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**Abstract**

*This paper examine to the comparative analysis of Egypt and Ethiopia foreign policy towards the Nile River. The Nile River has served as the source of tension and mistrust in the two countries" relations. It is rightly outlined that "deep distrust, suspicion, misunderstanding and even political and military confrontations have characterized their relations throughout history emperor*

*Tewodros II was called Egyptian are number one enemy for us and Egyptian had been tried to control the Nile after the end of Tewodros II regime but they defeated by Ethiopian at the battle of Gura and Gundet. Actually Nile is the life of Egypt without Nile Egypt cannot exist or we cannot think about Egypt without Nile. In this case the main parameter of Egypt foreign policy is Nile. Egypt is the most powerful state in the basin; it has achieved a substantial degree of hydraulic, legal and political control over the Nile waters. Egypt is dominating and has a hegemonic power on Nile. Egyptian foreign policy has aimed at protecting its interest on the Nile. Egyptians have focused their policy on the Nile with the object of halting any moves by upstream Ethiopia to divert or arrest the flow of the Nile. This policy has become more focused and specialized after the emergence of politically economically, and militarily more stronger and dominant Egypt. Egypt dominating the hydro politics of the Nile, Ethiopia has been unable to strike a deal on establishing user right on the river. Egypt has made its preoccupation to obstacle any development efforts on the Nile by Ethiopia. Egypt's diplomatic and political superiority has also proved effective in blocking any international funding for Ethiopia's effort in using the resources of the Nile.*

**Key words:** Egypt, Ethiopia, foreign policy, hegemonic power and Nile River

## **Introduction**

Egypt and Ethiopia have been in contact for centuries. The early contacts between Ethiopia and Egypt seem to have been based on the Red Sea trade. But some have noted that the knowledge that the Nile had a major tributary in Ethiopia was known in both countries, Egypt and Ethiopia at quite an early date (Ademnur, 2002). Herodotus observed that Egypt was a gift of the Nile. That observation is no less true today than in the distant past, because not only the prosperity of Egypt, but also its very existence depends on the annual flood of the Nile. Of its two sources, the Blue Nile flows from Lake Tana Ethiopia, while the White Nile flows from Lake Victoria in Uganda. Some percent of the water that Egypt consumes annually originates from the Blue Nile River, while the remainder comes from the Blue Nile (Daniel, 2019). Since concern with the free flow of the Nile has always been a national security issue for Egypt, as the Blue Nile goes it has been held that Egypt must be in a position either dominate Ethiopia, or to neutralize whatever unfriendly regime might emerge there. As the late President Sadat stated: "Any action that would endanger the waters of the Blue Nile will be faced with a firm reaction on the part of Egypt, even

if that action should lead to war (Daniel, 2019). Hydro political complexes are emerging to negotiate water-sharing policies that promote political stability, regional security, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability. Yet interstate disputes are occurring within most hydro political complexes, and weak riparian states are often coerced to agree to water-sharing policies that adversely affect them. Egypt is the “clear hegemon on the Nile in terms of economic strength” Its economy is stronger, more diverse and further integrated in the global economy than those of other riparian states (Mohammed, 2015). Egypt’s position has attracted outside powers who vied for its control. But whatever power had occupied Egypt, it had the control of the Nile as its primary objective. These powers had long recognized that Egypt would not survive without the Nile and that its security is strongly linked to the Nile. These powers were also interested in bringing the Nile under their control not only for Egypt’s sake but for their own benefit, i.e.-to secure their dominance in the region (Ademnur, 2002). Control of the Nile basin’s shared water resources is characterized by a high degree of asymmetry brought about by factors including the different capacities the riparian states to technically control, utilize and allocate the water resources (Mohammed, 2015).

### **The foreign policy of Egypt and Ethiopia towards Nile River**

The principle objective of foreign policy is to protect the sovereignty and national security of the state and maximize its vital regional and international interest. In the case of Egypt foreign policy had to follow certain dictates because of historical and geostrategic consideration. For instance Egypt heavily depends on the Nile River which originates outside its borders and forms the basis of its agricultural sector. The Nile flows from south to north but the wind blows from north to south enabling sailing in the other direction so that the Nile flows into Egypt as it were. To protect the flow of the Nile Egypt foreign policy has had to take into account a major geostrategic challenge that extends beyond its narrow Nile corridor. Egypt must crucially keep leverage over its southern border in order to maintain its supply of water (Housan, 2015). The Nile flows for 6,700 kilometers through ten countries in northeastern Africa: Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Sudan, and Egypt before reaching the Mediterranean, and is the longest international river system in the world. Its two main tributaries converge at Khartoum: the White Nile, which originates from Burundi and flows through the Equatorial Lakes, provides a small but steady flow that is fed by the eternal snows of the Ruwenzori (the ‘rain giver’) mountains, while the Blue Nile, which suffers from high seasonal

fluctuations, descends from the lofty Ethiopian 'water tower' highlands. They provide 86 per cent of the waters of the Nile Blue Nile 59 per cent, Baro- Akobo (Sobat) 14 per cent, Tekeze (Atbara) 13 per cent while the contribution from the Equatorial Lakes region is only 14 per cent (Ashok, 1997). The politics of Nile has greatly influenced the Ethio- Egyptian relations since very long time ago. The Nile River has served as the source of tension and mistrust in the two countries" relations (Endalcachew, 2015).

In the fact that Egypt had been tried to control the Blue Nile directly or indirectly but Egypt has defeated by Ethiopia. Egypt is one of the ancient states in the world. Egypt is the most populous country in the Arab world and has long exerted among its neighbors. According to kidane cited (Dvorak, 1982, p. 206), Egypt is not only "the Gift of the Nile" but also the Nile determines its topography and the make-up of its terrains. Realizing the above situation, Egyptians always dream to control if not to destabilize Ethiopia to their level best. As historical facts show, during Emperor Yohans IV of Ethiopia, the then Egyptian leader Ismail Khedive has attempted to control Ethiopia (Kidane, 2018). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Egypt's invasion and final conquest of the Sudan was largely motivated by its desire to secure control over the entire Nile system. Muhammed Ali (1769-1849), for instance, felt that the security and prosperity of Egypt could only be assured fully by extending conquests to those Ethiopian provinces from which Egypt received its great reserves of water. The objective of such a conquest was designed to impose Egypt's will on Ethiopia, and either to occupy it or to force it to give up the Lake Tana area. Hence, the conquest of the Sudan in 1820 served as a stepping-stone to the increased appearance of Egyptian soldiers in the western frontiers of Ethiopia, and to the subsequent Egyptian occupation of Kasala in 1834, Metema in 1838, Massawa in 1846, Kunama in 1869, and Harar in 1875. Khedive Ismail (1863-1879), too, wanted to make the Nile an Egyptian river by annexing to Egypt all the geographical areas of the basin (Daniel, 2019). Egypt's full support to organize and armed the Eritrean fighters was another historical event in 1961. On June 5, 1980, Anwar Sadat ordered the Egyptian Second Army commander to be ready for possible operation in the Ethiopian territory (Kidane, 2018). Beyond its largest population, Egypt owns a very large well-armed dominant army, vibrant media, strongest industrial base and it hosts the Arab League. These are not the only activities that have been taken by Egypt. Many legitimate and illegitimate actions have been and are still taking by Egypt's government. Egyptians have focused their policy on the Nile with the object of thwarting any moves by upstream Ethiopia to divert or arrest the flow of the Nile (Ademnur, 2002).

A combination of stronger material, bargaining and ideational power has allowed Egypt to develop a hydro-hegemonic status in the basin vis-à-vis the other riparian states and to maintain the regime that best served its national interests (Mohammed, 2015). The years 1929, 1959 and 1999 represent key tipping points in the hydro political relations between riparian countries in the Nile basin. 1929: Eighty years ago, the first Nile Water Agreement was signed between Egypt and Great Britain on behalf of Sudan and other British colonies in the basin (Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania). The Agreement included specific volumetric water allocations 48 billion m<sup>3</sup> in a year to Egypt and 4 billion meter cubic to Sudan and helped to institutionalize the belief that Egypt and Sudan had "natural and historic rights" to the Nile water. Ethiopia was not part of the Agreement and refused to acknowledge it (Ana Elisa, 2009). The crucial importance of the Blue Nile to Egypt was not lost on Britain, which had made Egypt's interests its own. In 1902, London dispatched John Harrington to Addis Ababa to negotiate border and Nile water issues with Emperor Menelik. Ethiopia's legitimate reasons to exploit the waters in its own territory for development purposes should be understandable (Daniel, 2019). This fact alone would provide sufficient grounds for some to invalidate the binding force of the agreement. But it was never ratified, either by the British Parliament or by the Ethiopian Crown Council. There was also the 1929 Agreement between Egypt and Britain. It stipulated that "no irrigation or power works or measures are to be constructed or taken on the River Nile or its tributaries, or on the lakes from which it flows in so far as all these are in the Sudan or in countries under British administration, which would entail prejudice to the interests of Egypt (ibid). The Nile 2002 Conference Series (1993-2004) played a pioneering role in bringing together both political and academic representatives from the Nile riparian's to debate hydro political cooperation. But it was only in the mid-1990s, that all Nile riparian's were committed to develop a multilateral cooperative institution that would deal with technical, environmental, developmental and legal issues (Ana Elisa, 2009). The adoption of cooperative diplomacy towards other states of Nile basin does not mean that Egypt is not prepared to use other means at its disposal to protect its interest in the region. On a number of occasion Egypt has demonstrated its preparedness to go to war if the situation so warranted (Hamdy, 2017). For example in the 1970s when Ethiopia tried to established projects in the Blue Nile without consultation with other fluvial states, Egypt warned Addis Ababa against destabilizing action. The issue of Nile River water and its significance for the survival of the peoples of Egypt has been clear in the mind of all political leaders in Cairo to the extent that no significant difference exists among the successive administrations over the decades (Hamdy, 2017). Egypt is endowed with geopolitical and strategic positions to dictate

policies on the Nile. Egypt, as the Nile Basin's hegemony, has used its role to maintain its comfortable position. International actors have played a major role in sustaining and maintaining this situation (Anja, 2011). Egypt is able to maintain power over the Nile, despite its poor location, because it is the most powerful state militarily and economically, relative to the other, more impoverished basin states. Ethiopia is very much consumed in their own internal conflicts that "consumed the attention (and the resources) of the governments involved, precluding any new investment in dams and irrigation projects. Egypt has historically taken advantage of this internal conflict in other nations for its own benefit, by using its own wealth, resources, and power to dominate the region (Lauren, no date).

### **The hydro hegemonic power of Nile River**

The economic, social, and environmental importance of water resources cannot be overstated. Water is a vital resource, critical for healthy living conditions and sound ecosystems. Drinking water, food production, energy supply, and industrial development are dependent on water availability. Yet, the rising demands associated with rapid population growth and economic development place increasing pressure on this fragile and finite resource (Halla, 2008). Albeit Ethiopia has been the natural right to use the Nile River but it was not use until 2011 to start the GRED. Egypt was dominated or hegemonic power on Nile basin. All international rivers, without exception, create some degree of tension among the societies that they bind and there are consequences arising from the cooperative or non-cooperative responses of the riparian states that can reach far 'beyond the river'. These tensions and their responses are often bundled with many other factors that affect basin interstate relations (Claudious, 2012). A combination of stronger material, bargaining and ideational power has allowed Egypt to develop a hydro-hegemonic status in the basin vis-à-vis the other riparian states and to maintain the regime that best served its national interests (Mohammed, 2015). As a result, transboundary river basin organizations are created to address the interests of the riparian countries as well as to shape resource sharing arrangements between or among them (Claudious, 2012). The Blue Nile, the primary contributor of water in the Nile basin, directly influences life in Sudan, Egypt, and Ethiopia, having a combined population of more than 210 million people. This number does not include the people inhabiting the White Nile areas of South Sudan and the Central and East African Great Lakes states (Jack, 2015). At the end of the twentieth century the Nile hydrological system is of major economic significance to two of its riparian's, Egypt and the Sudan; its waters could be of economic significance to at least four of its other riparian's. Egypt

would achieve total control of the Ethiopian flood by creating storage at its southern border with the Sudan of about three times the annual flow at that point (J. Anthony, 1999).

In transboundary river basins, the need for interstate cooperation is magnified as water scarcity increases. Within Africa, many countries recognize the need for cooperative management of transboundary waters and this has found expression in numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements and transboundary river basin organizations established (Mostert, 2005). The 1929 Agreement was replaced by the 1959 Agreement for the Full Utilizations of the Nile Waters. After the Independence of Sudan in 1956, Egypt's plans to build the High Aswan Dam and the need to renegotiate existing water allocations under the 1929 Agreement prompted the two countries to come up with new volumetric water allocations 55.5 Bm<sup>3</sup>/yr to Egypt and 18.5 Bm<sup>3</sup>/yr to Sudan under a new agreement. The 1959 Agreement reinforced downstream claims of "natural and historic rights" to the Nile waters, and became both Sudan and Egypt's 'redline' for future negotiations in the basin. The upstream riparian's were not included in the Agreement, and have continuously criticized its bilateral nature. The 1959 Agreement represents the backbone of the hydro political dilemma in the Nile basin downstream riparian's want to maintain it, while upstream riparian's want to replace it with a multilateral agreement based on equitable sharing (Ana Elisa, 2009). In May 2010, upper riparian states reinforced this statement by opening the Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement for signature. This agreement claims to announce the rights of upper riparian states to use the waters of the Nile. The upper riparian states have introduced the international "legal" instrument not for its legal value but its political and counter-hegemonic value. The treaty is best explained as a first step to counter and undo the hegemonic actions of Egypt that have been instigated since the beginning of the nineteenth century (Abadir, 2011).

Control of the Nile basin's shared water resources is characterized by a high degree of asymmetry brought about by factors including the riparian's different capacities to technically control, utilize and allocate the water resources. In terms of their technical control, the ten riparian's demonstrating varying capacities to harness the resource, based on their particular hydraulic infrastructural and storage capacity (Ana Elisa, 2009). The downstream riparian's (Egypt and Sudan) have consolidated their control over water resources. Egypt is the most powerful state in the basin; it has achieved a substantial degree of hydraulic, legal and political control over the Nile waters. Political and structural factors regional and national circumstances mean that upstream riparian's do not currently use a great deal of the water resources inside their boundaries (Ana Elisa, 2008).

Consideration of Egypt's downstream yet dominative position on the Nile, however, shows that geographic position can be less influential and determining than other fields of power. Hegemonic riparian's may manipulate the interaction with the neighboring riparian's through a number of tools, including lack of knowledge and data sharing, or the use of time, silence or ambiguity (Ana Elisa and Mark, 2010). The lower riparian states, Egypt and Sudan, have always depended on the waters of the Nile for their life. Nile waters constitute 96% of Egypt's renewable water,' while 85% of both North and South Sudan's population is in some way dependent on the river. Irrigation and Hydro electric power productions are the major values of the Nile for the lower riparian states. Agriculture, more than any other use, constitutes 80% of the lower riparian state's use of Nile waters when we compare the lower riparian with upper riparian lower riparian better than the lower riparian Ethiopia is the least consumption even though 86 % of source of Nile flow from Ethiopia (Abadir, 2011).

## Conclusion

Egypt and Ethiopia have been in contact for centuries that back traced to Axumite civilization period. The introduction of Christianity into Ethiopia is believed to have strengthened the relations between these two countries, Egypt and Ethiopia. In terms of its objective "the foreign policy of every country deals first with the preservation of its independence and security, and second with the detection and fortification of its economic benefit. Egyptian foreign policy has aimed at protecting its interest on the Nile. Egyptians have paying attention their policy on the Nile with the object of uncomfortable any moves by upstream Ethiopia to divert or arrest the flow of the Nile. The two riparian's agreed to share the water in the proportions 75 per cent and 25 per cent for Egypt and the Sudan respectively. Other riparian's were invited to participate in the discussions Ethiopia was out of the agreement. This policy has become more focused and specialized after the emergence of politically economically, and militarily more stronger and dominant Egypt. Ethiopia has been a force of economic integration between African countries, especially those in East Africa, over the past decade. Its economic diplomacy based foreign policy has smoothed the way for it to forge stronger economic ties with neighboring countries. The Nile River the only major source of water for the country plays a crucial role in the life of Egypt as compared to with Ethiopia. Egypt is the only country that heavily dependent on the Nile river . Any actions that would jeopardize the flow of the Nile River will always be the parameter



that influence Egyptian foreign policy vis-à-vis the states in the basin region. Egypt has better economic, political social and diplomatic than Ethiopian. Egypt is potentially at the center of three circles it actively involves at the Africa, the Arab and Islamic and Egypt has political support and economic aid from western and the Arab world. The fact that Ethiopia one of the poorest countries in the world adds to the problem of having to find the appropriate political set up Ethiopia has the lowest by contrast Egypt has better has economic and political set up than Ethiopia. As it known Ethiopia has its own internal problems of ethnic conflict and disintegration. So Egypt has been dominated and has hegemonic power on Nile River. Egypt has also tried to exploit the instabilities and internal crises in some countries in the basin, particularly Ethiopia, in support of one or the other parties involved in the crisis with the object of diverting development efforts on the Nile. Egypt has made its preoccupation to obstruct any development efforts on the Nile by Ethiopia. Egypt's diplomatic and political superiority has also proved effective in blocking any international funding for Ethiopia's effort in using the resources of the Nile.

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