parties involved. Third, as a sovereign county that can decide on its own resources, it provides legal protection in terms of economic and environmental consideration. (he reporter, March 21, 2020)

Moreover, The Reporter mentioned: using Nile waters is directly related to human right issues not only GERD but also any developmental activity taking place on Nile River has an effect on millions of people depend on it for their livelihood and food security. On June 20, 2020, the reporter published another Article, titled GERD: a bill settled for everyone's benefit(right) a brief analysis explicated GERD negotiation itself is a struggle of respecting human right. To alleviate poverty and to rescue many people staggering under starvation; on the verge of death, Ethiopia has to do developmental activity on Nile waters. This is the question of survival. UN also declares food is first, the basic need to human beings.

The above article elaborates; Ethiopians investment on GERD improves the accessibility of electricity to many Ethiopians so that they increase their productivity to get enough food. Depriving Ethiopia from realizing GERD means, violating basic human rights and the article concluded that the imposition neither have a moral nor a law basis.

The Reporter mentioned that the Nile River has annual water capacity of 84 billion cubic meters. Out of this, Ethiopia contributes 86% of the share. Based on this fact, the Reporter published an article on Ethiopia's undisputable rights to use the Nile waters. On 7 March 2020, for example under the article titled: The right to Blue Nile: a question of national sovereignty (right), the newspaper depicted no one can deny the fact that Nile is a river bestowed to Ethiopia by nature.

Therefore, it is safe to state that the Nile River is nature's gift to Ethiopia and that no one has the right to deny Ethiopia the use of her own resources. Ethiopia as an independent and sovereign nation has every right to protect and to use her natural resources as she sees fit. (the Reporter,7 March 2020)

Based on the above-mentioned article of the newspaper, Egypt has done a lot for long time to prevent Ethiopia from developing on the Nile River. Even though Ethiopia has 86% of the water share, she couldn't do anything to develop on the Nile waters and take the people out of an abject poverty. The article also mentioned Egypt's unitary supremacy to use and manipulate the water from the source in the future.

The article on the reporter also noted that having Egypt contributing not a drop to Nile waters, Egypt's inquiries on the negotiation, never deserve latitude compared to Ethiopia's contribution. For instance, 22 February 2020, under the article: Ethiopia's rights will only be respected by standing together; it is explicated" the major premise that Egypt set during the negotiation was the 1959 agreement signed between Sudan and Egypt to share Nile waters into two" . The reporter also exposed that the 1959 agreement set the maximum amount of water that could be withdrawn by these two countries that out of a total average flow 84 billion m<sup>3</sup>/year, of which Egypt 55.5 billion m<sup>3</sup>/year, Sudan 18.5 billion m<sup>3</sup>/year, and 10 billion m<sup>3</sup>/year for evaporation. This colonial law restricts Ethiopia from building dams and using the water for any development.

Instead of utilizing the shared water resource among all riparian countries Egypt has been saying that all Nile countries must recognize the 1959 treaty before any new agreements are realized, including benefit sharing proposals, but this entitlement has not been favored by the rest of the others. (the reporter, 22 February 2020)

The reporter on its analysis reflected: Egypt's urge for the signing of a new binding agreement declaring the untouchable Egypt's 55% water share is due to the fear that the filling of the dam and any developmental activity on it may diminish this water share. It said Egypt's "negative positions on GERD are not because of the technicalities of the Dam, but because of the deeply rooted claim of the so called "Historic Rights" " (the reporter, 16 may 2020).

Soon after the news of the American government putting an imposition on Ethiopia and bringing about an impact on the negotiation, many patriotic articles appeared on the Reporter demonstrating Ethiopia's right to use the natural Nile waters.

On 11 April 2020, under the article Everlasting gratitude, the Reporter gave analysis on Americas denouncing the development issue of Ethiopia by far. The newspaper also added, on the negotiation that took place in Washington, America wasn't a mediator, but was in favor of Egypt and clearly took Egypt's position. The newspaper quoted, Dr. Seleshi Bekele : "Ethiopia stressed the involvement of the US should be limited to a facilitator and an observer's role," for Ethiopian participation.

The Reporter also considered on its article that the imposition by the American government on Ethiopia has a colonial tendency and the basic argument of Egypt arises from the colonial law that states the sole share between Egypt and Sudan as the article elaborated this law primarily affects Ethiopia's sovereign right and forbids recognition to Ethiopia. The newspaper also equates the negotiation on the GERD to the Battle of Adawa which was a demonstration of freedom, national pride and sovereignty.

#### **4.2.1 Development Frame**

The reporter used development frame 10 (21%) of 50 reports of GERD negotiation. The Reporter concerning the negotiation of GERD made lots of analysis. One of the analysis is the

development frame analysis category. On many of development parameters, Ethiopia is known to be underdeveloped; millions of the populations live under absolute poverty line and a country which couldn't afford basic needs to the people.

On June 13, 2020, the Reporter under the article Executive Resolve expressed realizing GERD project improves the accessibility of electricity in Ethiopia for the country's economic, social and human development. It further stressed that the project would not cause significant harm on the downstream countries and said "Any good neighbor, who understands these hard facts, supports us. We will complete the project, even if there are elements who attempt to put a barricade on our path." (Reporter, 3, June 2020).

According to the report dated on 28 march, 2020, there are 400 million people living along the Nile valley, however, 260 million people live under the absolute poverty line. Out of which 110 million live in Ethiopia living in abject poverty. In contrary Egypt has a stronger economy among the riparian countries. "Food insecurity, lack of clean water and sanitation, clean energy, dignified living and decent work, lack of economic growth and stability are often the de facto descriptions of these areas " (the reporter 28 march, 2020,).

To fortify the above report, the newspaper on 4 April 2020, under the article An Egyptian illusion of control over Abay River , exposed the comparison of the two countries economy and considered Ethiopia's urge to development as fair and square right.

For example, Egypt's GDP and GDP per capita have reached 235 billion US dollar and 2,440 US dollar respectively. Ethiopia's GDP and GDP per capita are only reached 81.76 billion US dollar and 7668 US dollar respectively (the reporter 4 April 2020,).

The above report also considered on its article that the country's population and economic growth aren't compatible, to respond to the citizens' demand for development, using Nile waters for electricity and agriculture is mandatory. As the statistical data analysis by the reporter, the country is endowed with plenty of land which is suitable for agriculture. Out of the 3.5 million hectares of arable land, 55% is along the Nile streams. Out of this only 6% is used for agriculture.

Despite Ethiopian economy mainly depends on agriculture, the sector hasn't advanced, so food security has been a key question. On 20 June 2020, the Reporter, under the article using the title "GERD and its role in tackling climate change", the agriculture of Ethiopia is dependable mainly on rain as a result climate change is affecting it. To maintain food security by achieving an equitable utilization of the Nile waters and irrigating the land along the Nile valley as well as using the water for generating electricity is important.

Anyone should understand that threat of the Nile is not the construction of dams but the lack of electricity and underdevelopment in the area *i.e.*, lack of electricity and lack of industrialization. On account of these problems, peasants cut the bio-mass for fuel (firewood) and invade the forests to expand primitive agriculture ( the reporter 20 June 2020).

Unless Ethiopia utilizes her Nile water share, the country can't come to the realization of improving the people lives and achieve food security, the article explicated. In addition to this, the article exposed that the GERD has a vital role in pushing the country forward to the industry led economy and reduce unemployment. The shortage of electricity in the country is one of the basic sources of poverty in the country. Since the number of populations in the country is rising, the demand for electricity rises, so GERD is crucial to Ethiopia.

On the other hand, Ethiopia's electric power demand has been growing at an average rate of 25 per cent per year during the last five years and the demand projection for the next five years is to be 32 percent per year as per Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation. To encounter this challenge GERD will play vital role in the Nile basin including the downstream countries for securing the electric supply (the reporter, 4 April 2020).

The Reporter's articles not only emphasize on the vitality of the GERD and Nile waters to Ethiopia, but also analyze the water resources and water utilization of Egypt. For instance, under the article, published on 25 April 2020, the Reporter exposed Egypt's pretext of shortage of water to call the international community for support as a strategy and by mentioning the reality of Ethiopia. The other article on August 19, 2020 explained that apart from the electricity generation, GERD has a role to boost the economy of eastern Africa countries.

The economists further indicate, Ethiopia will land welfare gain valued at USD 6.9 billion. In fact, the whole Eastern Nile basin is expected to realize economic gains valued at USD eight billion when GERD enters into operation (the reporter August 19, 2020).

The above article also has stressed that the compilation of the water filling as per the schedule would save Ethiopia from extra spending. Postponing the filling process beyond 2024, on the other hand, would result in economic losses amounting USD 30 billion on the three countries (the reporter August 19, 2020).

#### **4.2.3 Internationalization**

The number of reports in internationalization frame is 10 (21%) out of 50 stories of the reporter newspaper on GERD negotiation. The Reporter stories under the Internationalization Frame explore why the Renaissance Dam negotiations have attracted international attention.

According to the story on May 16, 2020, Ethiopia wants resolve the dispute through technical negotiation. whereas Egypt is looking for political solution with the involvement of third-party.

The fact that Egypt is not satisfied with the way Ethiopia is approaching this issue is not an international security issue. Rather, it is a dispute that can easily be adjudicated by the international court. (the reporter, May 16, 2020)

This is a fundamental difference between the two countries, stated in the story.

According to The Reporter, on march 7, 2020 Egypt has been busy in international diplomatic and media campaigns to persuade the importance of third-party involvement in the GERD negotiation. it has indicated that Ethiopia's and Egypt's divergent perspective on GERD is a major factor that made it an international issue. It stated that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is a development project for Ethiopia, but Egypt says its existence is in danger. Egypt has tried intentionally to link the dam to its security in order to attract international attention.

Now involving the US, the world leader in the almost culminating unipolar global order, as well as the WB, one of the biggest multilateral sources of financial as well as technical support for Ethiopia, with an extended reach to the

middle east and the continental Africa, the issue of the GERD has become a center of attention for both individual nations and international bodies like the United Nations (the Reporter, March 7, 2020).

On the contrary, the story on February 8, 2020 underlines that since the Nile is international river, shared eleven countries, it is expected that the intervention of international institutions and countries when dispute happens over the water resource. The involvement of the third parties reduces the tension of negotiation significantly and leading Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan are able to outline a pathway for GERD to be filled (the reporter, February 8, 2020).

Another report on May 9, 2020 argues that the motives behind Egypt's desire to internationalizing the GERD issues, is not because the dam really threatened its existence, but it comes because of fearing the development of Ethiopia.

Being obsessed about the Nile cannot bring solutions to problems that are glaringly posing a serious danger to the very existence of the river. If the lakes dry up, everybody will lose, not just Egypt (the reporter, May 9, 2020).

The reporter on February 15, 2020 exposed that Egypt does not want resolve the GERD dispute through scientific negotiations. The report has reminded that Egypt walked out from the negotiation repeatedly in the past ten years to create tension in the region.

Egypt has continuously tested the country's resolve with failures to reach an amicable consensus. The outlook for the three riparian states reaching an agreement remain bleak and even the involvement of the World Bank and the US does not show signs of things abating soon (the reporter, February 15, 2020).

The other story on 30 May 2020 stressed that it is rational the involvement of the African Union in GERD negotiation rather than the intervention of the United States or the European Union, should intervene in the Renaissance Dam. It further noted that the GERD should be treated in the African union principle of "African Solution for Africa's Problem".

As a rule, one may rightly be compelled to underline that the African Union has the primary and cardinal responsibility to promote peace, security and stability in Africa as anchored in the persuasive principle of “African solutions to Africa’s problems” (the reporter, 30 May 2020).

On May 8, 2020, Egypt submitted its case to the United Nations Security Council over to stop Ethiopia unilateral action. According the report on May 16, 2020 report, Egypt's move violates international law and aimed to exert political pressure on Ethiopia. I stated " the fact that Egypt preferred to go to the Security Council, shows to the world that this is not a legal matter but a political maneuvering to twist Ethiopia’s arms to submit to Egypt’s demand " (The Reporter, 16 May 2020).

### **Technical Frame**

Technical frame is the fourth dominant frame used by the reporter, 9 stories (18%) reported under this frame. As the Reporter’s statement, the negotiation among Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan on GERD revolves around the filling of the dam, the release and operation on the dam. The Reporter under the article entitle *delicate deliberations (18 January, 2020)* explicated that an agreement was among reached among the countries on how Ethiopia should fill and operate the GERD during drought and prolonged drought years. As stated in the article the amount of water release during the filling period is one of the contentious issues among the negotiating parties.

Hence, the agreement stipulates that water flowing into GERD should be less than 37billion meter cube for Ethiopia to continue to fill the Dam, there by defining conditions below which it can be called drought conditions and filling will temporarily cease not harm water flowing to Egypt. (the reporter, 18 January, 2020)

On arbitration issues under the article dated on 4 April, 2020, the newspaper explicated the presence of an enormous future conflict resolution schemes among the negotiating countries; Ethiopia proposes, Future disputes and disagreements to be resolved by discussions and by Nile comprehensive arbitration frame work. Whereas Egypt proposes, the resolution to be reached by international arbitration court, therefore, Egypt enforces Ethiopia to sign the proposal that violet Ethiopia’s sovereign right.

The newspaper demonstrated the technical proposal that Egypt forwards not only prohibits Ethiopia from undertaking any developmental project on Nile waters but also makes to have a water debt.

However, water debt and repayment are relevant only when there is a water-sharing arrangement between riparian countries. There is no water-sharing arrangement in the Nile case, and no minimum amount of water allocated to Egypt and Sudan. Therefore, the concept of water debt is inappropriate. (the reporter, 4 April, 2020)

Another article dated on 8 February, 2020, indicates the negotiation was supposed to inculcate only the filling and the administration of the GERD, but it is advertently made by Egypt to focus on the water share. The reporter also criticizes the proposal forwarded by Egypt is a portrayal of the agreement reached with Sudan in 1959. It also demonstrated that the first-round filling of the dam includes two rounds, so it starts generating electricity on 2021.

The Reporter exposed on its article that the duration of the filling of the dam as the major rift among the countries. The newspaper also disclosed Ethiopia's proposal to fill the dam in four to seven years which Egypt rejected during the arbitrary role of America and the World Bank.

On the 11, January 2020, the newspaper restated the quote of Ethiopia's Minister of Water, irrigation and energy, Seleshi Bekele (PhD), Ethiopia intends to fill the dam this coming summer, while Egypt has requested for a delay by 12 to 21 years.

On the above story, the Reporter stated the Americas Treasury bill agency that facilitated the negotiation in Washington released a technical agreement proposal that supports Egypt. The Reporter on 20, January 2020 also expressed the imposition that the America leaders putting on the Ethiopia's negotiating team to sign the proposal, however, this situation shouldn't create confusion to the public; the minister added on the newspaper, "if there is a single word in the document to be signed that could compromise Ethiopia's right to use the water, Ethiopia will not sign it."

Moreover, the newspaper portrayed that any document prohibiting the right to develop of the future generation, wouldn't be signed by Ethiopia. This report also expressed Ethiopia's

considerable effort not to harm the downstream countries during the filling the GERD of the natural Nile waters.

In accordance with climatic conditions, the filling of the dam should be regulated in such way that under conditions of drought and severe drought the level of water they can be retained and goes to filling of dam has to take into consideration the water need of downstream nations like Egypt. (The reporter, 8 february 2020)

Another story dated on 30 may, 2020 disclosed more on further benefits the GERD gives to the downstream countries. further demonstrated Egypt's propaganda depicting as a blockage being built by Ethiopia to stop Nile from flowing to Sudan and Egypt. The article considered the filling have not impact on the natural flow of the River Nile since the dam is built with bottom outlet and culverts that allow the required amount of flow to Sudan and Egypt.

Anothr articles under the technical frame, the Reporter gave analysis that Egypt's forwarding unscientific data for the negotiation having the purpose of calling international attention and putting Ethiopia under pressure. This was more elaborated on the article entitled "Ethiopia should deploy new and stronger arguments over GERD". Egypt's portraying the prevalence of shortage of water as an argument on the negotiation was dis proved by a study forwarded by an American researcher Mary Caperton Morton in 2019. The article quoted the researcher's findings to demonstrate the Egyptians pretext of shortage of water as it is.

The Nubian Sandstone Aquifer System is the largest known fossil water aquifer in the world spanning more than two million square kilometers across Sudan, Chad, Libya and Egypt. It contains more than 150,000 cubic kilometer of ground water-more than the Nile River discharges in 500 years (the reporter 23, may, 2020).

The report also exposed Egypt's water resource as five times bigger; moreover, water shortage isn't the problem to Egypt, but a question of economical utilization of the water they have. The Egyptian uneconomical irrigation systems and the agricultural development projects in desert areas, particularly in the southern of the high Aswan dam of should be corrected before negotiating with Ethiopia on Nile waters the Reporter expressed.

## **Distrust fame**

The Reporter produced 7 stories (14%) by using the distrust frame. In this frame, articles on the Reporter newspaper portrayed the prevalence of distrust between Ethiopia and Egypt since the existence of the two countries. The articles also mentioned the distrust that prevailed between the two countries for long time has had an insurmountable impact on GERD negotiation. Many of the articles on the Reporter reflected the positions of Egyptian leaders since prehistoric times on Nile. Moreover, the articles also demonstrated the favoritism of the American and western governments for Egypt.

The main cause of the distrust between the countries arose from the falsely generated teaching of Nile belongingness to only and only Egypt since the pharaohs the Reporter explicated on the article published on June 27, 2020.

From the days of Pharaohs to days of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Egyptians have been told and seem to believe that they are the “gift of Nile” and that without Nile River “they will vanish.” This is far from the truth. (the reporter June 27, 2020.)

The false narratives of Egypt begin by depicting Nile in their education curriculum, literature, proverbs, stories, art and medias as their own natural gift defying the knowledge for their people that Nile is a bestowal of nature for eleven countries.

The false narration of Egyptian governments on Nile, apart from their people, misled the international community. To maintain their political and economic benefits with Egypt, some countries have been supporting the unfair positions of Egypt on Nile; accepting the false narration; Nile is Egypt’s natural possession. Therefore, the mentioned false narration on Nile, laid its shadow of distrust on the negotiation.

Generally speaking, Egypt's history of cooperation on trans-boundary Rivers is very weak. The Nile Basin Initiative was aimed to create a cooperative framework agreement for the management of Nile water (the reporter, 16 may, 2020).

The other reason that put Egypt into reflecting the ownership of Nile is due to the colonizer, Great Britain. To increase the agricultural and industrial production as well as to control the Red Sea up to India and rule over the sea trade, Britain did a lot that assisted Egypt in present. Among these, the agreements signed by Britain and the colonized riparian countries. These agreements deny the sovereign right of Ethiopia to utilize Nile water while benefiting Egypt and Sudan.

It is those treaties that Egypt claims to have given her the right to use and even to control the Nile Basin including the veto power over any Nile related projects initiated by Ethiopia. (27 June 2020)

According to the reporter Ethiopia's withdrawal from the US brokered negotiation has indicated the distrust among the negotiating parties reached its peak. Ethiopia responded positively to America as a facilitator and an observer to negotiate the three countries the Reporter presented by quoting the water, energy and irrigation Minister engineer Sileshi Bekele; the government of Ethiopia accepted the invitation from America as long as America is a neutral observer.

However, Egypt as often as it does, breached the agreement and went to Washington without letting Ethiopia and Sudan know of its intentions to involve the US. (The Reporter , 28 march 2020)

Ethiopia stressed the involvement of the US should be limited to a facilitator and an observer's role, and then agreed to convene in the US brokered talks; which Sileshi recalls as working against the 2015 Declaration of Principles (DoP), Article 10, which Ethiopia had signed together with Sudan and Egypt.

The countries agreed and signed the Declaration of Principles. "Only the three countries have to agree to seek the involvement of a third party when negotiations fail to produce any fruitful outcomes" the reporter quoted . Even if the Reporter didn't set forth evidence, it exposed the secret discussion between Egypt's president and the American counterpart Donald trump. Later, the Reporter explicated quoting the Dr sileshi Bekele, on December 9, 2019, January 12 and 13, 2020 meetings America changed the role; putting an imposition on Ethiopia siding Egypt.

At first, they agreed to remain as observers but later assumed a mediators role and then acted as a decision maker for us. Unfortunately, their decisions were not backed by science and we informed all the US institutions including the WB, that the numbers we initially agreed with the Egyptians were actually put aside and a new detrimental draft of ill-learned document was independently prepared and was put in front of us to sign, Sileshi said (the reporter 28 march, 2020)

On March 14, 2020 the newspaper published another article the imposition the American government put on Ethiopia to sign the agreement brought about expanded rift of distrust between the countries. The Reporter also added Egypt's urge to continue being supreme on Nile denouncing the rational as well as equitable utilization of Nile waters.

Diverging from the rules of equitable and justifiable use of water, Egypt has been continuously testing Ethiopia on every opportunity it gets. It is our obligation to foil Egypt's hidden agendas, by a strong diplomacy and quality in negotiations.

The Reporter considered Egypt untrustworthy and urges an intervention of third party on the negotiation. The writer of the above story advised Ethiopian government to use diplomacy effectively.

### **4.3 ALAHRAM; framing of GERD negotiation**

#### **4.3.1 Internationalization frame**

Internationalization frame is the major frame used by Alahram online. Out of 64 stories (100%), 21 stories (31%) are presented in this frame. Al-Ahram has been using the "internationalization" frame extensively on reporting the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam since the withdrawal of Ethiopia from the US-brokered talks in Washington under the auspices of the United States and the World Bank.

Al-Ahram's reports using an international frame to highlight the security threat posed on the horn of Africa caused by the suspension of the Renaissance Dam tripartite negotiations. On March 5, 2020 reports about Ethiopia's announcement to withdraw from the US brokered tripartite negotiation, which were held in Washington since November 2019 to February 2020. According to the report, Ethiopia's decision has exacerbated tensions between the three countries.

instead of seeking a solution to the threat of Egypt's water security which is caused by the GERD, Al-Ahram reprimanded the Ethiopian government as preferring to exploit the issue for domestic political gain.

Oddly enough, Ethiopian officials have recently connected issues pertaining to the filling and operation of the dam with “sovereignty” clearly to mobilize the crowds, as if the enemy was at the gates, ready to infringe upon the country’s sovereign rights and independence. (Al-Ahram 5 Mar 2020)

Al-Ahram stated that the Ethiopian government is to blame for the failure of a tripartite negotiation of the Renaissance Dam, which has been going on for nine years.

The reckless behaviors of the Ahmed-led government jeopardies peace in an already troubled region and it is now up to the international community to exercise more pressure on Addis Ababa in order to strike a balanced deal on the Nile before the protagonists in this drama lock horns. (Alahram 13, april 2020)

As for what the Egyptian government is thinking if the dispute over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam cannot be resolved through dialogue, it could use military options to protect its water resources," the report said.

further the report warned that if the ongoing tension between Ethiopia and Egypt escalates into a conflict, It could pose a serious threat to global peace and security beyond the Horn of Africa. Based on this narrative, the Egyptian government has been conducting an international diplomatic campaign claiming that the Renaissance Dam is a threat to the country's national interest and international peace and Security as well.

According to the news analysis on March 19, 2020 The diplomatic mission has four objectives, according to the analysis. to get the support of the international community, to prevent Ethiopia from filling the dam unilaterally before reaching an agreement with Sudan and Egypt, to put diplomatic pressure on Ethiopia to sign an agreement which gives guarantee for Egypt’s water interest, and to inform the world about Egypt's water security concerns.

One of the places visited by the Egyptian diplomatic team was the Middle East and they have covered six countries. The foreign minister in his visits has called the Middle East countries to

give diplomatic support for the protection of Egypt's historic right on the use of River Nile water.

In garnering international support, Egypt has courted the Arab League to press Ethiopia to negotiate a fair and comprehensive legally binding deal that focuses on the filling and operation of GERD without getting into debates over historic rights to, or current use of, Nile water (Al-Ahram, June25, 2020)

Al-Ahram reports on Egypt's diplomatic campaign in the Middle East, which seeks to address the issue of Nile water in the context of Arab security. In this regard, on March 6, 2020, it reported that the Arab League issued a statement in support of Egypt's stance on the Renaissance Dam. An emergency meeting of the Arab League ministers without any amendments approved the statement which was drafted by Egypt.

We, therefore, urge the international community to join the Arab League in taking cognizance of Ethiopia's continuing defiance and unilateralism, which threatens to undermine regional stability and security. " (Al-Ahram 6 march, 2020)

Although all Arab League member states voted in favor of Egypt, the Sudanese representative abstained the statement. Al-Ahram Online report on March 5, 2020, shows that the Sudanese representatives at the meeting had requested the council not to include Sudan's name on the statement of the meeting.

Sudan's position at the Arab League ministerial meeting was unexpected. Because a month ago, in an interview with Al-Ahram, the Prime Minister of the Transitional Federal Government of Sudan, Abdalla Hamdouk, said, "Our stance on the Renaissance Dam is the same as Egypt's, and we are with " (January 2, 2020).

Al-Ahram in other report calls the united nation security council to intervene in the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam negotiation to end up with agreement, as the three countries are unable to solve their differences. "The aim was to defuse the tension with the help of the international body because the continued escalation over the GERD does, indeed, threaten the very basis of peace, stability, and security in the region" it sated (Al-Ahram, 25,2020).

The reports tell that the scale of the tension among the three countries would escalate into conflict. For example, a news story published on June 24, 2020 said, the ongoing negotiations have failed to produce results and it is unlikely to solve soon. " Hanging over the dispute has been the fear it could escalate into military conflict, especially as Egypt — facing what it calls an existential threat — repeatedly hits dead ends in its attempt to strike a deal " (Al-Ahram, 24 June, 2020).

Al-Ahram also used internationalization frame to analyze the economic, social, political and security aspects of negative consequences that could arise if the three countries went into conflict. It also suggests that the United Nations Security Council should take measures to halt the construction of the Renaissance Dam, if Ethiopia continues to not accept the draft agreements proposed by Egypt and Sudan.

#### **4.2.2 Right frame**

Al-Ahram used right frame in its 12 reports (19%) out of 64 stories. Al-Ahram's reports under the right frame mainly focus on Egypt's right of the Nile River and legal aspects of transboundary rivers. The GERD tripartite negotiation deals only on the water filling and operation of the dam. However, there are stories that show Egypt is taking part in the tripartite talks primarily by targeting to sign a binding agreement with Ethiopia and Sudan on Nile water share which can enable to protect the right and secure the present and the future interest of Egypt over the river. Al-Ahram in many of its reports demonstrates Egypt's right on the Nile River is a matter of survival.

For instance, one of Al-Ahram's stories published on March 10, 2020 said that "Egypt's negotiations with Ethiopia and Sudan are aimed at ensuring the right to life." Egyptian officials in their public speeches and commentary, using phrases that link the GERD negotiation to the existence of Egypt. Regarding this in the above story, Ali Abdel-Aal, Deputy Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives of Egypt, told the members of parliament that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam would deprive Egypt's rights over the Nile. He also said that securing the existing water right for Egypt is a matter of life and death.

“In this respect, let me declare that Egypt will never waive its rights to the Nile water because this is a matter of life and death and it is an existential matter for all Egyptians,” said Abdel (Al-Ahram 10 Mar 2020)

In 1959, Egypt and Sudan signed an agreement to share the Nile water excluding the other nine riparian countries. Up on the agreement, 55.5 BCM of water allocated to Egypt and 18.5 BCM of water for Sudan and the remaining 10 bcm losses due to evaporation. for Al-Ahram (may 11, 2020) Egypt’s historical right over the Nile River is guaranteed by this agreement.

Al-Ahram using the right frame to pointed out that Ethiopia's strong position on the GERD negotiations is a threat to Egypt's water rights. Furthermore, it illustrated that the growing demand of using water resources for socio economic development is likely to reduce Egypt's share of water.

in relating to this a news story published on march 3, 2020 shows Egypt’s government sceptic views on Ethiopia and the uncertainty of Egypt’s future water right. The news stated Foreign Minister of Egypt, Samah Shukri, said that Ethiopia is conspiring to fully control and wants to use the Nile water resources alone, while it is resource shared by eleven countries. He also portrayed the GERD as a project, is being built intentionally to control the water flow of the river. " Ethiopia's ownership of the GERD does not give it the right to unilaterally control the Nile, which he described as the “lifeblood of Egypt since the dawn of time.” " (3 Mar 2020)

A news analysis released on January 28, 2020, announced that Ethiopia is preparing to build new dams in addition to the Grand Renaissance on the Nile tributaries. The three hydropower dams are, namely Beko-Abo, Karadobi and Mandaya , which will be built on the tributary rivers of Nile with an installed capacity of hydropower generation of 2,000 Megawatts (MW) each for Beko-Abo and Mandaya and 1,600 MW for Karadobi.

According to the report, the dams that Ethiopia plans to build will pose a threat to Egypt's historical rights on the Nile River. The report stated that these projects are aimed to end century long Egypt’s hegemony over the use of the Nile River water. "Should those projects be carried out, Ethiopia will have the upper hand in controlling, for eternity, the flow of the River Nile, a dreadful scenario that should be heeded now " Stated in the report (Al-Ahram 28 Jan 2020).

In other words, Egypt's right to 55.5 bcm of the Nile's waters per annum remains inalienable.

Most importantly, the historical agreements on the Nile will remain valid and effective, and Egypt's historical (though the word infuriates Ethiopian officials) share of the Nile, the 55.5 billion cubic meters, can never be infringed upon (Al-Ahram 28 Jan 2020).

Al-Ahram urges Ethiopia to accept the 1959 agreement, by reminding Egypt's population and water disparities. According to a report on March 10, 2020 report, Egypt had a population of 20 million when agreed with Sudan to get 55.5 billion cubic meters of water the Nile water. " now, our population has increased fivefold and reached 100 million but our water share remains the same amount that we had sixty years ago " (Al-Ahram March 10, 2020).

The report further noted that by 2050, Egypt's population is expected to reach 170 million, which means maintaining at least the current share of water is a matter of existence. Another report released on June 5, 2020 indicates that even if the current share of Egypt's water is preserved, it will not be possible to meet the needs of the people.

Al-Ahram coverages of the GERD tripartite negotiation, under the right frame is extensively entertain Egypt's right to use the Nile, it is difficult to find stories focus on the right of other river basin countries.

#### **4.2.3 Development frame**

It is the third dominant frame used by Al-Ahram. Out of 64 stories on the GERD tripartite negotiation 11 reports (17%) using this frame. The negative impact of the dam on Egypt's water supply is one of the topics that Al-Ahram Online focuses, using the development frame, on reporting the tripartite negotiations of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

In a report titled "Water effects of the dam" on March 24, 2020, he noted that the Renaissance Dam poses a serious threat to Egypt's water security. It indicates that Egypt is participating in the tripartite talks to avoid or reduce this risk. According to the analysis, Egypt is also a major food in secured country, currently importing more than 55% of its annual food consumption. The article explains the impact of the Renaissance dam on exacerbating this problem as follow:

This figure is expected to climb to 75 per cent after the GERD is complete because of the huge quantity of water held back during the filling of the reservoir, which has an estimated capacity of 74 billion m<sup>3</sup> of water. (March 24, 2020,)

One of the most contentious issues in the Renaissance Dam negotiations is how long the dam will be completed. According to the report, even if the water filling process may take place in six years, the amount of the Nile river water reaches to Egypt would be reduced by 12-17 billion cubic meters

Ethiopia has said that it plans to fill the dam in only three years. That would cut 25 to 33 billion m<sup>3</sup> from Egypt's annual quota of Nile water which, in turn, would yield a five-to-six-billion-acre loss in cultivable land given Egypt's climatic conditions and the current average of 5,000 m<sup>3</sup> of water that the Ministry of Agriculture allots per acre of agricultural land. (March 24, 2020,)

Al-Ahram land out of cultivation. (24 Mar 2020 Online's another commentary entitle "Egypt's water challenges: Beyond the dam saga" mentions that Egypt is a country suffering from water shortages. It explained that the Renaissance Dam further exacerbates the country's water shortage and threatens its existence.

According to the article, Egypt needs 110 billion cubic meters of water a year, but the country is getting 80 billion cubic meters. This means the country has 30 billion cubic meters of water deficit.

A report released on June 23, 2020 states that Egypt's Delta and Nile Valley, which are known for their agricultural production, could be seriously affected after the completion of the Renaissance Dam.

The reduction in the amount of water reaching Egypt will lead to a decline in the extent of its agricultural land and a loss of almost two million acres, with the increasing vulnerability of the Nile Delta to climate change and sea-level rise and seawater intrusion. (al ahram 23 Jun 2020)

The article also outlines the effects of the Renaissance Dam on Egypt's development and economy in terms of unemployment.

The GERD will decrease the water that arrives in Egypt by 10 to 12 BCM per year, which will mean that more than five million people will lose their jobs in the agriculture and fishing sectors. (al ahram 23 Jun 2020)

Egypt wants assurances from Ethiopia that the Renaissance Dam will not significantly affect its national development and the daily lives of its citizens. The Egyptian government has stated that the amount of water that Egypt should receive annually from the Nile should be quantified and a binding agreement must be reached.

A report released on March 21, 2020 states: "Our population continues to grow, but the amount of Nile water reaches in Egypt never have been increase. Despite this problem, Ethiopia is building a huge dam on the Nile. This will reduce the amount of water we have so far. "

In addition to information aimed to highlighting the negative impact of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on Egypt's development; There are also stories which are attempting to show how the GERD is unnecessary project for Ethiopia as well.

For example, in an analysis published on March 24, 2020, the statement said that the Renaissance Dam is being built to meet the needs of foreign countries, not for the development of Ethiopians.

Some analysts believe that a dam with such a huge reservoir capacity is not in Ethiopia's interests and that its purpose is primarily political and serves the interests of outside powers. They say a series of smaller dams would better serve Ethiopia's energy and agricultural needs (alaram, 24 March 2020 )

Although there is a description of "foreign powers" in the report, their identities are not disclosed. The above report by Al-Ahram Online implies that Ethiopia is building the Renaissance Dam for political purposes. On the contrary, it was announced on other story published a week before that the Renaissance Dam is a development project.

#### **4.2.4 Distrust frame**

The number of stories under this frame account 11 (17%), which is similar with development frame. It has been ten years since Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan started negotiations on the Renaissance Dam. it took a long time, but the three countries could not reach an agreement that would resolve their differences. According to Ahram, Egypt does not believe that it will enter into a mutually beneficial agreement with Ethiopia in the near future.

In the article entitled Ethiopian Pitfalls, published on Al Ahram named Ethiopia as a "distrusted country." According to the reporter, the reason for using this statement is that Ethiopia has deliberately started the construction of the Renaissance Dam during popular revolution and political crisis sparked in Egypt, said the article.

Ethiopia exploited this critical timing to announce its intention to construct the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and very swiftly it laid the foundation for it, on 2 April 2011, in a random, hurried way, confirming its bad faith and aim to exploit Egypt's predicament when it was preoccupied with internal problems (Ahram 22, may, 2020)

According to the article, in addition to taking advantage of the leadership gap created by the popular revolution in Egypt, Ethiopia was not interested in providing the information that Egypt needed regards to the construction of GERD. Although Ethiopia occasionally provided information to Egypt, the article states that most of the information, was incorrect and it led Egypt to not trust Ethiopia from the beginning. It also criticized Ethiopia for intentionally delaying the negotiation process.

Al-Ahram reports revealed that Ethiopia is not negotiating in tripartite negotiation in a give-and-take principle.

The Negotiations have been suspended repeatedly due to disagreements and resumed again. Despite their resumption, Ethiopia has not shown any signs of flexibility to narrow the wide gap. For instance, al-Ahram reported the following on June 13, 2020, after the three countries ministerial meeting, which held from June 9-13, 2020 Concluded without reaching agreement.

the revived negotiations on the disputed Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) are faltering, blaming what it described as Ethiopia's "intransigence" during the latest meetings between the water ministers of Cairo, Addis Ababa and Khartoum. (Al-Ahram, 13 Jun 2020)

According to the above news report, the ministers' meeting was to discuss ways to resume the tripartite talks that had been suspended for months. Al-Ahram demonstrated also Egypt is trying to be Flexible to build trust between the negotiating countries and reach a speedy agreement.

In the news report on 17 June 2020, a spokesman for Egypt's Ministry of water and Irrigation Ali Alfahni said that Ethiopia is not working in a trusted manner to realize cooperation and mutual benefit in the Nile Basin. He criticized the guideline document on the dam filling and operation, which was prepared by Ethiopia, would have downstream states "sign-away their riparian rights and recognize an Ethiopian right to exercise unfettered unilateralism both in the use of the Blue Nile and during the filling and operation of the GERD."

Al-Ahram also blames Ethiopia for the failure of the tripartite negotiation of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which has been taking place for the past ten years. The report on June 11, 2020 entitled "Egypt will not go back to square one in GERD negotiations" questioning Ethiopia's seriousness and willing to reach on a binding agreement. "Ethiopia does not always want to move forward, it wants to back down," said the report.

On 2 march 2020 Ahmed Wahda deputy speaker of house of people representative of Egypt spoke Al-Ahram;

But I stress that the strategy of the Egyptian leadership in dealing with Ethiopia will take a different course in the coming period, that Egypt will not stand helpless in the face of Ethiopia's conspiracies and that Egypt is ready to use all the tools it has to preserve its historical rights to the Nile water (Al-Ahram, 2 march 2020)

Another report on june18, 2020 said the Ethiopian government has repeatedly stated that its readiness to reach an agreement, which would benefit both the two downstream countries Sudan and Egypt, but has failed to implement it due to lack of political commitment. " Ethiopia rejected

the conclusion of a binding agreement in accordance with international law between the three countries, insisting on drafting “guiding rules that [it] can unilaterally amend,” (June 18, 2020).

Egypt and Sudan want to sign a binding agreement with Ethiopia on Nile water use. Although the two countries have worked hard to achieve this, Ethiopia has so far rejected to do so.

Five years were enough for Ethiopia to display its good faith and show commitment to what it signed in the Declaration of Principles, and transform it into a binding tripartite treaty, which was about to come to fruition after laborious and complex marathon negotiations sponsored by the US. (Al-Ahram August, 21, 2020)

Following the escalation of mistrust between the two countries, Egypt is adamant that the Renaissance Dam dispute will not be resolved without the intervention of a third party. As result, Egypt's Foreign Minister Samah Shoukry announced on June 17, 2020 that Egypt will take the issue of the Renaissance Dam to international institutions as its confidence in Ethiopia has waned, al-Ahram reported. Days after the Foreign Minister's speech, Egypt and Sudan announced their withdrawal from the tripartite talks with Ethiopia, on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The two countries immediately referred the matter to the UN Security Council.

### **Technical frame**

Al-Ahram presented 9 stories (14%) by using technical frame. The tripartite negotiation between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt, has launched soon after the start of the construction of GERD. The tripartite negotiation is mainly focus on the water filling process and dam operation. Various reports of Al-Ahram Online under the technical frame, show that the difference on technical issues of water filling and dam operation are the main reasons for the contention between the three countries over GERD.

Al-Ahram, by using the technical frame, have been covering water sharing, dam filling, dam safety and legal issues raised on GERD tripartite negotiation. The three countries have been negotiating on these major issues for nine years, but so far, no agreement has been reached.

According to Al-Ahram's report on January 4, 2020 report, the three countries main difference of the technical negotiation is broadly classified in to two. The dam filling period and legal mechanisms of conflict resolution are mentioned as the two sticking points of GERD technical negotiation.

sourcing the ministry of water, irrigation and energy of Ethiopia reported that the Egyptian government is pushing Ethiopia to slow the filling process of twelve to twenty-one years.

It accused Egypt of trying to reinforce “self-claimed sole ownership of the Nile waters” with a “proposal of filling in 12-21 years” and obliging Ethiopia to compensate for “the cumulative deficit” for the water it uses for dam filling (Alahram January 4, 2020)

However, Egypt's Minister of Irrigation denied that the Ethiopian government's statement as “deliberately misleading and Distorting the facts”. The statement also clarifies that Egypt proposed 6 to 7 years to complete the water filling of GERD, primarily it will be considering the various weather conditions that affect the water volume of the river.

The tripartite talks which were taking place in the US capital, Washington, DC, is one of the major topics continuously covered by Al-Ahram. The three negotiating parties were hold talks in Washington DC from November 2019 to January 2020 under the auspices of the United States Government and the World Bank. In fact, Ethiopia had a firm stand on not to allow third party intervention on the tripartite negotiation.

However, Ethiopia was forced to change this position because of growing international pressure.

The story entitles “GERD: final agreement?” published on February 26, 2020 shows the justification why the US Government decides to Intervene in the Tripartite Negotiation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

The two most controversial points in negotiations have been the timetable for filling the dam’s reservoir and its operating protocols. When tripartite negotiations failed to produce an agreement in October Egypt reiterated its calls for international mediation. Ethiopia initially resisted the idea: it was only when

Washington stepped in and offered to host the talks that Addis Ababa agreed. (Alahram, 26 Feb 2020)

The United States Government and the World Bank facilitated the Renaissance Dam negotiations in Washington for three rounds. The talks were attended by foreign ministers, water ministers and technical experts of the three countries. Al-Ahram had been presenting a continuous coverage on the negotiations.

According to Al-Ahram, citing a statement issued by the Egyptian Ministry of Water, the Ethiopian, Sudanese and Egyptian water ministers showed better rapprochement during the January 8-9, 2020 meeting. However, they did not reach an agreement on crucial technical issues.

"Egypt presented suggestions and studies that would ensure the generation of electricity to Ethiopia at high efficiency during times of drought while at the same time securing Egypt's water interests," (a statement by Egypt's irrigation ministry, Al-Ahram, January 9, 2020)

There is also disagreement on the amount of water to be released from the reservoir in different weather conditions. The statement added that there was also an "absence of clear procedures from the Ethiopian side to preserve the capacity of Egypt's High Dam in dealing with the impact of the GERD's operations, especially during drought and prolonged drought periods." (January 9, 2020).

The story published on February 6, 2020 indicated that the three rounds of negotiations which were held from November 2019 to February 2020, in Washington DC Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt narrowed their differences on technical issues better than before. There is consensus between three countries to undertake the annual water filling only from July to September, it is a season that the Nile River reaches its highest amount of water volume.

The ministers of the three states agreed on six points, including that the filling of the reservoir be executed in stages during the wet season, generally from July to August, and undertaken in a cooperative manner that takes into account the

hydrological conditions of the Blue Nile and potential impact of the filling on downstream reservoirs. ( Alahram. February 6, 2020)

Egypt and Sudan were very hopeful on the us brokered negotiation but finally it failed because of Ethiopia's rejection of the draft agreement and pulled off. One of the reasons that Ethiopia withdrew from the negotiations was that the draft document violated its sovereign right to develop its own natural resource.

Al-Ahram on June 17, 2020 blames that Ethiopia is less committed to negotiate in accordance with the 2015 Declaration of Principles.

Such positions and behavior can only mean one thing: Ethiopia is not serious about reaching an agreement and merely wants to fritter away the time until the rainy season so that it can begin to fill the dam reservoir and force Cairo and Khartoum to face a *fait accompli*. (Al-Ahram, 17 Jun 2020)

Conflict resolution mechanism is, the other fundamental point of difference between the three countries. Egypt and Sudan want to be judged by the International Court of Justice if there is a dispute between the three countries over the dam. Whereas Ethiopia wants that the three countries should resolve the issue through dialogue and negotiations without any interference.

Al-Ahram posted in-depth analysis on June 9, 2020 written by former Egyptian Minister of Water Mohamed Nasr El-Din Allam. In this article Dr Allam, one of the outspoken Egyptian hydro engineers, noted that the Ethiopian decision to unilaterally continue the dam construction and the water filling, will have a negative impact on the water supply of the two downstream countries. He pushed the Egyptian government to stop Ethiopia to take any action before the three countries reaching an agreement

All necessary guarantees and arrangements thus need to be put into place, including mechanisms for tripartite coordination and consultation whether on the implementation of the provisions of the agreement or on introducing changes to the rules if these benefit all the parties without infringing on their sovereignty. ( Alahram, 9 Jun 2020)

The above analysis also stated that Ethiopia should work in coordination and in consultation manner with Egypt and Sudan in long term operation Even after the dam is completed.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Media can frame an event by choosing what to present and what not to present. What is more, framing can be achieved through elaboration and emphasis. According to Entman (1993:52) frame means “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in communicating text in such way as to promote particular definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described ” .

The findings of the study showed that various frames were employed by the Reporter newspaper and Ahram to cover the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam tripartite negotiation. The two media have framed the issue by presenting some facts and by evading others.

It is noted that “in the process of selecting some topics as important, other issues are discarded. Once a topic has been selected, which aspects of that topic are to be emphasized and which minimized or excluded is largely left up to the journalist” (Kendal ,2005: pp.9-10). They also gave emphasis and elaboration to some concepts so that they will to promote them a particular definition. it is important to understand Both media from their own.

The presentation of the data previously showed that five frames were used by the selected media in their coverage of the GERD negotiation.

### **Internationalization**

Internationalization frame is a dominant frame for Ahram online, it accounts 35% of the stories. For the reporter it is the second dominant frame covers 21% of the total stories. According to the Reporter, the issues of the Renaissance Dam should have been solved only by the three countries, which are Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt through negotiating in good faith. However, Egypt has made internationalizing the GERD negotiation by portraying the contention would escalate conflict in the horn of Africa. For the reporter, it is a deliberate tactical move of Egypt to shift the technical negotiation into political mediation with the involvement of third parties.

For the Reporter Egypt's indisposition to negotiate based on scientific and legal manner was the reason for internationalizing the GERD issue. The reason for the Reporter used this frame is to show the negative impact of third-party involvements in the GERD negotiation. In this context the report had presented a continuous coverage and follow up reports on the tripartite negotiation. For reporter Ethiopia's withdrawal from the US brokered negotiation was a right decision. It said that Ethiopia has escaped from the US trap.

Al-Ahram's used internationalization frame broadly to highlight Egypt's diplomatic achievements, that resulted in third party involvement in the negotiation. It has portrayed the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam as a threat to world peace and security.

On March 11, 2020 stated three reasons for the need of making internationalize the GERD issue. First, to influence Ethiopia's intransigent characters; Second, to prevent the tension to escalate into a conflict and thirdly to reach an agreement before Ethiopia starts unilateral water filling. Egypt's diplomacy for Al-Ahram, puts pressure on Ethiopia to consider the cost of unilateral actions. It portrayed, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam as an existential threat to the whole Arab countries as it is the same to Egypt.

In garnering international support, Egypt has courted the Arab League to press Ethiopia to negotiate a fair and comprehensive legally binding deal that focuses on the filling and operation of GERD without getting into debates over historic rights to, or current use of, Nile water. (Ahram , June 25, 2020)

According to the Reporter the tripartite negotiation has been taken to Washington by the US government to fulfill the interest of Egypt. The Story on March 14, 2020 remarks from Ethiopian perspective that was a perilous moment, but finally the Ethiopian negotiators managed to get the talks out of the hands of the United States and back to Addis Ababa to resume under the auspices of the African Union.

Al-Ahram supports the involvement of third party in the tripartite negotiation and it stressed that agreement cannot be achieved in the absence of the third party. It advocates the third parties current status to promote from observer to mediator in order to have greatest role in the negotiation.

To the opposite of al-Ahram, The Reporter strongly opposes the involvement of third party at all. It advised that a third party must be invited by the agreement of the three countries and also only to provide technical support when it is necessary.

### **Right frame**

Right frame is the dominant frame of the Reporter Newspaper. It was found on 28% of the stories. and it is used secondly by Ahram Online. Whereas it is the second largest frame of Ahram Online with the contribution of 19%. The stories found from both media outlets, under the right frame, have entertained the issues beyond the scope of the tripartite negotiation, which is bounded to deal only on the water filling and operation of the GERD. In this frame the tripartite negotiation has been discussed in terms of sovereign right, universal declaration of human rights, right to development, the right to basic needs, and in terms of international law of transboundary rivers.

In this regard, the Reporter asserted that Ethiopia has inalienable right to use the Nile River as a member country of the basin. The story on June 27, 2020 underlines that Ethiopia is participating in the tripartite negotiation with the prime objective of ensuring and exercising its right to use the Nile River water for various purposes. "The use of the Nile waters is drawing unwarranted meddling from countries nearby and far afield with acts encroaching on the natural rights of the upper riparian countries, particularly Ethiopia, on the rise " (the reporter, 27 June 2020).

It stated that the three basic Principles of international law of transboundary rivers, these are Equitable Utilization, No-harm Principle, and Cooperation.

For the Reporter, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance hydroelectric dam is constructing in accordance with the above three principles. It portrayed that Egypt and Sudan are challenging Ethiopia not to exercise the right of using its natural water resources, which have been acknowledged by the international convention of transboundary rivers. As indicated in this story, Ethiopia has been engaging in the tripartite negotiation to protect its natural right over the Nile water. under the right frame (20 June 2020). the reporter argues that, in addition to generating electric power it is legally and morally sound that using the Nile water for different purposes in fair and equitable manner since Ethiopia contributes 86% of the Nile water.

However, as a matter of correct interpretation of international law, Ethiopia views that the no significant harm rule cannot and shall not be read as entailing a prohibition or as in any way requiring prior permission from Egypt before it can embark on the development of its water resources. (the reporter. 20 June 2020)

In the right frame Ahram Online, reports of the tripartite negotiation broadly focused on two main points: First, demonstrating how the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is threatens the Egyptian right to live and secondly, defining and elaborating the concepts and implications of Egypt's historical right over the Nile water.

The tripartite negotiation must take place in a way that respects Egypt's share of water in the accordance with the 1929 and 1959 agreements, Al-Ahram said. Further it underscores those past treaties should serve as a baseline to measure the outcomes of the three countries negotiation over the GERD.

The two media have reflected different views on the past treaties signed on the Nile River among different parties. Al-Ahram is standing in support those treaties, which have given Egypt absolute right to utilize the Nile water and wants to be acknowledged in the tripartite negotiation. Whereas, the reporter rejected the past treaties presented by Egypt in regards to water right. It has violated the sovereign right of Ethiopia to use its natural water resources, the reporter marked.

Egypt has been portrayed as a country to secure its water share of the Nile River. It was also explained that Egypt has been participating in tripartite negotiations to ensure its fair share of water in a manner of equitable utilization of the resource. Aharam remarks that the Egyptians life is entirely dependent on the water of the Nile River, which is the only source of fresh water in Egypt. Based on this fact, al-Ahram underlines that Egypt's negotiations with Ethiopia and Sudan on the Nile water issue is a matter of survival and a question of protecting the natural right to life.

## **DEVELOPMENT FRAME**

For both Ahram Online and the Reporter Newspaper development frame comes as the third dominant frame. The development frame accounted 20% and 17% for the Reporter Newspaper

and Ahram online respectively. It is found that the two media outlets used this frame in different tone and story angle. The Reporter newspaper used the development frame fundamentally to depict the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam as a development project. According to the reporter, Ethiopia is striving to alleviate chronic poverty and ensure socio-economic development, for this reason the completion of the GERD is crucial.

The Reporter criticized that Egypt and Sudan have been spreading false information by pretending that Ethiopia is a country with untapped surface and ground water resources. It used the development frame to deconstruct the false information and harmful narratives about the water resource of Ethiopia, by claiming that Ethiopia is a country of 110 million people living with insufficient water.

Most of the reporter stories under the development frame are mostly supported by statistical data that show Ethiopia's economic status, access to electricity, availability of clean water, social services, population growth, etc. The numerical data helps to demonstrate how Ethiopia is lagging behind to Egypt in terms of development.

With this in mind, the reporter underlines that the completion of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam will be a gamechanger to socioeconomic transformation and improving the lives of Ethiopians. It has used the phrase "Development is a matter of survival for Ethiopia" in various reports to emphasize the importance of social and economic change in Ethiopia.

On the contrary, Al-Ahram also used the development frame to show the negative effects of the Renaissance Dam on Egypt. The potential impact of the Renaissance Dam on the socio-economic development of the Nile Basin downstream countries has been explored by the development frame. Al-Ahram's stories predominantly focused on Egypt, however it has covered some topics that have been shared by both Egypt and Sudan.

Al-Ahram coverages of the tripartite negotiation using developmental frame, have portrayed GERD as a project that will significantly affect the Nile water supply of Egypt, that will result in a negative impact on the daily life of Egyptian and the country's economy in general.

The story published on July 21, 2020 explains the river Nile is a source of life for Egyptian to survive in the desert and a reason for the achievements of remarkable ancient Egyptian

civilization. It stated that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is not a development project rather it is a political project, that is being built to realize Ethiopia's hidden interest to control the water flow of the river.

For al-Ahram GERD is a huge dam, that is intentionally designed to hold an excess amount of water beyond the current actual need of Ethiopia. This report concluded that Ethiopia has a hidden interest to use the reserved water in the near future for another kind of water consumptive development works.

### **Technical Frame**

Technical frame represents 18% of the Reporter stories and 14% Ahram Online. The analysis of this frame shows that both media outlets used the technical frame to explore key negotiation issues in the tripartite talks. It is understood that the Negotiation is entirely focused on three subjects, which are water filling of the dam, operation of the dam and legal mechanism of conflict resolution. Most of the reports are presented in the form of news and commentary. In these reports, resolved and unresolved issues of the tripartite negotiation have been covered.

Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt so far have agreed to implement the first phase of GERD water filling with in two years.as the reporter indicated, it is one of the milestone achievements of the tripartite negotiation. Accordingly, the three countries have agreed to fill GERD total of 18.4 billion cubic meters water with in two periods.

According to the reporter on April 24, 2020, Egypt and Sudan have stated that the first-round water filling of the dam should not be taking place before the three countries reached a comprehensive agreement in all issues of the dam and the water share as well, said the reporter.

Ethiopia, on the other hand, is not willing to delay the first round of first year water filling until a comprehensive agreement to be reached between the negotiating parties.

The reporter underline on 20 June, 2020 " Egypt's claims over shortage of water are groundless because the power production over the dam is inextricably linked with water flow into turbines towards downstream countries,"

For the Reporter, Ethiopia's legal and technical position in the tripartite negotiation is rational and scientifically sound. On the contrary, it accused Egypt is secretly trying to disrupt the construction of the dam to not complete according to the schedule. Therefore, Ethiopia has taken right decision that enabled to carried out the first round of the first-year water filling.

Al-Ahram, on the other hand, opposes the first round of GERD water filling, and underlines that is Ethiopia's unilaterally action. it said on June 17, 2020 that Ethiopia's action clearly indicates that there is no willing to end the contention by reaching a binding agreement, which is supposed to give a guaranty to Egypt and Sudan to maintain its water share.

The two media have used the technical frame to analyze and to clarify the negotiating parties' position about the period the water filling. According to Al-Ahram on August 4, 2020, the filling period of the reservoir is one of the most difficult and complex issues of the technical negotiation of GERD. The negotiating parties still not reach on a comprehensive, while they have presented the reservoir filling period and the filling process models that could reduce risks and increase benefits.

Egypt, which relies on the Nile for 95 percent of its fresh water, fears the dam will significantly reduce the river's flow, especially during the filling stages through periods of drought and dry years. Ethiopia, on the other hand, says the project is key to its development. ( Alahram, August 4, 2020)

The reporter used the technical frame to depict the dam filling will not cause a significant harm on the downstream countries. During the filling process the natural flow of the Nile River water have not been interrupted, it was released through spillways. The second year of the first round of the reservoir filling will be carried out in august 2021 and the dam is expected to start generating electricity with the first two unite.

Al-Ahram reports indicating that Egypt has proposed the dam to be filled between 14 to 21 years. it also signified Egypt's and Sudan's fear that a proposal to fill the dam below 14 years will put a strain on the two countries water supply.

## **Distrust Frame**

The distrust frame accounted 14% of the stories of the Reporter Newspaper and 17% of Ahram Online. The Reporter using the technical frame to underlines that there is a deep-rooted mistrust between Ethiopia and Egypt, however the two countries have had a long history of diplomatic relation in numerous sectors. The two countries relation have been overshadowed by skepticism, which has led them distrust each other almost in all bilateral and diplomatic fronts.

It is noted that the power competition between the two countries over the control of the Nile water resource was a major cause for the arousal of skepticism and resulted a negative impact on the Renaissance Dam negotiations. The absence of trust between Ethiopia and Egypt have prevented them to have a positive and cooperative engagement in the tripartite negotiation, according to the reporter.

The Reporter stories under the distrust frame portrays Egypt as an enemy state of Ethiopia. The article on July 25, 2020 pointed out that historically, the two countries have clashed many times and have fought two major wars at the place called Gura and Gundet from 1874 to 1876. The conflict resulted in a complete victory by Ethiopians. As means to maintain the political power, Egyptian leaders have been doing a lot to manipulate their people perception with false narratives of the Nile water and the negative propaganda on Ethiopia. " For decades, Egypt tried and continues to convince Egyptians generation after generation that without Nile River there will be no Egypt and no Egyptian " ( the reporter , 25 July 2020).

Al-Ahram coverages of the GERD tripartite negotiation under the distrust frame has portrayed Ethiopia as an unreliable country. In many of its reports, alahram blames Ethiopia's characteristics for the failure of GERD negotiations over the past decade.

For Ahram the Ethiopian government has not been transparent since the beginning of the construction of GERD. Particularly the Ethiopian political leaders and the GERD negotiating members are depicted as not trustworthy and lacks political commitment to building trust between the three countries. It has criticized Ethiopia for using the tripartite negotiations to buy time instead of holding a genuine talk to reach at a point of agreement before the construction

reached the water filling stage. the report on march 5 ,2020 Ethiopia accuses is deliberately delaying the negotiation for the reason that not want to end in win solution.

Since the launch of the most recent trilateral talks between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt on the filling and operation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), there has been an unequivocal truth: Ethiopia has done nothing other than buying more time. ( Alahram march 5, 2020)

In many of its reports Ahram demonstrated Egypt as a flexible country, driven in a manner of cooperate and compromise with the riparian countries to equitably use the water of Nile river.

On the contrary the reporter suspected Egypt is plotting to destabilize Ethiopia allied with anti-peace forces, possibly targeting to delay or suspend the construction of the dam.

It also envisages that the two countries are not expected to sort out their differences in the near future and open a new era of diplomatic relation by restoring centuries old distrust.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

#### **5.1. Conclusion**

This study set out to examine how The Reporter Newspaper and Ahram Online framed the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam tripartite negotiation, between January 08, 2020 and August 25, 2020. Guided by the time frame, stories that entertain the GERD Tripartite negotiation downloaded from the two media websites. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather and analyze the data. Purposive sampling was used to select the media and the news items for this research. Right frame, development frame, technical frame, internationalization frame and distrust frame. finally identified to analyze the study.

Based on the analysis, it was found out that internationalization frame for Ahram Online and right frame for the Reporter Newspaper was the most predominant frame.

Ahram online has used internationalization Frame in its reports for three purposes. Firstly, to depict the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam as a threat for peace and security of East Africa. Secondly, to show the necessity of involvement of third party in GERD to resolve the dispute. And thirdly Al-Ahram used Internationalization Frame to report the Egyptian diplomacy campaign of mobilizing international support. It was also reported that exerting international pressure on Ethiopia to sign a binding agreement.

The Reporter stories of internationalization frame has described that Egypt doesn't want to hold a negotiation that guided by science and international laws. it also underlines, the diplomatic campaign being undertaken by Egypt is against the national interest of Ethiopia and violets its sovereign right.

The Reporter predominantly used the water rights frame. It remarks that Ethiopia has a natural and sovereign right of using its natural water resources. It used right frame to emphasize that the construction of GERD is undertaking in accordance with the international laws of transboundary rivers. For the reporter, Ethiopia is negotiating with Egypt and Sudan to secure its natural and sovereign rights by finalizing the GERD construction.

On the contrary the right frame helped, Alahram to demonstrate the negative consequence of GERD on the " historical " water right of Egypt. It underscores that as the Nile river is the only source of fresh water of Egypt, GERD would pose a serious threat on the Egyptian right to life,

Al-Ahram says Egypt needs guaranty from Ethiopia that can protect it's with right to use the Nile river water. The Reporter rejects Egypt's claim of "historic right" over the Nile water by explaining that the so called "historic right" does not exist in international transboundary river laws. On the other side Alahram does not recognize Ethiopia's sovereign right on the Nile river, since it is a transboundary river there is not a unique right given for Ethiopia.

The development frame is the third frame used by the two media. Under the development frame the Reporter has repeatedly emphasized that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is a development project. The need for development is the reason for the construction of the dam. To the opposite Al-Ahram, has portrayed the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam as a political project, which is being built to fulfill Ethiopia's desire of controlling the water flow the river in order to gain hydro hegemony over the Nile river. Actually, in its some reports, Alahram has recognized GERD as a development project.

The Reporter has used the development frame to illustrate the importance of GERD in fighting to eradicate extreme poverty from Ethiopia. Again, here Al-Ahram to the opposite of the reporter, has used the development frame to show the negative effect of GERD on the socio-economic developments of Egypt. both media has attempted to support their reports with scientific data.

Technical frame is the other frame used by the Reporter newspaper and Al-Ahram online. Both media are used this frame in news reports and articles. The technical frame has been used to make a news story on negotiation process and to show the negotiating party's position. Points of agreement and disagreements also have been entertained in this frame. The findings of the technical frame analysis have shown that contradicting information and unverified news has been disseminated by both media at different times.

It is supposed that the negotiating parties are deliberately disseminate misinformation in order to influence the negotiation process to goes at their interest. Although the GERD negotiating parties

have reached an agreement on a number of technical issues, they have still wide difference mainly in conflict resolution mechanisms and legal issues.

The reporter and Al-Ahram online has used the distrust frame to highlights the widespread mistrust between Ethiopia and Egypt. The stories of the distrust frame are presented in a form of commentary articles and mostly written by non-staff writers (contributors). It is found that in these stories Egypt and Ethiopia blame each other for the failure of the decade-long negotiations.

For the Reporter, Egypt is a country that does not want Ethiopia's development in general. It blames Egypt is not a genuinely negotiating in the tripartite negotiation in order to offer alternative negating platforms which can allow a third-party involvement with a great role. Similarly, by using the technical frame Al-Ahram also raised a question of trustworthiness on Ethiopia makes similar allegations against Ethiopia. For Ahram the Ethiopian government has no political commitment to resolve the differences through negotiations. It also indicates that Ethiopia is a country that does not want to negotiate on the basis of give and take principles.

In general, the Reporter paper and Ahram's coverage on the Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam Tripartite Negotiations are predominantly centered around the national interests of their respective countries. Both media are lacking the basics principles of journalism such as objectivity, neutrality, verification and soon during reporting the GERD issues. It is found that the stories are framed towards to serve primary their respective country's goal on the negotiation. It is clear that the journalists from both media institutions are in conflict between national interests and professional journalism.

The issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is a top national agenda for both countries the two countries have an irreconcilable position on the issue. as a result of this, both the reporter and Al-Ahram are standing at two extreme positions in respect to their countries stance. Hence, their role in regards to indicate a way forward to solve the disagreements of GERD negotiation is limited.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Media have an important role to shape public views, to build trust and to strengthen cooperation among the negotiating countries of GERD Tripartite Technical Negotiation. In this regard, media should give more coverage for a story which can positively contribute to cooperation and mutual benefit.

To achieve this, it is important to create information sharing platform among Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan media institutions and journalists to have a basin wide understanding on the water resource of the Nile basin. It enables the three countries media institutions to work closely in order to have positive contributions in resolving contention and to build trust among the people. in addition to this, it will help to reverse polarized reportings through increasing the knowledge of journalists on the tripartite negotiations to have a basin wide view.

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## Appendices

### Appendix

Coding sheet

Appendices      Appendix      A      Coding      Sheet      Name      of      Coder:

Code for coder one= 01

Code for coder two= 02

Name of Newspaper: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Publication (date/month/year): \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Story: \_\_\_\_\_

Analytical Categories:

1. Theme of Story:

cooperation \_\_\_\_\_

Development \_\_\_\_\_

conflict \_\_\_\_\_

Diplomacy \_\_\_\_\_

Legal regime \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Type of story: -

News \_\_\_\_\_

Editorial \_\_\_\_\_

Feature \_\_\_\_\_

Commentary \_\_\_\_\_

Interview \_\_\_\_\_

Reader's letter \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix

### Operational definition of frame category

6. Right frame:

This Reports focuses on legal and right issues of the Nile. It emphasizes particularly on sovereign rights, international laws of transboundary rivers, existing treaties, and human rights.

7. Internationalization frame:

It focuses on international diplomatic campaigns relations with in the riparian countries. This framework deals presents detail reports on the involvement and impact of third parties

8. Development frame:

It demonstrates the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam as a vital development project not only for Ethiopia but also for the region . This frame explains the socio-economic impact of GERD

9. Technical frame:

It is a type of frame that focuses on technical information raised by the three negotiating parties. It more highlights on the water filling, dam operation and dam safety issues of GERD tripartite negotiation.

10. Distrust frame:

It shows the long-standing mistrust between the upper and lower riparian countries of the Nile basin. This frame emphasizes on reports of growing suspicion between Ethiopia and the two lower riparian countries since the start of the construction of the Renaissance Dam.