NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

THE GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM: RISK OF INTERSTATE CONFLICT ON THE NILE

by

Timothy E. Petrov

December 2018

Thesis Advisor:	Rachel L. Sigman
Second Reader:	Emily L. Meierding

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			*Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188*

1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	**2. REPORT DATE** December 2018	**3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED** Master's thesis

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE THE GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM: RISK OF INTERSTATE CONFLICT ON THE NILE	**5. FUNDING NUMBERS**
6. AUTHOR(S) Timothy E. Petrov	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000	**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER**
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A	**10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER**

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.

12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.	**12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE** A

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

Since 2011, Ethiopia has forged ahead with plans to complete the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a massive infrastructure project meant to bring much-needed electricity to the nation and to the region. Egypt opposes the initiative due to the perceived negative impacts associated with altering the flow of the Nile. Ethiopia has—up until now—acquiesced to Egyptian claims on the Nile, showcasing an inclination toward cooperation. With the GERD, however, Ethiopia is challenging Egypt's historic supremacy over affairs along the Nile. Despite frameworks for cooperation, binding agreements have remained elusive and, in their absence, Ethiopia has unilaterally moved forward with the project. With construction over 65% complete, Ethiopia's developmental ambitions have collided with Egypt's access to natural resources, prompting fears of conflict between the sovereign states. Why has Ethiopia continued to press on with this initiative at the risk of interstate conflict? This thesis examines internal and external conditions affecting Ethiopia's drive toward construction and completion of the GERD. It highlights internal political and economic dynamics factoring into Ethiopia's decision-making process and showcases external considerations that have afforded Ethiopia the maneuver space to move forward with regional ambitions. Ultimately, internal and external conditions set the stage for initial construction and continue to incentivize Ethiopia toward completion.

14. SUBJECT TERMS Ethiopia, Egypt, Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam, GERD	**15. NUMBER OF PAGES** 115
	16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT	**18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE**	**19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT**	**20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	UU

NSN 7540-01-280-5500 Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89) Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239-18

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.

THE GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM: RISK OF INTERSTATE CONFLICT ON THE NILE

Timothy E. Petrov
Major, United States Air Force
BA, American Military University, 2007
BA, University of Minnesota, 2008

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(MIDDLE EAST, SOUTH ASIA, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 2018**

Approved by: Rachel L. Sigman
Advisor

Emily L. Meierding
Second Reader

Afshon P. Ostovar
Associate Chair for Research
Department of National Security Affairs

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ABSTRACT

Since 2011, Ethiopia has forged ahead with plans to complete the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a massive infrastructure project meant to bring much-needed electricity to the nation and to the region. Egypt opposes the initiative due to the perceived negative impacts associated with altering the flow of the Nile. Ethiopia has—up until now—acquiesced to Egyptian claims on the Nile, showcasing an inclination toward cooperation. With the GERD, however, Ethiopia is challenging Egypt's historic supremacy over affairs along the Nile. Despite frameworks for cooperation, binding agreements have remained elusive and, in their absence, Ethiopia has unilaterally moved forward with the project. With construction over 65% complete, Ethiopia's developmental ambitions have collided with Egypt's access to natural resources, prompting fears of conflict between the sovereign states. Why has Ethiopia continued to press on with this initiative at the risk of interstate conflict? This thesis examines internal and external conditions affecting Ethiopia's drive toward construction and completion of the GERD. It highlights internal political and economic dynamics factoring into Ethiopia's decision-making process and showcases external considerations that have afforded Ethiopia the maneuver space to move forward with regional ambitions. Ultimately, internal and external conditions set the stage for initial construction and continue to incentivize Ethiopia toward completion.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AU	African Union
BCM	Billon-Cubic Meters
CAR	Central African Republic
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism
CFA	Cooperative Framework Agreement
COMSEA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
Derg	Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia
DoP	Declaration of Principles
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
HAD	High Aswan Dam
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MW	Megawatts
NBI	Nile Basin Initiative
NRBC	Nile River Basin Commission
PIDA	African Union's Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa
PKO	Peacekeeping Operation
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TLPF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UIC	Union of Islamic Courts
UN	United Nations

UNAMID	African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USD	U.S. Dollars
WEF	World Economic Forum

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my wife and children for all the love and support they provided throughout my time in the military and especially during this period of graduate study. They have endured a great many stresses being part of a military family. Throughout countless moves and times apart, and with a general lack of understanding as to what the future might bring, they stood by me. For this, I am eternally grateful. Thank you to my advisors, who made this project possible—your dedication to duty and professionalism is unmatched. Above all else, I thank God, who gave me the strength to persevere.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

I. INTRODUCTION

Since 2011, Ethiopia has forged ahead with plans to complete the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a massive undertaking meant to bring much-needed electricity to the nation and to the region. Given the immense opposition from Egypt, which stems from the perceived negative externalities associated with altering the waterflow of the Nile, why has Ethiopia decided to risk interstate conflict by unilaterally moving forward with the initiative? Has Ethiopia's perception of relative power changed, and what exigencies are driving the decision to challenge Egypt's "hydro-hegemony?"[1] Why now? This research adds to literature on water wars and the risk of international conflict due to large-scale developmental projects.

The argument found herein suggests internal and external dynamics have fostered an environment suitable for Ethiopia to announce and move forward with the GERD project. From an internal perspective, Ethiopia—an inherently developmental state—has focused squarely on the economic advancement from and large-scale projects like the dam have served to further political and economic aspirations. Externally, regional dynamics have altogether changed. Egypt is weaker, Ethiopia is more significant in East Africa, and while the prospect of interstate conflict seems high, based on belligerent sentiments expressed by leaders, evidence suggests actual behaviors in the international arena are highly cooperative. With such internal and external conditions at play, Ethiopia has not only had the internal resolve to commence and push forward with the project, it has maintained the maneuver space to continue with progress unimpeded.

A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

This study adds to research on the potential for conflict over water and energy resources. As population growth pushes the total number of inhabitants on Earth past seven and a half billion, increased water use and competition have heightened concerns over

[1] Mark Zeitoun and Jeroen Warner, "Hydro-Hegemony – A Framework for Analysis of Trans-Boundary Water Conflicts," *Water Policy* 8 no. 5 (October 2006): 435–460, http://doi.org/10.2166/wp.2006.054.

"environmental scarcity" and the "depletion and degradation of aquifers, rivers, and other water resources."[2] Writing in 1984, Cooley maintained "long after oil runs out, water is likely to cause wars, cement peace, and make [or] break empires and alliances."[3] With the potential to spur increased conflict or cooperation between international and subnational groups, it is important to identify links between natural resources, development and the potential for international dispute.

Ethiopia's commitment to completing the GERD has certainly increased interactions with regional, riparian states. Contention and cooperation have been part of the dialogue. As such, this study is nested in larger academic debates surrounding the contemporary relevance of realism and liberalism. Realists suggest the international system is inherently anarchic, producing a perpetual struggle between self-interested, unitary actors attempting to bolster material power.[4] Liberals contend institutions within the international regime provide a "binding and constraining" effect, reducing ambiguity and conflict and forging greater agreement between states.[5] Given these perspectives, analyzing the dispute over the GERD provides the opportunity to investigate unilateral actions of contemporary states in the international order. It likewise provides indications of how international institutions may affect conflict or cooperation in contending states. The GERD represents a crucial juncture in the relations between Ethiopia and Egypt. Despite the potential for increased acrimony, Ethiopia has pressed forward with the initiative. As Ethiopia continues to act unilaterally, questions emerge about regional power

---

[2] Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases," *International Security* 19, no. 1 (1994): 5, http://doi.org/10.2307/2539147.

[3] John K. Cooley, "The War Over Water," *Foreign Policy*, no. 54 (1984): 3http://doi.org/10.2307/1148352.

[4] Kenneth M. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979), 69, 66, 64, 105.

[5] Robert O. Keohane, "The Demand for International Regimes," *International Organization* 36, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 325–355; G. John Ikenberry, "Democracy, Institutions, and American Restraint," in *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power*, ed. G. John Ikenberry, 213–238 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

dynamics, "hydro-hegemony," "water diplomacy," and the water-energy-food nexus.[6] These issues will affect future security and political dynamics in the region. For this reason, it is important to understand what factors are driving Ethiopia to push forward with the GERD.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section draws on theories of resource conflict and water wars to investigate how large-scale energy projects affect the onset of conflict. While scholarship does not directly answer the question of why Ethiopia has unilaterally moved forward with the GERD initiative, evaluation of resource conflict and water wars informs overall understandings of resources, development, water, and the potential for conflict or cooperation. A great deal of research has been dedicated to evaluating conflict, as it relates to natural resources. Investigation of the GERD dispute adds to this body of knowledge by providing a contemporary perspective, one centered on development and regional dynamics in Africa. Greater study on the GERD has the potential to contribute to the conflict versus cooperation debate by illuminating the circumstances behind why states to adopt a more conflictual approach to interstate interaction. Understanding this necessarily requires an in-depth review of the literature on resource conflict and cooperative versus conflictual approaches.

1. Overview: Resource Wars and Interstate Conflict

Scholars debate the extent to which natural resources drive conflict. Those arguing that resource wars exist point to the convergence of population expansion, scarcity, and competition increasing tension between actors. This junction between resources and conflict is by no means a novel concept. It harkens back to what Hobbes described in *Leviathan* as the inevitability of conflict due to contending interests: "two men [desiring]

---

[6] Zeitoun and Warner, "Hydro-Hegemony"; Hala Nasr and Andreas Neef, "Ethiopia's Challenge to Egyptian Hegemony in the Nile River Basin: The Case of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam," *Geopolitics* 21, no. 4 (2016): 972, http://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2016.1209740; Ibrahim Ismail and A. Refaat, "Water Food and Energy Sustainability Nexus" (paper presented at International Conference on Sustainable Futures (ICSF), Applied Science University, Bahrain), October 2017, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321579870_Water_Food_and_Energy_Sustainability_Nexus.

the same thing, which nevertheless they both cannot enjoy, [ultimately leading them to] become enemies."[7] While this is but a micro-level expression of resource conflict, the underlying principle holds true at the macro level. As Sprout and Sprout showcased in 1968, resource availability rarely proved adequate enough to satiate desires of sovereigns, especially when coupled with increased demands from subjugated populations.[8] International discord is noted as a product of "domestic growth and the external expansion of interest; competition for resources, markets, superiority in arms, and strategic advantage; and the dynamics of crisis."[9] As such, modernization and developmental efforts throughout history reflect a continuance of the struggle to subsist in a world of finite—sometimes scarce—resources.

This study provides a contemporary take because Ethiopia is in a unique stage of industrialization and development, seeking to maximize use of all available resources.[10] While Ethiopia persistently exhibited characteristics of a developmental state throughout history, the GERD represents the first instance of an internal developmental agenda in Ethiopia crossing a threshold into the realm of international contest. As energy is the most fundamental driver of global economic prosperity, and as Ethiopia continues to exploit the Nile as a source of hydropower, contending interests with Egypt may once again promote Hobbesian divisiveness.[11]

In the debate surrounding "resource conflict," there are two camps. The first group represents a school of thought which sees resources, the acquisition thereof, and subsequent

---

[7] Arash Abizadeh, "Hobbes on the Causes of War: A Disagreement Theory," *The American Political Science Review* 105, no. 2 (2011): 300, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41495067.

[8] Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout, "The Dilemma of Rising Demands and Insufficient Resources," *World Politics* 20, no. 4 (1968): 661, http://doi.org/10.2307/2009688.

[9] Nazli Choucri and Robert C. North, *Nations in Conflict: National Growth and International Violence*, (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1975): 14.

[10] Alex Gray, "Ethiopia is Africa's Fastest-Growing Economy," World Economic Forum, May 4, 2018, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/05/ethiopia-africa-fastest-growing-economy/.

[11] Huiyi Chen and Ashok Swain, "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: Evaluating Its Sustainability Standard and Geopolitical Significance," *Energy Development Frontier* 3, no. 1 (March 2014): 11–12; Bekele Bayissa, "A Review of the Ethiopian Energy Policy and Biofuels Strategy," in *Digest of Ethiopia's National Policies, Strategies and Programs*, ed. Taye Assefa, 209–238 (Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies (FSS), 2008), 209.

development efforts as fundamental drivers of conflict.[12] Water is identified as a subset of overall resources, and as such, a point of contention. The counter to the "conflict" narrative is the "cooperation" perspective. This camp notes that transboundary water resources have assuredly increased interactions between states, but that overall, such exchanges have produced markedly more agreement than disagreement.[13] Though expansion, scarcity, and competition have the potential to increase tension, the incentive to cooperate and engage in water diplomacy consistently prevailed.[14] Both camps are explored in greater detail below.

2. Water Wars: The Alarmists' Perspective

There are a number of authors who have emphasized the potential for water conflict. Starr discussed water conflict in the Middle East and Africa.[15] She highlighted upticks in population, increased water use, and the depletion of overall supplies as aggravators of conflict.[16] Starr noted that throughout the Middle East, water disputes fostered heighted levels of aggression. Iraq, Syria, and Turkey proved to be particularly aggressive actors. Exchanges included proposals to attack the Ataturk Dam and Turkish aircraft being shot down by Syrian forces.[17] Such belligerent confrontations prompted

---

[12] See Sprout and Sprout, "The Dilemma of Rising Demands and Insufficient Resources"; Cooley, "The War Over Water."; Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict."; Peter H. Gleick, "Environment and Security: The Clear Connections," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 47, no. 3 (1991): 19–20, https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.1991.11459956; Joyce R. Starr, "Water Wars," *Foreign Policy*, no. 82 (1991): 17–36, http://doi.org/10.2307/1148639; Michael Klare, *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001).

[13] See Aaron T. Wolf, "'Water Wars' and Water Reality: Conflict and Cooperation Along International Waterways," in *Environmental Change, Adaptation and Security*, ed. S. C. Lonergan, 251–265 (Netherland: Kluwer Academic Publishing, 1999); Juha I. Uitto and Aaron T. Wolf, "Water Wars? Geographical Perspectives: Introduction," *The Geographical Journal* 168, no. 4 (2002): 289–292, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3451472; Shim Yoffe, Aaron T. Wolf, and Mark Giordano, "Conflict and Cooperation Over International Freshwater Resources: Indicators of Basins At RISR," *Journal of the American Water Resources Association (JAWRA)* 39, no. 5 (October 2003): 1109–1126, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-1688.2003.tb03696.x.

[14] Hala Nasr & Andreas Neef, "Ethiopia's Challenge to Egyptian Hegemony in the Nile River Basin: The Case of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, *Geopolitics* 21, no 4 (July 2016): 973, http://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2016.1209740.

[15] Starr, "Water Wars."

[16] Ibid., 17–18.

[17] Ibid., 31.

Starr to conclude: "Water security will soon rank with military security in the war rooms of defense ministries."[18]

Gleick was similarly adamant about the connection between water, as a contested resource, and conflict. He saw a definitive cause for concern, as structural forces continued to guide nations towards increased competition and dispute. It was not just incongruence in the distribution of natural resources between countries, but rather, scarcity was a product of increased demand due to population growth, rises in the standard of living, and negative implications associated with climate change.[19] According to Gleick, changed conditions warranted a reevaluation of contemporary understandings of security and threat, to address "resource and environmental problems that reduce the quality of life and result in increased competition and tensions among sub national or national groups."[20]

Klare likewise believed competition over resources provoked conflict. He noted fresh water is a particularly divisive issue, because sources are unevenly distributed throughout the planet and disproportionately appropriated to stronger states through multilateral arrangements.[21] Transnational watercourses remain "a chronic source of tension" between actors because when flow is altered or subsides, "the political environment deteriorates, [and] tensions often reach a breaking point."[22] Competition ultimately drives "econocentric security policy…[with] increased emphasis on resource protection" by those with the capacity to do so.[23]

There have certainly been a number of incidents involving water disputes and the mobilization of military forces. Hostilities between Israel, Syria, and Jordan showcased "attempts by each side to divert water from the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers," while altercations "between Turkey, Syria, and Iraq [occurred] over the construction of dams on

---

[18] Ibid., 19.

[19] Peter H. Gleick, "Water and Conflict: Fresh Water Resources and International Security," *International Security* 18, no. 1 (1993): 79, http://doi.org/10.2307/2539033.

[20] Gleick, "Water and Conflict," 82.

[21] Klare, *Resource Wars,*144–145.

[22] Ibid., 146–147.

[23] Ibid., 14.

the Euphrates River."[24] An altogether separate contest occurred over the Ussuri River, prompting "armed confrontation between China and the Soviet Union in 1969."[25] This suggests, at a minimum, the potential for conflict over water. There are, however, concerns about the aforementioned perspectives because they overstate the frequency of water wars and ignore historic levels of cooperation between riparian states. Both of these factors are discussed below.

3. Water Wars: The Empiricists' Take

The counter to the conflict narrative is a cooperation perspective. Simply put, it revolves around the reality that water has historically not prompted armed conflict, and at times, inspires cooperation over conflict.[26] Indeed, the onset of conflict has never been associated with contestation of water rights.[27] Throughout the literature on wars between nations, even stretching back hundreds of years, there have been no large-scale examples of material conflict or mobilization of forces occurring on the basis of water disputes.[28]

Contrary to the conflict view, history is rife with examples of increased cooperation, even when dealing with the most belligerent of rivals. This may be tied to international intervention. Tir and Stinnet (2011) provide evidence of cooperation fostered by institutions, whereby the contentious issue of water has been managed by international agencies, ultimately leading states to interact and "stop short of full-scale war."[29]

---

[24] Paul R. Hensel, Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, and Thomas E. Sowers, "Conflict Management of Riparian Disputes," *Political Geography* 25, no 4 (2006): 384, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2005.11.001.

[25] Hans Petter Wollebæk Toset, Nils Petter Gleditsch, Håvard Hegre, "Shared Rivers and Interstate Conflict," *Political Geography* 19, 8 (2000): 980, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0962-6298(00)00038-X.

[26] Nils Petter, Gleditsch, Kathryn Furlong, Håvard Hegre, Bethany Lacina, and Taylor Owen, "Conflicts Over Shared Rivers: Resource Scarcity or Fuzzy Boundaries?" *Political Geography* 25, no. 4 (May 2006): 379, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2006.02.004.

[27] Wolf, "'Water Wars' and Water Reality."

[28] Wolf, "'Water Wars' and Water Reality"; Uitto and Wolf, "Water Wars? Geographical Perspectives."; Fiona Fintan and Imeru Tamrat, "Spilling Blood over Water? The Case of Ethiopia," in *Scarcity and Surfeit: The Ecology of Africa's Conflicts*, ed. Jeremy Lind and Kathryn Sturman, 243–319 (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2002).

[29] Jaroslav Tir,and Douglas M. Stinnett, "The Institutional Design of Riparian Treaties: The Role of River Issues," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55, no. 4 (2011): 608, https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022002710393917.

Following the logic of conflict over cooperation, countries like India and Pakistan should have fought numerous wars over the Indus River.[30] Instead, these actors found a route to an agreement—that is, with the help of organizations like the World Bank.[31] Throughout the globe, some three thousand-plus water treaties highlight extensive cooperation between nations, as well as the role of international intervention, in assuring fresh water sources were not endangered by the outbreak of violence.[32]

Even when cooperation between actors has been absent, states have seemed to avoid war over water. Downplaying concerns about international conflict due to increased water use, Allan (2002) documented the how riparian states along the Jordan Basin managed the stress of limited water supplies. One state simply shifted to importing agricultural necessities, effectively offsetting those enterprises which consumed the most water resources.[33] Rather than choosing conflict or even cooperation, unilateral options existed outside of these constraints. This, at a minimum, suggests states seek alternative means of resolving water concerns.

4. Cooperation and Conflict: The Ethiopia–Egypt Dynamic

With regard to the GERD dispute, Ethiopia has, up until now, accepted Egyptian dominance over affairs along the Nile. Egypt has maintained a position of power since the early 20th century; the 1929 and 1959 Nile agreements not only guaranteed a set amount of water each year, but also provided Egypt with a "veto power" against upstream developmental efforts which jeopardized flow.[34] Ethiopia's minimal dam construction

---

30 Undala Alam, "Questioning the Water Wars Rationale: A Case Study of The Indus Waters Treaty," *The Geographical Journal* 168 (2002): 341–353, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0016-7398.2002.00060.x.

31 Alam, "Questioning the Water Wars Rationale."

32 Yoffe, Wolf, Giordano, "Conflict and Cooperation Over International Freshwater Resources."

33 John Anthony Allan, "Hydro-Peace in the Middle East: Why No Water Wars? A Case Study of the Jordan River Basin," *SAIS Review* 22, no. 2 (2002): 255–272, http://doi.org/10.1353/sais.2002.0027.

34 Peter Engelke and Howard Passell, *From The Gulf To The Nile: Water Security in an Arid Region* (Washington, D.C.: Atlantic Council, 2017), 11, www.jstor.org/stable/resrep03704; Ana Elisa Cascão, "Changing Power Relations in The Nile River Basin: Unilateralism Vs. Cooperation?" *Water Alternatives* 2, No. 2 (2009): 245; Zeitoun and Warner, "Hydro-Hegemony," 447, 435; Salman M. A. Salman, "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: The Road to The Declaration of Principles and The Khartoum Document," *Water International* 41, no. 4 (2016): 513, http://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2016.1170374.

indicates an acquiescence and an inclination towards cooperation. With the GERD project, however, it appears evident that Ethiopia is challenging this norm. As such, leveraging the conflict versus cooperation debate may provide insight into Ethiopia's rationale for moving forward. Interestingly, a look at the historical narrative indicates both conflict and cooperation have been part of the dispute.

Clashes over the Nile have long captivated the attention of statesmen and scholars alike. Egypt's former President Anwar Sadat famously described the Nile waters as "a matter of life or death."[35] These sentiments were echoed by Egypt's former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Boutrous Boutrous-Ghali, who likewise declared "the next war in our region will be over the waters of the Nile, not politics."[36] From a more contemporary perspective, in 2013, Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi said that "all options" were being considered to prevent disruption of water supplies.[37] The Ethiopian government promptly rebuffed the declaration stating: "Ethiopia is not intimidated by Egypt's psychological warfare and won't halt the dam's construction, even for seconds."[38] This was consistent with past sentiments of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi who stated: "I am not worried that the Egyptians will suddenly invade Ethiopia….Nobody who has tried that has lived to tell the story. I don't think the Egyptians will be any different and I think they know that."[39] On the surface, the statements are clear saber-rattling. Deeper investigation, however, reveals that recurrent salvos of inflammatory rhetoric have been walked back time and time again, in an effort to quell belligerence.[40] The question is whether Ethiopia's language, coupled with continued unilateral activity, is indicative of substantive change.

---

[35] Gleick, "Environment and Security," 19–20.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Aaron Maasho, "Ethiopia Dismisses Egypt's 'Psychological Warfare' on Dam," *Reuters*, June 11, 2013, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-egypt-nile-idUSBRE95A0X620130611.

[38] Ibid

[39] Barry Malone, "Ethiopian PM Warns Egypt of Nile War," *Reuters*, November 23, 2010, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-egypt-meles-idUSTRE6AM5V820101123.

[40] Ahmed Maher, "Egyptian Politicians Caught in On-Air Ethiopia Dam Gaffe," *BBC News*, June 4, 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-22771563.

Some analysts view the construction of the dam as a complete "game changer," an event shifting regional hegemony in favor of Ethiopia.[41] The construction of the GERD represents an inflection point in the relations between the two countries, where Ethiopia's developmental agenda now constitutes a distinct "counterhegemonic power play."[42] It is clear Ethiopia seeks to exploit the Nile as a source of hydropower. What is less clear is the extent to which Ethiopia is willing to exert influence, sustain unilateral activities, and upset regional power dynamics. According to Verhoeven (2013), this is well underway. Indeed "the technocratic logic underpinning Ethiopia's unprecedented push to become Africa's 'hydro-superpower' is sound …. [and represents] the regime's boldest attempt at transforming" the state and the region.[43] Simply put, Egypt's historic claim to the Nile is being contested, and some scholars contend, contestation is a preliminary phase to genuine conflict over regional hegemony.[44] This however, does not mean violence between states is imminent. Cooperation can prevail.

Literature indicates that Ethiopia and Egypt have historically maintained a strategic dialogue on the contentious issue of the GERD. This ultimately led to the Declaration of Principles (DoP) and the Khartoum Document.[45] The DoP, later reinforced by the Khartoum Document, codified a new era of cooperation along the Nile, with a gravitation away from the historical rights of Egypt and a new focus on development efforts benefitting all riparian states.[46] This shows a continued reliance on cooperation rather than resorting

---

41 Rawia Tawfik, "Reconsidering Counter-Hegemonic Dam Projects: The Case of The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam," *Water Policy* 18, no. 5 (October 2016): 1033–1052, http://doi.org/10.2166/wp.2016.162; Salman, "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam."

42 Hala Nasr and Andreas Neef, "Ethiopia's Challenge to Egyptian Hegemony in the Nile River Basin," 969.

43 Harry Verhoeven, "The Politics of African Energy Development: Ethiopia's Hydro-agricultural State-building Strategy and Clashing Paradigms of Water Security," *Philosophical Transactions: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* 371, no. 2002 (2013): 6, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42583071.

44 Hamdy A. Hassan, "Contending Hegemony and The New Security Systems in Africa," *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 9 no. 5 (May 2015): 159–169http://doi.org/10.5897/AJPSIR2015.0772; Ana Elisa Cascão, "Ethiopia–Challenges to Egyptian Hegemony in the Nile Basin," *Water Policy* 10 no. 2 (November 2008): 13, http://doi.org/10.2166/wp.2008.206.

45 Salman, "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam."

46 Ibid.

to conflict. In fact, even at the height of tensions—during the initial diversion of waters in anticipation of the greater excavation project in 2013—armed conflict between the two nations was unlikely.[47] Meeting between Egypt and Ethiopia seemingly showcase a low risk of conflict and an intent to shift from unilateral, antagonistic rhetoric to preserving stability and regional cooperation.[48] This may be influencing Ethiopia's overall calculations of risk.

Some researchers suggest cooperation may have less to do with maintaining cordial relations than a genuine fear of the deleterious effects of militarized confrontation between the nations.[49] War risks deterioration and contamination of a river; a mutually assured destruction by ruining life-sustaining supplies of water.[50] With millions of individuals dependent on the Nile River, and millions more already lacking sustained access to fresh water sources, the incentive to cooperate is evident.[51]

Despite the aforementioned frameworks for cooperation, binding agreements to set and guarantee allocations of water remain elusive.[52] In their absence, Ethiopia has pressed forward with construction. Continued construction suggests the benefits of development outweigh any perceived costs associated with conflict. The GERD dispute provides an opportunity to understand the circumstances under which cooperative relationships may become more conflictual. Investigation fosters greater understanding of how and why

---

[47] Goitom Gebreluel, "Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam: Ending Africa's Oldest Geopolitical Rivalry?" *The Washington Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (2014): 26http://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2014.926207

[48] Peter Kagwanja, "Calming the Waters: The East African Community and Conflict over the Nile Resources," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1, no. 3 (2007): 321–337, http://doi.org/10.1080/17531050701625565.

[49] Seifulaziz Milas, "Egypt/Ethiopia: There Will Be No Water War in the Nile Basin Because No One Can Afford It," *African Arguments*, June 10, 2013, http:// africanarguments.org/2013/06/10/egyptethiopia-there-will-be-no-water-war-in-the-nilebasin-because-no-one-can-afford-it-by-seifulaziz-milas/.

[50] Gebreluel, "Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam," 33.

[51] "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: Conflict and Water Diplomacy in the Nile Basin," in *Water Diplomacy in Action: Contingent Approaches to Managing Complex Water Problems*, edited by Shafiqul Islam and Kaveh Madani, 253–262 (London: Anthem Press, 2017): 253.

[52] Dale Whittington, John Waterbury, and Marc Jeuland, "The Grand Renaissance Dam and Prospects for Cooperation on the Eastern Nile," *Water Policy* 16, no. 4 (August 2014): 595–608, http://dx.doi.org/10.2166/wp.2014.011; Daniel Mumbere, "Ethiopia Unhappy With Egypt's 'Unconstructive' Comments On Nile Dam Project," *Africa News*, 12 May 2018, www.africanews.com/2018/05/12/ethiopia-unhappy-with-egypt-s-unconstructive-comments-on-nile-dam-project/.

states become aggressive, given competition over water. In order to do this, however, there must be a baseline understanding of the factors driving Ethiopia to behave this way.

C. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The core issue investigated in this study is the connection between development of water resources and conflict. Building on the water war debate introduced in the literature review, the question of why Ethiopia decided to move forward with the GERD generates two overarching explanations, with a number of nested hypotheses. From a more general perspective, explanations for Ethiopia's decisions stem from internal and external sources. This is obvious, as internal and external pressures drive states to act and respond. As such, the below hypotheses are separated into internal and external dynamics affecting Ethiopia.

1. Internal Conditions

The first hypothesis is that *internal political considerations* are driving Ethiopia towards completion of the GERD. To begin, Ethiopia stands out as an exception to common conceptions of African statehood and development. While European imperialism shaped the trajectory of other states in Africa, Ethiopia was neither settled, colonized, nor exploited as a base of operations for extracting natural resources. This uniqueness helped to set the state on an altogether different course, one which—through necessity—strengthened centralized authority and focused government efforts on internal development.[53] Ethiopia has a legacy of elites dominating economic affairs and has also

[53] Christopher Clapham, "Ethiopian Development: The Politics of Emulation," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 44, no. 1 (2006): 138, http://doi.org/10.1080/14662040600624536.

showcased a willingness to pursue an aggressive, state-led, developmental agenda.[54] As such, internal political dynamics must be evaluated.[55]

The second hypothesis is that *improved economic conditions* are driving the government's decision-making process. Ethiopia is at a stage of economic development which requires greater amounts of energy. Throughout history, developing nations have leveraged natural resources—such as wood or coal—to produce energy commensurate with the corresponding stage of development.[56] Indeed, during industrialization periods, the demand for energy spikes and growth in energy production is deemed vital to continued expansion and progress.[57] This is the case, at present, in Ethiopia. With some 90 million citizens and a burgeoning economy, energy needs are real and pressing. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the GERD is a direct response to "Ethiopia's expanding energy needs…fast-growing economy, booming urbanization, increasing industrial development and establishment of industrial parks."[58] This lends credence to the supposition that economic considerations are driving the government to act.

A nested theory, under the "improved economic conditions" hypothesis, is that growth has brought about greater availability of funding for the project. Ethiopia has

---

[54] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, (London: Yale University Press, 1998), 22.

[55] The original proposal for this thesis included a hypothesis on large-scale infrastructure projects diverting attention away from core domestic issues. Large-scale development projects are inherently political and bolster the legitimacy of centralized states by showcasing government provisions to the citizenry. Such gestures, however, also deflect attention away from domestic issues by refocusing the narrative on muscle movements made on behalf of the people. The GERD is certainly a massive undertaking and will eclipse all other development ventures with regard to investment and anticipated return. As Ethiopia announced the GERD in 2011—at the height of the internal strife between the Oromo and Somali ethnic groups—this seemed like a plausible hypothesis. After an evaluation of the historical narrative, it could not be substantiated that Ethiopian leadership purposely leveraged the GERD as a means of diverting attention away from internal strife. Instead, what came to the fore was a clear indication that developmentalism was wholly engrained in the Ethiopian conception of legitimacy and rule. As such, focus shifted to an investigation of developmentalism and the diversionary development hypothesis was removed.

[56] William J. Hausman, "Long Term Trends in Energy Prices" in *The State of Humanity* edited by Julian L Simon, 280–286, (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Inc, 1995), 280.

[57] Ibid.

[58] "The Reality of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)," Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accessed April 16, 2018, http://www.mfa.gov.et/-/the-reality-of-the-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam-gerd.

witnessed a tremendous amount of growth in the recent past. Despite a World Economic Forum (WEF) ranking of 108 out of 137 countries in terms of competitiveness, the country boasts five years of consecutive growth and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of $72.5 billion.[59] According to one WEF analyst, Ethiopia has the potential to maintain 8% growth, effectively signaling a changed condition from one of the poorest nations in the world.[60] Furthermore, Ethiopia has demonstrated a commitment to securing the funding through both internal and external sources.[61] Internally, the government has acquired 12 billion Ethiopian birr ($982.26 million), with another 3.4 billion birr in donations expected in the coming year.[62] Externally, the GERD initiative has generated international interest, with China even offering loans to pay for the project.[63] As such, "funding availability" is an altogether relevant, albeit nested, hypothesis.

2. External Conditions

The third hypothesis moves beyond internal conditions, to external exigencies, and posits that regional power dynamics have shifted from the historic precedent of Egyptian hegemony. This "regional power shift" hypothesis intimates that Ethiopia's timing was purposeful—during a period of waning Egyptian power and influence. Indeed, Ethiopia announced initial plans to construct the dam in April of 2011. This was a merely a few months after the Arab Spring and revolution in Egypt. This suggests a degree of opportunism, but also feeds into larger questions of changing power dynamics in the region. Egypt historically exerted influence on riparian states in Africa, dominated affairs along the Nile, and preserved a position of power "through threat and intimidation."[64]

---

[59] Klaus Schwab, *The Global Competitiveness Report 2017–2018* (Davos, Switzerland: World Economic Forum, 2017), 33, 116–117, https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-competitiveness-report-2017-2018.

[60] Gray "Ethiopia is Africa's Fastest-Growing Economy."

[61] Shaul Shay, "The 'Renaissance Dam' Crisis," (paper presented at Herzliya Conference, April 2018), https://www.idc.ac.il/en/research/ips/2018/Documents/ShaulShayRenaissance%20DamEN22.4.2018A.pdf

[62] Shay, "The 'Renaissance Dam' Crisis" 2–3.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Klare, *Resource Wars,* 158.

Perhaps something changed in 2011, when Egypt showcased to the world it could no longer manage the internal affairs of the state.

The final hypothesis is that there is no genuine fear of retribution because interstate war is infrequent and has never stemmed from disputes over water. A critical, element to this "no fear" hypothesis is that violent conflict in the post-World War II (WWII) era has predominantly existed in Third World countries, with outbreaks occurring at the subnational level.[65] This leads to questions about the likelihood of contemporary interstate conflict in the post-WWII, liberal, international order, where juridical sovereignty is enforced without the requisite of empirical sovereignty.[66]

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

The dispute surrounding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is an interesting case because it both conforms to and contradicts the aforementioned theories of resource conflict and water diplomacy. As the literature suggests, cooperation and conflict have both been part of the debate. One group necessarily sees the GERD as increasing opportunities for engagement, with cooperation clearly benefiting all states involved.[67] An opposing perspective views the construction of the GERD as a direct challenge to Egypt's regional hegemony and a legitimate driver of conflict.[68] Understanding the nature of this dispute,

---

[65] Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict," 5; Mohammed Ayoob, "State Making, State Breaking, and State Failure," in *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict.* ed. Chester A Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall. 127–142 (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2001): 127.

[66] Robert H Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, "Sovereignty and Underdevelopment: Juridical Statehood in the African Crisis." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 24, no. 1 (1986): 2, http://www.jstor.org/stable/160511.

[67] See Kagwanja, "Calming the Waters," 321–325; Gebreluel, "Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam," 27–29; Dale Whittington and Elizabeth McClelland, "Opportunities for Regional and International Cooperation in the Nile Basin," *Water International* 17, no. 3 (2009): 144-154, http://doi.org/10.1080/02508069208686134.

[68] See Klare, *Resource Wars,* 158; Cascão, "Ethiopia–Challenges to Egyptian Hegemony in the Nile Basin," 13; Cascão, "Changing Power Relations in The Nile River Basin."; Gleick, "Water and Conflict."; Harry Verhoeven, "The Politics of African Energy Development: Ethiopia's Hydro-agricultural State-building Strategy and Clashing Paradigms of Water Security," *Philosophical Transactions: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* 371, no. 2002 (2013): 10, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42583071.

as it relates to the larger debate of water conflict versus cooperation, requires greater inquiry. This thesis seeks to address this.

This case study will be based on qualitative analysis of primary sources like speeches and statement made by key leaders, as well as secondary sources to include data from scholarly articles, governmental or agency reports, and newspapers. This is the most appropriate method of inquiry given time constraints and the overall objective of understanding why Ethiopia has maintained its current course. Leveraging previous scholarship will aid in understanding resources and conflict, hydro-hegemony, water diplomacy, and the water-energy-food nexus.[69] Contemporary intentions and perspectives derived from government reports and news articles will also provide insight.

E. THESIS OVERVIEW AND DRAFT CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis is structured into four chapters. Following the introduction, the second and third chapters respectively evaluate internal and external considerations affecting Ethiopia's drive toward construction and completion of the GERD. Chapter Two discusses internal dynamics to include the domestic political environment, economic development, and growth. It evaluates the three hypotheses of internal political considerations, improved economic conditions, and funding availability. The third chapter focuses on external conditions and investigates Egypt's waning influence in Africa, Ethiopia's rising significance, and the prospect of violent conflict over water. As such, Chapter Three analyzes the remaining hypotheses of regional power shift and no fear. The final chapter provides conclusions which showcases how internal considerations were the impetus behind initial plans and commencement of the GERD initiative, while external dynamics fostered an international environment with enough maneuver space for Ethiopia to continue with progress unimpeded.

---

[69] See Zeitoun and Warner, "Hydro-Hegemony – A Framework for Analysis of Trans-Boundary Water Conflicts;" Ismail and Refaat, "Water Food and Energy Sustainability Nexus;" Hala Nasr and Andreas Neef, "Ethiopia's Challenge to Egyptian Hegemony in the Nile River Basin," 972; "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: Conflict and Water Diplomacy in the Nile Basin," 253–262.

II. INTERNAL CONDITIONS

Investigating internal conditions in Ethiopia provides a tremendous amount of insight into the government's desire to continue moving forward with construction and completion of the GERD. In evaluating internal political and economic considerations, it becomes evident that Ethiopia is a developmental state, that politicians have consistently relied on economic performance to maintain power, and that Ethiopia's current economic planning requires urgent increases to energy supplies. This chapter is dedicated to exploring these internal dynamics.

In an effort to evaluate the internal conditions of the state, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first section delves into relevant theory. While scholarship does not directly answer the question of how internal considerations affected Ethiopia's drive towards construction and completion of the GERD, theories of developmental states highlight a confluence between political and economic influences. As such, the section begins with an introduction of developmental state theory depicted by a number of scholars but substantively defined in terms of African states by Mkandawire (2001).[70] The theory speaks to a convergence between political and economic considerations and provides a fundamental basis for understanding the inclinations of the Ethiopian government. "Performance legitimacy," autonomy, and economic transformation are also explored, as concepts intrinsically tied to the developmental state.[71]

The second section moves beyond theory to an investigation of political conditions in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is a developmental state. State-led intervention efforts, coupled with absolute control over economic planning and management, are conspicuous and persistent

---

[70] For Developmental State Theory, see Chalmers Johnson, *Japan: Who Governs? The Rise of the Developmental State*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995); For developmental states in Africa, see Lindsay Whitfield, Ole Therkildsen, Lars Buur, and Anne Mette Kjær, *The Politics of African Industrial Policy: A Comparative Perspective*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015): 6; Christopher Clapham, "The Ethiopian Developmental State," *Third World Quarterly* 39, no. 6 (2018): 1151, http://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1328982; Thandika Mkandawire, "Thinking About Developmental States in Africa," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 25, no. 3, Special Issue on African Economic Development in A Comparative Perspective (May 2001): 289–313, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23600389.

[71] Clapham, "The Ethiopian Developmental State," 1154.

throughout the historical narrative of the state. Elite domination was central to the state's developmental logic early on, and as the state matured, autocratic tendencies of past regimes—which proved critical in bolstering the economic condition of the state—were not only maintained but strengthened. From a more contemporary perspective, growth became an obsession, and this is evident from government policies and official statements showcasing economic development as the overriding priority of the state.[72] As such, the historical narrative reflects a unique internal political condition—the strengthening of elite domination, developmentalism, and state-led intervention.[73]

The final section shifts to an analysis of economic factors driving the GERD forward in Ethiopia. It begins with a discussion of economic performance and highlights how improvements in the recent past have led to a changed economic condition. The GERD, central to transforming the state internally and regionally, exists as both the upshot of policy aimed at improving the socio-economic condition of the state, while also the antecedent to anticipated growth and productivity. Ultimately, the section reveals how the GERD, and the economic benefits it is expected to generate, incentivizes Ethiopia to press forward with the project despite the potential for raised tensions with Egypt.

A. RELEVANT THEORY AND CONCEPTS

Theories of developmental states came from attempts to understand the economic successes noted in the East Asian countries.[74] In these states, economic policies targeted key industries for investment and expansion. Government intercession improved conditions in certain sectors and set the stage for increased growth. The lines between business interests and government action were blurred considerably, and in the East Asian context, state-led intervention brought about marked improvements in economic performance. The developmental state represented a distinct challenge to laissez-faire or

---

[72] Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, *Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) 2010/11-2014/15* (Addis Ababa: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, 2010), http://www.iea.org/media/pams/ethiopia/Ethiopia_GTP_2010to2915.pdf.

[73] Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 22.

[74] Johnson, *Japan: Who Governs?*; Whitfield, Therkildsen, Buur, and Kjær, *The Politics of African Industrial Policy,* 6.

minimalist perspectives on government intervention in economic affairs, and while much could be said about the factors involved in success, the end result was still an enhanced economic condition in the East Asian countries.

Developmental state theory has been applied to Africa, and Ethiopia has even been noted as the "clearest example" of a developmental state on the continent.[75] To classify Ethiopia as a developmental state, however, certain conditions must be met. Mkandawire suggested the developmental state has two core "components: one ideological [and] one structural."[76] The first component, ideology, points to the central "mission" of the state—to direct all governmental action towards bolstering economic growth.[77] The second component, structure, relates to the ability to enact reforms and implement policies without being subject to interference.[78] Mkandawire further noted:

> Such a capacity is determined by various…institutional, technical, administrative and political [mechanisms]. Undergirding all these is the autonomy of the state from social forces so that it can use these capacities to devise long-term economic policies unencumbered by claims of myopic private interests. It is usually assumed that such a state should, in some sense, be "strong" and enjoy "relative autonomy" from key social actors.[79]

As such, the developmental state has a strong centralized authority, a definitive will, and absolute control over economic planning and management. This, however, does not lead to regime success or continuity. A government could fulfill such requisites yet institute policies which inordinately reward a select few, ultimately leading to upheaval. For a government to persist, a measure of legitimacy must exist.

The concept of performance legitimacy, linked to developmental state theory, likewise stemmed from studying the economic successes of East Asia. It suggests that a certain level of repression may be acceptable to the citizenry; that is to say, the populace

---

[75] Clapham, "The Ethiopian Developmental State," 1151.

[76] Mkandawire, "Thinking About Developmental States in Africa," 290.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

might sacrifice political or social freedoms in exchange for quality of life enhancements brought about by a government's "developmental agenda."[80] Citizens view restrictive measures as a necessary evil—essential to transforming society and reaching a level of advancement commensurate with a modern state. Performance legitimacy has been primarily applied to China, where the communist government has enjoyed relative political stability due to an improved economic condition.[81] As was the case with developmental state theory, however, scholars posited that performance legitimacy could be applied to Ethiopia.[82] This is because Ethiopia is markedly repressive yet enjoys relative political stability.[83] At the same time, economic growth has been noted in the recent past. This suggests, at a minimum, some linkage.

In addition to the above concepts, *elite domination* over the economy—that is to say, uncontested "autonomy" in managing the economy, without subservience to any particular social or economic group—is critically important to underscore.[84] This is because construction of the GERD could not have been realized without absolute control over economic planning and management. As elite domination is featured throughout the historical narrative of Ethiopia, it represents a necessary condition—one which must be highlighted from the outset. Indeed, as will be discussed, elite domination led to an obsession with economic growth. Growth is manifestly a state imperative in Ethiopia, and with an expectation of continued advancement, energy—or rather, producing ample supplies commensurate with sustained economic growth—has emerged as the central focus of Ethiopia's developmental agenda. Construction of the GERD is thus bound to elite

---

80 Suisheng Zhao, "The China Model: Can It Replace the Western Model of Modernization?" *Journal of Contemporary China* 19, no. 65 (2010): 419–436, http://doi.org/10.1080/10670561003666061; Elsje Fourie, "China's Example for Meles' Ethiopia: When Development 'Models' Land," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 53, no. 3 (September 2015): 308, http://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X15000397.

81 Zhao, "The China Model," 419–436.

82 Fourie "China's Example for Meles' Ethiopia," 308.

83 Mohammad Ademo and Jeffrey Smith, "Ethiopia Is Falling Apart," *Foreign Policy*, January 11, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/01/11/ethiopia-is-falling-apart/.

84 The phrase "elite domination" is an adaptation derived from conceptions of state autonomy—discussed in Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States & Industrial Transformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

dominance over economic planning and management, and ultimately, to the ruling regime's power and legitimacy.

Even a cursory review of the above theories and concepts highlight a certain applicability to the case of the GERD. Large-scale infrastructural projects in Ethiopia—like past agricultural investments and reform—are expressions of a distinct ideology of state-led development and intervention.[85] State-led development, under the guise of modernization schemes, proved to be a key mechanism through which the central government centralized authority, garnered increased legitimacy, and assured the continuity of the regime.[86] This has been an enduring practice from colonial rule—where Ethiopia was itself an imperial entity—to the present and has occurred regardless of the regime in power.[87] To fully understand this, a look at the political-economic dynamics of Ethiopia's past is required.

B. INTERNAL POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS—DEVELOPMENT AND ELITE DOMINATION

This section investigates political dynamics in Ethiopia. It reviews the historical narrative of the state and highlights a legacy of centralization, elite domination over economic planning and management, and state-led development. It points to elite domination as a necessary condition for a strong commitment to projects like the GERD, but also showcases how this condition has strengthened over time. Furthermore, this section describes an increasing willingness by the Ethiopian government to aggressively pursue a developmental agenda. Over time, the central state strengthened to such an extent that large-scale infrastructural projects were immutable, dictated by the all-powerful state. As such, the GERD can be viewed as the crown jewel in Ethiopia's developmental legacy, a contemporary manifestation of elite will, and an infrastructure project meant to serve the distinct needs of the state.

---

85 Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 22.

86 Ibid.

87 Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 413; Emanuele Fantini, Tesfaye Muluneh, Hermen Smit, "Big Projects, Strong States," in *Water, Technology, and the Nation-State*, ed. Fillippo Menga and Erik Swyngedouw, 65–80 (New York: Routledge, 2018): 66.

To begin, Chinigo (2004) suggested centralization, elite domination, and state-led development extend as far back as the Imperial Era, when Ethiopia engaged in military conquests and instituted a quasi-feudal land tenure system to serve the needs of the central Abyssinian state.[88] As the Abyssinian Empire expanded into the neighboring regions of Oromo, Afar, Ogaden and Sidama, the emperor took control of all land and allocated it as he saw fit—generally to elites "in exchange for differing combinations of services and tribute."[89] Similar to European feudalism, groups at periphery paid tribute, and this served as a means of bolstering elite power and developmental discretion.[90] As Crummey (1980) noted, "the Abyssinian social formation had two fundamental classes: cultivators and rulers. Relations between these two were intimate and fluid, uncomplicated either by ethnicity or by legal status…. [and] rulers supported themselves by means of exactions from the peasants, primarily in the form of tribute rather than rent."[91] As such, from the outset, Ethiopia existed as an elite center and a dominated fringe. This affected the developmental agenda of the state by centering policy on growth.

Throughout the 1950s, Ethiopian leaders recognized that agricultural productivity was markedly low, so they sought to improve lands under the purview of the state. With absolute control over the economy, the empire established agencies like the "National Economic Council…to boost agro-industrial productivity and living standards."[92] While early developmental strategies brought some growth, it quickly became evident that the

---

[88] David Chinigo, "Decentralization and Agrarian Transformation in Ethiopia: Extending the Power of the Federal State," *Critical African Studies* 6, no. 1 (2014): 2, http://doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2014.853986.

[89] Lubie Birru, "Abyssinian Colonialism as the Genesis of the Crisis in The Horn: Oromo Resistance (1855-1913)," *Northeast African Studies* 2/3, no. 3/1 (1980): 93, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43660058; John M. Cohen, "Ethiopia After Haile Selassie: The Government Land Factor," *African Affairs* 72, no. 289 (1973): 366; Lionel Cliffe, "Capitalism or Feudalism? The Famine in Ethiopia," *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 1 (1974): 35–36; Chinigo, "Decentralization and Agrarian Transformation in Ethiopia," 5.

[90] Donald Crummey, "Abyssinian Feudalism, "*Past & Present* 89 (1980): 115–138, http://www.jstor.org/stable/650660.

[91] Crummey, "Abyssinian Feudalism," 138.

[92] Sarah Vaughan and Mesfin Gebremichael, *Rethinking Business and Politics in Ethiopia: The Role of EFFORT, the Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray*, Africa Power and Politics, Report 2 (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2011), 17, http://www.institutions-africa.org/filestream/20110822-appp-rr02-rethinking-business-politics-in-ethiopia-by-sarah-vaughan-mesfin-gebremichael-august-2011.

wealth generated from state ventures was disproportionately funneled to the actors closest to the regime. The central state—but also the church—maintained the largest tracts of land, and as such, reaped the greatest reward from planning and management.[93] Land tenure practices and taxes crushed rural populations, and as discontent grew, peasants rallied around the mantra of returning "land to the tiller."[94] The empire was overthrown by a military committee called "the Derg," and this early situation shows a striking similarity to a developmental state without the fulfillment of the performance legitimacy condition.

1. The Derg

The Derg overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie I in 1974 and instituted sweeping changes throughout the country. This era represented a shift from monarchical rule to a pointedly socialist government. As Abegaz noted:

> The Derg intensified the administrative centralization program of the monarchy under a unitary state and implemented an unprecedented degree of state ownership and control of the modern sector of the economy. The country's 15 regions were reorganized into thirty administrative units. Imitating the nomenklatura systems of the socialist states, the regime established parallel networks of government and party organs down to the level of the kebele (neighborhood)—all controlled by [the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE), military officers in the upper echelon of the civil service core].[95]

While these changes were meant to shift power back to the people, the reality was that power still resided at the center—this time with the party.

State-led development and elite domination not only continued but intensified during the Derg years. The government was extraordinarily repressive and "outlawed private ownership of land holdings over 10 hectares, abolished rural wage labor, set production quotas and agricultural prices, and empowered state enterprises to control

---

[93] Shahidur Rashid, Meron Assefa and Gezahegn Ayele, "Distortions to Agricultural Incentives in Ethiopia," (Working Paper 43, World Bank, December 2007): 1, http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/738521468023444566/Main-report.

[94] Chinigo, "Decentralization and Agrarian Transformation in Ethiopia," 42.

[95] Berhanu Abegaz, *Aid and Reform in Ethiopia*, World Bank Project 35725, (August 1999): 24, www.documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/716401468029717101/pdf/357250ET0Aid010reform0ethiopia2.pdf.

practically all aspects agricultural markets."[96] The state nationalized all "land, industries and property" and state-owned enterprises and bureaucracies became the central mechanism guiding all economic transactions and developmental activities.[97] Anything that could be taken from the people was coopted by the central government and reallocated as deemed appropriate. This included homes or other private businesses, and groups that lost assets or goods and received no compensation from the government.[98]

At its worst, the Derg instituted policies to forcibly remove rural populations. The government placed groups in agricultural communities, or "villages," with the expectation of bolstering productivity and output.[99] This developmental policy was a tragic failure. Such actions, however, showcase elite domination over economic planning and management, as well as the ability to impose elite will, regardless of the effect on the citizenry.

As land reforms and resettlement programs continued to negatively affect the population, and as famine gripped the region, "rural and ethnically-based opposition movements" began to form.[100] The Derg "violently repressed" groups like the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).[101] This only strengthened the resolve of the opposition. Internal discord, coupled with an external war with Eritrea proved to be too much, and the Derg was removed from power in 1991.[102] A second era of failed developmental policy had come to an end.

---

96 Vaughan and Gebremichael, *Rethinking Business and Politics in Ethiopia*, 17; Rashid, Assefa and Ayele, "Distortions to Agricultural Incentives in Ethiopia," 4.

97 Vaughan and Gebremichael, *Rethinking Business and Politics in Ethiopia*, 18; Alemayehu Geda, "Macroeconomic Performance in Post-Derg Ethiopia," *Northeast African Studies* 8 (2001): 162, http://doi.org/10.1353/nas.2005.0016.

98 Abegaz, *Aid and Reform in Ethiopia*, 23.

99 Adrian P. Wood, "Natural Resource Conflicts in South-West Ethiopia: State, Communities, and the Role of the National Conservation Strategy in the Search for Sustainable Development," 89; Clapham, "Ethiopian Development," 115; Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 418–419.

100 Clapham, "Ethiopian Development," 116.

101 Flintan and Tamrat, "Spilling Blood over Water?" 248.

102 Ibid.

2. The Meles Era

After the exceedingly repressive policies of the Derg era and the fall of the Soviet Union, the expectation from the international community was to see the Ethiopian government step away from centralized management and exploitative practices to a more open, market-oriented, liberal-democratic model of governance and development.[103] This did not occur. Instead, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), led by Meles Zenawi, formulated an altogether new model which fundamentally contradicted liberal-democratic norms and the Washington Consensus.[104] The idea of "revolutionary democracy" meant to blend aspects of "Marxist-Maoist ideology" with markets, institutions, and other democratic practices, ultimately to produce a developmental state centered on exploiting the state's most precious natural resource, land.[105] In delving into the intricacies of the model, it becomes evident land was not the sole resource of interest. Increasingly, water—for irrigation and energy production—became part of an aggressive developmental agenda aimed at the end goal of industrialization.

Shifting to a growth model which incorporated a more diverse set of interests required a strong, central state to guide and impose change. The leader of the EPRDF was up for the challenge. Meles Zenawi attacked the failed developmental practices of the West, and unambiguously asserted that the principles guiding liberal democratic governments and markets were incongruent with Africa.[106] Likewise, he condemned the predatory practices of states in Africa, which led to patronage and corruption, noted as altogether debilitating for a state.[107] He believed what was needed was an authoritarian spin on democracy, tailored to the immediate needs of the state—a state run and regulated

---

[103] Clapham "Ethiopian Development," 116.

[104] Alex DeWaal, "The Theory and Practice of Meles Zenawi," *African Affairs* 112 (2013): 148.

[105] Nolawi Melakedingel, "The Oddities of 'Revolutionary Democracy,'" *The Addis Standard*, May 10, 2013, addisstandard.com/the-oddities-of-revolutionary-democracy/; Leonardo R. Arriola and Terrence Lyons, "The 100% Election," *Journal of Democracy* 27, 1 (2016): 79.

[106] DeWaal, "The Theory and Practice of Meles Zenawi," 153.

[107] Ibid.

economic enterprise that could assure continued, meaningful growth.[108] This was the only safeguard against runaway capitalism and the depravity of neopatrimonialism. Fantini (2013) captured the distinctive nature of this new model:

> [While] the traditional developmental state model, as theorized from the East Asian experience, relies on an independent state bureaucracy committed to economic growth and transformation, within the Ethiopian approach, the ruling party overlaps with state administration at all layers. This appears in line with Ethiopian political tradition, where a single Amharic word, *menghist*, indicates at the same time the state, the government and the party in power. In particular, in the EPRDF vision, the government and ruling elite should play the role of "political vanguard," interpreting the needs and aspirations of the poor masses and transforming the country from a precapitalist to a "sustainable" market economy.[109]

Simply put, the answer was to cede all power to the state, because only a strong central government could maintain a "single-minded pursuit of accelerated development."[110]

It is important to recognize that while the government was an ethno-federal system, Ethiopia was a de facto one-party state which limited influence from other political or economic interests.[111] The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front initially implemented the ethnic federalism to battle the "ethno-regionally based conflicts and inequalities that had marked Ethiopia before 1991."[112] Although the constitution boasted that "all sovereign power resides in Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of Ethiopia," Ethiopian federalism showcased something entirely different.[113] Ruling-party dominance was pervasive and authoritarian traditions served to politicize ethnicities and drive a wedge

---

[108] DeWaal, "The Theory and Practice of Meles Zenawi," 154.

[109] Emanuele Fantini, *Developmental State, Economic Transformation and Social Diversification in Ethiopia* (Milan, Italy: Italian Institute for International Political Studies, 2013): 4, https://www.ispionline.it/sites/default/files/pubblicazioni/analysis_163_2013.pdf.

[110] Arriola and Lyons, "The 100% Election," 79.

[111] Asnake Kefale, "The (Un)making of Opposition Coalitions and the Challenge of Democratization in Ethiopia," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5, no. 4 (2011): 694.

[112] Tobias Hagmann & Jon Abbink, "Twenty Years of Revolutionary Democratic Ethiopia, 1991 to 2011," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5, no. 4 (2011): 579.

[113] Lahra Smith, *Making Citizens in Africa: Ethnicity, Gender, & National Identity in Ethiopia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 79.

between disparate groups.[114] Indeed, as Kefale noted: "Twenty years after the adoption of a multiparty system in Ethiopia, there is little progress towards the building of an open and democratic space where parties with contradictory agendas can freely compete"[115] Ultimately, the state could execute a centralized vision without interference.

While the government showcased the trappings of a modern democratic state, to include elections, the EPRDF maintained preeminence over all political affairs. This dominance bled over into economic realm, as the only viable source of livelihood was found within the party structures. The center controlled the resources, as well as the distribution of government investments to local businesses. As Lefort (2013) noted, this caused increased "wheeling and dealing, patrimonialism, and even predation" in Ethiopia.[116] It is no wonder why between the years of 2005 and 2010 membership in the EPRDF increased more than five-fold to four million members.[117] There was, effectively, nothing but the party-state.

This new model of governance and development showcased a convergence between political ambition and economic transformation. As state-supported enterprises strengthened, and as the center continued to exercise influence over lands and agriculture, the interlacing between business interests and government action crystalized.[118] As was the case in the past, lands were repurposed for what the central government thought was most important. Land was even appropriated for foreign investment and ventures which directly competed with indigenous, rural populaces.[119] "Developmental patrimonialism"

---

114 Smith, *Making Citizens in Africa*, 84.

115 Kefale, "The (Un)making of Opposition Coalitions and the Challenge of Democratization in Ethiopia," 694.

116 Rene Lefort, "The Theory and Practice of Meles Zenawi: A Response to Alex de Waal," *African Affairs* 112, no. 448 (July 2013): 467.

117 Fantini, *Developmental State, Economic Transformation and Social Diversification in Ethiopia*, 4; Harry Verhoeven, "Africa's Next Hegemon: Behind Ethiopia's Power Plays," *Foreign Affairs*, April 12, 2015, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ethiopia/2015-04-12/africas-next-hegemon.

118 Vaughan and Gebremichael, *Rethinking Business and Politics in Ethiopia*, 8.

119 Jon Abbink, "Dam Controversies: Contested Governance and Developmental Discourse on the Ethiopian Omo River Dam," *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale* 20, no. 2 (May 2012): 127, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8676.2012.00196.x.

aided growth in terms of GDP, but fundamentally undermined democratic principles, ultimately widening the chasm between the ruling center and the dominated periphery.[120] Marginalized groups had no voice, and as such, no recourse. The state exerted absolute control over economic planning and management, and exercise government will without contest.

After consolidating political and economic power, the state sought to legitimize its position by focusing on the "existential threat" of poverty.[121] The Derg era showcased to the world that Ethiopia was unable to prevent famine. This was a black eye for a proud Ethiopian government. As such, poverty reduction became the fundamental basis for all political and economic activity, and the government strengthened "state-directed development" as the means of stemming poverty.[122]

Plans for growth and development were initially centered on raising productivity in the agricultural sector because land still existed as the core state resource. Interestingly, agricultural modernization efforts intersected with industrialization initiatives. As discussed in more detail in the next section, energy came to be understood as a critical component of continued growth. The government realized dams supported the dual purpose of irrigation and energy production. This brought about a new period, where the developmental agenda of the state focused squarely on dams. As Abbink (2012) noted:

> Ethiopia is one of the enthusiastic participants in massive dam building. Poverty, socio-economic 'backwardness' and material underdevelopment can, in the view of the state elite, be decisively pushed back by grand schemes of energy infrastructure building imposed from above. The building of dams all over the country is one crucial element in this effort, next to large-scale agrarian land leases to foreign investors …. In the past 20 years—since the post-Marxist EPRDF party came to power in 1991 after a civil war—dams and hydropower stations have been built or expanded in a significant way…[123]

---

120 Ibid.

121 Leonardo R. Arriola and Terrence Lyons, "The 100% Election," *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 1 (2016): 80, https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Arriola-27-1.pdf.

122 Arriola and Lyons, "The 100% Election," 79.

123 Abbink, "Dam Controversies," 127.

Elite dominance over economic planning and management drove state-led developmental efforts, and ultimately fostered increased dam-building. This began with state-led efforts. Governmental policies targeted growth as an overriding imperative.[124] The massive surge in government spending is a testament to this. As Rodrik (2016) noted, public investment jumped "from 5% of GDP in the early 1990s to 19% in 2011 – the third highest rate in the world."[125] Investment in "roads, schools, health facilities, and, more recently, railways and energy," were critical to the state's agenda.[126] Economic policy fostered a measure of growth, and as a result, a degree of legitimacy. As Fantini, Muluneh, and Smit (2018) alluded to, the government came to rely on economic performance to maintain power and even leveraged "large scale development projects—particularly dams" to bolster authoritarian rule in Ethiopia.[127] As such, dams served the expressed purpose of exemplifying legitimate state action on behalf of the people. Not all citizens' needs, however, were represented in the state's planning.

Elite domination and state-led development not only proved to be a persistent theme in the distant past but were critical functions in modern existence. Returning to Mkandawire's definition, the concepts of structure and ideology seem to be fulfilled as the expressed intent of the government to build dams went forward uncontested despite the adverse impacts on the population. Indeed, carrying forward the exact practices of past regimes, the central state paid little heed to the needs of the periphery and did not care about the negative externalities associated with building dams. "Increased pressure and competition" over natural resources affected the rural populations during dam construction,

---

[124] Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, *Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP)*.

[125] Dani Rodrik, "The Return of Public Investment," *Project Syndicate,* January 13, 2016, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/public-infrastructure-investment-sustained-growth-by-dani-rodrik-2016-01.

[126] Yared Seid, Alemayehu Seyoum Taffesse, and Seid Nuru Ali, "Ethiopia: An Agrarian Economy in Transition," in *Africa's Lions: Growth Traps and Opportunities for Six African Economies*, ed. Bhorat Haroon and Tarp Finn, 37–76 (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2016): 66, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctt1hfr23q.5; "Ethiopia Not Ready for Foreign Investment in Telecoms, Banking: President," *Reuters*, 24 April 18, https://af.reuters.com/article/topnews/idafkbn1hv1k1-ozatp; W. Wolde-Ghiorgis, "Renewable Energy for Rural Development in Ethiopia: The Case For New Energy Policies and Institutional Reform," *Energy Policy* 30 (2002): 1096, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0301-4215(02)00061-7.

[127] Fantini, Muluneh, and Smit, "Big Projects, Strong States," 66.

and conflict between domestic groups even erupted.[128] This, however, did not stop government plans or programs. In fact, as was the case during the Derg era, the government doubled-down on authoritative practices and even saw fit to relocate groups. This occurred on the Omo River, where tens of thousands of people were resettled or displaced as a result of the Gilgel Gibe dam complex.[129] The state had the will and the ability to enforce its ambitions.

Elite dominance was further exemplified in the public discourse surrounding construction of the dams. Any opinions contesting dam construction were quickly dismissed or denigrated by the central government. Protests were labelled anti-growth or contrary to critical poverty reduction initiatives.[130] In the end, state-led development efforts served elite interests of growth and development, and this outweighed shorter-term concerns of those that were adversely affected.

Evaluating the historical narrative produces an understanding of distinct political conditions affecting Ethiopia's push towards construction and completion of the GERD. The Ethiopian model of governance represents a unique blend of "revolutionary democracy and [the] developmental state," where state officials leverage a narrative of enhancing economic conditions to legitimize central power and enact elite will.[131] A centralized vision was persistently imposed throughout history, despite negative repercussions or protests from the periphery. The core difference was the absolute power of the state—the ideology (mission), coupled with the structure (ability) to enforce the plans and ambitions of the state. This is not to say political conditions alone drove initial construction of the GERD. As discussed in the next section, economic factors were also relevant. They were, however, subordinate to the absolute political dominance that prompted state action.

---

128 Flintan and Tamrat, "Spilling Blood over Water?" 268.

129 Terri Hathaway, "What Cost Ethiopia's Dam Boom? A Look Inside the Expansion of Ethiopia's Energy Sector," International Rivers, February 6, 2008, 5, 21–22, https://www.internationalrivers.org/sites/default/files/attached-files/ethioreport06feb08.pdf.

130 Abbink, "Dam Controversies," 134.

131 Jon Harald Sande Lie, Berouk Mesfin, *Ethiopia: A Political Economy Analysis*, Report commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2018), xi, https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2496505/NUPI_rapport_%2BEthiopia_%2BSandeLie_Mesfin.pdf.

Political will brought about economic advancement, economic advancement necessitated increases in energy production, and the expectation of continued growth reinforced incentives to continue moving forward with the GERD. This becomes clearer after a review of the economic condition in Ethiopia.

C. ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS—THE GERD AS STATE TRANSFORMATION

In assessing internal conditions in Ethiopia, it becomes difficult to divorce economic and political considerations. Indeed, state-led intervention and developmental efforts have been the impetus behind past economic successes.[132] As such, political and economic conditions must be understood as conjoined. Increased economic growth is central to the political ambitions of the state, but initial economic performance and growth was contingent on state-led development, intervention, and investment.[133] The nexus between economic and political considerations is patently evident and becomes all the more palpable when considering the case of the GERD.

To begin, Ethiopia's economy has grown dramatically in the recent past. Though the World Economic Forum (WEF) ranked Ethiopia as 108 out of 137 countries in terms of economic competitiveness, the country boasted five years of consecutive growth from 2012 to 2017 and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of $72.5 billion.[134] With growth rates hovering around 10% in the last decade, and with the potential to maintain 8% growth over the next few years, Ethiopia has demonstrated it is "Africa's fastest-growing economy."[135] This growth has been accompanied by changing economic conditions. Ethiopia has become more integrated in the global economy, and with labor costs just under those of Bangladesh,

---

[132] Lars Christian Moller and Konstantin M. Wacker, "Explaining Ethiopia's Growth Acceleration—The Role of Infrastructure and Macroeconomic Policy," *World Development*, 96 (2017): 199, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.03.007.

[133] Kassahun Berhanu and Colin Poulton, "The Political Economy of Agricultural Extension Policy in Ethiopia: Economic Growth and Political Control," *Development Policy Review* 32, no. 2 (2014): s198, https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.12082.

[134] Schwab, *The Global Competitiveness Report 2017–2018*, 116–117.

[135] Gray, "Ethiopia is Africa's Fastest-Growing Economy."

Ethiopia has already courted companies like H&M, J. Crew, and Naturalizers.[136] This changed economic condition, however, cannot be divorced from the aforementioned political considerations—more specifically, from state-led development efforts.

It is important to recognize the government's expressed intent has always been to bolster socio-economic conditions, relieve endemic poverty, and bring the nation to a middle-income society.[137] The difference now, as it pertains to the GERD, is an overall understanding that the ability to advance the stage is dependent on an improved energy situation.[138] Extraordinary levels of development require extraordinary amounts of energy, and with a newfound burgeoning economy, Ethiopian leaders prioritized energy production as an absolute must. This is evident from the policies enacted.

In 2010, the government introduced the *Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP),* an all-encompassing plan overhaul the socio-economic condition of the state. The *GTP* articulated goals such as "an economy which has a modern and productive agricultural sector…an industrial sector that plays a leading role in the economy…and, [increased] per capita income."[139] The initiative focused on driving the nation towards a middle-income status by 2025, a goal which incorporated a distinct shift from agriculture to manufacturing.[140] Such a transformation necessitated massive increases to energy supplies. This was not overlooked by policymakers.

The *GTP* called for a five-fold increase in domestic energy generation capacity—from 2,000 megawatts (MWs) to 8,000 MWs, with a 10,000 MW capacity by the end 2015.[141] Though the government failed to achieve this goal within the given time

---

136 Alan Gelb, Christian J. Meyer, Vijaya Ramachandran, and Divyanshi Wadhwa, *Can Africa Be a Manufacturing Destination? Labor Costs in Comparative Perspective*, CDG Working Paper 466 (Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, 2017), 26, https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/can-africa-be-manufacturing-destination-labor.pdf.

137 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, *Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP)*, 7.

138 Bayissa, "A Review of the Ethiopian Energy Policy and Biofuels Strategy," 211.

139 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, *Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP)*, 7.

140 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, *Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP)*, 13, 49; *Power Africa in Ethiopia*, USAID, accessed 12 June 2018, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/EthiopiaCountryFactSheet__2016.09%20FINAL.pdf.

141 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, *Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP)*, 36.

constraints, improvements were ongoing. The most significant advancements were linked to dam construction and utilization. Projects included damming along the Omo River and the Nile, and with regard to the Omo River, a cascade of five dams was planned and developed. The Gilgel Gibe I, II, and III were completed in 2004, 2010, and 2016 respectively, and after operations began, the Gibe I fulfilled 30% of Ethiopia's power requirements.[142] The Gibe III, with more than 1,870 MWs, effectively doubled the nation's total energy supplies.[143] The two remaining projects were set to add another 2,000 MWs of capacity.[144] While these steps represented extraordinary progress towards increasing energy supplies, they were not enough. What was needed was a big win—a massive infrastructural undertaking to boost supplies.

The GERD, situated along the Blue Nile, dwarfs all other energy projects planned in Ethiopia. It is the largest dam under development on the continent, and with a potential of over 6,000 MWs of installed power, it boasts a generation capacity of 15,000 GWh of energy per year.[145] Publicly, the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs contends the GERD is a direct response to "Ethiopia's expanding energy needs…fast-growing economy, booming urbanization, increasing industrial development and establishment of industrial parks."[146] As such, it is a result of past growth, but also serves the expressed interest of meeting future needs. The GERD was announced in 2011, and construction began shortly thereafter. It was deemed 65% complete in June 2018 and is projected to be finished by 2019.[147]

---

142 "Salini Impregilo in Ethiopia: A Story Sixty Years Long," Salini Impregilo, accessed 12 June 2018, https://ethiopia.salini-impregilo.com/en/projects/main-projects.html.

143 Keshav Rastogi, "An Emerging and Troubled Power: Ethiopia's (Un)Distributed Renewable Grid," *Harvard Political Review*, April 16, 2018, harvardpolitics.com/columns/an-emerging-and-troubled-power-ethiopias-undistributed-renewable-grid/.

144 "Two More Dams for Ethiopian Power Generation," *ESI Africa*, October 20, 2014, https://www.esi-africa.com/two-more-dams-for-ethiopian-power-generation/.

145 "Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam" Salini Impregilo, accessed 12 June 2018, https://ethiopia.salini-impregilo.com/en/projects/grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam.html.

146 "The Reality of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)," Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

147 "More Than 65% of GERD's Construction Completed," Embassy of Ethiopia in Belgium, Brussels, June 4, 2018, https://ethiopianembassy.be/en/2018/06/04/more-than-65-of-gerds-construction-completed/.

The GERD has eclipsed all other state-led development efforts with regard to investment and anticipated return.[148] The overall cost is assessed at $4.7 billion (80 billion Ethiopian Birr).[149] Ethiopia has demonstrated a commitment to advancing the project by securing funding through both internal and external sources.[150] Funding for the dam stems from taxes, bonds, lotteries, and foreign investment and support.[151] Taxes represent a small portion but aid the overall effort to fund the project. It should be noted that the very ability to tax internally showcases a changed economic condition in the state.

Support also stems from compulsory contributions. The government extracts *donations* from civil servants, equivalent to one-month's salary, and issues bonds in return.[152] Though some within the state see this as a patriotic way to support Ethiopian advancement, most citizens have little choice in the matter and act in submission to the government's pressure to buy bonds.[153] This again showcases a changed condition within the state. There is money among the masses and the government is able to leverage contributions to help push the project along. Other internal mechanisms include loans and bond purchases from state-owned banks, investments by state-owned business, and a lottery, which entices citizens with a jackpot of 10 million Ethiopian Birr (~ $450,000).[154]

---

148 "Paying for Giant Nile Dam Itself, Ethiopia Thwarts Egypt but Takes Risks," *Reuters*, April 23, 2014, https://www.reuters.com/article/ethiopia-energy-idUSL6N0N91QM20140423.

149 Michael Asiedu, "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD): Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan Push for Cooperation," *Global Political Trend* (February 2018): 1, http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep14135.

150 Shay, "The 'Renaissance Dam' Crisis."

151 Kingsley Ighobor and Busani Bafana, "Financing Africa's Massive Projects," *Africa Renewal* December 1, 2014, https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2014/financing-africa's-massive-projects.

152 Katrina Manson and Borzou Daragahi, "Water: Battle of the Nile," *Financial Times*, June 19, 2013, https://www.ft.com/content/bc79c9ac-d364-11e2-95d4-00144feab7de.

153 Temesgen T. Deressa and John Mukum Mbaku, "While Egypt Struggles, Ethiopia Builds over the Blue Nile: Controversies and the Way Forward," *Brookings Institute* (blog), 25 July 2013, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2013/07/25/while-egypt-struggles-ethiopia-builds-over-the-blue-nile-controversies-and-the-way-forward/.

154 Deressa and Mbaku, "While Egypt Struggles, Ethiopia Builds over the Blue Nile."; Kofi Saa, "Winning Numbers of Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam Lottery Announced in Addis Ababa," *Zegabi*, June 28, 2016, www.zegabi.com/articles/10480.

Collectively, these efforts highlight a newfound internal ability to raise money and amass contributions.

Externally, the GERD initiative has garnered extensive international support. With more than three million Ethiopians living abroad, the diaspora contributed more than $2 million (USD).[155] The project has also generated interest and support from China.[156] China has offered loans and provided foreign investment packages to help pay for the exorbitant cost of the project.[157] Backing from China aligns with larger initiatives like One Belt, One Road. China is investing heavily in Ethiopia and the GERD is one of many interests. Indeed, China recently supported construction of a $4 billon rail system from Addis Ababa to Djibouti.[158] As such, external sources of funding are available and add to the newfound ability to sustain the GERD project.

Overall, the government has acquired 12 billion Ethiopian Birr ($982.26 million), with another 3.4 billion Birr in donations expected in coming years.[159] Despite the high price tag, construction has moved forward uninterrupted. Internal and external sources of funding have provided the ability to continue with the project. Ultimately, however, movement on the GERD continues unabated because the dam is central to the economic and political aspiration of the state—to become the regional provisioner of hydro-electric energy.

Once complete, the GERD will transform the state. From a domestic perspective, it will bring much-needed electricity to Ethiopia's urban and rural communities. At present,

---

155 Haftu Gebrezgabiher, "Ethiopia: Diaspora Raises Over U.S. $2 Million for Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam*," Ethiopian Herald*, February 21, 2017, https://allafrica.com/stories/201702210172.html.

156 Wossenu Abtew and Shimelis Behailu Dessu, "Financing the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam," in *The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile,* 161–169 (Switzerland: Springer, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97094-3_11.

157 Abtew and Dessu, "Financing the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam."; Jenny R. Kehl, "Water Security in Transboundary Systems: Cooperation in Intractable Conflicts and the Nile System," in *Water Security in the Middle East Essays in Scientific and Social Cooperation,* ed. Jean Axelrad Cahan, 39–66, (London: Anthem Press, 2017), 48.

158 Bashir Ali, "Under the Radar: Ethiopia's Economic Growth Offers Opportunities and Challenges," *Global Risk Insights*, February 4, 2018, https://globalriskinsights.com/2018/02/ethiopia-economic-growth-opportunities-challenges/.

159 Shay, "The 'Renaissance Dam' Crisis," 2–3.

75% of the nation's residents still live without reliable access to electricity.[160] Without an assured supply, the population continues to leverage biomass fuel for everyday life.[161] While hydropower is the country's leading source for the generation of electricity, it is greatly underutilized. More than 45,000 MWs of potential capacity exists within the state, but only 2,300 MW has been exploited thus far.[162] The GERD is an essential step in leveraging the full potential of natural resources to provide for the well-being of the citizenry and bring Ethiopia out of backwardness.[163]

The project also promises increased revenue for Ethiopia through the state-owned energy enterprise. If economic planning works out as scheduled, by 2030, the GERD will not only serve the domestic populace, but enable Ethiopia to produce surpluses of electricity—enough for export throughout the region.[164] As Figure 1 indicates, continued growth in demand will be met with additional supplies of domestic energy—notably from increases in hydropower (blue). Construction of the GERD, coupled with efficiencies in terms of better cabling, infrastructure, and enhanced substations, will lead to a net surplus of electricity, available for export to neighboring countries.[165] As such, Ethiopia's current economic planning is set, and its success is wholly contingent on the increased supplies brought about by the GERD.

---

[160] Rastogi, "An Emerging and Troubled Power."

[161] Chen and Swain, "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam," 11.

[162] USAID, *Ethiopia: Power Africa Fact Sheet,* accessed 12 June 18, https://www.usaid.gov/powerafrica/ethiopia.

[163] Abbink, "Dam Controversies," 127.

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, *Ethiopia's Climate-Resilient Green Economy: Green Economy Strategy*, (Addis Ababa: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, 2011): 80, https://www.undp.org/content/dam/ethiopia/docs/Ethiopia%20CRGE.pdf.

[165] According to Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and as described in, *The Ethiopian Power Sector: A Renewable Future*, infrastructure upgrades constitute some $14 billion in investments, which include upgrading transmission lines, connectors, and building capacity at more than one hundred substations throughout the country. *Power Africa*, a component of USAID, is working in conjunction with Ethiopia Electric Utility to ensure transmission and distribution losses are minimized. (Sources: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, *The Ethiopian Power Sector: A Renewable Future*, 14; "Ethiopia – Energy," International Trade Administration (ITA), U.S. Department of Commerce, June 21, 2017, https://www.export.gov/apex/article2?id=Ethiopia-Energy.)

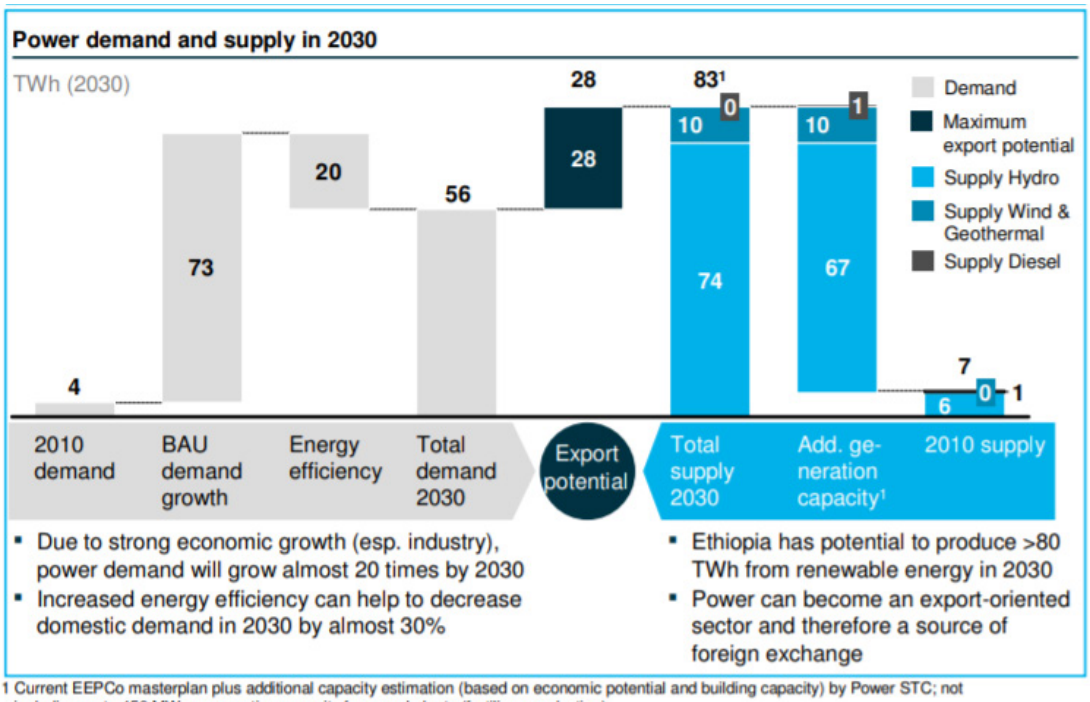

Figure 1. Ethiopian Power Demand and Supply by 2030[166]

It is important to note Ethiopia is already exporting electricity to Djibouti and Sudan, with connections that support a maximum power flow of 90 MW and 250 MW respectively.[167] Sales of electricity to Djibouti are garnering $1.3 to $1.5 million per month for Ethiopia.[168] Further south, the Ethio-Kenya-Tanzania power line is currently under construction, and once complete, is expected to deliver more than 2,000 MWs of capacity.[169] As such, there are clear incentives to continuing the GERD. The dam is not only instrumental to future economic ventures, it is essential to sustaining current economic relations between Ethiopia and neighboring states.

---

[166] Source: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, *Ethiopia's Climate-Resilient Green Economy: Green Economy Strategy*, 80.

[167] Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, *The Ethiopian Power Sector: A Renewable Future*, 11; Agathe Maupin, *Energy Dialogues in Africa: Is the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Transforming Ethiopia's Regional Role?* (Johannesburg, South Africa: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2016), https://www.africaportal.org/documents/14554/saia_sop_228_maupin_20160223.pdf.

[168] "Energy Report - Ethiopia," Embassy of Sweden, 15 September 2016, https://www.business-sweden.se/globalassets/energy-report-ethiopia.pdf.

[169] Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, *The Ethiopian Power Sector: A Renewable Future*, 11.

D. CONCLUSION

This chapter evaluated political and economic conditions driving Ethiopia towards construction and completion of the GERD. From a political perspective, a legacy of developmentalism and elite dominance over economic affairs has shaped government action and driven aggressive economic planning. Elite dominance has not only been an enduring theme in the historical narrative, it has occurred as a strengthening condition over time. From an economic perspective, state-led development efforts have produced economic growth but have also necessitated greater intervention and continued investment. Collectively, internal conditions have fostered advancement on the GERD project.

In returning to the concepts of the developmental state and performance legitimacy, a few things should be noted. The historical narrative suggests Ethiopia is a developmental state, where the will of the elite is extended from core to the periphery.[170] Disparate sources of information show that the core mission of the state has been, and continues to be, economic growth. Furthermore, the government has maintained the ability to impose elite will—throughout history and to the present. This elite dominance occurred during the rule of the empire, was bolstered during the period of the Derg, and became absolute in the modern era, where the government was easily able to shut down any protest or contention surrounding dams. As such, the mission and the structure principles found within Mkandawire's definition are fulfilled.

So why risk conflict by moving forward with the GERD project? Simply put, because internal conditions have incentivized the government towards initial construction and continued progress. Ethiopia's current economic planning demands urgent increases to energy supplies, and now that Ethiopia has the political and economic means to improve conditions, the GERD has morphed into a strategic imperative. The GERD is an integral part of domestic and regional ambitions, and as there are clear economic benefits for persisting with the project, Ethiopia is simply willing to assume the risk.

---

[170] Moller and Wacker, "Explaining Ethiopia's Growth Acceleration," 198; Jason Mosley and Elizabeth E. Watson, "Frontier Transformations: Development Visions, Spaces and Processes in Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 10, no. 3 (2016): 453, http://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2016.1266199.

The GERD—Africa's largest infrastructure project to date—represents a developmental agenda centered on transforming the state and the region.[171] As such, it is important to recognize the internal, developmental agenda of the state has crossed a threshold and transcended into the realm of international contest. This necessitates a discussion of external considerations. While the rationale for the GERD is evident from an analysis of internal conditions, progress on the dam could not have occurred without parallel, accommodating external conditions. Ethiopia would need the right mix of external dynamics to have the maneuver space to move forward with the project unimpeded. An analysis of these external considerations is what this study now turns to.

[171] Verhoeven, "Africa's Next Hegemon."; "Ethiopia Not Ready for Foreign Investment in Telecoms, Banking."; Wolde-Ghiorgis, "Renewable Energy for Rural Development in Ethiopia," 1096.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

III. EXTERNAL CONDITIONS

> The current regime cannot be sustained. It's being sustained because of the diplomatic clout of Egypt. Now, there will come a time when the people of East Africa and Ethiopia will become too desperate to care about these diplomatic niceties. Then, they are going to act.[172]
>
> —Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, 2005

The previous chapter reviewed internal considerations and provided key insights into the motivations of the Ethiopian leadership. The government desired to progress down the path of advancement, and the GERD became central to realizing internal and regional aspirations. While internal dynamics proved critical to understanding why Ethiopia chose to move forward with the GERD, it is equally important to note external conditions, which have afforded Ethiopia the opportunity to continue with construction of the dam.

This chapter is dedicated to investigating the *regional power shift* and *no fear* hypotheses and showcases how external conditions changed, ultimately aiding initial announcement and subsequent progression of the GERD project. While a host of influences or dynamics could be addressed, analysis herein focuses on three overarching themes. During the period leading up to the announcement of the GERD, Egypt's regional influence declined, Ethiopia's power and standing increased, and the overall prospect of violent conflict between the two nations—something which was markedly low from the outset—diminished. With such external conditions at play, Ethiopia had a unique window of opportunity to both announce the project and move forward with it unilaterally.

The first section of this chapter investigates Egypt from the perspective of its waning influence in Africa. It highlights how Egypt once held a position of prominence and exerted great influence on riparian states on the continent. As time passed, however, Egypt's ability to compel upstream neighbors lessened considerably. The second section

---

[172] Mike Thomson, "Nile Restrictions Anger Ethiopia," *BBC News*, February 3, 2005, news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4232107.stm.

evaluates Ethiopia as an emerging power and "anchor of stability" in the region.[173] It discusses Ethiopia's economic and political dominance in the region, how Ethiopia became central to regional stability, and how relations with the U.S. bolstered the significance of the state. The final section evaluates the prospect of violent conflict between Ethiopia and Egypt, as a result of the contestation over the Nile waters. Standing in stark contrast to narratives on impending "water wars," it showcases how the probability of conflict was (and continues) to be low.[174] As there was no genuine fear of retribution for constructing the GERD, the project moved forward unabated.

Collectively, these three considerations showcase an external dynamic apt for a challenge to Egypt's historic hegemony over the Nile.[175] Prior to an explanation of the contest, what is needed is an understanding of power dynamics in Africa.

A. EGYPT'S WANING POWER

Egypt was once a regional leader in Africa. This was apparent and seemingly unquestioned. Nations throughout the continent looked to Egypt as one of the first states to break free from the shackles of imperialism. In the post-colonial period, African states saw Egypt as a model of governance and a source of political and military support.[176] As time passed, Egypt's circle of influence contracted considerably. In an effort to understand the importance of this external consideration, as well as the effect on initial construction of the GERD, this section showcases Egypt's initial "position of power," how successive Nile

---

[173] Paul Omach, "The African Crisis Response Initiative: Domestic Politics and Convergence of National Interests," *African Affairs* 99, no. 394 (January 2000): 83, 90, https://www.jstor.org/stable/723548; Gebreluel, "Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam: Ending Africa's Oldest Geopolitical Rivalry?" 29.

[174] For more on "water wars" see Starr, "Water Wars," 17–36; Gleick, "Water and Conflict," 79, Klare, *Resource Wars,* 144–145.

[175] Cascão, "Ethiopia–Challenges to Egyptian Hegemony in the Nile Basin," 13; Cascão, "Changing Power Relations in The Nile River Basin."; Zeitoun and Warner, "Hydro-Hegemony," 447, 435.

[176] Barak Barfi, *Egypt's New Realism: Challenges Under Sisi* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2018), 68, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus156-Barfi.pdf.

treaties undermined Egypt's supremacy, and how Egypt's weakened state opened a window of opportunity for Ethiopia to move forward with the GERD.[177]

1. Egypt's Position of Power

In discussing Egypt, it is important to begin with an understanding that Egypt historically displayed characteristics of a regional hegemon.[178] Throughout the 20th century—due to political, military, and economic power—Egypt exerted extraordinary influence in African nations. This influence could be described as benevolent or malevolent, but ultimately, it should be regarded as extensive. As early as the post-colonial era, Egypt assumed a leadership role in the region. Then-President Gamal Abdel Nasser spoke out against the "European overlords" and denounced the vices of apartheid policies in South Africa.[179] Such actions set the stage for nationalist and independence movements throughout the continent and showcased how Egypt's influence was altogether pervasive.

During the same period, Egypt sought to expand its reach. Egypt exported technical experts to developing states and even allowed African students—those who were denied opportunities to study abroad in European nations—to attend universities in Egypt.[180] These efforts forged ties with neighboring states and affixed Egypt in a position of prominence. This unique standing was bolstered as Egypt even became more involved in the internal affairs of African states. Egypt not only inspired Eritrean separatist movements in the late 1950s but provided material support for Somali irredentists.[181] Egypt also provided direct military assistance to African governments. In the case in Nigeria, Egyptian

---

177 Nasr and Neef, "Ethiopia's Challenge to Egyptian Hegemony in the Nile River Basin," 971, 976.

178 Dale Whittington, "Visions of Nile Basin Development," *Water Policy* 6, no. 1 (2004): 1–24, quoted in Mohammed Yimer, "The Nile Hydro Politics; A Historic Power Shift*," International Journal of Political Science and Development* 3, no. 2 (2015): 101, http://doi.org/10.14662/IJPSD2015.011; Cascão, "Ethiopia–Challenges to Egyptian Hegemony in the Nile Basin," 13; Cascão, "Changing Power Relations in The Nile River Basin: Unilateralism Vs. Cooperation?": 248; Kehl, "Water Security in Transboundary Systems," 42.

179 Barak Barfi, *Egypt's New Realism: Challenges Under Sisi*, 68.

180 Ibid.

181 Haggai Erlich, "Identity and Church: Ethiopian–Egyptian Dialogue, 1924 –59," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32 (2000): 23–46, https://www.jstor.org/stable/259534; Kagwanja "Calming the Waters," 325.

pilots were deployed to quell hostilities during the Biafran (civil) War.[182] There are numerous other examples of Egypt's influence on the continent but suffice it to say Egypt held considerable sway in Africa. This was even more true of affairs along the Nile River.

Egypt was the preeminent actor on the Nile. Its authority remained uncontested because Egypt was the "most powerful riparian," exercising a "formidable veto power" over any action on the watercourse.[183] This unique standing was legitimized through rhetoric and legal precedent. From a rhetorical perspective, Egypt claimed to be absolutely dependent on the Nile waters; nearly 97% of Egypt's freshwater stemmed from the river.[184] From a legal standpoint, Egypt maintained that certain "historic rights" were spelled out in past treaties, which guaranteed access to set allocations of waters.[185] These assurances dated back to the colonial period, when Egypt was a part of the British Empire. During this era, allocation of the Nile's waters was codified and ensured a position of privilege for Egypt with regard to the amount of water allocated.[186] Agreements in 1929 and 1959 respectively guaranteed 48 and 55.5 billion cubic meters (BCM) of water each year.[187] Outside of Sudan—which was under the administration of Egypt and received 4 BCMs per year—other riparian nations were altogether excluded from deliberations.[188] As such, the status quo from the outset was Egyptian supremacy over the Nile, and in this way, Egypt acted as a de facto hegemon.

---

182 Ibid.

183 Zeitoun and Warner, "Hydro-Hegemony," 447, 435; Salman, "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam," 513.

184 Jack Di Nunzio, *Conflict on The Nile: The Future of Transboundary Water Disputes Over the World's Longest River*, Future Directions International, Strategic Analysis Paper, November 25, 2013, 4, http://www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/conflict-on-the-nile-the-future-of-transboundary-water-disputes-over-the-world-s-longest-river/; Cascão, "Changing Power Relations in The Nile River Basin," 248.

185 Fred H. Lawson, "Desecuritization, Domestic Struggles, and Egypt's Conflict with Ethiopia over the Nile River," *Democracy and Security* 12, no. 1 (2016): 129, http://doi.org/10.1080/17419166.2015.1133305; Swain, "Ethiopia, The Sudan, and Egypt: The Nile River," 677.

186 Salman, "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam," 513; Kagwanja "Calming the Waters," 321.

187 Engelke and Passell, *From the Gulf to the Nile*, 11; Cascão, "Changing Power Relations in The Nile River Basin," 245.

188 Ibid.

Egypt dominated affairs along the Nile and enforced its will through threats of retribution.[189] As Klare noted in 2001, Egypt maintained its preeminence through "intimidation… [whenever] neighbors announced plans for a new major water project, Cairo [was] quick to warn of dire consequences should it proceed with any such plan."[190] Even as Egypt stymied the plans other states, it moved forward unilaterally with efforts to leverage the Nile to its fullest potential. In 1960, Egypt began construction of the High Aswan Dam (HAD) for irrigation and to control waterflow during years of drought and flooding. The HAD, a hydroelectric facility, served the dual-purpose of generating 15% of the country's energy needs.[191] It is important to realize this massive endeavor moved forward despite protests from upstream states like Ethiopia.[192] This showcases Egypt's preeminence. It is equally important to note is that while the HAD improved the quality of lives for millions of Egyptians, evaporation in the reservoir—which accounted for 12% of the river flow annually—represented an inherent waste for in country with insufficient supplies of water.[193] Even so, Egypt continued with this and other unilateral development efforts, which later came to include land reclamation—the process of converting desert lands into farmlands.[194] Ultimately, Egyptian unilateralism inspired upstream states to evaluate the water utilization within their own borders.

2. Nile Treaties and Undermined Supremacy

As African states became more affluent, and as outside organizations like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and United Nations (under the United Nations

---

189 Swain, "Ethiopia, The Sudan, and Egypt: The Nile River," 685.

190 Klare, *Resource Wars*, 158.

191 Ismail and Refaat, "Water Food and Energy Sustainability Nexus," 12.

192 Daniel Kendie, "Egypt and the Hydro-Politics of the Blue Nile River," *Northeast African Studies* 6, no. 1–2, (1999): 148, https://doi.org/10.1353/nas.2002.0002.

193 John Waterbury and Dale Whittington, "Playing Chicken on the Nile? The Implications of Microdam Development in the Ethiopian Highlands and Egypt's New Valley Project," *Natural Resources Forum*, 22 (1998): 156, http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-8947.1998.tb00725.x; Fred Pearce, "Does Egypt Own The Nile? A Battle Over Precious Water," *Yale Environment 360*, July 19, 2010, https://e360.yale.edu/features/does_egypt_own_the_nile_a_battle_over_precious_water.

194 *Egypt: Egyptian Land Reclamation Efforts*, United States Department of Agriculture, Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN) Report, May 16, 2016, https://www.fas.usda.gov/data/egypt-egyptian-land-reclamation-efforts.

Development Program – UNDP) looked to improve conditions in the region, African states began to develop water resources as part of general or internal developmental efforts. This led to a realization in Egypt that Cairo needed to get out ahead of the problem and set a regional agenda before upstream development endangered the country's water supply. As such, Egypt worked to broker deals along the Nile. These were ultimately in an effort to protect their vital interests.

Preliminary accords, to include Hydromet (1967), the Undugu (1983), and the TeccoNile (1992), produced very little change with regard the status quo. This was because Egypt led the coordination efforts. Not all riparian states were included in the discussions, and deliberations ultimately focused on "technical issues" versus direct "legal challenges" to Egypt's dominance.[195] Hydromet served as an initial coordination effort between Egypt, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. It was funded by the UNDP and sought to research the water flow from Lake Victoria, Lake Kyoga and Lake Albert.[196] Even then, upstream states were particularly suspicious of the effort, which was predominantly driven by Egypt.[197] The Undugu Project included more states like Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Rwanda, Sudan and Uganda—Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania were passive observers—but failed to produce meaningful change, as discussions focused on drought versus effective utilization of water during rainy seasons.[198] Finally, TeccoNILE brought together the DRC, Egypt, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda, with Burundi, Kenya, Eritrea and Ethiopia as observers once again.[199] This process included various ministers of water, as well as an international panel of experts, to discuss "technical assistance and capacity building" efforts, ultimately meant to drive development along the Nile.[200] Though seemingly innocuous, due to the overall lack of coordination between states, these early mechanisms for increased coordination

---

[195] Cascão, "Changing Power Relations in The Nile River Basin," 246

[196] Kagwanja, "Calming the Waters," 329.

[197] Ibid.

[198] Ibid.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Ibid.

began the process of eroding Egyptian supremacy along the Nile.[201] A shift was occurring, away from Egyptian-led efforts and the preeminence of Egyptian interests. This was the beginnings of a weakened Egypt. Indeed, Ethiopia, for its part, purposefully abstained from negotiations, bucking Egypt's attempts to control the dialogue. As one author noted, "Ethiopians…in accordance with their old strategy of letting the Egyptians sweat, preferred to participate as observers only."[202] This overt rebuff marked the beginning of an era of increased contestation.

In the 1990s, Egypt's influence began to diminish considerably, as regional organizations and collective efforts became the norm. The Nile 2002 Conference Series (1993–2004) was one of the first attempts to bring together disparate states to discuss the establishment of a "multilateral, cooperative institution" to specifically address concerns stemming from previous Nile accords.[203] Ethiopia again took the role of passive observer, but other participants met regularly annually—"in Aswan in 1993, in Khartoum in 1994, in Arusha in 1995, in Kampala in 1996, and in Addis Ababa in February [of] 1997."[204] With each meeting, the power dynamic shifted further away from the dictates and interests of Egypt to regional cooperation and region-wide initiatives.

As regional coordination appeared to be rising, Egypt looked for ways to safeguard water supplies. This is most evident in the bilateral deal signed by Egypt and Ethiopia in 1993. This treaty, outside of the construct of the aforementioned treaties and cooperative efforts, was the first time Egypt conceded that Ethiopia had an inherent "right" to make use of available resources within its borders.[205] Buried deeper in the accord was wording which showcased Egypt's acknowledgement of being in a weakened position. Egypt specifically sought assurances from Ethiopia that it would "refrain from engaging in any

---

[201] Kagwanja, "Calming the Waters," 321–325; Haggai Erlich, *The Cross and the River: Ethiopia, Egypt, and the Nile*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 330.

[202] Haggai Erlich, *The Cross and the River: Ethiopia, Egypt, and the Nile*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 11.

[203] Cascão, "Changing Power Relations in The Nile River Basin," 691.

[204] Swain, "Ethiopia, The Sudan, and Egypt: The Nile River," 691.

[205] Lawson, "Desecuritization, Domestic Struggles, and Egypt's Conflict with Ethiopia over the Nile River," 1.

activity related to the Nile waters…[which] may cause appreciable harm to the interests of the other party."[206] This was tantamount to an admission that upstream riparian states held considerable power. Egypt's hegemony over the affairs along the Nile had come to an end, and regional cooperation became the standard.

Regional organizations like the East African Community (EAC) promoted integration between African states, solved the collective action problem, and ultimately produced an overt challenge to "Egyptian and Sudanese monopoly over the Nile waters."[207] Egypt could no longer compel states along the Nile, and with each new collective effort, regional organizations chipped away at Egyptian influence. Later efforts, most notably the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), shifted the dialogue from general cooperation, to rectifying the uneven distribution of water resources apparent in previous accords.[208] The NBI defined development in terms of benefits for all riparian states, and emphasized "equitable utilization" of the Nile waters.[209]

In 2006, organizations like the Nile River Basin Commission (NRBC) met regularly, enhanced levels of cooperation between states, and worked towards the goal of "sustainable, equitable and peaceful use of water resources."210 By May of 2010, the Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) established a new precedent—that Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania all had the inherent right to use the Nile waters originating or traversing their territories.211 Egypt rejected the CFA and even stopped attending cooperative summits. Egypt reluctantly resumed participation in 2016 out of fear of being left out of deliberations altogether.212 This was a major blow to Egyptian influence. Not only was regional cooperation the default, but states were afforded

---

206 Barfi, *Egypt's New Realism: Challenges Under Sisi*, 66.

207 Kagwanja, "Calming the Waters," 322.

208 Cascão, "Changing Power Relations in The Nile River Basin," 262.

209 Cascão, "Changing Power Relations in The Nile River Basin," 262; Ana Elisa Cascão and Alan Nicol, "GERD: New Norms of Cooperation in The Nile Basin?" *Water International* 41, no. 4, (2016): 551, http://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2016.1180763.

210 Kagwanja, "Calming the Waters," 321.

211 Deressa and Mbaku, "While Egypt Struggles, Ethiopia Builds over the Blue Nile."

212 Barfi, *Egypt's New Realism: Challenges Under Sisi*, 70.

the opportunity to exercise "hydro-sovereignty," the ability to use internal water resources at the state's discretion.213 The inequity of colonial agreements was supplanted by cooperative efforts centered on equitable utilization. Power had shifted away from Egypt.

While efforts to enhance regional cooperation were ongoing, it must be noted that increased unilateral action was likewise on the rise.[214] States in the Nile River Basin were rapidly developing and taking advantage of funding stemming from external actors like the World Bank, IMF, UNDP, and most importantly, China.[215] Indeed, Chinese support ushered in a number of projects along the Nile and its tributaries. As Figure 2 showcases, any internal projects that would "bring economic and political benefits at the national level" were undertaken; many occurred with little regard to the effects on downstream states.[216]

213 Patricia Wouters, "The Relevance and Role of Water Law in the Sustainable Development of Freshwater," *Water International* 25, no. 2 (2000): 202-207, http://doi.org/10.1080/02508060008686819, quoted in Cascão, "Changing Power Relations in The Nile River Basin," 246.

214 Cascão, "Changing Power Relations in The Nile River Basin," 262.

215 Ibid.

216 Cascão, "Changing Power Relations in The Nile River Basin," 263.

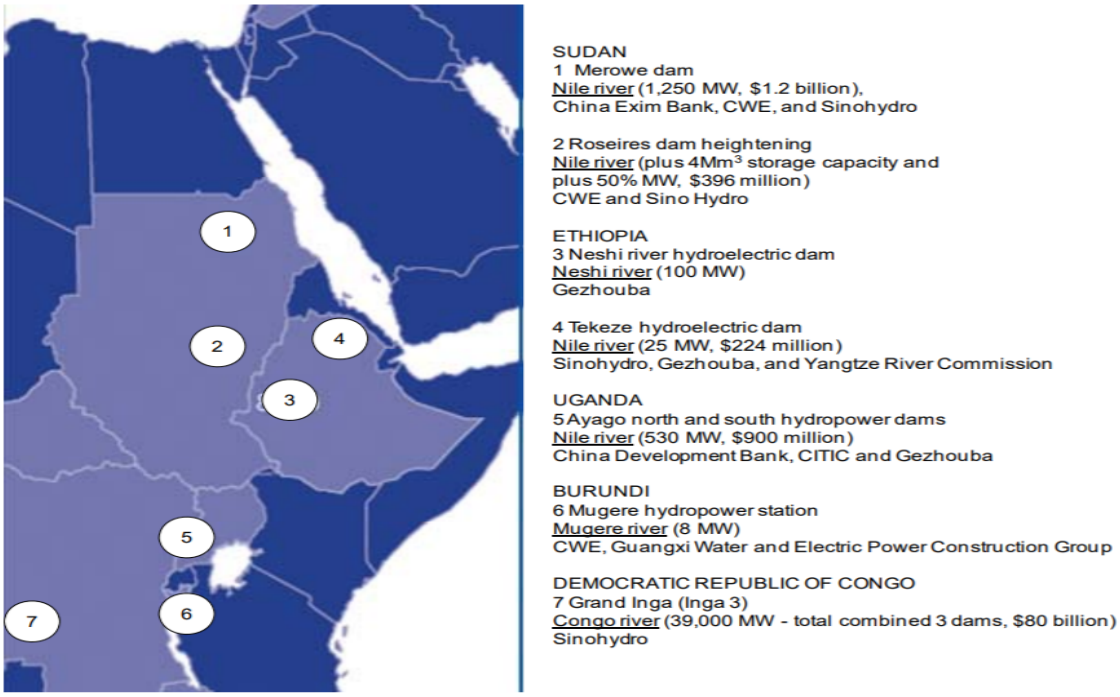

Figure 2. Chinese Support to Projects along the Nile[217]

As countries became more economically and politically stable, and upstream states continued to unilaterally advance development projects within their own borders, Egypt's historic ability to compel states to adhere to colonial era dictates ceased to exist.[218] Worse yet, instability was on the rise in Egypt, and as the internal affairs of the state continued to deteriorate—ultimately leading to the 2011 revolution—this provided an opportune time for Ethiopia to move forward with the GERD.

3. Egypt's Weakened State: An Opportunity

The revolution in Egypt provided a unique window of opportunity for Ethiopia. After Mubarak was removed from power, Egypt was altogether preoccupied with the internal affairs of the state—especially with efforts to centralize authority and contend with economic downturn. This was the perfect time for Ethiopia to advance its developmental ambitions. No one was looking, and by the time Egypt's affairs were in order, it was too

[217] Source: Cascão, "Changing Power Relations in The Nile River Basin," 261.

[218] Cascão, "Changing Power Relations in The Nile River Basin," 265.

late. The GERD was too far down the path of completion. This becomes clearer after a review of the historical narrative.

To begin, the timing on the announcement of the GERD was impeccable. Even the Egyptians noted this:

> Hani Raslan, the head Nile Basin studies department at Cairo's al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, said it is no coincidence that Ethiopia announced plans to massively expand the dam and forge ahead with its construction just weeks after Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was ousted in early 2011…. Ethiopia has aspirations to be a regional power at Egypt's expense…. It is taking advantage of the instability after the revolution, especially now that there's a weak Muslim Brotherhood president with no experience [and] who is not in sync with the institutions of the state.[219]

After the revolution, Egypt was broken, and the government did not have the bandwidth to contend with external issues because all "attention and energies were riveted on the problem of economic recovery" and fixing the state.[220] External issues simply were not the focus.

Egypt's clear lack of focus on external affairs was justifiable. Many internal issues needed to be resolved. Indeed, the first year of interim military rule was understandably inward-facing, as the government fixated on quelling protests, maintaining stability, and aiding transition efforts.[221] Even when elections ushered in a new president, however, the focus remained on internal affairs and centralization efforts. This is evident from the initial actions taken by then-President Mohmad Morsi. Though the revolution was centered on expanding the democratic process in Egypt, Morsi took it upon himself to perform a full "constitutional review," which ultimately led to all government powers being vested in

---

219 Griff Witte, "Egypt Frets, Fumes Over Ethiopia's Nile Plan," *The Washington Post*, June 12, 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/egypt-frets-fumes-over-ethiopias-nile-plan/2013/06/12/d3ab3f4a-d1e1-11e2-9577-df9f1c3348f5_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.f14dcafa9d02.

220 Lawson, "Desecuritization, Domestic Struggles, and Egypt's Conflict with Ethiopia over the Nile River," 17.

221 Gawdat Bahgat, *Egypt in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring What Lies Ahead*? (Mt Edgecombe, South Africa: African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, 2015), https://accord.org.za/conflict-trends/egypt-aftermath-arab-spring.

him.[222] This effort, clearly meant to strengthen centralized authority, backfired and led to increased tensions between disparate actors vying for power and influence. Egypt was not only preoccupied with the internal affairs of the state, it became divided and weak.

Egypt's internal weakness can be noted in Morsi's brief tenure, which abruptly ended in a military coup led by General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.[223] Later, al-Sisi became President. Interestingly, the al-Sisi's government maintained a similar perspective that "Ethiopia [had] exploited Egypt's weakness during Mohammed Morsi's presidency…to secure the acquiescence of the region's other states to the GERD project, isolate Egypt, and violate long-standing agreements on the use of the Nile's waters that date [back] to British colonial rule."[224] Despite understanding this dynamic, little changed with regard to internal versus external focus because al-Sisi's primary objective was "regime survival and avoiding a replay of the uprising that toppled Mubarak."[225] The government remained altogether preoccupied with the internal affairs of the state. This is not to say external affairs like the GERD never came up in the period after the revolution; they did, but they were intrinsically tied to, and moreover heavily subordinated to, internal issues in Egypt.

It is important to realize that when Egypt discusses external issues, the GERD is a central consideration. Indeed, as one analyst noted, Egypt "faces only one significant external threat, the ongoing construction of the Renaissance Dam in Ethiopia."[226] It must be noted, the characterization of the GERD as a substantive threat is a clear attempt by

---

222 Nathaniel D. Danjibo, "The Aftermath of The Arab Spring and Its Implication for Peace and Development in the Sahel and Sub-Saharan Africa," *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 35, no. 2 (2013): 23, https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/Legacy/sitefiles/file/46/1322/05danjibopp1634.pdf.

223 Danjibo, "The Aftermath of The Arab Spring and Its Implication for Peace and Development in the Sahel and Sub-Saharan Africa," 22–23.

224 Payton Knopf, *South Sudan's Civil War and Conflict Dynamics in the Red Sea*, Special Report 431, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2018), 3, https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-09/sr_431_knopf_south_sudans_civil_war_and_conflict_dynamics_in_the_red_sea2.pdf.

225 Bahgat, "Egypt in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring What Lies Ahead?"

226 Eran Lerman, "The Keystone: Sisi, Egyptian Stability and the Future of the Eastern Mediterranean," *The Jerusalem Institute for Strategic Studies*, August 16, 2018, https://jiss.org.il/en/lerman-keystone-sisi-egyptian-stability-future-eastern-mediterranean/.

political entrepreneurs to deflect attention away from internal issues in Egypt.[227] There are genuine and pressing issues in Egypt. These include overpopulation and water scarcity linked to overusing resources in agricultural enterprises.[228] While the GERD could complicate issues already present in Egypt, "[the GERD as a] potential flash point can [genuinely] be mitigated by implementing more progressive water policies" in Egypt.[229] As such, while the GERD is regularly discussed in terms of an external threat, the reality is that the GERD is a scapegoat for failures of policy in Egypt.

The GERD is politicized for internal purposes in Egypt. Interestingly, instead of being a unifying force—i.e., an existential threat creating a "rally around the flag" effect—the GERD has actually deepened internal divisions. As Lawson noted in 2016: "radical Islamist parties and liberal parliamentarians…called attention to the threat [of the GERD] emanating from the south, but they did so primarily as a way to mobilize public opposition to President Mursi and the Freedom and Justice Party."[230] This shows how internal issues and power struggles remained the core focus of the state, even when discussing the supposed external issue of the GERD.

Ultimately, in the period after the revolution, Egypt was weak and divided. Ethiopia capitalized on disarray in Egypt, moved forward with planning and construction, and by the time Egypt's affairs were in order, it was simply too late. Ethiopia had advanced too far with the GERD, and there was no means of stopping progress. As von Lossow and Roll (2015) highlighted:

> [Since] President Sisi took office in June 2014, Cairo has followed a surprisingly conciliatory line. Three-party talks with Sudan and Ethiopia, initially abandoned in early 2014, resumed in the autumn…. [discussions are] no longer about whether or in what form [the] GERD will be built, but

---

227 Gregory R. Copley, "Egypt's Instability Triggers a New Proxy War Against Ethiopia and its Allies," *OilPrice.com*, June 7, 2013, https://oilprice.com/Geopolitics/Africa/Egypts-Instability-Triggers-a-New-Proxy-War-Against-Ethiopia-and-its-Allies.html.

228 Omer Karasapan and Sajjad Shah, "Egypt's Population: Boom Then Bust?" *Brookings Institute* (blog), May 22, 2018, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2018/05/22/egypts-population-boom-then-bust/; Di Nunzio, *Conflict on The Nile,* 4.

229 Lerman, "The Keystone: Sisi, Egyptian Stability and the Future of the Eastern Mediterranean."

230 Lawson, "Desecuritization, Domestic Struggles, and Egypt's Conflict with Ethiopia over the Nile River," 17.

> how the ecological and socioeconomic consequences for each state will be measured, assessed and addressed. In early 2015, the three countries agreed to commission an international consulting firm to prepare recommendations and monitor their implementation. In a historic departure from its previous stance, Cairo's consent to this move implies acceptance of the Ethiopian dam.[231]

Ethiopia effectively used this window of opportunity to move forward the GERD.

B. ETHIOPIA'S INCREASED REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

In the period leading up to the announcement of the GERD, regional power dynamics shifted. Egypt lost the ability to compel states and was ultimately unable to influence regional organizations. At the same time, Ethiopia demonstrated a commitment to dominating political, economic, and security affairs in East Africa. Ethiopia's improved standing in the region even earned the country the reputation of being an "anchor of stability."[232] The intent of this section is not to suggest Ethiopian supremacy has replaced Egypt's hegemony—though some scholars have alluded to this.[233] Rather, the objective is to showcase how Ethiopia became increasingly significant in the region throughout the period leading up to the announcement of the GERD.

This section highlights Ethiopia's bolstered position in East Africa. Ethiopia's regional significance increased as a result of rising economic and political power. Ethiopia dominated regional collaborative organizations and used positions of leadership to influence affairs in the region. Ethiopia's significance also grew as the military became central to regional peacekeeping and security operations. Finally, Ethiopia's increasingly close partnership with the United States served to enhance the state's capabilities, while

---

231 Tobias von Lossow and Stephan Roll, *Egypt's Nile Water Policy Under Sisi: Security Interests Promote Rapprochement with Ethiopia*, (Berlin, Germany: German Institute for International and Security Affairs, 2015), 2, https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/143811223.pdf.

232 Omach, "The African Crisis Response Initiative," 83, 90.

233 Cascão, "Ethiopia–Challenges to Egyptian hegemony in the Nile Basin."; Verhoeven, "Africa's Next Hegemon."; Abadir M. Ibrahim, "The Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement: The Beginning of the End of Egyptian Hydro-Political Hegemony," *Journal of Environmental and Sustainability Law* 18, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 282–313, http://scholarship.law.missouri.edu/jesl/vol18/iss2/4.

legitimizing Ethiopian action throughout the region. With such a unique standing, Ethiopia was able to advance strategic imperatives and realize regional aspirations.

1. Rising Economic and Political Power

To begin, Ethiopia stands out as a significant power in East Africa based on area, population, strategic location, and relative political stability.[234] With regard to being a legitimate regional power, one scholar noted that states assume such a status when they acquire "domestic legitimacy (economic and political performances), regional legitimacy (recognition and compliance by regional states), and international reliability (whether their international alliances with various global powers support or counteract their regional leadership)."[235] If this definition qualifies as the litmus test for being a regional power, Ethiopia may have already attained this status. This becomes clear from a review of economic and political dynamics.

From an economic and political perspective, Ethiopia's relative power grew as the state exerted influence on regional, cooperative organizations—most notably the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). IGAD was originally established as a consortium of states seeking to combat the perils of drought and famine in East Africa.[236] As time passed, however, the mandate of the organization evolved and expanded to incorporate peacekeeping and security operations, economic cooperation, and integration among the eight member-states.[237]

IGAD is committed to advancing the socio-economic condition of East African states through collective developmental efforts and regional projects aimed at benefitting

---

234 Sonia Le Gouriellec, "Regional Power and Contested Hierarchy: Ethiopia, An 'Imperfect Hegemon' in the Horn of Africa," *International Affairs* 94, no. 5 (September 2018): 1059, https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiy117; Kidist Mulugeta, *The Role of Regional Powers in the Field of Peace and Security: The Case of Ethiopia*, (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2014), http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/aethiopien/10879.pdf.

235 Belachew Gebrewold, "Legitimate Regional Powers? A Failed Test for Ethiopia, Nigeria, and South Africa," *African Security* 7, no. 1 (2014): 1–23http://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2014.880029.

236 "About Us: The History of IGAD," Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), accessed Oct 26, 2018, https://igad.int/about-us.

237 Maupin, *Energy Dialogues in Africa,* 16–17.

all members.[238] While IGAD is not the only organization Ethiopia is a part of, it is the most significant. As one analyst noted, though Ethiopia is "a founding member of the UN, the African Union (AU), … and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Ethiopia pursues its regional interests… through a dominant role in IGAD.[239] It is important to note Egypt is not a participant in IGAD. It is equally important to know IGAD serves as a complimentary function to the NBI and CFA, encouraging partner states "to become signatories [of] the CFA," as well as other cooperative ventures.[240] As such, IGAD initiatives have consistently undermined Egyptian interests by focusing on collective, regional efforts.

Ethiopia has historically dominated affairs in the IGAD. Though IGAD is headquartered in Djibouti, the most critical functions of the IGAD—"[the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN)] office, IGAD Facilitator's Office for Somalia, the IGAD Parliamentary Union, and the Livestock Office"—are located in Addis Ababa.[241] This level of proximity allows for frequent contact between the government of Ethiopia and the offices involved in regional efforts. As an example, Ethiopia was able to acquire the strategic position of leading the "peace and security division" within the IGAD, and from 2008–2014, Ethiopia even served as the chair of the IGAD.[242] Filling these unique leadership positions allows the state to influence the region by setting and driving a developmental agenda based on Ethiopian interests.[243] This is most evident in the three main projects of IGAD: "the peace process project for Sudan, [the peace process project

238 "About Us: The History of IGAD."

239 Mehari Taddele Maru, *Ethiopia's Regional Diplomacies: A Dominant Interpretation of the Horn of Africa*, Policy Briefing 112 (Johannesburg, South Africa: South African Foreign Policy and African Drivers Programme, 2014): 1, www.saiia.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/saia_112_maru_20141027.pdf.

240 Zeray Yihdego, Alistair Rieu-Clarke, and Ana Elisa Cascão, "How Has the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Changed the Legal, Political, Economic and Scientific Dynamics in the Nile Basin?" *Water International* 41, no. 4 (2016): 507–508, https://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2016.1209008.

241 Mulugeta, *The Role of Regional Powers in the Field of Peace and Security*, 15–16.

242 Mulugeta, *The Role of Regional Powers in the Field of Peace and Security*, 15.

243 Ibid.

for Somalia], and the CEWARN.[244] With a focus on conflict management external to Ethiopia, these programs afforded Ethiopia the opportunity to expand reach into the affairs of neighboring states.

Ethiopia's regional power grew as a result of dominating economic and political affairs in the region. This was made possible by leveraging IGAD. The significance of IGAD should not be understated. International institutions look to the IGAD to fulfill the role of guiding the region towards greater levels of peace and prosperity. This is evidenced by the overt support IGAD receives from international institutions like the UN, AU, and even the European Union (EU). Indeed, the EU has worked tirelessly to build capacity in the IGAD, noting that the organization is critical to enhancing "economic and political integration in the Horn of Africa."[245] As a result, IGAD wields considerable influence over states, enforces a regional agenda on East Africa, and enjoys a measure of legitimacy from international institutions. This had translated to a unique position of power for the most influential state in IGAD, Ethiopia.

With specific regard to the GERD project, IGAD has consistently supported the initiative.[246] In addition to praising the efforts of the Ethiopian government, IGAD has repeatedly reiterated the GERD's regional benefits, and made statements reassuring member-states that the dam will not cause negative consequences.[247] Furthermore, the IGAD staff directly contributed $250,000 (USD) to the project.[248] This public gesture showcases alliances and ultimately highlights how the organization serves the expressed purpose of promoting Ethiopian interests in the region.

---

244 Ulf Terlinden, *IGAD – Paper Tiger facing Gigantic Tasks*, (Berlin, Germany: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2004), 3, www.ulf-terlinden.de/docs/Terlinden2004-IGAD-engl.pdf.

245 Harald, Lie, and Mesfin, *Ethiopia: A Political Economy Analysis*, 35.

246 "IGAD Executive Secretary: The GERD Project Is Regional," Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), accessed 1 November 2018, https://igad.int/executive-secretary/1529-igad-executive-secretary-the-gert-project-is-regional.

247 Ibid.

248 "IGAD Executive Secretary Hands Over Staff Contribution to GERD Project," Intergovernmental Authority on Development, January 21, 2018, https://igad.int/executive-secretary/1741-igad-executive-secretary-hands-over-staff-contribution-to-gerd-project.

2. Ethiopia—Central to Regional Peacekeeping and Security Operations

Ethiopia's increased significance is not only tied to dominance over economic and political affairs, it is linked to supremacy over security operations in the region. Ethiopia has maintained one of the largest and most adept fighting forces on the continent—comprised of nearly 138,000 troops.[249] It has regularly employed its military to wage conventional warfare, engage in counterinsurgency operations, and participate in peacekeeping and security operations.[250] This military prowess represents a unique and critical capability, one which not only enhances the power of the state, but influences the trajectory of the region. This is best understood by discussing the military's expanded role in regional peacekeeping operations (PKOs).[251] By engaging in PKOs, Ethiopia has become a key player in the region and shifted alliances in its favor.

Ethiopia's regional significance grew as the state shifted from being a participant in PKOs to leading regional efforts to promote peace. In the last 50 years, the Ethiopian military was increasingly called upon to be the central peacekeeping and security force in Africa.[252] Ethiopia engaged in UN global peacekeeping efforts from the 1950s onwards. The Ethiopian military fought alongside multinational forces in the Korean War, assisted in efforts to restore order in the Republic of Congo throughout the 1960s, aided peace and stability operations in Somalia and Haiti, and provided critical support to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).[253] In accomplishing these disparate missions, Ethiopian forces acquired greater technical proficiency and even

---

249 Mulugeta, *The Role of Regional Powers in the Field of Peace and Security*, 13.

250 Le Gouriellec, "Regional Power and Contested Hierarchy," 1064.

251 Jakkie Cilliers, Julia Schünemann and Jonathan D Moyer, *Power and Influence in Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria and South Africa*, African Futures Paper 14 (Pretoria, South Africa: Institute for Security Studies, 2015), 6, https://issafrica.org/research/papers/power-and-influence-in-africa-algeria-egypt-ethiopia-nigeria-and-south-africa; Solomon A. Dersso, "Peacekeeping Contributor Profile: Ethiopia," Providing for Peacekeeping, accessed October 26, 2018, www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/2014/04/03/contributor-profile-ethiopia/.

252 Ibid.

253 "Ethiopia: A Leading Contributor to UN Peacekeeping Efforts," United Nations, accessed October 26, 2018, https://news.un.org/en/gallery/529832.

achieved a noteworthy level of discipline and professionalism.[254] Only recently, however, has a distinct shift been noted. The Ethiopian military has become so entrenched in peace and stability operations, the country has earned the reputation of being the "security provider" for East Africa.[255]

As the Ethiopian government continued to support PKOs, host nations, as well as international institutions, became increasingly reliant on Ethiopian military power. As a result, Ethiopia deployed more forces throughout Africa—from Liberia to Rwanda—with the most expansive operations occurring in war-torn Sudan and Somalia.[256] With regard to numbers, Ethiopian contributions to PKOs swelled from 2,500 personnel in 2004 to nearly 8,000 in 2012.[257] Ethiopia, once the fourth-largest contingent of troops executing UN-mandated missions abroad, came to be the number one contributor of forces to UN peacekeeping operations.[258] This uptick in support was purposeful, as the Ethiopian leadership understood that participating in PKOs enhanced "regional and international influence."[259] By sending troops to the most troubled spots in the region, Ethiopia assumed the role of Africa's peacekeeper and became the most "influential player in the security problem in the Horn of Africa."[260]

With regard to influencing affairs along the Nile, Ethiopia's role as the provisioner of security in the region has aided the state's ability to shift in regional alliances to their advantage vis-a-vis the GERD. This dynamic is particularly evident with respect to Sudan, which previously supported Egyptian interests along the Nile but has recently come to side

---

254 Cilliers, Schünemann and Moyer, *Power and influence in Africa*, 6.

255 Le Gouriellec, "Regional Power and Contested Hierarchy," 1060

256 Mulugeta Gebrehiwot Berhe, "The Ethiopian Post-Transition Security Sector Reform Experience: Building a National Army from a Revolutionary Democratic Army," *African Security Review* 26, no. 2 (2017): 174http://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2017.1297581.

257 Le Gouriellec, "Regional Power and Contested Hierarchy," 1065; Dersso, "Peacekeeping Contributor Profile: Ethiopia."

258 Berhe, "The Ethiopian Post-Transition Security Sector Reform Experience," 174; "Ethiopia: A Leading Contributor to UN Peacekeeping Efforts."

259 Dersso, "Peacekeeping Contributor Profile: Ethiopia."

260 Cilliers, Schünemann, and Moyer, *Power and Influence in Africa*, 6; Mulugeta, *The Role of Regional Powers in the Field of Peace and Security*, 17.

with Ethiopia. Ethiopia makes up more than 95% of the troops supporting peacekeeping operation on the border of Sudan and South Sudan.[261] Increased levels of interaction have built trust and strengthened relations between Ethiopia and Sudan. The overall strength of this partnership is evidenced by statements made by Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir. In 2013, Bashir stated: "[Sudan's] support for the Renaissance Dam is firm. There are benefits for the entire region, including Egypt."[262] This overt gesture of support serves as an outright denunciation of Egypt, and marks the end of Sudan's relationship with Egypt—something which has been on the decline since the 1980s.[263] Indeed, as Knopf (2018) noted, "Sudan and Ethiopia have forged an increasingly close political and security partnership rooted in a shared position on the GERD and the use of the Nile."[264] Ethiopia is seemingly the partner of choice in the region. This new standing has likewise led the U.S. to seek out a strategic relationship with Ethiopia.

3. Ethiopia—Critical U.S. Partner in East Africa

Ethiopia's regional influence grew as it engaged in PKOs, but its international standing and legitimacy crystallized as it partnered with the U.S. on contingency operations. This section highlights Ethiopia's increased significance to the U.S. and to the international community. While it strays a bit from the core issue of the GERD, Ethiopia's ability to maneuver in the international system, as well as influence affairs regionally, is intrinsically tied to the legitimacy it receives from the U.S and international community. This legitimacy allows Ethiopia to act with a level of impunity in East Africa. Indeed, past actions—sanctioned by both the U.S. and the international community—set the precedent for Ethiopian leadership in the region and have helped to make Ethiopia a regional power. As such, a digression is warranted because partnering with the U.S. led to increased latitude, and ultimately, international legitimacy.

---

261 Gebreluel, "Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam: Ending Africa's Oldest Geopolitical Rivalry?" 29–30.

262 Barfi, *Egypt's New Realism: Challenges Under Sisi*, 69.

263 Barfi, *Egypt's New Realism: Challenges Under Sisi*, 69; Knopf, *South Sudan's Civil War and Conflict Dynamics in the Red Sea*, 4.

264 Knopf, *South Sudan's Civil War and Conflict Dynamics in the Red Sea,* 4.

In the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks, the importance of states in Africa grew considerably. The Horn of Africa, as well as countries throughout the Sahel, became "frontline states" in the effort to curb the spread of radical elements.[265] The U.S. recognized Ethiopia was a consequential actor in the region—one which held considerable political, economic, and most importantly, military power. As such, the U.S. partnered with Ethiopia to assure radical ideologies did not take hold or spread throughout less stable states in East Africa. In the years after the September 11th attacks, U.S aid to Ethiopia rose from $928,000 (1999-2001) to more than $16.7 million (2002-2004).[266] This was as an indication of Ethiopia's increased significance, but also pointed to U.S. confidence in Ethiopia's ability to drive regional change.

The U.S. leveraged Ethiopia as an "expert" in the region and relied heavily on the state's unique ability to understand political dynamics, language, and culture in East Africa.[267] The partnership with Ethiopia was critical to advancing U.S. interests in the region and this was particularly true of operations in Somalia. The U.S. viewed Somalia as breeding ground for extremists, as well as a potential successor state for Al Qaeda.[268] This judgement was later reinforced by the presence of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), a radical element which took control of Mogadishu in 2006.[269] As the regional peacekeeping force, Ethiopia was called upon to take action in Somalia.

Ethiopia engaged in operations to disrupt the activities of the UIC and ultimately seized control over large swaths of territory, to include the capitol of Somalia.[270] These

---

265 *Africa and the War on Terrorism*, ed. John Davis, (London: Routledge, 2007): 1, https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9781317184515.

266 Marina Walker Guevara, "Ethiopia Reaps U.S. Aid by Enlisting in War on Terror and Hiring Influential Lobbyists," *International Consortium of Investigative Journalists*, May 2, 2012, https://www.icij.org/investigations/collateraldamage/ethiopia-reaps-us-aid-enlisting-war-terror-and-hiring-influential.

267 Le Gouriellec, "Regional Power and Contested Hierarchy," 1070.

268 *Africa and the War on Terrorism*, 2.

269 Ibid., 6, 9.

270 Ibid., 6, 9, 39.

activities were encouraged by the United States.[271] The U.S. not only aided the Ethiopians by sending special operations forces (SOF) "to train Ethiopian troops in anti-terrorism and counterterrorist tactics," the U.S. also assisted with intelligence operations and airstrikes.[272] Increased collaboration with the U.S. bolstered Ethiopian supremacy in the region. This is evidence by the fact that neither the UN nor the AU condemned the overt incursion into another sovereign state.[273] In fact, Ethiopia was later rewarded for its dominance in regional security affairs. The international community invited Ethiopia to be "a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council."[274] Ultimately, in partnering with the U.S., Ethiopia attained a new level of prominence, which included uncontested regional authority and international legitimacy.

In returning to the litmus test of a regional power—which includes "economic and political performance…regional legitimacy (recognition and compliance by regional states), and international reliability"—Ethiopia may have achieved regional power status.[275] Ethiopia dominated political and economic affairs through the IGAD, expanded influence throughout the region by engaging in peacekeeping and security operations, and attained an elevated international standing as a reliable partner and regional provisioner of security. While the intent of this section was not to prove Ethiopia replaced Egypt as the regional hegemon, one thing is clear: Ethiopia's power grew. This increased standing changed regional power dynamics, shifted alliances in favor of Ethiopia, and ultimately legitimized Ethiopia as acting on behalf of the region. As Le Gouriellec noted: "What [was] good for Ethiopia [was now] good for the Horn of Africa."[276]

---

[271] Ibid., 9.

[272] Ibid., 146, 149, 172.

[273] Le Gouriellec, "Regional Power and Contested Hierarchy," 1067

[274] Ibid., 1065.

[275] Gebrewold, "Legitimate Regional Powers?" 1.

[276] Verhoeven, "Africa's Next Hegemon," quoted in Le Gouriellec, "Regional Power and Contested Hierarchy," 1059.

C. NO FEAR OF RETRIBUTION

The final section of this chapter discusses a core consideration as to how Ethiopia could move forward, undeterred, with construction and completion of the GERD. Ethiopia announced the GERD, and continued with the project unabated, because the existential threat of conflict with an external actor—specifically Egypt—was never a genuine concern. Indeed, the overall prospect of interstate violence was markedly low from the outset, and this condition has persisted to the present. While Egypt sees construction of the GERD as an adverse foreign action diminishing the flow of water in the Nile, and even labeled "water availability a matter of national security," Egypt has consistently demonstrated a commitment to cooperation over conflict.[277] As such, while water scarcity is certainly a pressing issue in Egypt, war with Ethiopia is not imminent. The importance of this conclusion cannot be understated because it stands in stark contrast to sensationalized narratives of states engaging in "water wars."[278] As analysis herein showcases, cooperation—not conflict—has been the precedent in international water disputes, and the case of the GERD is no different. To fully comprehend this, a fundamental understanding of international water disputes is required.

To begin, Homer-Dixon (1994) was among the first to suggest that water scarcity, coupled with transboundary river disputes, has the potential to drive increased hostilities and interstate conflict—especially when the countries involved have the ability to respond militarily.[279] Other scholars, researchers, and commentators have advanced similar contentions throughout the years. Klare (2001) notably discussed transnational watercourses as a "chronic source of tension" between actors; when allocation of water changes, tensions rise and "reach a breaking point" where cordial diplomatic and political processes fall to pieces.[280] The eventuality is conflict between opposing sides. The rationale for thinking stems from a perception that increased consumption is linked to

---

[277] Nasr and Neef, "Ethiopia's Challenge to Egyptian Hegemony in the Nile River Basin," 969.

[278] For more on "water wars" see Starr, "Water Wars," 17–36; Gleick, "Water and Conflict," 79, Klare, *Resource Wars,* 144–145.

[279] Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict," 19.

[280] Klare, *Resource Wars*, 146–147.

scarcity and that scarcity drives competition between actors—in this case states. As consumption and competition persist, finite resources dwindle, and acrimony eventually provokes conflict. A closer look, however, suggests this may be an altogether inaccurate presumption.

Both Homer-Dixon and Klare paint extraordinarily gloomy pictures of the interaction between states when issues of water scarcity emerge. States are presented as belligerent and unrestrained, and conflict is described as inevitable. The reality, however, is somewhat different. To begin, it must be noted that in the post-World War II era, violent conflict has been a phenomenon which has persisted in the "Third World" but predominantly at the intra- versus interstate levels.[281] As Figure 3 highlights, conflict between states has lessened considerably over time, with outright wars being mediated by international organizations like the UN. As such, the backdrop of the discourse on the GERD, or really any other international dispute, is one of increased interstate cooperation and dialogue.

[281] Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict," 5; Mohammed Ayoob, "State Making, State Breaking, and State Failure," 127.

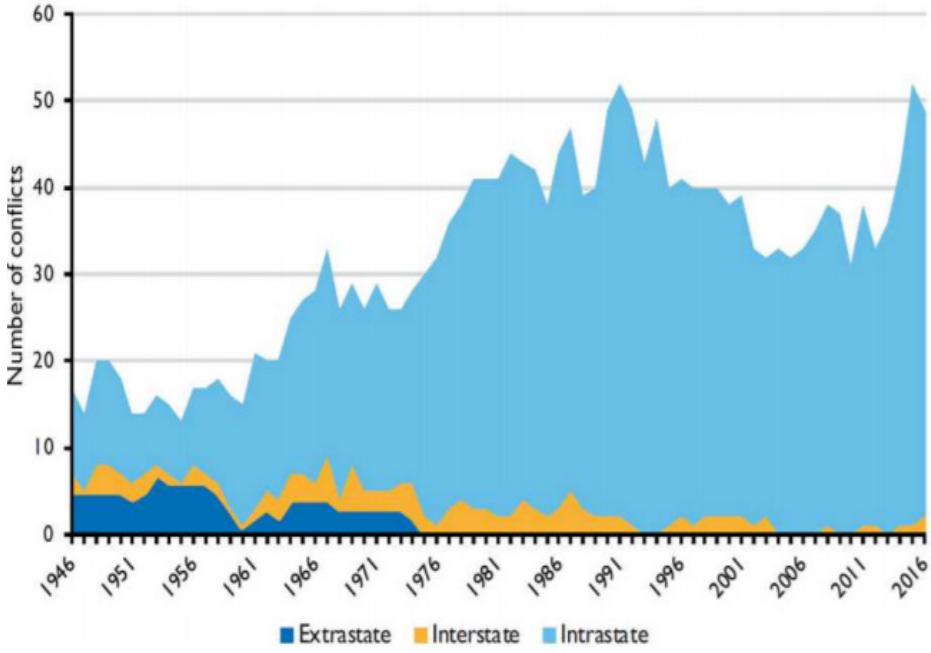

Figure 3. Interstate versus Intrastate conflict, 1946–2016[282]

In evaluating international contestations over water, it becomes evident disputes over water rights have not been associated with the onset of violence conflict between states.[283] In fact, throughout the history of wars between nations, even stretching back hundreds of years, there have been no substantial examples of conflict or mobilization of forces occurring on the basis of contending water interests.[284] In 2003, Yoffe, Wolf, and Giordano even questioned the very legitimacy linking water to international conflict.[285] After an exhaustive review of relevant cases, they concluded such assertions were altogether unfounded: "dependence on freshwater resources for agricultural or energy

[282] Source: Kendra Dupuy, Scott Gates, Håvard M Nygård, Ida Rudolfsen, Siri Aas Rustad, Håvard Strand and Henrik Urdal, *Trends in Armed Conflict, 1946–2016* (Zurich: Center for Security Studies, 2017), www.css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/articles/article.html/a7992888-34fc-44e6-8176-2fcb3aada995/pdf.

[283] Gleditsch, Furlong, Hegre, Lacina, and Owen, "Conflicts Over Shared Rivers," 379; Wolf, "'Water Wars' and Water Reality."

[284] Wolf, "'Water Wars' and Water Reality."; Uitto and Wolf, "Water Wars."

[285] Yoffe, Wolf, and Giordano, "Conflict and Cooperation Over International Freshwater Resources," 1111.

needs showed no significant association with conflict."[286] Gebreluel (2014) likewise noted how water wars were markedly absent from the historical narrative of interstate interactions:

> Despite the many threats and warnings from both analysts and politicians, the empirical evidence for inter-state war over water is very clear: several statistical studies have illustrated the historical anomaly of water wars. The International Crisis Behaviour dataset, for example, found 412 incidents of inter-state crises from 1918–1994. In only seven of these cases did it find water to be a central point of dispute, and all seven were minor skirmishes rather than large-scale confrontations.[287]

As such, claims of impending water wars should be met with some degree of skepticism. The prospect of violent conflict lessens all the more when considering external influences on states engaged in a dispute.

From a contemporary perspective, disputes surrounding water have been influenced and managed by international institutions. As Gleick (1993) noted, "The UN has played an important role, through the International Law Commission, in developing guidelines and principles for internationally shared watercourses."[288] Intervention has facilitated increased and peaceful interstate dialogue, ultimately heading off any escalation to "full-scale war."[289] Ultimately, the historical narrative lacks a precedent of water war and the current international environment showcases an inclination towards intervention and cooperation rather than conflict. These dynamics hold true in the case of the GERD as well.

Ethiopia and Egypt have consistently maintained a strategic dialogue on the contentious issue of the GERD. Negotiations have led to the Declaration of Principles (DoP) and the Khartoum Agreement.[290] Additionally, continued progress by Egypt to

---

[286] Ibid., 1124.

[287] Gebreluel, "Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam: Ending Africa's Oldest Geopolitical Rivalry?" 31.

[288] Gleick, "Water and Conflict," 110.

[289] Tir and Stinnett, "The Institutional Design of Riparian Treaties," 608.

[290] Salman, "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam," 512, 527.

utilize water more efficiently indicates an intent to carry on with negotiation efforts.[291] This cooperative behavior follows a larger general pattern of regional cooperation along the Nile. There is a precedent of Ethiopia and Egypt collaborating with the other nine countries who share the Nile; the Cooperative Framework for Agreement (CFA), the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), and the Nile Basin River Commission all attest to this.[292] In fact, even though Egypt withdrew from negotiations in the past, it subsequently returned to the table rather than resorting to war.[293] As such, cooperation, not conflict, has been the precedent. This was true even during times of increased antipathy.

It is important to note the practice of continuing a strategic dialogue despite the inflammatory rhetoric of state leaders. As an example, during the tensest period in 2013—when the Nile waters were initially diverted in anticipation of the larger excavation project—leaders lobbed accusations and engaged in boisterous saber-rattling. Bellicose statements, however, served distinct internal political needs and should be understood as nothing more than political pandering. Indeed, there are noticeable differences in tone at the international level. In 2013, then-President Mohammed Morsi is quoted as saying: "We do not want a war, but we are keeping all options open."[294] News outlets clearly emphasized the latter half of this statement, and few, if any, focused on the former. While the statement seems to suggest the potential for conflict, deeper analysis of the GERD dispute during this critical period reveals that armed conflict was extremely unlikely.[295] Though internally, rhetoric appeared provocative, externally, meetings between the two states continued to take place, and this ultimately suggests Egypt and Ethiopia valued

---

291 Yayew Genet Chekol, "Dynamics for Shifting the Ethio-Egyptian Hydro Political Relations," *International Journal of Social Sciences Studies* 6, no. 8 (2018): 69, https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v6i8.3492.

292 Kagwanja, "Calming the Waters," 321–325; Gebreluel, "Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam: Ending Africa's Oldest Geopolitical Rivalry?" 27–29.

293 Barfi, *Egypt's New Realism: Challenges Under Sisi*, 70.

294 Tom Perry and Alastair Macdonald, "Egypt 'War' Talk Raises Ethiopia Nile Dam Stakes," *Reuters*, June 10, 2013, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-egypt-nile-war/egypt-war-talk-raises-ethiopia-nile-dam-stakes-idUSBRE95911020130610.

295 Gebreluel, "Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam: Ending Africa's Oldest Geopolitical Rivalry?" 26.

dialogue over resorting to conflict. As cooperation was the persistent, legitimate precedent, it becomes clear the likelihood of violence was (and continues to be) low.

Contrary to the popular contention advanced by alarmists, transboundary water resources promote increased dialogue based on shared interests, and ultimately lead to increased cooperation and accord—not conflict.[296] As such, it is clear how Ethiopia could move forward with the GERD project: because the potential for conflict with Egypt never truly existed. From the outset, the existential threat of war was negligible, because large-scale, interstate conflict existed as an aberration in the post-World War II, liberal international order. The prospect of war further diminished because conflict instigated by contestation over water rights was (and remains) inconsistent with the historical narrative of interstate interactions. Ultimately, disputes over transboundary waterways have been tempered by international influences seeking to promote continued, peaceful cooperation between riparian states. With such an accommodating external dynamic—an environment free from the fear of reprisal or retribution—Ethiopia simply has had the maneuver space to continue with the project undeterred.

D. CONCLUSION

This chapter showcased how Egypt's power waned, how Ethiopian power grew, and how the prospect of interstate conflict was nonexistent. Collectively, these external conditions have produced an environment where Ethiopia could move forward with constructing the GERD. Without Egypt's weakened state, the status quo would still reflect Egyptian interests over the rights of upstream riparian states. Without Ethiopia as a distinct regional power, Ethiopia would not be able to exert influence on states throughout East Africa. Finally, if a genuine fear of international conflict actually existed, the dynamics between the two states would be altogether different. What is ultimately observed throughout the dispute is offensive rhetoric as a tool of internal political mobilization, but strong signals of cooperation internationally.

296 Ibid., 33.

To offer one final observation, the GERD is noteworthy because it exists at the intersection between increased unilateralism and regional cooperation—two dynamics ushered in by a weakened Egypt. From a unilateral vantage, Ethiopia moved forward with planning when Egypt's power had waned. From a regional cooperation perspective, the GERD was central to regional developmental efforts. Indeed, as one analyst noted, prior to the initial announcement of the GERD in 2011, the dam was already included in the African Union's Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), a continent-wide plan to integrate sources of energy for collective use throughout Africa.[297] This intersection between unilateralism and regional cooperation is unique, and ultimately showcases how Egypt's diminished preeminence, coupled with Ethiopia's bolstered standing, allowed for initial announcement and continued progress on the GERD.

[297] Maupin, *Energy Dialogues in Africa*, 12.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

IV. CONCLUSIONS

A. SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS

This thesis examined internal and external conditions affecting Ethiopia's drive towards construction and completion of the GERD. It highlighted internal political and economic factors influencing Ethiopia's decision-making process and showcased external dynamics which have afforded Ethiopia the opportunity to move forward with the project. As a result of analysis, two arguments emerged. Both arguments are addressed below.

1. Internal Conditions

The first argument that materialized was that internal political considerations significantly influenced announcement and initiation of the GERD. The second chapter, which discussed internal political and economic conditions, repeatedly showcased the centrality of the state in guiding economic affairs. A developmental focus, coupled with elite dominance over economic planning and management, prompted extraordinary change in the state, and ultimately led to construction of the GERD. Early on, the centralized state assumed the role of developing the economy and instituted sweeping reforms with little consideration for affected outgroups. The state strengthened over time and implemented increasingly aggressive developmental agendas, which even came to include resettlement programs. In the modern era, when state power became absolute under the EPRDF regime, the incontestable dictates of the government focused squarely on internal development. While this produced a measure of growth, it also necessitated further intervention to maintain momentum. Subsequent developmental policies codified growth as the overriding imperative of the state and the government targeted infrastructure—and moreover, energy production—for industrialization purposes. As a result, damming became essential to the developmental logic of the state. Consequently, initial construction of the GERD was bound to the developmental state, control over economic planning and management, and, the government's ambition and capacity to transform the state. Figure 4 illustrates the argument more succinctly.

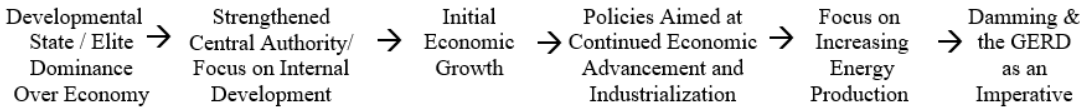

Figure 4. Internal Conditions Argument Map

It is important to note that improved economic conditions added to the overall ability of the state to move forward with construction of the dam. Indeed, economic growth produced greater levels of government investment in infrastructure. Furthermore, an increased availability of funding bolstered to the government's capacity to sustain the project. Improved economic conditions and additional funding, however, did not prompt the GERD. Internal political considerations were the antecedent to an improved economic state, and as such, political considerations—not economic conditions—were the initial drivers of the GERD.

2. External Conditions

The second argument was that external dynamics provided complimentary and accommodating conditions, which ultimately helped propel the project forward. To begin, it is difficult to suggest external pressures alone drove construction of the GERD—that is to say, absent the internal thrust by the Ethiopian government. It is however, relatively easy to see how external considerations afforded Ethiopia the opportunity to continue with domestic and regional aspirations. This argument is described in detail below but are also concisely depicted in Figure 5.

As a core external consideration, Egyptian power, the most preeminent power along the Nile, weakened considerably in the years leading up to the announcement of the GERD. Egypt's historic hydro-hegemony ended, regional cooperation supplanted Egyptian influence in Africa, and an inability to compel adherence to colonial era treaties fostered increased use and development by upstream riparian states. By the time internal upheaval and revolution turned the state's attention inward, Egypt's regional power had already subsided.

At the same time Egypt's influence waned, Ethiopia became a more prominent actor in the region. Political and economic affairs were controlled by IGAD, a regional coordination organization inherently dominated by Ethiopia. Furthermore, as an anchor of stability, strategic partner of the West, and overall provisioner of security in East Africa, Ethiopia gained regional prestige, and moreover, international legitimacy. As such, Ethiopia became more significant in East Africa, and this bolstered standing provided the latitude necessary to project internal developmental ambitions throughout the region.

Both of these changes—the increase and decrease in power—occurred against a backdrop of subsiding interstate conflict. In the post-WWII, liberal international order, the prospect of interstate violence decreased substantially. International institutions, dedicated to limiting the outbreak of conflict, oversaw and managed transboundary water disputes. Coupling this accommodating international environment with the precedent of cooperation in water disputes, there was no legitimate fear of war between Ethiopia and Egypt. This external condition added to Ethiopia's expanding maneuver space and ultimately allowed for greater unilateral action.

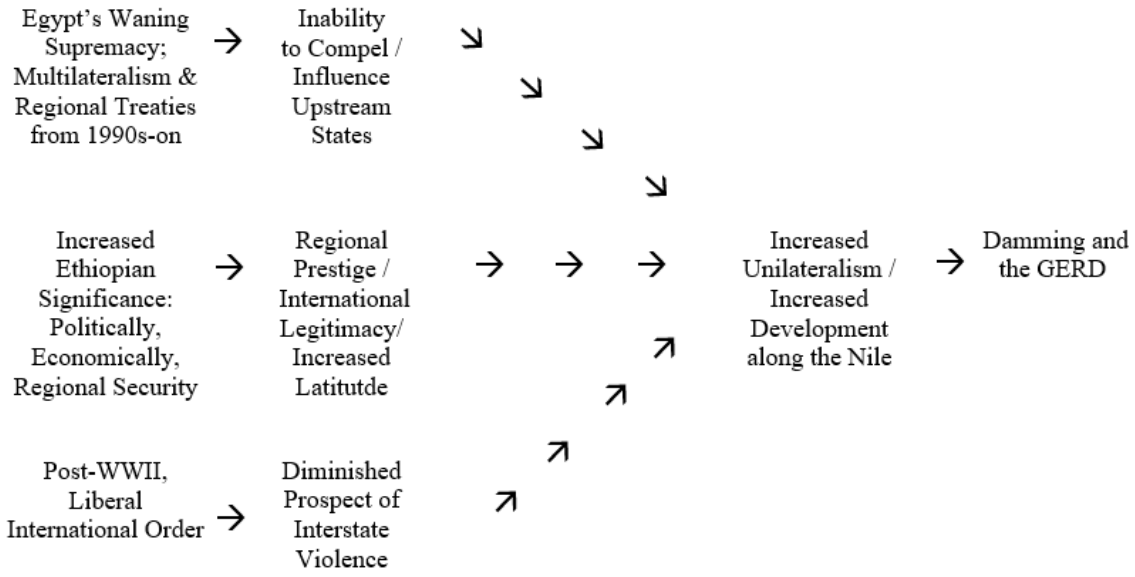

Figure 5. External Conditions Argument Map

3. The Confluence

A confluence between internal and external considerations must be noted, as Ethiopia's ambition to become a regional provisioner of electricity transcended the realm of domestic affairs. The internal developmental agenda of the state necessarily met with complimentary and accommodating external dynamics and momentum on the project was sustained by shifting regional power dynamics. Had Egypt maintained veto power over upstream construction—and moreover, been able to resort to violent conflict—Ethiopian unilateralism would have been restricted. Ultimately, the mission of the Ethiopian government, to transform the state, initiated from within. The capacity to sustain progress was inherently buttressed by external conditions.

B. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

From a theoretical perspective, analysis of the GERD dispute lends credence to the pragmatists' perspective on water conflict. It also showcases, however, that the literature on water conflict needs to give more attention to domestic political considerations, which include state structure and ideology. While the case generally conforms to water cooperation over conflict, the evaluation of the GERD project highlights how internal politics have the ability to drive leaders to adopt an aggressive stance on water projects—even if international cooperation is the dominant behavior noted. As such, the case has significant theoretical implications.

To begin, the GERD seemingly represents a contemporary manifestation of the water war arguments presented by Homer-Dixon and Klare. Water scarcity exists is at the center of the dispute, the contention is over the Nile—a transboundary watercourse—and both Egypt and Ethiopia maintain capable standing militaries. Furthermore, both countries have a record of resorting to war to accomplish political ends. Egypt leveraged military power to counter Israel on several occasions, and Ethiopia deployed forces to contend with Eritrean and Somali rivals. Add to these conditions with the rhetoric of political entrepreneurs in Ethiopia and Egypt and it may even seem logical to assume relations are

in a "diplomatic downward spiral."[298] A closer look, however, reveals something quite different.

In accordance with the pragmatists' understanding international water disputes, the case of the GERD conforms to theories of water cooperation, not water war. As suggested by theorists, the dispute over the Nile waters increased the levels of interactions between Egypt and Ethiopia, and the states responded with increased diplomacy rather than resorting to violent conflict. Even when relations were most strained, during the initial diversion of the Nile waters in 2013, communication persisted. Ultimately, cooperative frameworks like the Declaration of Principles (DoP) and the Khartoum Document ensued, and at present, the states continue to showcase an inclination towards cooperation. In a November 2018 meeting with the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Egypt's Prime Minister emphasized the desire to "increase the level of cooperation between the two countries…to ensure the fulfillment of the aspirations of the two brotherly peoples in the development and preservation of their water interests."[299] As such, the case of the GERD demonstrates the pragmatists' perspective on cooperation over conflict.

The discourse on the GERD also showcases that the literature on water conflict needs to focus more attention on the internal political condition of states involved. Ideology (mission) and structure (capability)—introduced in Mkandawire's definition of the developmental state—are critical to understanding internal decision-making processes, as well as external actions. Though international behaviors generally reflect cooperation over conflict, domestic considerations can push states to adopt a more aggressive stance on water projects. This is the case, at present, in Ethiopia. Indeed, the GERD is the result of a decades-long push to consolidate power, institute a developmental ideology, and strengthen the capacity of the state. With a centralized mission to advance the economic condition of the state—manifestly evident in the ideology of revolutionary democracy—

---

[298] Daniel Benaim and Michael Wahid Hanna, "Water Wars on the Nile: How Water Scarcity and Middle Eastern Influence Are Reshaping Northeast Africa," *Foreign Affairs*, August 9, 2018, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/2018-08-09/water-wars-nile.

[299] "We Are Committed to Follow-Up, Continuation of GERD Talks: Ethiopian PM," *Egypt Independent*, November 18, 2018, https://ww.egyptindependent.com/we-are-committed-to-follow-up-continuation-of-gerd-talks-ethiopian-pm/.

and a capability to control all aspects of life—to include economic planning and management—the thrust towards completion of the dam is altogether internal. As such, internal political considerations must be noted as central to the theories on water conflict and cooperation.

C. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis investigated the dispute surrounding the construction of the GERD. In doing so, it touched on water scarcity as an environmental stress triggering increased tension between Ethiopia and Egypt. While analysis suggested the likelihood of interstate violence is low, the dispute should not be minimized. Egypt and Ethiopia have proficient militaries, are anchors of stability in Africa, and receive exorbitant amounts of U.S. aid; Egypt alone represents the second-largest recipient of military aid after Israel.[300] Above all else, there has never been an infrastructure project of this magnitude in Africa. While there are extraordinary benefits associated with the project, there are also potential hazards. Indeed, filling the reservoir will take five to fifteen years and could potentially displace 3,700 – 20,000 people during the process.[301] Given these factors, it is critically important that the U.S. monitor the discourse, and intervene accordingly, as any level of increased volatility would inevitably distract U.S. attention away from contingency operations in the Middle East and Africa.

The below sections provide policy recommendations and potential courses of action for Egypt, Ethiopia, and outside actors. Recommendations focus on mitigating the causes of water scarcity and bolstering cooperative efforts between the two states. Prior to reviewing recommendations, what is needed is clarity in understanding the link between water scarcity and the GERD. As such, the following paragraphs showcase the actual connection between the two, before moving forward with recommendations.

---

[300] Jared Malsin, "U.S. Releases $195 Million in Military Aid to Egypt," *Wall Street Journal*, July 25, 2018, https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-releases-195-million-in-military-aid-to-egypt-1532553758.

[301] Asiedu, *The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD),* 2; Jacey Fortin, "Dam Rising in Ethiopia Stirs Hope and Tension," *The New York Times*, October 11, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/12/world/dam-rising-in-ethiopia-stirs-hope-and-tension.html; "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Fact Sheet," International Rivers, January 24, 2014, https://www.internationalrivers.org/resources/the-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam-fact-sheet-8213.

In analyzing the link between water scarcity and the GERD, it becomes manifestly evident that the issue of water scarcity is internal to Egypt, preventable, and altogether manageable. Furthermore, it is separate and distinct from any potential effects stemming from the GERD. This is because the GERD is not the source of water scarcity, but rather a potential complicator—adding to insecurities already present in Egypt. The GERD has the potential to exacerbate water scarcity in Egypt, but it is important to remember the GERD has not been completed. As such, it cannot be labeled the source. In fact, closer examination of the situation reveals that population growth and misuse of water resources are the main contributors to scarcity in Egypt. Consequently, mitigating tensions must start with management of internal issues in Egypt.

What must first be addressed is the effect of population growth. From 2006 to 2017 Egypt's population ballooned from 73 million to 104.5 million; it is expected to reach 128 million by 2030.[302] This has important implications for the state. With a growing population, the math simply works against Egypt. Egypt's water availability has already dropped from 2,500 cubic meters per person in 1947 to around 600 cubic meters in 2013.[303] (It is important to note the United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs (UNDESA) defines water scarcity as levels below 1,000 cubic meters per person, with absolute scarcity defined as less than 500 cubic meters per person.[304]) As such, 600 cubic meters per person, subdivided among an ever-growing population, will inevitably lead to absolute scarcity regardless of any future effects stemming from the GERD.

Simple water scarcity is not the sole issue in Egypt. A growing population necessarily requires greater foodstuffs for sustainment. While Egypt has historically imported around 50% of its food supply to contend with increased demand, it has

---

302 Karasapan and Shah, "Egypt's Population: Boom Then Bust?"

303 Jonathan Rashad, "The World's Longest River is in Trouble," *The Washington Post*, March 22, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/theworldpost/wp/2018/03/22/egypt/?utm_term=.1b91fff9985a; "Egypt's Per Capita Water Share Falls 60 Pct in 66 Years: CAPMAS," *Ahram Online*, May 21, 2014, http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/101910.aspx.

304 "Water Scarcity," United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs (UNDESA), accessed August 9, 2018, http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/scarcity.shtml.

repeatedly showcased the intent to expand agricultural efforts domestically.[305] Land reclamation in Egypt, the process of converting desert lands into farmlands, was attempted at various times throughout the past, with a limited degree of success.[306] Despite negligible returns, the government pledged to continue and even bolster these efforts through 2016.[307] Land reclamation requires extensive irrigation networks and wastes an exorbitant amount of water.[308] While population growth has already impacted aggregate supplies of water, increased use for agricultural purposes imposes an excessive strain on already limited resources. With 97% of Egypt's freshwater coming from Nile, and more than 80% of that water dedicated to agriculture enterprises, little is left for the ever-expanding population.[309] Ultimately, mitigating tensions must first begin with adjustments to internal policies in Egypt prior to engaging in a strategic dialogue with Ethiopia. This is central to the recommendations provided below.

Recommendations

To begin, Egypt, as the state predominantly affected by water scarcity, should shift internal policies and practices as a gesture of good will and in an effort to maintain positive relations with Ethiopia. Egypt should import more agricultural necessities, effectively offsetting those enterprises which consume the majority of water resources in-country. A "virtual water" mentality—importing rather than growing domestically—is critically important to maintaining adequate levels of water in Egypt.[310] After internal adjustments, Egypt should take on the role of initiator in strategic dialogues with Ethiopia. This would showcase unwavering commitment to the cooperative process and could potentially

---

305 Ashok Swain, "Challenges for Water Sharing in The Nile Basin: Changing Geo-Politics and Changing Climate," *Hydrological Sciences Journal* 56, no. 4 (2011): 693, http://doi.org/10.1080/02626667.2011.577037.

306 United States Department of Agriculture, *Egypt: Egyptian Land Reclamation Efforts*, Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN) Report, 16 May 2016, https://www.fas.usda.gov/data/egypt-egyptian-land-reclamation-efforts.

307 Ibid.

308 Ibid.

309 Di Nunzio, *Conflict on The Nile*, 4.

310 Allan, "Hydro-Peace in the Middle East," 255–256.

improve upon current levels of engagement. After showing a level of steadfastness, safe-filling practices should be addressed.

Ethiopia, for its part, should consider reservoir-filling practices that incorporate periodic releases of water, so the GERD does not greatly harm flow to downstream riparian neighbors.[311] Additionally, as unilateralism is antithetical to cooperation and also provokes mistrust, Ethiopia should seek increased engagement with Egypt and remain holistically transparent in all GERD dealings.

With regard to the U.S., it is in the interest of the U.S. to strengthen the dialogue between the two states. The U.S. should offer increased incentives for cooperation, or at a bare minimum, attach conditionality to the support already provided to recipients. Aid to both countries is considerable and could be used as leverage to provoke greater levels of cooperation or concession. Ultimately, assuring a peaceful dialogue affords the United States the opportunity to continue focusing on more pressing operations throughout the Middle East and Africa.

Finally, it is paramount international agencies provide support to Ethiopia and Egypt, in an effort to further incentivize cooperation. International institutions should start by helping Egypt produce sustainable goals on water use and consumption. The United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) should support projects like desalinization plants in Egypt and aid efforts to leverage imports over agricultural expansion. Additionally, international agencies should facilitate exchanges between the states and promote compromise and coordination during reservoir-filling years.

Overall, the states involved will continue to pursue cooperation if properly incentivized. Points of contentions are not insurmountable and can be overcome with practical compromise and coordination. Indeed, international expectations impose a responsibility on Ethiopia to not harm downstream riparian neighbors during construction

---

311 Kevin G. Wheeler, Mohammed Basheer, Zelalem T. Mekonnen, Sami O. Eltoum, Azeb Mersha, Gamal M. Abdo, Edith A. Zagona, Jim W. Hall & Simon J. Dadson, "Cooperative Filling Approaches for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam," *Water International*, 41 no. 4, (2016): 611–634, http://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2016.1177698.

and filling, and this constitutes a mechanism for bringing the two states back to the table for cooperation. Until Egypt fixes internal issues, however, the GERD will be looked upon as a potential exacerbator, because the ultimate source of scarcity is internal to Egypt.

D. GAPS IN RESEARCH AND AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

As is evident from the review of literature and above analysis, there is insufficient data on Ethiopia's decisive choice to move forward with construction and completion of the GERD. There is certainly a host of information on developmental theories, internal and external dynamics influencing Ethiopia's decision-making, and water conflict as a general topic of study. To be sure, this information added credibility to the hypotheses and arguments presented in this study. What is absent from the research, however, is a causal link between the dependent variable, construction of the dam, and a definitive independent variable, something which set the plan into motion—or at the very least, tipped the scales in favor of construction. Perhaps the best way to interpret this is that the holistic situation is complex and cannot be boiled down to a simplistic x → y construct. Rather, the "why now" may be a product of numerous or overlapping influences. This is not to suggest an independent variable does not exist; rather, that it is altogether difficult to isolate a distinct, singular driver of the GERD.

Linked to the issue of highlighting an independent variable, there was a great of difficulty in establishing legitimate government intent. For the most part, this was due to Ethiopia being a relatively closed society. Information is limited, or biased, under the inherently authoritarian regime in Ethiopia. Media outlets are influenced by the central government, and the state not only suppresses information, but harasses journalists, shuts down news companies, and enacts measures to control messaging on all matters of great import.[312] As such, there was no smoking gun with regard to rationale. The government did not openly discuss the timing of the GERD or make overt statements about an intent to become a regional hegemon. Rather, the arguments presented were constructed based on

[312] Mulatu Alemeyehu Moges, "Ethiopian Journalism from Self Censoring to Silence: A Case of Reporting on Internal Conflict," *Journal for Communications Studies* 10, no. 1 (2017): 113, https://www.essachess.com/index.php/jcs/article/download/374/409.

imperfect, available data. Even when discussing the announcement of the GERD, which seemingly showcased a measure of opportunism, without inside knowledge or first-hand accounts from Ethiopian leaders confirming this, timing can be relegated to mere coincidence. As such it is difficult to gauge legitimate intent from the available sources of information. More information is needed.

With regard to further study, this thesis merely scratched the surface of describing how internal developmental ambitions influence decision-making, and moreover, offset concerns over international conflict. More research must be conducted on the revolutionary democracy, the distinct developmental ideology found in Ethiopia. This should start with a reevaluation of primary sources—speeches or statements made by key officials—and secondary sources like scholarly articles, governmental or agency reports, and newspapers. Additionally, in an effort to add analytic rigor to the process, field research should be conducted. Researchers should interview government officials in Ethiopia. While this would present some difficulty, as Ethiopia is a closed society, any insight that could be gleaned from officials or bureaucrats would add to the overall understanding internal intent. Interviews and surveys should include questions about the intent of government, given explicit statements found within core policies like the *GTP*. Questions should be posed to bureaucrats in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development in Ethiopia, and if possible, to Abraham Tekeste, the Minister of Finance and Economic Cooperation. In the end, the intent is to gain an understanding of how internal developmental ambitions affect decisions with regional implications. Interviews would provide a critical perspective.

Another concept primed for further study is performance legitimacy. The historical narrative presented in this thesis showcased a number of regime changes before the EPRDF came to power. After this, Ethiopia experienced a measure of political stability. Logic suggests that if the government was deemed illegitimate, regime change—as was repeatedly noted in the past—would have occurred. Rather than regime change, however, the EPRDF government has persisted. Furthermore, the government recently transitioned, and even elected a prime minister from an opposition group. This occurred under the construct of the existing one-party state. This leaves a number of questions unanswered. Is

the government perceived as legitimate, and if so, by whom? These questions must be answered, as the persistence of the EPRDF governance model is linked to revolutionary democracy and a developmental agenda which includes completion of the GERD.

As scholarship on governmental legitimacy in Ethiopia is limited, investigation should go beyond qualitative analysis of existing research. Enquiry should include evaluation of available data from surveys—those which were previously accomplished by organizations like Afrobarometer. In doing so, general perceptions on legitimacy can be unearthed. After this, field research should be conducted to provide supporting evidence for these suppositions. Again, as interviews and surveys provide the best means of gauging perceptions, engaging government officials, bureaucrats, and the general populace is needed.

The same line of questioning should be used for all parties or groups questioned. By asking similar questions about legitimacy to disparate groups, it is possible to gain an understanding of each group's perception. Ultimately, the question of internal conditions fostering construction of the GERD is linked to the public's acquiescence to government action. If groups see the government as legitimate, the government persists, and citizens continue to forgo rights and privileges in exchange for continued growth. If they do not view the government as legitimate, this leads to other questions, like the extent to which the government is willing to repress citizens to achieve developmental goals. Either way, analysis of performance legitimacy provides an avenue for greater awareness of the internal decision-making processes in Ethiopia. For this reason, it is a worthwhile venture.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Abbink, Jon. "Dam Controversies: Contested Governance and Developmental Discourse on the Ethiopian Omo River Dam." *Social Anthropology* 20, no. 2 (May 2012): 125–144. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8676.2012.00196.x.

Abegaz, Berhanu. *Aid and Reform in Ethiopia.* World Bank Project 35725, August 1999. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/716401468029717101/pdf/357250ET0Aid010reform0ethiopia2.pdf.

Abizadeh, Arash. "Hobbes on the Causes of War: A Disagreement Theory." *The American Political Science Review* 105, no. 2 (2011): 298–315. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41495067.

Abtew, Wossenu and Shimelis Behailu Dessu. "Financing the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam." In *The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile,* 161–169. Switzerland: Springer, 2018. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97094-3_11.

Ademo, Mohammad and Jeffrey Smith. "Ethiopia Is Falling Apart." *Foreign Policy*, January 11, 2018. https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/01/11/ethiopia-is-falling-apart/.

Alam, Undala. "Questioning the Water Wars Rationale: A Case Study of the Indus Waters Treaty." *The Geographical Journal,* 168 (2002): 341–353. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0016-7398.2002.00060.x.

Allan, John Anthony. "Hydro-Peace in the Middle East: Why No Water Wars? A Case Study of the Jordan River Basin." *SAIS Review* 22, no. 2 (2002): 255–272. http://doi.org/10.1353/sais.2002.0027.

Ali, Bashir. "Under the Radar: Ethiopia's Economic Growth Offers Opportunities and Challenges." Global Risk Insights, February 4, 2018. https://globalriskinsights.com/2018/02/ethiopia-economic-growth-opportunities-challenges/.

Arriola, Leonardo R., and Terrence Lyons. "The 100% Election." *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 1 (2016): 76–88. https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Arriola-27-1.pdf.

Asiedu, Michael. *The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD): Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan Push for Cooperation,* Report in Global Political Trends Center (GPoT), (February 2018): 1–6. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep14135.

Ayoob, Mohammed. “State Making, State Breaking, and State Failure.” In *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, edited by Chester A Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, 127-142. Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2001.

Bahgat, Gawdat. *Egypt in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring What Lies Ahead?* Mt Edgecombe, South Africa: African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, 2015. https://accord.org.za/conflict-trends/egypt-aftermath-arab-spring/.

Barfi, Barak. *Egypt’s New Realism: Challenges Under Sisi.* Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2018. https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus156-Barfi.pdf.

Bartle, Alison. “Hydropower Potential and Development Activities.” *Energy Policy* 30, no. 14 (2002): 1231–1239. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0301-4215(02)00084- 8.

Bayissa, Bekele. “A Review of the Ethiopian Energy Policy and Biofuels Strategy.” In *Digest of Ethiopia’s National Policies, Strategies and Programs,* edited by Taye Assefa, 209–238. Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies (FSS), 2008.

Benaim, Daniel and Michael Wahid Hanna. “Water Wars on the Nile: How Water Scarcity and Middle Eastern Influence Are Reshaping Northeast Africa.” *Foreign Affairs*, August 9, 2018. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/2018-08-09/water-wars-nile.

Berhanu, Kassahun and Colin Poulton. “The Political Economy of Agricultural Extension Policy in Ethiopia: Economic Growth and Political Control.” *Development Policy Review* 32, no. 2 (2014): s197-s213. https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.12082.

Berhe, Mulugeta Gebrehiwot. “The Ethiopian Post-Transition Security Sector Reform Experience: Building a National Army from a Revolutionary Democratic Army.” *African Security Review* 26, no. 2 (2017): 161–179. http://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2017.1297581.

Benaim, Daniel and Michael Wahid Hanna. "Water Wars on the Nile: How Water Scarcity and Middle Eastern Influence Are Reshaping Northeast Africa." *Foreign Affairs*, August 9, 2018. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/2018-08-09/water-wars-nile.

Beyene, Getachew. “The Challenges and Prospects of Electricity Access in Ethiopia.” Master’s Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 2018. http://etd.aau.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/17607/1/Getachew%20Beyene.pdf

Birru, Lubie. “Abyssinian Colonialism as the Genesis of the Crisis in The Horn: Oromo Resistance (1855-1913).” *Northeast African Studies* 2/3, no. 3/1 (1980): 93–98. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43660058.

Cascão, Ana Elisa. “Ethiopia–Challenges to Egyptian Hegemony in the Nile Basin.” *Water Policy* 10, no. 2 (November 2008): 13-28. http://doi.org/10.2166/wp.2008.206.

Cascão, Ana Elisa. “Changing Power Relations in the Nile River Basin: Unilateralism Vs. Cooperation?” *Water Alternatives* 2, no. 2 (2009): 245-268.

Cascão, Ana Elisa and Alan Nicol. “GERD: New Norms of Cooperation in the Nile Basin?” *Water International* 41, no. 4, (2016): 550–573. http://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2016.118076.

Chekol, Yayew Genet. “Dynamics for Shifting the Ethio-Egyptian Hydro Political Relations.” *International Journal of Social Sciences Studies* 6, no. 8 (2018): 67–72. https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v6i8.3492.

Chen, Huiyi and Ashok Swain. “The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: Evaluating Its Sustainability Standard and Geopolitical Significance.” *Energy Development Frontier* 3, no. 1 (March 2014): 11–19.

Chinigo, David. “Decentralization and Agrarian Transformation in Ethiopia: Extending the Power of the Federal State.” *Critical African Studies* 6, no. 1 (2014): 40–56. http://doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2014.853986

Choucri, Nazli and Robert C. North. *Nations in Conflict: National Growth and International Violence.* San Francisco, CA: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1975.

Cilliers, Jakkie, Julia Schünemann, and Jonathan D. Moyer. *Power and influence in Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria and South Africa.* Pretoria, South Africa: Institute for Security Studies, 2015. https://issafrica.org/research/papers/power-and-influence-in-africa-algeria-egypt-ethiopia-nigeria-and-south-africa.

Clapham, Christopher. “Ethiopian Development: The Politics of Emulation.” *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 44, no. 1 (2006): 137–150. http://doi.org/10.1080/14662040600624536.

Clapham, Christopher. “The Ethiopian Developmental State.” *Third World Quarterly* 39, no. 6 (2018): 1151–1165. http://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1328982.

Cooley, John K. “The War Over Water.” *Foreign Policy*, no. 54 (1984): 3, http://doi.org/10.2307/1148352.

Copley, Gregory R. “Egypt’s Instability Triggers a New Proxy War Against Ethiopia and its Allies.” OilPrice.com, June 7, 2013. https://oilprice.com/Geopolitics/Africa/Egypts-Instability-Triggers-a-New-Proxy-War-Against-Ethiopia-and-its-Allies.html.

Cliffe, Lionel. “Capitalism or Feudalism? The Famine in Ethiopia.” *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 1 (1974): 35–36.

Cohen, John M. “Ethiopia After Haile Selassie: The Government Land Factor.” *African Affairs* 72, no. 289 (1973): 365–382. http://www.jstor.org/stable/721148.

Crummey, Donald. “Abyssinian Feudalism.” *Past & Present*, no. 89 (1980): 115–138. http://www.jstor.org/stable/650660.

Danjibo, Nathaniel D. “The Aftermath of the Arab Spring and Its Implication for Peace and Development in the Sahel and Sub-Saharan Africa.” *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 35, no. 2 (2013):16-34. https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/Legacy/sitefiles/file/46/1322/05danjibopp1634.pdf.

Davis, John. “Introduction: Africa’s Road to the War on Terror.” In *Africa and the War on Terrorism*, edited by John Davis, 1–16. London: Routledge, 2007. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9781317184515.

Dersso, Solomon A. “Peacekeeping Contributor Profile: Ethiopia.” Providing for Peacekeeping. Accessed October 26, 2018. www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/2014/04/03/contributor-profile-ethiopia/.

de Waal, Alex. “The Theory and Practice of Meles Zenawi.” *African Affairs*, Volume 112, no. 446 (January 2013): 148–155. https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/ads081.

Di Nunzio, Jack. *Conflict on The Nile: The Future of Transboundary Water Disputes Over the World’s Longest River*. Future Directions International, Strategic Analysis Paper, November 25, 2013. http://www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/conflict-on-the-nile-the-future-of-transboundary-water-disputes-over-the-world-s-longest-river/.

Deressa, Temesgen T. and John Mukum Mbaku. “While Egypt Struggles, Ethiopia Builds over the Blue Nile: Controversies and the Way Forward,” *Brookings Institute* (blog), July 25, 2013. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2013/07/25/while-egytp-struggles-ethiopia-builds-over-the-blue-nile-controversies-and-the-way-forward/.

Dupuy, Kendra, Scott Gates, Håvard M Nygård, Ida Rudolfsen, Siri Aas Rustad, Håvard Strand and Henrik Urdal. *Trends in Armed Conflict, 1946–2016*. Zurich: Center for Security Studies, 2017. www.css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/articles/article.html/a7992888-34fc-44e6-8176-2fcb3aada995/pdf.

"Egypt's Per Capita Water Share Falls 60 Pct in 66 Years: CAPMAS." *Ahram Online*, May 21, 2014. http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/101910.aspx.

Embassy of Ethiopia in Belgium, Brussels. "More than 65% of GERD's Construction Completed." June 4, 2018. https://ethiopianembassy.be/en/2018/06/04/more-than-65-of-gerds-construction-completed/.

Embassy of Sweden. "Energy Report – Ethiopia." September 15, 2016. https://www.business-sweden.se/globalassets/energy-report-ethiopia.pdf.

Engelke, Peter, and Howard Passell. *From the Gulf To The Nile: Water Security in an Arid Region*. Washington, D.C.: Atlantic Council, 2017. www.jstor.org/stable/resrep03704.

Erlich, Haggai. "Identity and Church: Ethiopian– Egyptian Dialogue, 1924 –59." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32 (2000): 23–46. https://www.jstor.org/stable/259534.

Erlich, Haggai. *The Cross and the River: Ethiopia, Egypt, and the Nile*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001.

"Ethiopia Not Ready for Foreign Investment in Telecoms, Banking: President." *Reuters*, April 24, 2018. https://af.reuters.com/article/topnews/idafkbn1hv1k1-ozatp.

Evans, Peter. *Embedded Autonomy: States & Industrial Transformation.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Fantini, Emanuele. *Developmental State, Economic Transformation and Social Diversification in Ethiopia,* ISPI Analysis No. 163. Milan, Italy: Institute for International Political Studies, 2013. https://www.ispionline.it/sites/default/files/pubblicazioni/analysis_163_2013.pdf.

Fantini, Emanuele, Tesfaye Muluneh, and Hermen Smit. "Big Projects, Strong States." In *Water, Technology, and the Nation-State*, edited by Fillippo Menga and Erik Swyngedouw, 65–80. New York: Routledge, 2018.

Fantini, Emanuele and Luca Puddu. "Ethiopia and International Aid: Development Between High Modernism and Exceptional Measures." In *Aid And Authoritarianism in Africa Development Without Democracy*, edited by Tobias Hagmann and Filip Reyntjens, 91–118. Uppsala, Sweden: Nordic Africa Institute, 2016.

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. *Ethiopia's Climate-Resilient Green Economy: Green Economy Strategy*. Addis Ababa: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, 2011. https://www.undp.org/content/dam/ethiopia/docs/Ethiopia%20CRGE.pdf.

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. *Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) 2010/11-2014/15.* Addis Ababa: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, 2010. http://www.iea.org/media/pams/ethiopia/Ethiopia_GTP_2010to2915.pdf.

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. *The Ethiopian Power Sector: A Renewable Future.* Presentation at Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue, Berlin, Germany, March 2017. https://www.energiewende2017.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/betd_2017_bekele_ethiopia.pdf.

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "The Reality of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)." Accessed April 16, 2018. http://www.mfa.gov.et/-/the-reality-of-the-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam-gerd.

Fortin, Jacey. "Dam Rising in Ethiopia Stirs Hope and Tension." *The New York Times*, October 11, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/12/world/dam-rising-in-ethiopia-stirs-hope-and-tension.html.

Fourie, Elsje. "China's Example for Meles' Ethiopia: When Development 'Models' Land." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 53, no. 3 (September 2015): 289–316. http://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X15000397.

Flintan, Fiona and Imeru Tamrat. "Spilling Blood over Water? The Case of Ethiopia." In *Scarcity and Surfeit: The Ecology of Africa's Conflicts*, edited by Jeremy Lind and Kathryn Sturman, 243–319. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2002.

Gebreluel, Goitom. "Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam: Ending Africa's Oldest Geopolitical Rivalry?" *The Washington Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (2014): 25–37. http://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2014.926207.

Gebrezgabiher, Haftu. "Ethiopia: Diaspora Raises Over U.S.$2 Million for Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam." *Ethiopian Herald*, February 21, 2017. https://allafrica.com/stories/201702210172.html.

Gebrewold, Belachew. "Legitimate Regional Powers? A Failed Test for Ethiopia, Nigeria, and South Africa." *African Security* 7, no. 1 (2014): 1–23. http://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2014.880029

Geda, Alemayehu, "Macroeconomic Performance in Post-Derg Ethiopia," *Northeast African Studies* 8 (2001): 159-204. http://doi.org/10.1353/nas.2005.0016.

Gelb, Alan, Christian J. Meyer, Vijaya Ramachandran, and Divyanshi Wadhwa. *Can Africa Be a Manufacturing Destination? Labor Costs in Comparative Perspective,* CGD Working Paper 466. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, 2017. https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/can-africa-be-manufacturing-destination-labor.pdf

Gleditsch, Nils Petter, Kathryn Furlong, Håvard Hegre, Bethany Lacina, and Taylor Owen. "Conflicts Over Shared Rivers: Resource Scarcity or Fuzzy Boundaries?" *Political Geography* 25, no. 4 (May 2006): 361–382. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2006.02.004.

Gleick, Peter H. "Environment and Security: The Clear Connections." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 47, no. 3 (1991): 16–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.1991.11459956.

Gleick, Peter H. "Water and Conflict: Fresh Water Resources and International Security." *International Security* 18, no. 1 (1993): 79–112. http://doi.org/10.2307/2539033.

Gray, Alex. "Ethiopia is Africa's Fastest-Growing Economy." World Economic Forum, May 4, 2018. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/05/ethiopia-africa-fastest-growing-economy/.

Guevara, Marina Walker. "Ethiopia Reaps U.S. Aid by Enlisting in War on Terror And Hiring Influential Lobbyists." *International Consortium of Investigative Journalists*, May 2, 2012. https://www.icij.org/investigations/collateraldamage/ethiopia-reaps-us-aid-enlisting-war-terror-and-hiring-influential.

Hagmann, Tobias and Jon Abbink. "Twenty Years of Revolutionary Democratic Ethiopia, 1991 to 2011." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5, no. 4 (2011): 579–595. https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2011.642515.

Hammond, Michael. *The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and the Blue Nile: Implications for Transboundary Water Governance*, Discussion Paper 1306, Canberra, Australia: Global Water Forum, 2013. www.globalwaterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/The-Grand-Ethiopian-Renaissance-Dam-and-the-Blue-Nile-Implications-for-transboundary-water-governance-GWF-13061.pdf.

Harald, Jon, Sande Lie, and Berouk Mesfin. *Ethiopia: A Political Economy Analysis.* Oslo, Norway: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2017. https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2496505/NUPI_rapport_%2BEthiopia_%2BSandeLie_Mesfin.pdf?sequence=1.

Hassan, Hamdy A. "Contending Hegemony and the New Security Systems in Africa." *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 9, no. 5 (May 2015): 159–169. http://doi.org/10.5897/ajpsir2015.0772

Hathaway, Terri. *What Cost Ethiopia's Dam Boom? A look inside the Expansion of Ethiopia's Energy Sector.* International Rivers, February 6, 2008. https://www.internationalrivers.org/sites/default/files/attached-files/ethioreport06feb08.pdf.

Hausman, William J. "Long Term Trends in Energy Prices." In *The State of Humanity*, edited by Julian L Simon, 280–286. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Inc, 1995.

Hensel, Paul R., Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, Thomas E. Sowers. "Conflict Management of Riparian Disputes." *Political Geography* 25, no 4 (2006): 383–411. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2005.11.001.

Homer-Dixon, Thomas F. "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases." *International Security* 19, no. 1 (1994): 5–40. http://doi.org/10.2307/2539147.

Ibrahim, Abadir M. "The Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement: The Beginning of the End of Egyptian Hydro-Political Hegemony." *Journal of Environmental and Sustainability Law* 18, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 282–313. http://scholarship.law.missouri.edu/jesl/vol18/iss2/4.

Ighobor, Kingsley and Busani Bafana. "Financing Africa's Massive Projects." *Africa Renewal,* December 1, 2014. https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2014/financing-africa's-massive-projects.

Ikenberry, G. John. "Democracy, Institutions, and American Restraint." In *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power,* edited by G. John Ikenberry, 213–238. New York: Cornell University Press, 2002.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). "About Us: The History of IGAD." Accessed 26 Oct 2018. https://igad.int/about-us.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). "IGAD Executive Secretary Hands Over Staff Contribution to GERD Project." January 21, 2018. https://igad.int/executive-secretary/1741-igad-executive-secretary-hands-over-staff-contribution-to-gerd-project.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development. "IGAD Executive Secretary: The GERD Project Is Regional." Accessed November 1, 2018. https://igad.int/executive-secretary/1529-igad-executive-secretary-the-gert-project-is-regional.

International Trade Administration (ITA), U.S. Department of Commerce. "Ethiopia – Energy." June 21, 2017. https://www.export.gov/apex/article2?id=Ethiopia-Energy.

Ismail, Ibrahim and A. Refaat. *Water Food and Energy Sustainability Nexus*, Paper presented at International Conference on Sustainable Futures (ICSF), Applied Science University, Bahrain, October 2017. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321579870_Water_Food_and_Energy_Sustainability_Nexus.

Jackson, Robert H and Carl G. Rosberg. "Sovereignty and Underdevelopment: Juridical Statehood in the African Crisis." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 24, no. 1 (1986): 1–31. http://www.jstor.org/stable/160511.

Kagwanja, Peter. "Calming the Waters: The East African Community and Conflict Over the Nile Resources." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1, no. 3 (2007): 321–337. http://doi.org/10.1080/17531050701625565.

Karasapan, Omer and Sajjad Shah. "Egypt's population: Boom then bust?" *Brookings Institute* (blog), May 22, 2018. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2018/05/22/egypts-population-boom-then-bust/.

Kefale, Asnake. "The (Un)making of Opposition Coalitions and the Challenge of Democratization in Ethiopia, 1991–2011." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5, no. 4 (2011): 681–701. https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2011.642525.

Kehl, Jenny R. "Water Security in Transboundary Systems: Cooperation in Intractable Conflicts and the Nile System." In *Water Security in the Middle East Essays in Scientific and Social Cooperation,* edited by Jean Axelrad Cahan, 39–66. London: Anthem Press, 2017.

Kendie, Daniel. "Egypt and the Hydro-Politics of the Blue Nile River." *Northeast African Studies* 6, no. 1–2 (1999): 141–169. https://doi.org/10.1353/nas.2002.0002.

Klare, Michael. *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict.* New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001.

Knopf, Payton. *South Sudan's Civil War and Conflict Dynamics in the Red Sea.*" United States Institute of Peace (UNIP) Special Report 431. Washington, DC: UNIP, 2018. https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-09/sr_431_knopf_south_sudans_civil_war_and_conflict_dynamics_in_the_red_sea2.pdf.

Keohane, Robert O. "The Demand for International Regimes." *International Organization* 36, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 325–355.

Koubi, Vally Gabriele Spilker, Tobias Böhmelt, and Thomas Bernauer. "Do Natural Resources Matter for Interstate and Intrastate Armed Conflict?" *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 2 (2013): 227–243. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343313493455.

Lawson, Fred H. "Desecuritization, Domestic Struggles, and Egypt's Conflict with Ethiopia over the Nile River." *Democracy and Security* 12, no. 1 (2016): 1–22. http://doi.org/10.1080/17419166.2015.1133305.

Le Billon, Philippe. "The Political Ecology of War: Natural Resources and Armed Conflicts," *Political Geography* 20, no. 5 (June, 2001): 561-584. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0962-6298(01)00015-4.

Le Gouriellec, Sonia. "Regional Power and Contested Hierarchy: Ethiopia, an 'imperfect hegemon' in the Horn of Africa." *International Affairs* 94, no. 5 (September 2018): 1059–1075. https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiy117.

Lefort, René. “The Theory and Practice of Meles Zenawi: A Response to Alex de Waal.” *African Affairs* 112, no. 448 (July 2013): 460–470.

Lerman, Eran. “The Keystone: Sisi, Egyptian Stability and the Future of the Eastern Mediterranean.” Jerusalem Institute for Strategic Studies. August 16, 2018. https://jiss.org.il/en/lerman-keystone-sisi-egyptian-stability-future-eastern-mediterranean/.

Maasho, Aaron. “Ethiopia Dismisses Egypt’s ‘Psychological Warfare’ on Dam.” *Reuters*, June 11, 2013. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-egypt-nile-idUSBRE95A0X620130611.

Maher, Ahmed. “Egyptian Politicians Caught in On-Air Ethiopia Dam Gaffe.” *BBC News*, June 4, 2013. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-22771563.

Malone, Barry. “Ethiopian PM Warns Egypt of Nile War.” *Reuters*, November 23, 2010. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-egypt-meles-idustre6am5v820101123.

Malsin, Jared. “U.S. Releases $195 Million in Military Aid to Egypt.” *Wall Street Journal*, July 25, 2018. https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-releases-195-million-in-military-aid-to-egypt-1532553758.

Manson, Katrina and Borzou Daragahi. “Water: Battle of the Nile.” *Financial Times*, June 19, 2013. https://www.ft.com/content/bc79c9ac-d364-11e2-95d4-00144feab7de.

Maru, Mehari Taddele. *Ethiopia’s Regional Diplomacies: A Dominant Interpretation of the Horn of Africa*, South African Foreign Policy and African Drivers Programme Policy Briefing 112. Johannesburg, South Africa: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2014. www.saiia.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/saia_112_maru_20141027.pdf.

Maupin, Agathe. *Energy Dialogues in Africa: Is the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Transforming Ethiopia’s Regional Role?* Johannesburg, South Africa: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2016. https://www.africaportal.org/documents/14554/saia_sop_228_maupin_20160223.pdf

Melakedingel, Nolawi. “The Oddities Of ‘Revolutionary Democracy.’” *The Addis Standard*, May 10, 2013. addisstandard.com/the-oddities-of-revolutionary-democracy/.

Milas, Seifulaziz. “Egypt/Ethiopia: There Will Be No Water War in the Nile Basin Because No One Can Afford It.” *African Arguments*, June 10, 2013, http://africanarguments.org/2013/06/10/egyptethiopia-there-will-be-no-water-war-in-the-nilebasin-because-no-one-can-afford-it-by-seifulaziz-milas/.

Mkandawire, Thandika. “Thinking About Developmental States in Africa.” *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 25, no. 3 (May 2001): 289–313. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23600389.

Moges, Mulatu Alemeyehu. “Ethiopian Journalism from Self Censoring to Silence: A Case of Reporting on Internal Conflict.” *Journal for Communications Studies* 10, no. 1 (2017): 111-128. https://www.essachess.com/index.php/jcs/article/download/374/409.

Moller, Lars Christian and Konstantin M. Wacker. “Explaining Ethiopia’s Growth Acceleration—The Role of Infrastructure and Macroeconomic Policy.” *World Development* 96 (2017): 198–215. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.03.007.

Mosley, Jason and Elizabeth E. Watson. “Frontier Transformations: Development Visions, Spaces and Processes in Northern Kenya And Southern Ethiopia.” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 10, no. 3 (2016): 452–475. http://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2016.1266199.

Mulugeta, Kidist. *The Role of Regional Powers in the Field of Peace and Security: The Case of Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2014. http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/aethiopien/10879.pdf.

Mumbere, Daniel. “Ethiopia Unhappy with Egypt’s ‘Unconstructive’ Comments On Nile Dam Project.” *Africa News*, May 12, 2018. www.africanews.com/2018/05/12/ethiopia-unhappy-with-egypt-s-unconstructive-comments-on-nile-dam-project/.

Nasr, Hala and Andreas Neef. “Ethiopia’s Challenge to Egyptian Hegemony in the Nile River Basin: The Case of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.” *Geopolitics* 21, no. 4 (July 2016): 969–989. http://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2016.1209740.

Omach, Paul. “The African Crisis Response Initiative: Domestic Politics and Convergence of National Interests.” *African Affairs* 99, no. 394 (January 2000): 73–95. https://www.jstor.org/stable/723548.

“Paying for Giant Nile Dam Itself, Ethiopia Thwarts Egypt But Takes Risks. “*Reuters*, April 23, 2014. https://www.reuters.com/article/ethiopia-energy-idUSL6N0N91QM20140423.

Pearce, Fred. “Does Egypt Own the Nile? A Battle Over Precious Water.” *Yale Environment 360*, July 19, 2010. https://e360.yale.edu/features/does_egypt_own_the_nile_a_battle_over_precious_water.

Perry, Tom and Alastair Macdonald. “Egypt ‘War’ Talk Raises Ethiopia Nile Dam Stakes.” *Reuters*, June 10, 2013. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-egypt-nile-war/egypt-war-talk-raises-ethiopia-nile-dam-stakes-idUSBRE95911020130610.

USAID. *Power Africa in Ethiopia.* Accessed 12 June 2018. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/EthiopiaCountryFactSheet__2016.09%20FINAL.pdf.

Rashad, Jonathan. "The World's Longest River is in Trouble." *The Washington Post*, March 22, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/theworldpost/wp/2018/03/22/egypt/?utm_term=.1b91fff9985a.

Rashid, Shahidur, Meron Assefa, and Gezahegn Ayele. *Distortions to Agricultural Incentives in Ethiopia,* Agricultural Distortions Working Paper 43. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2007. www.siteresources.worldbank.org/INTTRADERESEARCH/Resources/544824-1163022714097/Ethiopia_0708.pdf

Rastogi, Keshav. "An Emerging and Troubled Power: Ethiopia's (Un)Distributed Renewable Grid." *Harvard Political Review*, April 16, 2018. www.harvardpolitics.com/columns/an-emerging-and-troubled-power-ethiopias-undistributed-renewable-grid/.

Rodrik, Dani. "The Return of Public Investment." *Project Syndicate,* January 13, 2016, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/public-infrastructure-investment-sustained-growth-by-dani-rodrik-2016-01.

Saa, Kofi. "Winning Numbers of Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam Lottery Announced in Addis Ababa." *Zegabi*, June 28, 2016. www.zegabi.com/articles/10480.

Salini Impregilo. "Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam." Accessed June 12, 2018. https://ethiopia.salini-impregilo.com/en/projects/grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam.html.

Salini Impregilo. "Salini Impregilo in Ethiopia: A Story Sixty Years Long." Accessed June 12, 2018. https://ethiopia.salini-impregilo.com/en/projects/main-projects.html.

Salman, Salman M. A. "The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: The Road to The Declaration of Principles and The Khartoum Document." *Water International* 41, no. 4 (2016): 512–527. http://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2016.1170374.

Schwab, Klaus. *The Global Competitiveness Report 2017–2018*. Davos, Switzerland: World Economic Forum, 2017. https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-competitiveness-report-2017-2018.

Scott, James C. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed.* London: Yale University Press, 1998.

Seid, Yared, Alemayehu Seyoum Taffesse, and Seid Nuru Ali. "Ethiopia: An Agrarian Economy in Transition." In *Africa's Lions: Growth Traps and Opportunities for Six African Economies*, edited by Bhorat Haroon and Tarp Finn, 37–76. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctt1hfr23q.5.

Shay, Shaul. "The 'Renaissance Dam' Crisis." Paper presented at Herzliya Conference, Herzliya, Israel, April 2018. https://www.idc.ac.il/en/research/ips/2018/Documents/ShaulShayRenaissance%20DamEN22.4.2018A.pdf.

Smith, Lahra. *Making Citizens in Africa: Ethnicity, Gender, & National Identity in Ethiopia*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Sprout, Harold and Margaret Sprout. "The Dilemma of Rising Demands and Insufficient Resources." *World Politics* 20, no. 4 (1968): 660–693. http://doi.org/10.2307/2009688.

Starr, Joyce R. "Water Wars." *Foreign Policy*, no. 82 (1991): 17–36. http://doi.org/10.2307/1148639.

Swain, Ashok. "Challenges for Water Sharing in The Nile Basin: Changing Geo-Politics and Changing Climate." *Hydrological Sciences Journal* 56, no. 4 (2011): 687-702. http://doi.org/10.1080/02626667.2011.577037.

Swain, Ashok. "Ethiopia, the Sudan, and Egypt: The Nile River Dispute." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 35, no. 4 (December 1997): 675–694. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/162009.pdf.

Tawfik, Rawia. "Reconsidering Counter-Hegemonic Dam Projects: The Case of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam." *Water Policy* 18, no. 5 (October 2016): 1033–1052. http://doi.org/10.2166/wp.2016.162

Terlinden, Ulf. *IGAD – Paper Tiger facing Gigantic Tasks*. Berlin, Germany: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2004. www.ulf-terlinden.de/docs/Terlinden2004-IGAD-engl.pdf.

Thomson, Mike. "Nile Restrictions Anger Ethiopia." *BBC News*, February 3, 2005. news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/Africa/4232107.stm.

Toset, Hans Petter Wollebæk, Nils Petter Gleditsch, Håvard Hegre. "Shared Rivers and Interstate Conflict." *Political Geography* 19, no. 8 (2000): 971–996. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0962-6298(00)00038-X.

"The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: Conflict and Water Diplomacy in the Nile Basin." In *Water Diplomacy in Action: Contingent Approaches to Managing Complex Water Problems*, edited by Shafiqul Islam and Kaveh Madani, 253-262. London: Anthem Press, 2017.

"The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Fact Sheet." International Rivers. January 24, 2014. https://www.internationalrivers.org/resources/the-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam-fact-sheet-8213.

Tir, Jaroslav and Douglas M. Stinnett. "The Institutional Design of Riparian Treaties: The Role of River Issues." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55, no. 4 (2011): 606–631. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23049903.

"Two More Dams for Ethiopian Power Generation." *ESI Africa*, October 20, 2014. https://www.esi-africa.com/two-more-dams-for-ethiopian-power-generation/.

Uitto, Juha I. and Aaron T. Wolf. "Water Wars? Geographical Perspectives: Introduction." *The Geographical Journal* 168, no. 4 (2002): 289–92. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3451472.

United Nations. "Ethiopia: A Leading Contributor to UN Peacekeeping Efforts." Accessed October 26, 2018. https://news.un.org/en/gallery/529832.

United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs (UNDESA). "Water Scarcity." Accessed August 9, 2018. http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/scarcity.shtml.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). *Egypt: Egyptian Land Reclamation Efforts*, Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN) Report, May 16, 2016. https://www.fas.usda.gov/data/egypt-egyptian-land-reclamation-efforts.

Vaughan, Sarah and Mesfin Gebremichael. *Rethinking Business and Politics in Ethiopia: The Role of EFFORT, the Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray*, Africa Power and Politics, Report 2. London: Overseas Development Institute, 2011. http://www.institutions-africa.org/filestream/20110822-appp-rr02-rethinking-business-politics-in-ethiopia-by-sarah-vaughan-mesfin-gebremichael-august-2011.

Verhoeven, Harry. "Africa's Next Hegemon: Behind Ethiopia's Power Plays." *Foreign Affairs*, April 12, 15. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ethiopia/2015-04-12/africas-next-hegemon.

Verhoeven, Harry. "The Politics of African Energy Development: Ethiopia's Hydro-agricultural State-building Strategy and Clashing Paradigms of Water Security." *Philosophical Transactions: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* 371, no. 2002 (2013): 1–16. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42583071.

von Lossow, Tobias and Stephan Roll. *Egypt's Nile Water Policy Under Sisi: Security Interests Promote Rapprochement with Ethiopia*. Berlin, Germany: Stiftung Wissenschaft and Politik (SWP), 2015. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/143811223.pdf.

Waltz Kenneth M. *Theory of International Politics.* New York: McGraw Hill, 1979.

Waterbury, John and Dale Whittington. "Playing Chicken on the Nile? The Implications of Microdam Development in the Ethiopian Highlands and Egypt's New Valley Project." *Natural Resources Forum* 22 (1998): 155–163. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-8947.1998.tb00725.x.

"We Are Committed to Follow-Up, Continuation of GERD Talks: Ethiopian PM." *Egypt Independent*, November 18, 2018. https://ww.egyptindependent.com/we-are-committed-to-follow-up-continuation-of-gerd-talks-ethiopian-pm/.

Wheeler, Kevin G., Mohammed Basheer, Zelalem T. Mekonnen, Sami O. Eltoum, Azeb Mersha, Gamal M. Abdo, Edith A. Zagona, Jim W. Hall and Simon J. Dadson. "Cooperative Filling Approaches for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam." *Water International* 41, no. 4 (2016): 611–634. http://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2016.1177698.

Whitfield, Lindsay, Ole Therkildsen, Lars Buur, and Anne Mette Kjær. *The Politics of African Industrial Policy: A Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Whittington, Dale, John Waterbury, and Marc Jeuland. "The Grand Renaissance Dam and Prospects for Cooperation on the Eastern Nile." *Water Policy* 16, no. 4 (2014): 595–608. http://dx.doi.org/10.2166/wp.2014.011.

Witte, Griff. "Egypt Frets, Fumes Over Ethiopia's Nile Plan." *The Washington Post,* June 12, 2013. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/egypt-frets-fumes-over-ethiopias-nile-plan/2013/06/12/d3ab3f4a-d1e1-11e2-9577-df9f1c3348f5_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.f14dcafa9d02.

Wolde-Ghiorgis, W. "Renewable Energy for Rural Development in Ethiopia: The Case for New Energy Policies and Institutional Reform." *Energy Policy* 30 (2002): 1095–1105. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0301-4215(02)00061-7.

Wolf, Aaron T. "'Water Wars' and Water Reality: Conflict and Cooperation Along International Waterways." In *Environmental Change, Adaptation and Security*, edited by S. C. Lonergan, 251–264. Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishing, 1999.

Wood, Adrian P. "Natural Resource Conflicts in South-West Ethiopia: State, Communities, and the Role of the National Conservation Strategy in the Search for Sustainable Development." *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 2, no. 2 (1993): 83–99. www.njas.helsinki.fi/pdf-files/vol2num2/wood.pdf.

Yihdego, Zeray, Alistair Rieu-Clarke and Ana Elisa Cascão. "How Has the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Changed the Legal, Political, Economic And Scientific Dynamics in the Nile Basin?" *Water International* 41, no. 4 (2016): 507–508. https://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2016.1209008.

Yimer, Mohammed. "The Nile Hydro Politics; A Historic Power Shift," *International Journal of Political Science and Development* 3, no. 2 (2015): 101–107. http://doi.org/10.14662/IJPSD2015.011.

Yoffe, Shim, Aaron T Wolf, and Mark Giordano. "Conflict and Cooperation Over International Freshwater Resources: Indicators of Basins At RISR." *Journal of the American Water Resources Association (JAWRA)* 39, no. 5 (October 2003): 1109–1126.

Zeitoun, Mark and Jeroen Warner. "Hydro-Hegemony – A Framework for Analysis of Trans-Boundary Water Conflicts." *Water Policy* 8 no. 5 (October 2006): 435–460, http://doi.org/10.2166/wp.2006.054.

Zeitoun, Mark and Naho Mirumachi. "Transboundary Water Interaction I: Reconsidering Conflict and Cooperation." *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* 8, no. 4 (2008): 297–316. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10784-008-9083-5.

Zhao, Suisheng. "The China Model: Can It Replace the Western Model of Modernization?" *Journal of Contemporary China*, 19 no. 65 (2010): 419–436. http://doi.org/10.1080/10670561003666061.

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

1. Defense Technical Information Center
   Ft. Belvoir, Virginia

2. Dudley Knox Library
   Naval Postgraduate School
   Monterey, California