



# Geopolitics of Nile Basin Countries: Cooperation as a Sole Option for Contemporary Egypt: The Case of Egypt and Ethiopia

Miheretab Wolde

Scuola Superiore Santa Anna  
Human Rights and Conflict Management  
*miheretab1@yahoo.com*

**Abstract:** An explanatory case study using secondary data was conducted and reviewed the case of Egypt and Ethiopia in the Nile Basin Region. It is based on the conceptual framework which framed on the concept of hydro hegemony. Egypt, as a negative hegemony applied resource controlling tactics. After long silent years, Ethiopia now becomes effective counter hegemony in the region. This counter hegemony-power accelerates the falling of the negative hegemony and it opens up a door for emerging of a new hegemony. International Law, new binding treaty in the region, and contemporary challenges like climate change and uncontrolled population growth make Egypt without options except joining the upper riparian countries and Sudan for cooperation.

**Keywords:** Nile River; Hydro Hegemony Power; Egypt; Ethiopia; Cooperation.

## INTRODUCTION

### Organization

This study is structured into four main sections. The first section is the introduction part, which consists of organization, background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions, and study design. The second section presents the conceptual framework on Nile Basin and the countries in the Nile Basin region, particularly by giving due emphasis on the contemporary case of Egypt and Ethiopia. The presentation of the findings is the third section of this paper. Under this section also the discussion part of the paper is presented. In the last part conclusion and recommendations are presented.

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

### Statement of the Problem

Transboundary River could be a potential source of cooperation or conflict. Across the globe, starting from 805 AD to 2007, three thousand six hundred cooperation agreements were signed. In the last fifty years, thirty seven water based conflict cases reported. The number of the signed agreement and conflict resolution process can be a proxy indicator how the water issue is very sensitive and it is intertwined with the sovereignty of the states (UN Water, 2014). According to UN Water (2014) report, there are 276 large transboundary lake and river basins around the world, of which 64 are in Africa and cover more than half of the continent's surface area.

The Nile is the longest river on earth, at 6,875 km, and its tributaries flow along the Nile Basin countries. This Basin is the only largest river basins in the world which encompass eleven countries, namely Burundi, DRC,

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Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda (Dereje & Wuhibegezer, 2014). The Blue Nile or *Abbai* (the local name for Blue Nile), the major source of the Nile river (it supplies 86 per cent of its volume), originates from Lake Tana in Ethiopia while the White Nile, the smaller source, originates in central Africa. The origin of Nile River considered as a heartland or the geographical pivot of the Nile Basin (Haggi, 2002). As stated in Mackinder theory, controlling a Heartland of certain geography is very significant in exercising the ultimate command afterward (Ronald, 1998). The ancient Egyptian and the Egypt, Colonial Power, UK, conducted various exploratory attempts to discover the Heartland or the origin of the Nile River (Haggi, 2002).

On April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1618 a Spanish missionary named Padre Paez discovered the source of the Blue Nile while he was in missionary service in Ethiopia. He was a friend of the Ethiopian Emperor Susinios and he undertook many risky expeditions while he was there. Though there were various claims of discovery of the Blue Nile, the Ethiopian government recognized that he was the first western who discover the source. In his note he showed that how fortunate and happy he was to see the source of the Nile River, which remained challenging and never accomplished for Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and other great leaders at that time. Though the Ethiopian Emperor, the Ethiopian people, and the missionary: Padre Paez knew the origin of *Abay* or Blue Nile and they kept quiet as a sign of protecting the Heartland of the Nile River (Henze, 2000).

Not until 19 Centuries the larger portion of Nile originates from Ethiopia is not known by the rest of the world. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the discovery was getting clearer and it was reported that the Nile River originated from Ethiopia and the country contributes 86 per cent of the Nile River's water annually (Haggi, 2002). However, this fact became a cause for rivalry between Egypt and Ethiopia and started damaging the relationship between the two countries.

The past history showed that Ethiopia and Egypt passed through various levels of conflict to claim power over another. The Ethiopian Emperor Laibela threatened the Egyptian counterpart by stating its plan of diverting the river. In nineteenth century Egypt and Ethiopia fought over control of the Red Sea and upper Nile Basin. The climax came in 1876 at the Battle of Gura (the present day Eritrea) where the Egyptian army was humiliated by heavy defeat from the Ethiopians side (Haggi, 2002).

Though Egyptian defeated by war, they formulated various strategies to create instability in Ethiopia for example supporting the rebel groups and strengthening the insurgents. This ultimately weakened the economic power of Ethiopian while the Egyptian kept on growing in various aspects like education, foreign relationship, economy and military power (Carles, 2006). In the absence of power, the proximity of a state for its natural resource is only a mere illusion. As Harvey Starr (2013) pointed out a meaning of certain geography can be altered or impacted by a political or technological power. Geography is not only a result of territory it is also the outcome of history. This change of meaning well noticed in the case of Egypt and Ethiopia. Ethiopia was powerless to control its own resource, but they did not keep silent.

The Ethiopian government tried to react in various occasions, for instance on the signing of the bilateral agreement between Egypt and Sudan; and during the pre-constructions stage of dam in Egypt and Sudan but all remained in vain. In the twentieth century, the continuous unilateral action from Egypt side offended Ethiopia and King Haile Selassie. As a response, the king planned construction of several dams on the Blue Nile and funded \$10 million dollars to conduct a large scale study by the U.S. Department of Reclamation (Collins, 2002).

The action of the Ethiopian king made the Egyptian president to be more furious and then to scale up the support which they provided to rebel groups, insurgents and the Muslims fighters from Ethiopia-Somali (Ogaden Region) and Eritrea (used to be part of Ethiopia region) (Carles, 2006). This action left the Ethiopian

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to fight a longstanding civil war in Africa history, which ended up with a number of consequences like economic crisis, deepening of poverty, the secession of Eritrea, being landlocked country or losing the access to the red sea, and eruption of civil war from the entire corner of the country. Not until the recent two decades, Ethiopia was in civil war, starvation, famine, and deep rooted poverty which caused a death of over one million people (Dereje & Wuhibegezer, 2014).

Eventually, Egypt succeeded in controlling the Heartland or the geography Pivot of Nile River through indirect way like making Ethiopia a passive partner on the issue of Nile River and eliminating any option for Ethiopia and upstream countries from benefiting from Nile River through blocking international loan and aid and weakening their domestic economy via aggravating civil war and conflict (Carles, 2006). This Egyptian strategy left two undeniable and permanent facts on Ethiopia: the first one is the negative history, which marked in the history of Ethiopia like long standing civil war and the loss of one million people due to starvation, and the second one was the loss of power to control its natural resource which originated from its territory. This gradually allowed the Egyptian to emerge as a Hydro Hegemony power of the Nile Basin Region and to run their asymmetric water resource policy (Haggi, 2002).

Until recently, Ethiopia as well as the upstream countries was not in a position to benefit or claim a share from the Nile River. However the current move from Ethiopia and other upstream countries shaken the stability of hydro hegemony in the Nile Basin Region. The construction of the mega Dam in Ethiopia is a sign which indicates the end of Egypt Hydro Hegemony while it is a sign of the emerging of counter hegemony. Hegemony has a cyclic nature and there is a transitional period of stability to declination and then to crisis while there is also a transition period of crisis to rise (Dereje & Wuhibegezer, 2014).

The declination of the Egypt Hydro Hegemony and the emerging of a new Hydro Hegemony is not a coincidence; it was the result of the past two decades phenomena which took place in the two countries. In the past twenty years Egypt passed through in different kind economic, social, and political turmoil. On the other hand Ethiopia has showed a continuing economic development and maintaining peace and stability internally and in its neighboring countries. During this period, Ethiopia also showed significant improvement in diplomacy gain, which can be substantiated by looking the country relationship with the USA, China, UK, Germany, Israel and Saudi Arabia (Abadir, 2012).

Egypt is struggling to restore its hydro hegemony position while Ethiopia is acting as counter hegemony. The present situation in Ethiopia and Egypt revealed that the Nile Basin Region Hydro Hegemony status quo is unlikely to be sustainable. The stand between the two countries is so distinct and this might have a potential to lead them either to conflict or cooperation. The recent recurrent actions from Egypt, for instance withdrawing from negotiation and mediation process and mobilizing and advocating the international community against Ethiopia seem that the country is going back to its old fashion tactics of proxy war and pessimism diplomacy approaches (Federalist, 2013). This could be a proxy indicator for the existences of a slim chance of conflict up to the level of war unless otherwise there is a clear and effective answer framed for the following burning question in the management of Nile Basin.

### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

*Why cooperation is a sole option, to the present-day Egypt?*

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### **Significance of the Study**

Research can be used as a tool to investigate the factors associated with a certain problem and serves as an input to develop evidence based action. Nowadays the common agenda in relation to Nile River is increasing and it requires a joint intervention like climate change and rapid population growth. This study is very significant in revealing the situation in Egypt and Ethiopia, and reviewing the existing facts against academic theoretical perspectives.

This kind of approach also contributes to the knowledge basis regarding to the Nile Basin Region in relation to the dynamism of Hegemony power and the need for collaboration. The finding of the study will also be used as an input for the policy makers, program and project designers, the mediators, and the key players in the Nile Basin Region. It can be also used as additional document for further study and research analysis.

### **Study Design**

The research, based on the conceptual framework which developed through the review of the secondary documents like scientific studies, books and UN and other international guidelines, research and report documents. The study did not have an objective of defining the problem in Nile Basin Region rather it has a purpose of explaining the current erratic situation in Nile Basin Region and the dynamism of hegemony power. This is going to be carried out through the analysis of the context against the already existing theoretical issues. Thus the study designed to answer the research question: why cooperation is a sole option to the present-day Egypt?

Yin (2003) pointed out that case study is an appropriate qualitative approach to answer the questions of how and why. How and why questions are being posed, when the researcher has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context. In this study, the approach was designed to answer the research questions: why? It focuses on a contemporary situation of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Nile Basin Region, and Hydro Hegemony and the Hegemony change process or emergence of counter Hegemon. The case study is purely framed on the existing academic theory and on the real-situational context of Egypt and Ethiopia in relation to Nile River. Thus, the qualitative approach employing explanatory case study methods is best suited to answer the research question.

The limitation of the study is the data source solely depends on the secondary documents or desk review and observation. The study is mainly targeting in addressing the set conceptual framework and it is not supplemented by primary data source due to time, scope, and finance limitation. The result of this study cannot be used to generalize the situation of the Nile Basin Region and it only explains the contemporary situation of the region by giving due emphasis on the current case of Egypt and Ethiopia.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the critical analysis of the Hydro Hegemony concept. As Warnerb and Zeitouna (2006) pointed out Hydro-hegemony framework is applicable in situations where there is asymmetric power and if the river flow controlled by Hegemony power and where there is intense competition in water resource. Thus, this framework concept which developed from various theoretical concepts like power, regimes, status quo, and hegemony is relevant to explain the contemporary situation of the Nile Basin Region in general and Egypt and Ethiopia in particular. According to this framework, the Hydro-Hegemon uses four water resource control tactics. These include coercion, utilitarianism, norms, and ideology (Warnerb &Zeitouna, 2006).

Coercion is when Hegemony power state forces other states to refrain from doing a project or activity against its will. It can be achieved through the material power which manifested through military force, threats, and covert action so as to compel any potential competitor state to behave according to the existing status quo. An example of covert

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action could be the support of intrastate rebel groups which could weaken the central government (Cascao, 2008).

The utilitarian tactic, mainly focused on provision of incentives upon the compliance of the status quo. These could be trade incentives, diplomatic recognition, military protection, and working on the shared interest project. This dimension also used strong bargaining power to control any negotiation related to the core issue. The bargaining power has a capacity to influence the agenda to be set on the negotiation table. It has also a power to twist or manipulate any kind of laws, whether it is relevant or not (Warnerb &Zeitouna, 2006).

The third tactics that are normative tactic is a way in which the Hegemony power tries to consolidate the status quo through the signing of agreements and treaties. The bargaining power also plays a significant role in this dimension to attain such a goal. If the Hegemony succeeded with this approach, it can create a long lasting and stable regime. The signed treaties can be used an instrument for Hegemony to impose compliance (Warnerb &Zeitouna, 2006).

Securitization or ideational is a tactic which mainly used to construct unfounded knowledge around the point of interest and disseminating unstoppable propaganda and speech like linking the issue with national security and promoting the legitimate right to take exceptional measures. It is mainly targeted at changing the perception and destroying narrative and knowledge, and constructing and brining an ideological compliance. It ultimately targeted at establishing soft law (Buzan & Weaver, 2003).

Cascao (2008) also pointed out that the water controlling tactic of a Hegemons power can be expressed in the form of negative, neutral, or positive. Under negative controlling approach, there is an unequal resource distribution and in long run this approach leads to the declining of the Hegemony since there will be a potential resistance reaction from its non-Hegemony. On the other hand the positive leadership works for equitable distribution of resources.

There is a transformation stage where Hegemony power is going from stability to declining stage and then to the crisis. On the other hand, there is a possibility for non-Hegemony power to emerge as counter-hegemony. Counter-hegemony is a process in which non-hegemony is resisting the existing status quo and trying to create a new and alternative regime. According to Cascao (2008), there are two phases of counter-hegemony. The first phase called as reactive phase and in this phase non-Hegemony power started resisting the status quo. The second phase is the stage where the introduction and establishment of a new regime and it is called active phase.

Generally, in this study the aforementioned concepts will be used to review the dynamism of Hegemony in terms of declining of the existing one and the emergence of the new one and its possible controlling tactics. Thus, the model of analysis of this study is the following:

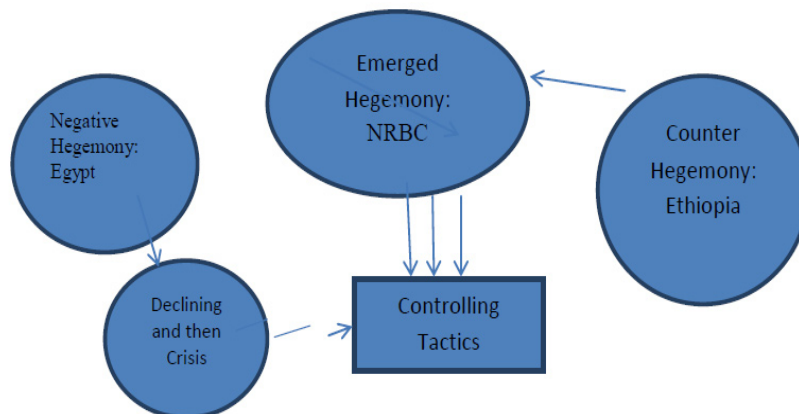


Fig.2.1. Conceptual Framework Chart

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The consistence resistance and reaction from the non-hegemony, power label them as a counter Hegemony. The active and persistence move against the status quo will lead the counter hegemony to the formation of a new regime which will consider as an emerged or new hegemony. The controlling tactic of the resource or the Nile water depends on the strategy which the emerged Hegemony would like to follow. It has three options, either to be a negative Hegemony or neutral or positive Hegemony (Cascao, 2008).

The new tactic that will be followed by the emerged Hegemony will play a significant role in determining the regime norm of the region. The declining Hegemony will have two options, either to oppose or cooperate. Thus the line or the link which it is going to follow with the emerged Hegemony will not be cleared till the new regime form a norm. The positive Hegemony tactic will have a power to bring the declining Hegemony or Hegemony in crisis to the negotiation table and then to cooperation (Shapland, 1997).

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Declining of the Negative Hydro Hegemony: Egypt**

Geography is about power. The management of territorial space and natural resource is not only determined by geography it is also by power which ultimately result to centralization (John, 1994). The present geopolitical situation of the Nile Basin disclosed this fact. Egypt is a downstream country with no contribution in Nile river and thousand kilometers far away from the origin of the Nile River but the country was controlling the resource and leading the Nile Basin Region (Haggi, 2002).

Egypt followed a negative hegemony, power which totally excludes the upstream countries from any kind of benefit claim from the Nile River. This unilateral resource management is not because of the acceptance of the upstream countries, but it is the result of the poor economic status of these countries (Cascao, 2009). For many years, these countries were under deep rooted poverty, civil war, the denial of international loan or financial aid, and lack of other alternatives. Ethiopia and other upper riparian countries have a right to use its natural resource in its own jurisdiction without jeopardizing the international law which based on equitable share (Abadir, 2012).

Until not the last two decades the Nile water controlling tactics which employed by Egypt was very successful. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Egypt was the key player in supporting antagonist state, rebel groups and other militants' against Ethiopia and other upstream countries (Carles, 2006). The long standing volatility in Ethiopia due to the unstoppable civil war and interstate wars cost the country to be one of the poorest countries in the world. This eventually made the country to be passive and behave according to the existing status quo of Nile Basin Region, which was founded on negative hegemony (Cascao, 2009).

The present condition revealed that the material power of Egypt was shaken due to its domestic crisis and some other factors like the mountainous debt Egypt had from world bank, upstream countries astonishing economic growth, military and security collaboration in East Africa Region, the presence of fund or finance alternative for mega project, the policy of China and its strong tie with the sub-Saharan Africa countries, and the achievement of the long waiting stability in Ethiopia and the broader East Africa Region (Dereje & Wuhibegezer, 2014).

Egypt also employed other resource controlling tactics like utilitarian, normative, and securitization or ideational strategies. In the past many years Egypt was skilled in its bargaining and convincing power. The country acted as a partner for the upstream countries as long as they kept the status quo (Cascao, 2009). The incentive, these countries had got from Egypt, was not attractive. It was just a mere diplomacy relation and development of proposals for minor joint project which were not substantiated. This approach helped Egypt just to buy time



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and strengthen the existing status quo. In the past the “carrot” approach from the Egyptian side had turned many upstream countries to compromise their long term benefit and to stick with their domestic issues. This utilitarian tactic from the Egyptian side also achieved a result of creating division among the upstream countries which ultimately caused a lack of shared vision in the issue of their common agenda (Abadir, 2012).

Egypt has a number of treaties and agreements which were signed by the colonial powers and downstream countries. The entire upstream countries were not part of such agreement or treaties. As the former Tanzanian president pointed out the agreement on the colonial period cannot be used as an instrument to govern the Nile Basin Region. The statement of the former Tanzanian president cited as Nyerere Doctrine (Daniel, 1984). This kind of reactions reflected among the majority of upstream countries, and Ethiopia is always the first to do so. Despite the strong reactions from Ethiopia and other states, Egypt has been trying to establish a norm on the basis of immaterial agreements or treaties (Abadir, 2012).

Egypt largely used the tactic of securitization to establish a new knowledge, perception and culture as part of their regional plan. Every Egypt government officer expected to link the issue of Nile River as the issue of sovereignty, survival, and national security; and whenever they got an opportunity for media or platform they make such propaganda. They have been also promoting their unfounded regional right, for instance, taking exceptional measures, including force for any threat in Nile water (Arsano & Tamirat, 2004). This position is against the international law and it is against UN Charter Article (2:4):

All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

In the past securitization tactic worked since Egypt was the only countries in the region with power and strong diplomacy role. However, in this contemporary world Ethiopia and the other upstream countries are taking the lead in diplomacy. Besides, there are many key players which stand for justice and truth, and they are showing solidarity to disclose the fact and the reality on the ground. This targeted multidimensional approach affected the reputation of Egypt and discredits their ideational tactic (Abadir, 2012).

Generally the current situation in Nile Basin Region revealed that Egypt is not in a position to exercise the same kind of resource controlling tactics. The lack of control of a resource is a symptom that shows the weakening of the Hegemony. The negative Hydro Hegemony regime in Nile Basin Region is in declining stage and it is heading to lose.

### **COUNTER HEGEMONY: ETHIOPIA**

Ethiopia struggled for many hundred years to have a share, part in Nile River. However the deep rooted poverty, lack of material power, inefficient bargaining power, and political instability put the country in low profile though the geographical location gives the country a strong bargaining power (Carles, 2006). This history was the same until recently. In the last two decades, Ethiopia has brought stability in the country and achieved an economic development (Dereje & Wuhibegezer, 2014).

The Ethiopian’s national financial report indicated that the country has registered a double digit economic growth for the last ten consecutive years. This claim was proved through various international organizations like the IMF and World Bank though the figure is less than what the national report indicated. According to World Bank, Ethiopia has shown an average GDP growth of 7 % (Voice of America, 2013). This economic gain opened a door for the development of a mega project like EGRD and for the building of a military might in Africa

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next to Egypt. This in turn creates an opportunity to establish the core pillar of Hydro Hegemony that is the power (Abadir, 2012).

EGRD project is being constructed with a cost of 4.8 billion dollars. At the end of the project period, it will have a capacity of generating 6,000 megawatts of electricity, which is more than any other hydropower project in Africa. The project is being constructed in the Benishangul Gumuz Regional State of Ethiopia, which is located 40 kilometers from the Sudanese border. This project will boost the Ethiopian economy, promote clean and renewable energy, and bring industrialization and modernization in the region. This project also brings benefits to both Sudan and Egypt like accessing cheap hydropower, managing flooding, providing a sustainable flow in dry and wet seasons, and enhances agricultural production. The completion of this dam could also be a signal for the end of the negative hegemony in the region (Dereje & Wuhibegezer, 2014).

Ethiopia has got a backing from Sudanese administration and Sudan scholars on EGRD project. This is the result of Ethiopian improved bargaining power in terms of creating a new knowledge and perception in the region. The shift of the Sudanese stand and policy in this regard is a bigger gain for Ethiopia and a blow for Egypt (Dereje & Wuhibegezer, 2014).

Ethiopia is working on different tactics which could strengthen their counter Hydro Hegemony position. For instance, in present time Ethiopia signed a military agreement with 14 countries, including Sudan to secure and protect any destructive attempts. Ethiopia is also playing a significant role in speeding up the transformation of Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) to Nile River Basin Commission (NRBC) (Dereje & Wuhibegezer, 2014).

NBI considered as a transitional institution which mainly open a way for the establishment of a permanent institution called NRBC. Though it takes more than ten years to develop and finalize the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) and now it is open for signatures. This framework agreement is going to be a binding treaty document and it will come to force as soon as six members of the Nile Basin Region signed and ratified it. Six member states already signed the agreement, namely Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania; and after long awaiting Burundi signed on February 2011 and escaped the Egyptian utilitarian tactic. This is another victory for upper riparian countries (Alan, 2003).

Generally the aforementioned explanation put Ethiopia as effective counter Hegemony while it's labeled Egypt as a declining Hydro Hegemony. Ethiopia for long period resisted the status quo; however, it was not materialized due to lack of power and exploitation capacity. In the last twenty years the reaction phase transformed into the active phase in which the country showed the capacity of facilitating the formation of a new regime norm and leadership, CFA. As it is noted in the CFA, the member states of NRBC agreed to follow a positive hegemony leadership (Alan, 2003). This is a new Hegemony power and its principles founded on equitable and fair distribution of Nile River. This step has reframed the norm of the Nile Basin Region and it is a legal and binding action which invites all member states to take part in win-win approach.

## **COOPERATION AS A SOUL OPTION FOR CONTEMPORARY EGYPT**

### **International Law and International Community**

The international law and the treaty agreement on CFA put pressure on Egypt to take part in peaceful and constructive approach. This is a new thinking and it is widely supported by the international community and international law. During the recent confrontation between Egypt and Ethiopia as a result of EGRD, the head of the two international offices: UN secretary general and AU Chairperson conveyed a similar message on equitable and fair resource sharing, and the importance of cooperation (Daily News, 2013). Besides



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Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, AU chairperson, advised Egypt to throw off the legacy of colonialism and to move forward and work with the Nile Basin Regional countries on a CFA (SABC News, 2013). CFA formulated based on the international law. The international water law on Article IV of the Helsinki Rules (1967) states as follows: Each Basin State is entitled, within its territory, to a reasonable and equitable share in the beneficial uses of the waters of an international drainage basin.

This kind of clear statement of the international law and strong stand from the international community in favor of CFA puts pressure on Egypt. Egypt is the only country which fully dependent on the Nile River and if the country persists in his coercion approach it will permanently damage the relation with the upstream countries and its people.

### **Egypt Dependency on the Nile River**

Egypt is one of the third highly populated countries in Africa next to Nigeria and Ethiopia. In geographical point view, the country is the least powerful country since it's the last downstream countries which has a nil contribution to the Nile River. However, almost the entire water demand of the nation (95 %) comes or source from Nile River. This can be substantiated from the settlement pattern of the population and the industries for example, 95% of the Egyptian population reside in the Nile Delta (Brunnee & Toope, 2002). This fact clearly showed how Egypt is highly dependent on Nile River.

### **Economic Development**

In times of economic crisis across the world, the East Africa Countries, particularly Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Tanzania showed continuous economic growth. In the last ten years Ethiopia has recorded two digit economic growths. Similarly Rwanda and Tanzania showed an increase in their domestic economy and they scored a GDP of 7.5% and 7% respectively. While the Egypt economic growth declined and reached to a GDP rate of 1.8% (World Bank, 2012). This economic growth is a leverage to initiate a mega project, which purely financed from the domestic source.

The EGRD dam is an indication for the succession of other similar projects which could be built by domestic funds. Thus, it is highly advantageous for Egypt to work and cooperate during the inception of the permanent institution, NRBC. After ratification of CFA (at least by 6 member states), NRBC will become a higher body in Nile Basin Region. Ethiopia signed and ratified the treaty. The other five countries (Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and Tanzania) signed and they are under the process of ratification. South Sudan and DRC are in the process of signing. At the end of this process, Egypt will not have a legal ground to oppose other than to comply with the norm of NRBC (Mekonnen, 2010).

### **Bargaining Power: Ethiopia**

Ethiopia is a source of the Blue Nile and this contributes 86 % of the total Nile Water and this percentage usually reached to the level of 96% during the wet or flood season. Despite a consistent resistance to the act of Egypt and its negative Hydro Hegemony, Ethiopia couldn't able to materialize its reaction. The reaction phase has got its gear through the leadership of former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and now reached to the level of active phase in which they started exploiting their potential through mobilizing local resource and international partners. The country bargaining power tremendously improved in the last twenty years and the bigger credit goes to their former leader (Dereje & Wuhibegezer, 2014).

Ethiopia foreign policy and the bargaining power attract many neighboring countries to be a reliable partners for instance Sudan. In recent years Sudan and Ethiopia formulated and signed a number of bilateral agreements

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which could foster collaboration of the two countries. The state as well as the people of Sudan is supporting the new project of Ethiopia, EGRD, which is being built close to their border. The contemporary situation in the region shows, how Egypt is being isolated from the entire upstream countries and Sudan; and how the country is still tied up with its old approach and discourse (Dereje & Wuhibegezer, 2014). This is a time for Egypt to accommodate the new thinking which established on the win-win principle.

### **Alternative Financing Source**

China is becoming a key player in Africa. The china approach is established on pure mutual economic interest. This unconditional approach opens a door for many African countries, including Ethiopia to work on the development of infrastructure like a dam, road, and railway. Ethiopia is one of the beneficiaries in accessing a loan from the China state bank, EXIM Bank of China and others. This new opportunity closed the Egyptian manipulation and bargaining power on the World Bank and international financial institution (Bosshard, 2008).

### **Climate Change**

The global climate change is becoming undeniable facts across the world. According to an IPCC assessment report of the year 2020, over 250 million Africans will be exposed to water stress resulted from climate change. One of water basins which might be heavily affected will be Nile Basin Region (Martens, 2011). The increase in evaporation due to the increase in temperature significantly reduces the volume of the Nile River.

According to OECD (2004) report, Nile River will face a significant loss of water. As it was reported there will be a 4% increase of evaporation for a single °C rise in temperature. There are a number of factors contributed to these, for instance deforestation, pollution, environmental degradation, and lack of ownership. This challenge requires multifaceted response approaches. Thus to address such common threat, Egypt needs to work in collaboration with Ethiopia and other upper riparian countries. The delay of intervention will cost the entire member states of the Nile Basin Region.

### **Population Growth**

The population growth in Nile Basin Region is not being controlled and it will eventually lead to scarcity of water since the population growth ultimately brings an increase in demand for water (Axworthy et al., 2012). According to the UNPD prediction in 2030 the population of Nile Basin countries will reach 654 million. This unprecedented increase in population will bring additional pressure in the region. The Nile river cover eleven countries and its monthly discharge rate are 1584 CM per second while the Amazon River, which relatively cover the same distance, but cover a small number of countries has a monthly discharge rate of 180,000 CM per second (FAO, 2012). Thus, there is a need to apply a wise and efficient use of water resource in Nile Basin Region.

The Nile Basin region will be the first region to encounter a growing gap between human needs and the available supply water. This shows how the Nile Basin region needs to act in coordination to use this scarce resource in a wise manner. It is also a stage where it demands their integrated efforts and a policy formulation and implementation in relation to unlimited population growth (Yohannes, 2009).

### **Military Power and Military Collaboration**

Military power is one of the areas where the Hegemony power is being used it for propaganda purpose and protection of the status quo. In 2012 Egypt spent 3.4 million \$ while the other upstream countries altogether spent less than 1.8 million \$. This is almost less by 50% comparing to Egypt military spending power (Carles,

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2006). However the current domestic crisis in Egypt and the rough relationship with USA will have a power to affect this kind of military spending trend. According to the report from Global Fire Index 2014, Ethiopia is building the second military power in Africa next to Egypt. Ethiopia is also tightening the border by signing bilateral and multilateral military cooperation with the neighboring countries including with Sudan. Ethiopia is showing its readiness for self-defense and proportional response (Global Fire Index, 2014). On top of these evidences, there is international law which prohibited aggression (UN charter 2:4) as a result of these facts; there is a slim chance to dispute.

Generally there is a single option left for Egypt that is Cooperation. Under cooperation framework the country expected to work with Ethiopia and other upstream countries on the principle of Win-Win scenario. This change requires self-determination and reorientation of the old approach of Egypt, which is based on Win-Loss principle.

### **CONCLUSION**

In this study, cooperation is identified as a soul option to Egypt. In the past the Hydro Hegemony power of the Nile Basin Region, Egypt, used “cooperation” as per its own desires, ignoring the demand of the upstream countries in favor of coercion. Coercion was one of Egyptian strategies which made Ethiopia and other riparian countries as “silent partners”. This type of water controlling tactics used different strategies like supporting the rebel group and building the capacity of the neighboring countries for proxy war (Abadir, 2012).

The former Ethiopian prime minister accused Egypt for its involvement in interstate war, which Ethiopia had in the past and the country support to rebel groups. The long war in Ethiopia destroyed the country material and the exploitation capacity to the level where the country could not able to feed its own people. Until the last twenty years the majorities of the upstream countries were in uninterrupted conflict and civil war, and deep rooted poverty. Ethiopia was one of the victims of the long war, famine, and drought (Dereje & Wuhibegezer, 2014).

Egypt also has been used other controlling tactics on Nile water like normative and securitization or ideational strategies. Though these tactics helped the country to run its negative Hegemony policy for a long period of time; nowadays Ethiopia is challenging the status quo and opening a way for the emergence of new Hegemony. There are a number of reasons contributed for this shift of power like the unprecedented economic growth in Ethiopia and other upstream countries which enhanced domestic expenditure for mega project, the alternative financial source, the improvement of the bargaining power, the capacity of Ethiopia to counter resist Hegemony water controlling tactics, the establishment of strong tie between Ethiopia and USA, and the improvement of military capacity among upstream countries like Ethiopia, the policy shift of the Sudanese state on the usage of Nile water resource, and the domestic crisis in Egypt (Arsano & Tamirat, 2004).

Presently Ethiopia is being considered as a counter Hegemony. The continued resistance of the status quo begun in the late 1990s and the active response for negative Hegemony has been undergoing in 21 centuries. In the last twenty years the continuous economic growth, which recorded in Ethiopia has played a significant role in transforming the reactive phase of the counter Hegemony to active phase (Dereje & Wuhibegezer, 2014).

During the active phase Ethiopia has mobilized international and domestic resources. This in turn assists the country to initiate a mega project on Nile River like the construction of EGRD. This action conveyed a political message which indicated about the end of asymmetric power or negative Hegemony and the emerging of new Hegemony. In addition to the emerging of the new Hydro Hegemony, there are also other additional factors

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which force Egyptian to drop their “Win-Loss” approach to come to the negotiation table for a Win-Win approach which could only achieve through cooperation thinking. These factors include climate change, population growth, and reduction of volume in Nile River. Egypt, a country with full dependent on Nile River, if it is not ready to cooperate with Ethiopia and other upstream countries, the people in the region, particularly the life of the people in Egypt will be in jeopardy due to the consequence of natural and man made changes in the region (Abadir, 2012).

This is high time for Egypt to alter its policy on Nile River and come to the table for equitable and fair distribution of water resource. Ethiopia and the other upstream countries are moving in the direction of the Dublin Principles which framed on the principle of equitable and fair share. In near future or in long run Egypt expected to join the other nine countries of the Nile Basin Regional States (Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi, South Sudan, DRC, and Sudan; though Sudan is not ready to sign the document in this period; they are fully supporting the EGRD and other Mega Project on Nile River) who will tie under the umbrella of NRBC. While the Nile Basin countries waiting Egypt to join the group, they need to push the ratification process of CFA. In addition, they have to scale up the actions which could consolidate the cooperation framework in the Nile Basin Region like:

- ✓ Internalizing the shared vision among the member states and their people.
- ✓ Improving their bargaining power and widening the network to avail multiple alternatives.
- ✓ Developing knowledge based strategies which could enhance the efficiency of the upcoming regional institution, NRBC, and its power exercise.
- ✓ Developing effective counter strategies for any destructive approach in the Nile Basin Region, which could jeopardize the fate of the initiative.
- ✓ Developing and implementing win-win projects, and forecasting and controlling any harm attached to the upcoming new projects by applying Do Not Harm Principle.
- ✓ Strengthening integration and addressing the common agenda like climate change, population growth, security threat, and poverty.
- ✓ Improving exploitation power through establishing and/or strengthening regional and national institutes which could train experts in relation to modern agriculture, dam construction and other techniques which could be applied in Nile Basin Region.
- ✓ Establishing Nile Basin Regional financial institution like Bank so as to access loan and to get any financial support for projects which designed by Nile Basin Region.
- ✓ Establishing military cooperation and formulating a clear guidance on self-defense and proportional countermeasures for any possible aggression as per international law.

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