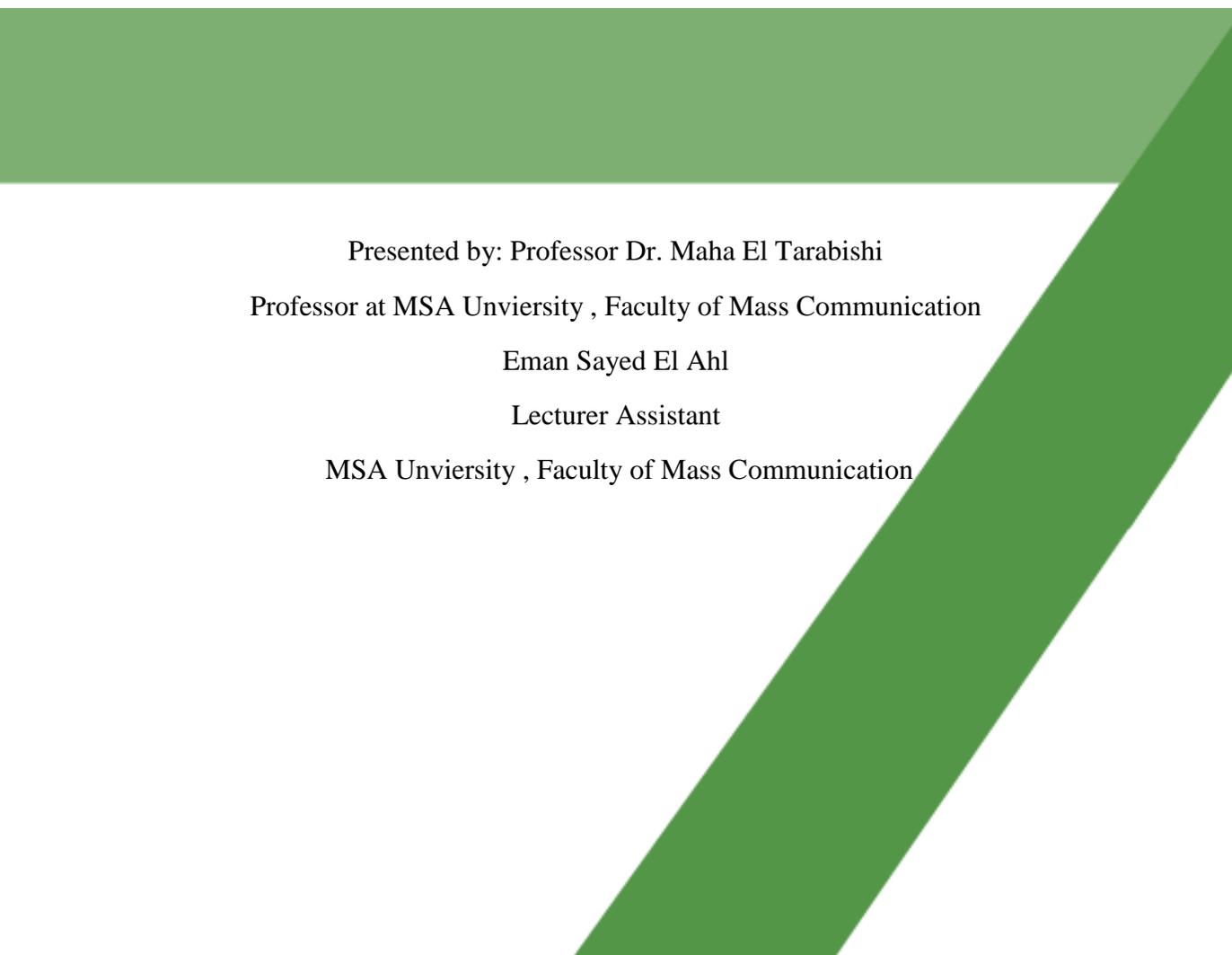




The coverage of the Egyptian, Ethiopian, and Sudanese Online Newspapers in relation to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam “GERD” with regard to their national interest

A Comparative Analytical Study



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Introduction

The River Nile is one of the most important sources of water for Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia. For Egypt it provides 95% of water needed for different purposes vital to life in Egypt, as for, Sudan it is also a very important source of agriculture and drinking water. Ethiopia, also the water issue is related to their national dream for development and prosperity.

Egypt has depended on the River Nile as a source of water supply, since ancient history. The fact that the River Nile is shared by other countries in the African continent has created concerns between those countries.

Proposals to build a dam at the source of the River Nile in Ethiopia have been made for years. Ethiopia actually started to build the renaissance Dam in May 2011, and since then it has been a controversial occurrence regarding the negative impact it would have on both Egypt and Sudan, mainly manifested in water supply shortage.

The three main countries afflicted by the building of this dam will have drastic consequences. For many years negotiations have been happening regarding agreements on the terms of building the dam, as it will have consequences on all three countries.

Since negotiations started there has been no plan announced to the public regarding the reservoir filling rate which has now posed a problem. Ethiopia is now proposing a plan to fill the dam within a three year period, while Egypt is insisting on a seven year plan in order to reduce the serious consequences on Egypt's water supply.

The Dam is a \$4 billion project becoming the core of Ethiopia's effort to become Africa's largest power provider. The Dam is meant to be fully functioning by 2022. Because of the rising gap between water demands and supply, water shortage is increasing. Resulting in more pressure, arguments, and disagreements, over the span of time it will take to fill the reservoir, which came to a dead end.

Ethiopia and Egypt are clearly disagreeing, through the statements of both countries, while it does not seem like Sudan will back up Egypt during further negotiations.

Actually, Egypt has the right of veto according to an agreement with Great Britain in 1929. The document gave Egypt the right to veto projects that will affect the level of the reservoir of the water that would affect its water share (Mourad & Fahmy, 2019).

Moreover, the Ethiopian side didn't make any consideration for this agreement and took advantage from the unstable situation in Egypt during the 2011 revolution and started to build the Dam.

Many online Egyptian and Sudanese and Ethiopian newspapers are covering this problem intensely since then. This is the main reason why the researcher have chosen this topic in order to analyze the content of these three online newspapers during the year 2018 and 2019 and make a comparison between them in relation to their national interest.

An overview of the Problem of Water Scarcity in general focusing on the Developing Countries

Water scarcity is define as the lack of sufficient available water resources to meet the demands of water usage within a region.

It already affects every continent and around 2.8 billion people around the world at least one month out of every year.

More than 1.2 billion people lack access to clean drinking water. Water scarcity involves water stress, water shortage or deficits, and water crisis. Water scarcity is being driven by two converging phenomena: growing freshwater use and depletion of usable freshwater resources. Water scarcity can be a result of two mechanisms:

physical (absolute) water scarcity and economic water scarcity, where physical water scarcity is a result of inadequate natural water resources to supply a region's demand, and economic water scarcity is a result of poor management of the sufficient available water resources.

According to the United Nations Development Programme, the latter is found more often to be the cause of countries or regions experiencing water scarcity, as most countries or regions have enough water to meet household, industrial, agricultural, and environmental needs, but lack the means to provide it in an accessible manner.

The reduction of water scarcity is a goal of many countries and governments. The UN recognizes the importance of reducing the number of people without sustainable access to clean water and sanitation.

The Millennium Development Goals within the United Nations Millennium Declaration state that by 2015 they resolve to "halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water.

Water scarcity in developing countries

Water issues in developing countries include scarcity of drinking-water, poor infrastructure for water access, floods and droughts, and the contamination of rivers and large dams has become a major issue recently. Over one billion people in developing countries have inadequate access to clean water. Millions of women spend hours every day collecting water, 2.6 billion people lack access to sanitation, and 1.8 million children die each year from diarrhea. Barriers to addressing water problems in developing nations include poverty, education, climate change, and poor governance.

People need fresh water for personal care, agriculture, industry, and commerce. The 2019 UN World Water Development report notes that about 4 billion people, representing nearly two-thirds of the world population, experience severe water scarcity during at least one month of the year. With rising demand, the quality and supply of water diminishes.

Water use has been increasing worldwide by about 1% per year since the 1980s. Global water demand is expected to continue increasing at a similar rate until 2050, accounting for an increase of 20-30% above 2019 usage levels. The steady rise in use has principally been led by surging demand in developing countries and emerging economies. Per capita water use in the majority of these countries remains far below water use in developed countries—they are merely catching up.

Agriculture (including irrigation, livestock, and aquaculture) is by far the largest water consumer, accounting for 69% of annual water withdrawals globally. Agriculture's share of total water use is likely to fall in comparison with other sectors, but it will remain the largest user overall in terms of both withdrawal and

consumption. Industry (including power generation) accounts for 19% and households for 12%.

The scarcity of fresh water resources is an important issue especially in Northern and Southern Africa, the Middle East.

Economic water scarcity applies to areas that lack the fiscal resources and/or human capacity to invest in water sources and meet local demand.

An overview on the Climate change and its effect on the water issue in the African continent

Recently Climate change has been one of the most important topic covered by almost all different online newspapers and on the media in general all over the world as it is related to sea and water levels, agriculture, rain and ecosystem.

Climate change is a long-term change in the statistical distribution of weather patterns over periods ranging from decades to millions of years. Climate change may be limited to a specific region or may occur across the whole Earth.

The causes of climate change can be divided into two categories, human and natural causes. It is now a global concern that the climatic change occurring today have been speeded up because of man's activities.

The natural variability and the climate fluctuations of the climate system have always been part of the Earth's history, however there have been changes in concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere growing at an unprecedented rate and magnitude (Krishan Kaltra,2008).

The United Nations, governments and many top scientists around the world believe that we must act now to stabilize and arrest further changes.

To understand climate change fully, the causes of climate change must be first identified. Scientists divide the causes into two categories, natural and human causes.

The Earth's climate is influenced and changed by natural causes like volcanic eruptions; ocean current, the earth's orbital changes and solar variations, whereas, agriculture, deforestation are human causes of climate change.

The impact of climate change can be tremendously affecting the atmosphere, biosphere, sea and water levels, agriculture, temperature, rain, ecosystem,

forestry....etc. When it affects the natural systems then directly or indirectly affects the living being in turn.

This Climate change has its effect globally, and many if not all of the African countries will be affected as well.

The Importance and aims of the study

This research tries to analyze the treatment of the content of the three online newspapers and compare them regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance dam in relation to of their national interest.

Operational Definitions

1. Water scarcity:

Water scarcity is the lack of freshwater resources to meet demand. One-third of the global population (2 billion) live under conditions of severe water scarcity at least 1 month of the year. Half a billion people in the world face severe water Scarcity all year round.

2. Global Problem and Water scarcity:

Water scarcity and pollution are persistent global problems. According to End Water Poverty, some 663 million people around the world have absolutely no reliable access to clean, safe water year-round. ... Our daily consumption of water affects future supply, of course.

3. Global Water Crisis:

Globally, 844 million people lack access to clean water. Without clean, easily accessible water, families and communities are locked in poverty for generations. Children drop out of school and parents struggle to make a living.

Women and children are worst affected because they are more vulnerable to diseases from dirty water, women and girls are often bear the burden of carrying water for their families each day.

4. Importance of clean water:

Access to clean water changes everything; it's a stepping-stone to development. When people gain access to clean water, they are better able to practice good hygiene and sanitation. Children enjoy good health and are more likely to attend school. Parents put aside their worries about water-related diseases and lack of access to clean water. Instead, they can water crops and livestock and diversify their incomes.

5. Water stress:

While the concept of water stress is relatively new, it is the difficulty of obtaining sources of fresh water for use during a period and may result in further depletion and deterioration of available water resources. Water shortages may be caused by climate change, such as altered weather patterns including droughts or floods, increased pollution, and increased human demand and overuse of water.

6. water crisis:

A water crisis is a situation where the available potable, unpolluted water within a region is less than that region's demand.

7. Water Resource Management:

Water resource management is the cornerstone for sustainable development. According to the United Nations world water development report, one-fifth of the world's population lives in areas characterized by physical water scarcity (Xu et al. 2018).

The increase of water demand concomitantly with water scarcity is a common threat for humanity; it is expected to be worse in the future. Almost half of the world population will be living in area with high water stress by 2030 (United Nation Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2012). Thus, potential water resources need to be monitored with care for strategic management.

Literature Review of the Previous Studies

According to Guerra and Reklaitis (2018) Population growth and economic development cause significant increase in agricultural and industrial demand for water. Recently, they have addressed the growing vulnerability to both availability and quality of water sources. They stated that “the vulnerability of energy systems to water utilization constraints could be mitigated by the effective design and implementation of water management strategies.”

According to Al Saidi (2017) The integration of wastewater quality and vulnerability into the design and planning of water management strategies are needed. Numerous researchers have addressed the strategic topic of water resource management, especially for agriculture (Al-Saidi 2017; Christ and Burritt 2017; Gao et al. 2017; Liu et al. 2017; Nguyen et al. 2018; Ross 2017; Skouteris et al. 2018; Zhou et al. 2017).

It is well known the agriculture accounts for more than two thirds of the global water use (Kraiem et al. 2014). This situation may induce severe water crisis and all waters even those of bad quality have to be valued and stored. Therefore, integrated water management is one of the pillars of sustainable development. In this context, the 2nd ICIEM conference aimed at exchanging relevant experiences, up-to-date scientific research, and findings carried out all over the world to protect and preserve the environment through rationalizing water resources.

More than 300 participants attended this event to share new findings and discuss the potential applications of such new processes that can be turned out to viable technique for sustainable development.

This thematic issue includes selected papers from the conference acting in the field of water resources. They have, undoubtedly, contributed to deeper knowledge on the current researches and achievements in the broad field of water resources.

The main aspects are the following: water quality and sustainable use, integrated water resources management, assessment of groundwater vulnerability, the quantity and quality of water streams, the potential for the treatment of these waters for recycle and/or beneficial reuse and the economics of such treatment strategies and management of irrigation water and durability.

According to Elhadad, 2018 it all started in 2011 when the Ethiopian government decided to build the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Nile river and this raised the tension between the African countries such as Sudan and Egypt mainly because the GERD will affect the water level in both countries as both countries depend mainly on agriculture, and this caused the mass media all over the world to cover this important issue

According to Eltawil 2018 as the media is considered to be the most effective way of forming Public Opinion, so it was so important to show how the media in those countries (Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan) try to present the issue.

According to Elhadad,(2018) and Helal & Abdelhaleem (2015) regarding the Egyptian media side, every media publication inside Egypt especially after 30 June, 2011, started to be controlled by the government, so most of the time only represent the Egyptian government's point of view only, without presenting the whole situation.

Regarding the situation in Sudan, which is a federal system, each and every state in Sudan follows its own system in media. In Khartoum, there are more than 59 political,

social and partisan newspapers, as well as 19 private and public entertainment channels from different backgrounds and ideologies.

According to EL-Tawil 2018, speaking about the Ethiopian press or media system, the government monitored more than 27 radio stations in local languages, 6 public satellite channels and 24 satellites.

According to Yihdego & Khalil & Salem (2017) The way the media in those countries, Ethiopia and Sudan, try to address the issue about the role of Egypt in Africa and, try to avoid the language of escalation, and using the diplomatic tone, in addition to positioning Egypt as the victim as both countries (Sudan and Ethiopia) mean to decrease the water amount for Egypt and this will affect the country badly. Supporting by evidence as Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, The Egyptian president has tried to adopt a quite foreign policy aimed to have a diplomatic dialogue to understand the Ethiopian side clearly, and represent the Egyptian side efficiently.

According to Bealy, 2014 Al Ahram online publication tries to portray, the problem, however, even when some newspapers published news about hitting the dam, Al Masry Al Youm publication started to focus on the issue in an objective way.

Another kind of media coverage tries to misrepresent the Ethiopian side when covering most of the Ethiopian protests.

According to Bealy (2014).the reporter, in an independent Ethiopian media publication started use negative language and the usage aggressive terms in the reporting and focusing on hostile statements by Egyptian politicians for the intent to taking an aggressive military action to destroy the GERD. Ethiopia tries to unite the public opinion to support the dam building by mentioning the benefits of building the dam to let the public be supportive of the government's point of view as the dam will bring benefits to the whole sectors of the country. It also tries to attract the support of the other neighborhood countries through mentioning the benefits that will occur to them by building the dam and this will make Sudan support Ethiopia rather than supporting Egypt

According to Yihdego & Khalil & Salem (2017) the neutral side was Sudan because it might have a benefit from the Grand Ethiopian Residence Dam because of reducing the floods, producing electricity, and benefiting the agriculture sector, this neutral side remains when Sudan tries to organize a conference to clarify both sides and solve the situation in a diplomatic way by letting both sides share the official documents about how the dam will affect both sides and that the Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam will not harm Egypt.

Theoretical Framework of the study:

The researcher will apply two theories, the theory of Social Responsibility and Modernization theory to help explain the role of the online newspapers in the three riparian countries regarding the GERD issue within the context of promoting national interest of each country.

1. Social Responsibility Theory:

Social Responsibility theory allows free press without any censorship but at the same time the content of the press should be discussed in public panel and the media accept the debate of any issues within the context of media professional self-regulations.

The theory lies between both authoritarian the one hand but the external controls in other hand. Here, the press ownership in private. The social responsibility theory moves beyond the simple “Objective” reporting (facts reporting) to “Interpretative” reporting (investigative reporting). The total news is complete facts and truthful but the Commission of the freedom Press stated that “No longer giving facts truthfully rather than give a necessary analyzed or interpretative report on facts with clear explanations”.

The theory helped in creating professionalism in media by setting up a high level of accuracy, truth, and information. The commission of press council also included some tasks based on social responsibility of media, which are as follows:

1. Formulate the code of conduct for the press.
2. Improve the standards of journalism.
3. Safeguard the interests of journalism and journalist.

4. Criticize enforce penalties for violating the code of conduct.

The theory allows

1. Everyone to say something or express their opinion about the media.
2. Community opinion, Consumer action and professional ethics.
3. Serious invasion of recognized private rights and vital social interests.
4. Private ownership in media may give better public service unless government has to take over to assure the public to provide better media service.
5. Media must be aware of social responsibility and if they do not, government or other organization will do.

The Social Responsibility Theory postulates the following:

1. Avoids the conflict situation during war or emergency by accepting the public opinion.
2. Media will not have a monopoly because the audience and media scholars will raise questions if media published or broadcast anything wrongly or manipulate any story.
3. .Media Standards will improve
4. Media will concern all class audience rather than focus on higher classes in the society.
5. Media may work autonomously but certain things are controlled by the government and other public organizations.

2. Modernization Theory:

Modernization theory is used to explain the process of modernization within societies. Modernization refers to a model of a progressive transition from a 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' to a 'modern' society. Modernization theory originated from the ideas of German sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920), which provided the basis for the modernization paradigm developed by Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons (1902–1979).

The theory looks at the internal factors of a country while assuming that with assistance, "traditional" countries can be brought to development in the same manner more developed countries have been.

Modernization theory was a dominant paradigm in the social sciences in the 1950s and 1960s.

Historically the Modernization theory went through a process of development from the Sociological theories of the late 19th century such as Social Darwinism which provided a basis for asking what the laws of Evolution of Human Society were.

The current modernization theory originated with the ideas of German sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) regarding the role of rationality and irrationality in the transition from traditional to modern society.

Weber's approach provided the basis for the modernization paradigm as popularized by Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons (1902–1979), who translated Weber's works into English in the 1930s and provided his own interpretation.

The relationship between modernization and democracy and development is one of the most researched studies in comparative politics. There is academic debate over the drivers of democracy because there are theories that support economic growth as both a cause and effect of the institution of democracy. “Lipset’s observation that

democracy is related to economic development, first advanced in 1959, has generated the largest body of research on any topic in comparative politics,”

Larry Diamond and Juan Linz, who worked with Lipset in the book, *Democracy in Developing Countries: Latin America*, argue that economic performance affects the development of democracy in at least three ways.

First, they argue that economic growth is more important for democracy than given levels of socioeconomic development.

Second, socioeconomic development generates social changes that can potentially facilitate democratization.

Third, socioeconomic development promotes other changes, like organization of the middle class, which is conducive to democracy

The Problem statement:

The researcher tries to analyze and compare the content of the three online newspapers regarding the (GERD) issue in relation to their national interest.

Main Research question:

The following questions will serve as main research question to guide this research:

1. How the content of the online newspapers in the three riparian countries tackled the GERD issue in regard of each country's national interest?

The Methodology of the study:

This research used the content analysis and comparative study to measure the content presented in the three online newspapers regarding the issue of the GERD in relation to each country's national interest.

The Sampling Method and Size:

The researcher used three governmental online newspapers Ahram online, The Ethiopian Herald and Sudan News Agency for the duration of the year 2019. Purposive samples were chosen throughout the whole coverage of the year during 2019 based on the chronological order of the latest issues that accompanied the time of the completion of GERD project that occurred between the three riparian countries. However, the majority samples of the Sudanese coverage was related more to the bilateral relation between Sudan and Egypt and Sudan and Ethiopia separately. Small direct coverage over the GERD was found on SNA. The total sample size chosen were twenty five samples divided as follows: eight samples from Ahram Online, eight samples from The Ethiopian Herald and nine samples from Sudan News Agency. The following months were chosen as samples to be analyzed for Ahram Online: January 19, August 21, September 20, October 9, October 15, October 27, November 5 and November 5 (two issues were published on November 5). The following months were chosen as samples to be analyzed for The Ethiopian Herald: February 2, May 12, September 19, September 21, September 27, October 8, October 17, and October 27. The following months were chosen as a sample to be analyzed for Sudan News Agency: May 25, September 17, September 24, October 8, October 11, October 12, October 24, October 30, and November 5. The samples were brought from the original websites of the online media newspapers except for the Sudanese samples eight samples were brought from allafrica.com website and one article was brought from SNA original website.

Research findings and Analysis:

Comparison between “Ahram Online,” “The Ethiopian Herald” and “Sudan News Agency” Coverage about the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in 2019

How the messages about the GERD project were portrayed on the Egyptian, Ethiopian and Sudanese online media?

Through the chronological order of the GERD’s coverage in 2019; some of the messages in the headlines of the three governmental online media were portrayed as follows:

In **Ahram Online**, **January 19**, the headline was; **“Filling Ethiopia’s GERD will be in Agreement with Egypt and Sudan: Dam Project Manager”**. The number of views for this article was 4923. (Rational)

On **February 2**, the headline of The Ethiopian Herald online media was; **“GERD Completion a Matter of Life and Death: PM Abiy”**. The number of views for this article was 130. (Emotional)

On **May 12**, the headline in **The Ethiopian Herald** was; **“National Pride or National Disaster”**. The number of views for this article was 117. (Emotional)

On Sudan News Agency, on **May 25**, the headline was; **“Egypt: Al-Burhan Arrives in Cairo”**, and it was mentioned that talks about bilateral relations will be discussed between TMC Chairman and the Egyptian Head of State. Where it could have been possible that officials in both countries had discussed the GERD issue. (Rational)

On **August 21**, in **Ahram Online**; the headline was; **“Egypt’s Nile Water Committee Reviews Trilateral Negotiations on Ethiopia’s GERD”**. The number of views for this article was 4650. (Rational)

On September 17; in Sudan News Agency; the headline was; **“Sudan: Renaissance Dam Meetings to Resume in Khartoum at the End of September”**. (Rational)

On September 19, The Ethiopian headline was; **“Ethiopia Rejects Egypt’s New GERD Filling Proposal”**. The number of views for this article was 112. (Emotional)

On September 20, Ahram Online headline was; **“Ethiopia says Egypt’s Proposal on Filling of GERD ‘puts sovereignty in question’**. The number of views for this article was 3632. (Emotional)

In **The Ethiopian Herald;** the headline on **September 21** was; **“Difficult to accept any Compromise on GERD”**. (Emotional) The number of views for this article was 124. On **September 27,** the headline in **The Ethiopian Herald** was; **“Experts Rebuke Egypt’s ‘futile attempt to politicize GERD technical issue’ No False allegation stops the unstoppable dam”**. (Emotional) The number of views for this article was 98.

On **September 24** on **Sudan News Agency;** the following headline was presented: **“Sudan: Al-Sisi – Name of Sudan shall be removed from List of Countries Sponsoring Terrorism”**. (Rational)

On **October 8,** on **The Ethiopian Herald,** the headline was; **“Ethiopia Rejects Egypt’s Third Party Invitation to GERD Talks”**. (Emotional) The number of views for this article was 123.

On **October 8,** SNA’s headline was **“Sudan: Minister of Defense Meets Ambassador of Egypt”** (Rational)

On **October 9,** Ahram Online headline was; **“Egypt’s PM Madbouly accuses Ethiopia of Violating GERD Declaration of Principles”**. (Emotional) The number of views for this article was 3285.

The headlines on both **October 11 and 12** on SNA were as follow: **On October 11, “East Africa: Sudan and Ethiopia Agreed on Establishment of Joint Pipeline” (Rational)** and on **October 12, “Sudan: Hamdok Returns Home after Two-Day Visit to Ethiopia” (Rational)**.

On October 15, on **Ahram Online**, the headline was **“GERD: Intransigence or Reason”**. (Rational) The number of views for this article was 756.

On October 17, on **The Ethiopian Herald**, the headline was **“GERD: Issue of Survival, Sovereignty”**. (Emotional) The number of views for this article was 149.

On **October 24**, SNA headline was; **“Sudan: FM Assistant Undersecretary Receives Egyptian Ambassador” (Rational)**

On October 27 both **Ahram Online** and **The Ethiopian Herald** published an article about the GERD which was portrayed as follows: headline on **Ahram Online** was; **“GERD: War of Words”**. (Emotional) The number of views for this article was 3824. On **The Ethiopian Herald**; the headline was; **“The Premier’s Firm Stance on the GERD”**. (Rational) The number of views for this article was 59.

On October 30, SNA headline was; **“Ethiopia: Sudan and Ethiopia Discuss Ways to Strengthen Cooperation”**. (Rational) The number of views for this article was 64.

On November 5; both SNA and Ahram Online covered the GERD issue in the following headlines: In **Ahram Online** two articles were published; **“World Bank can be Key Player in Reaching Final Deal over Nile Dam: Analyst”**. (Rational) The number of views for this article was 2632. And **“Egypt’s Shoukry Discusses Stalemate in GERD negotiations with US’ Jared Kushner”**. (Rational) The number of views for this article was 1660. On SNA the headline was: **“Sudan: Ministerial Meeting on GERD to kick off Wednesday in Washington”**. (Rational)

Analysis

It was clear that there was consistency in the number of viewers to the articles in Ahrām Online and The Ethiopian Herald related to the GERD topic. This was an indicator for the ongoing interest and importance of the issue related to the GERD topic to the people of both countries. There was a consistency in the coverage related to the GERD topic in Ahrām Online and The Ethiopian Herald more than in the coverage of Sudan News Agency.

Through the number of coverage related to the GERD topic on Ahrām Online, the highest rate of views to articles ranged between 4923 and 2632. One of these high views rate articles, was in January 2019 and it got 4923 views and the headline was a rational one and it referred to the Dam project manager; “Filling Ethiopia’s GERD will be in Agreement with Egypt and Sudan: Dam Project Manager.” It shows the Egyptians’ interest in news related to the topic from the Ethiopian source.

In August 2019, the article on Ahrām Online that got the second highest rate of views in relation to the GERD topic; was 4650 where the headline was a rational one that was informing about an Egyptian committee reviewing trilateral negotiations on the GERD. “Egypt’s Nile Water Committee reviews trilateral Negotiations on Ethiopia’s GERD.”

Another referred coverage to Ethiopia on Ahrām Online on September got a high rate of views which was 3632 views. The headline was an emotional one and it was as follows: “Ethiopia says Egypt’s Proposal on Filling of GERD ‘puts sovereignty in question.’”

Two more articles got high views rate on Ahrām Online where the headlines were emotional in both of them. One of these headlines was an accusation of Egypt’s PM to Ethiopia of violating GERD DoP and the views were 3285. The other headline was “GERD: War of Words” which got 3824 number of views.

It was also clear that out of eight articles on Ahram Online that the rational appeal used in the headlines was dominant in five headlines while the emotional appeal was dominant in three headlines. Among the chosen sample; all the emotional headlines on Ahram Online got high views rate which were covered on September, and two in October 2019. All the rational headlines got high views rate which were published on January, August, and two in November 2019. Only one article which was issued on October 2019 with a rational headline related to the GERD topic got low view rate which was 756 compared by other articles on Ahram Online. The head line was: “GERD: Intransigence or Reason”.

The coverage on Ahram Online in the beginning of 2019 was trying to refer to Ethiopian source that there will be agreement regarding the filling process, then the Egyptian coverage tried to show that there are efforts done through trilateral negotiations. There was another referral by Ahram Online to Ethiopia’s rejection for Egypt’s GERD filling proposal. Then, there was accusation to Ethiopia by violating GERD DoP. Then on November, the coverage focused on the effective role of the World Bank and the US as mediators in the negotiations regarding the GERD.

It was clear that the dominant appeal used in the headlines in The Ethiopian Herald were the emotional ones where the emotional appeal was used in seven headlines that were published on February, May, three in September, and two in October. While the rational appeal was only used in one headline that was published by end of October. The least views rate was 59 views, which was for the article that used the rational headline related to the GERD on The Ethiopian Herald. The highest views rate to articles related to the GERD topic on The Ethiopian Herald ranged between 149 views and 123 views. The articles that got highest views rate included emotional headlines related to the GERD e.g. “GERD: Issue of Survival, Sovereignty,” “GERD Completion a matter of life and Death,” “Difficult to accept any Compromise on GERD” and “Ethiopia Rejects Egypt’s third party invitation to GERD Talks”. The

headlines were aggressive and tough, the portrayal of headlines showed how far the GERD project is an important matter to Ethiopians that anything can be sacrificed except its completion. The Ethiopian coverage tried to show their strength and power in protecting the construction of the GERD till its completion.

The tension between Egypt and Ethiopia regarding the GERD issue was obvious through the media coverage. It was also clear how far the Egyptian and Ethiopian online media were following up with what was going on in each other's media coverage through the response and referral to each other. It was also clear that Sudan is playing a neutral role in the GERD issue and they want to benefit as much as possible from both Egypt and Ethiopia. The rational appeal was dominant in the headlines that was related to the GERD topic in SNA. Egypt and Ethiopia are trying to gain Sudan's support to their side by strengthening the bilateral relations and cooperation between them and Sudan which was also shown through the chronological order of the media coverage.

What was the aim of the writer?

Through the coverage of the governmental media in 2019, it was clear that that each media tried to portray its national interest. The coverage was divided to four sections; if the coverage support a certain idea or act, if there was attempt to solutions or cooperation, if there was any sort of criticism to an idea or act and if there was a clarification to an idea or act.

Supportive to a certain idea or act on Ahram Online

On Ahram Online; the Support to a certain idea or act included four main topics and they were seven topics due to the repetition of some ideas. Egypt's power to protect its rights to the Nile water was mentioned twice. It was mentioned that Egypt has the power to resort to international law. "FM Sameh Shoukry said that: "Egypt will never

allow Ethiopia to impose the status quo and that Egypt has the power not only to protect its rights to the Nile water but also to resort to international law in this respect.” (Ahram Online, October 9)

Parliament speaker Ali Abdel-Aal; “urged Ethiopia to exercise wisdom and to show respect for Egypt’s right.” “We still have diplomatic and peaceful channels, but there is a red line that none should cross, and Egypt will never allow the loss of any drop of Nile water.” (Ahram Online, October 9). In an opinion article it was mentioned that, “The DoP represented a real achievement for Cairo. The fourth article enriches respect for the equitable and reasonable division and use of water, an essential consideration given Egypt’s water scarcity.” (Ahram Online, October 15)

The idea of the necessity of international mediation was raised three times by two officials and in an opinionated article in Ahram Online. Egypt’s FM said that: he is “supporting the idea of a mediator who will respect the right of all parties after four years of fruitless negotiations.” (Ahram Online, October 15). Head of parliament’s African Affairs Committee, mentioned that, “Egyptian officials have been busy alerting the international community to the dangers posed by Ethiopia’s intransigence over the dam.” (Ahram Online, October 27)

Supportive to a certain idea or act on The Ethiopian Herald

Eight main topics were tackled under the part of supporting a certain idea or act which were as follows: what does the GERD mean to Ethiopia? What does the GERD symbolize to the Ethiopians? Why it is important? How they should feel about the GERD? What should be done to support the project? What is the Ethiopian stance towards water treaties and international water laws and action(s) taken based on that? In which stage is the project and what are the government’s plan for the completion process of the GERD project?

On The Ethiopian Herald, it was covered that the “completion of the construction of the GERD would be a matter of life and death for Ethiopians,” (The Ethiopian Herald, February 2, 2019).

The GERD was portrayed as follows: “The GERD is a mega project and certainly, nothing even remotely similar to it has ever been done in the long and proud history of Ethiopia.” “The GERD is a perfect example of what the government has done right over the last two decades” (The Ethiopian Herald, May12, 2019).

The benefit of the GERD was framed in the following ways: “The construction of the GERD was a good idea, as it would bring sustainable sourced electricity to vast numbers of people and at the same time give Ethiopia its natural right to the water of the River Nile” (The Ethiopian Herald, May 12, 2019). “The GERD is an iconic project to Ethiopia. As being source of energy, potential for foreign currency and many other economic and environmental benefit many Ethiopians value it” (The Ethiopian Herald, September 21, 2019).

The way how they should feel towards the GERD project was presented as follows: “It must be clear that, from a moral, ethical, and patriotic perspective, all Ethiopian citizens should continue to see the GERD as a source of national pride” (The Ethiopian Herald, May12, 2019). “The GERD is a challenge-resilient project. Now is the time to be of high morale, and look to the future” (The Ethiopian Herald, May12, 2019).

Actions to be taken to support the GERD project, On a viewpoint article on The Ethiopian Herald it was mentioned that, to support the GERD project the Ethiopians can buy a bond and this will be a practical way to increase the support to the project (The Ethiopian Herald May12, 2019).

Ethiopia’s stance towards water treaties and international water laws and action(s) taken based on that. “Ethiopia requires no country’s permission and will construct the

dam inside its territories.” “International water laws do also grant the country a right to develop its resources without inflicting significant harm to other countries” (The Ethiopian Herald September 27, 2019). “Ethiopia won’t recognize any preexisting water allocation treaty, which has no applicability whatsoever on Ethiopia” (The Ethiopian Herald October 8, 2019). “We will rectify errors made by past governments but we will go ahead and complete our best projects” (The Ethiopian Herald October 27, 2019). “It is an asset difficult to afford any negotiations that open a chance to compromise” (The Ethiopian Herald September 21, 2019). “The major focus of the government is to carry on with the construction while at the same time engaging in negotiations with the Nile Basin countries” (The Ethiopian Herald October 17, 2019).

In which stage is the project and what are the government’s plan for the completion process of the GERD project? “The dam has already reached a completion level.” “Out of the budget invested on the dam, a fifth of it is debt.” “That is why we have made serious evaluation and taken actions on GERD so that it doesn’t incur inflation anymore.” Said by the Ethiopian PM (The Ethiopian Herald, February 2, 2019). “The government of Ethiopia will strengthen its efforts to realize development of its water resource to meet the present and future needs of its people that deserve development and adequate standard of living” (The Ethiopian Herald October 8, 2019).

Attempts for solutions and cooperation on Ahram Online

Nine attempts for cooperation were covered in Ahram Online, five attempts of cooperation were covered by The Ethiopian Herald and one was covered by Sudan News Agency.

Negotiations and agreements were mentioned five times by officials as a way to reach solutions between Ethiopia and downstream countries. Egypt’s Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources. “Negotiations are continuing although ‘no new developments have been reached’” (Ahram Online August 21). “All state authorities have moved to intensify communications with all concerned international organizations in order to

overcome obstacles,” Mentioned by Egypt’s FM upon instructions from president (Ahrām Online, October 9). Egypt’s FM said that; “It’s essential we can reach a solution that respects both the rights of downstream countries and Ethiopia’s right to pursue development” (Ahrām Online October 15). Egypt’s FM hopes the forthcoming meeting would “formulate a binding legal agreement to achieve the interests of three countries,” “Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan accepted a US invitation to discuss breaking the deadlock in negotiations over the GERD,” (Ahrām Online November 5).

It was mentioned three times that Egypt has developed an inclusive plan to solve the water problem. And the government is implementing a number of giant water projects until 2037 (Ahrām Online, October 9 and 27).

“In a televised speech Al-Sisi said many statements about the dam on social media were exaggerated and called on the public to deal with the issue calmly” (Ahrām Online October 27)

Attempts for Solution(s)/ Cooperation on The Ethiopian Herald

There were five attempts and approaches for cooperation and seeking solutions that were presented on The Ethiopian Herald. The attempts included counter proposal for filling the dam’s reservoir, engaging in dialogues intended to ensure mutual understanding between the lower riparian countries. Ethiopia declared its intention for upholding the principle of equitable use of water and to cause no harm on the riparian countries. There is no existence to the following concepts which are the monopolization of the water supply of the Nile, solutions based on unilateralism or using of force.

Criticize a certain idea or act on Ahram Online

Through the coverage of the three online governmental media, the criticism to a certain idea or act took place ten times in both Ahram Online and The Ethiopian Herald. On Sudan News Agency there was no criticism in the coverage to the GERD issue.

Ethiopia was criticized five times regarding the respect of agreements and law; “that there is a determination to subvert international conventions on transnational rivers” (Ahram Online, October 15, 2019). “Ethiopia took a unilateral decision to build the GERD.” Egypt’s PM, “accused Ethiopia of backtracking on all previous agreements related to the Nile Water” (Ahram Online, October 9, 2019). Egypt’s PM mentioned that; “Ethiopia displayed very radical positions represent a violation of the DoP” (Ahram Online, October 9, 2019).

There were three criticism to Ethiopia related to the filling and operation of GERD which were as follows: “it is unclear how Addis Ababa seeks to fill the reservoir, but Bekele said that his country will submit its own technical proposal on the filling, without providing further details” (Ahram Online, September 20, 2019). Egypt’s FM criticized Ethiopia for rejecting every proposal submitted to prevent a reduction in Egypt’s water supply (Ahram Online, October 27, 2019).” Egypt’s PM stated that; “Ethiopia displayed very radical positions in the latest round of negotiations held in Khartoum and rejected all proposals submitted by Egypt to solve the differences” (Ahram Online, October 9, 2019).

It was mentioned in an opinionated article that; “Addis Ababa had continued the pattern of procrastination, using false pretexts to stymy any progress in meetings and taking advantage of the situation in Sudan to try to impose a new, de facto reality on the ground” (Ahram Online, October 15, 2019).

Egypt's FM mentioned that "Abiy Ahmed's words included negative signals and unacceptable hints." "It was inappropriate to threaten military action as a means to resolve dispute over GERD" (Ahram Online, October 27, 2019).

Criticize a certain idea or act on The Ethiopian Herald

Six ideas and acts were criticized and the total number of acts and ideas that were criticized were ten due to the repetition of one of the ideas. The idea that were commonly and was most repeated in its criticism was related to Egypt's proposal for filling the dam and it was described as 'unfair.' The following is how the ideas and acts were criticized on The Ethiopian Herald.

Egypt's proposal was criticized five times and was described as 'unfair' where Egypt's utilization of the water around Aswan Dam is unknown to Ethiopia. "We also have demands regarding our future." "Egypt's new proposal violates the principle of the Nile Waters Treaty signed earlier between the three countries." Ethiopia's Minister of Water Irrigation and Electricity said. (The Ethiopian Herald September 19, September 21, October 8 and October 17, 2019). "Egyptian side nullifies the efforts and progresses made so far as the document presented by their side contravenes with the benefits of Ethiopia" (The Ethiopian Herald September 21, 2019).

The president and the government were criticized for politicizing the GERD issue on The Ethiopian Herald and it was covered as follows: "There is no ground for Egypt to politicize the matter; the dam should be weighted by significance and technical parameters." "The president is the top Egyptian official who tried to defame Ethiopia's amicable desire for mutual benefits" (The Ethiopian Herald September 27, 2019).

The following coverage was criticism on The Ethiopian Herald towards the Egyptian side for distorting the true image of the GERD; "There have been some confrontational statements from Egyptian side to tarnish the true image of the dam in

many ways; Ethiopia has to proactively work on promoting the necessity of the dam and the causes behind it” (The Ethiopian Herald September 27, 2019). “The Egyptian public must not be easily exposed to wishful and propaganda of extremists” (The Ethiopian Herald October 27, 2019).

The Egyptian diplomatic side was criticized on The Ethiopian Herald by framing that the Ethiopian side is the one doing all the important work to maintain peaceful relation with Egypt and it was framed in the following way: “It is clear to guess that Ethiopia is in a position to do all the necessary diplomatic work to make sure that the tripartite dialogue between Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan, resumes so that it maintains both the GERD and the smooth relation with Egypt. (The Ethiopian Herald September 21, 2019).

The Ethiopians who are against the GERD project due to their political affiliations were also criticized in the following way; “Some self-styled activists or opposition politicians may say that the project was political and failure from the start. Such views must be considered rather narrow-minded and politicizing (The Ethiopian Herald May 12, 2019).

Clarify an idea or an act on Ahram Online

Three topics were covered and the total no. of topics were ten with the repetition of some of the topics.

The act that there was no agreement and that the negotiations were useless and reached a deadlock on Egypt's technical proposal were mentioned four times by officials and in an opinionated article. (Ahram Online, August 21, September 20, October 10, October 15, 2019). It was mentioned five times that Egypt has fears that the hydroelectric dam will reduce its share of Nile water. (Ahram Online, January 19, September 20, October 27, November 5, 2019). It was mentioned that "The latest round of talks between the three countries collapsed last October 2019, and Ethiopia had previously rejected Cairo's request for a mediator" (Ahram Online, November 5, 2019).

Clarify an idea or an act on The Ethiopian Herald

The Ethiopian Herald pointed out to three topics to serve their national interest regarding the GERD issue. Two of these clarified topics were directed to the international community and one was mainly directed to the Ethiopians.

The two topics that were mainly directed to the international community were portrayed as follows; "Ethiopia has rejected Egypt proposal for the filling of the GERD claiming it is unnecessary and harmful to Ethiopia's interest" (The Ethiopian Herald September 19, 2019). "Ethiopia took the initiative to form a National Independent Scientific Research Group NISRG to carry out consultative meeting on the filling and operation of the dam. Relevent engineers and experts reached mutual understanding on the filling and operation of the dam. However, the signing of the consensus was postponed upon the request of Egypt to discuss with experts" (The Ethiopian Herald September 21, 2019).

The coverage that was mainly directed to the Ethiopians was; “No matter the region of the world, mega projects just never go according to plan. And the GERD is no exception” (The Ethiopian Herald May 12, 2019).

Clarify an idea or an act on Sudan News Agency

Sudan News Agency coverage neutrally clarified the path of the negotiations. The coverage aimed to inform that there were meetings held about the GERD where the ministers of water resources attended beside the attendance of the members of the National Independent Scientific Research Committee. The coverage was about informing that Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia agreed to discuss the new proposals that will be submitted by each of them in regard to the filling and operation process of the dam (Sudan News Agency September 17, 2019).

There were four specified Ethiopian Sources that Ahram Online Referred to and two sources their source was not specified. Three of them were positive, two were negative and one neutral. There were three specified Egyptian Sources that The Ethiopian Herald Referred to and one source was unspecified. The four sources were negative. There was one unspecified Sudanese Source that The Ethiopian Herald Referred to and it was a positive source.

Conclusion:

It was clear that through the online coverage of the three governmental Egyptian, Ethiopian and Sudanese media that each media was framing information regarding the Nile water and regarding the GERD topic in a way that best serves each one's national interest.

Ahram Online coverage expressed several times its fear from the reduction of the Nile water supply which the GERD can cause. The coverage of Ahram Online hammered on the necessity of international mediation after the four years fruitless negotiations as mentioned by Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry. Egypt's Foreign Minister mentioned that upon instructions from President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi "all state authorities have moved to intensify communications with all concerned international organizations in order to overcome obstacles." FM Sameh Shoukry said that; "Egypt is proposing that the World Bank act as a mediator in this respect." On October 2019, "the round of talks between Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan collapsed, and Ethiopia had rejected previously Cairo's request for a mediator," (Ahram Online, November 5, 2019). On November 5, 2019, "Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan have accepted a US invitation to discuss breaking the deadlock in negotiations over the GERD between Cairo and Addis Ababa." (Ahram Online, October 5, 2019)

Ahram Online framed Egypt's power to protect its rights to the Nile water and Egypt's power to resort to international law. Egypt pointed out that Ethiopia is not upholding to Article 3 which commits the three signatories not to harm the interests of the others. Ahram Online portrayed that Egypt is the victim of Ethiopia's procrastination and its determination to ignore international law. Ahram Online coverage showed that Egypt worked relentlessly to forge agreement over the filling and operation of GERD but due to Ethiopia's inflexibility and stubbornness; only the Ethiopian side to ignore impact studies of different scenarios for filling of the reservoir and operation of the dam from internationally known consultant.

Sudan News Agency didn't miss out the coverage regarding the most common topic that caused tension between Egypt and Ethiopia which was about the filling and operation process of the GERD. However, the intensity of coverage regarding the GERD topic in general was so weak compared by the Egyptian and Ethiopian coverage. Beside the type of coverage of the filling and operating process of the GERD came once through the chosen samples and the coverage was neutral.

Ahram Online covered what Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said which was as follows: "If there is need to go to war, we could get millions readied. If some could fire a missile, others could use bombs. But that's not in the best interest of all of us." In reaction, a statement by the Egyptian Foreign Minister said that if true, "Ahmed words included negative signals and unacceptable hints." "It was inappropriate to threaten military action as a means to resolve dispute over GERD." The statement hammered that Egypt has always pursued to tackle the issue in line with the principles of international law and international legitimacy (Ahram Online, October 27, 2019).

On the other side, The Ethiopian Herald coverage was concerned to clarify that almost all the necessary diplomatic effort towards maintaining smooth relation with Egypt while working on the GERD project was done by its side. One of the most topics that was covered intensively on The Ethiopian Herald was the criticism of Egypt's proposal for filling the dam reservoir. The criticism for Egypt's proposal regarding the filling of the reservoir was a sort of reply as well to Egypt's intense criticism in its coverage for the Ethiopian stance regarding the rejection on Egypt's proposal.

The Ethiopian coverage was keen to show its active role to present a counter proposal regarding the filling of the reservoir and the Ethiopian coverage pointed out that they were waiting for the consensus of Egypt on their suggested proposal.

The Ethiopian coverage hammered on the idea that Egypt is violating the law through its proposal regarding the filling of the reservoir and mentioned that it's harmful to Ethiopia's development. The Ethiopian coverage focused that it's their right to use

their resources for developmental purposes and that Ethiopia need no country's permission to build the GERD inside its territories. And that "International water laws do also grant the country a right to develop its resources without inflicting significant harm to other countries." The Ethiopian coverage mentioned that "Ethiopia won't recognize any preexisting water allocation treaty, which has no applicability whatsoever on Ethiopia."

On the other hand, the Egyptian coverage accused Ethiopia for not respecting the international water law by building the GERD. And that "the fourth article in the declaration enshrines respect for the equitable and reasonable division and use of water, an essential consideration given Egypt's water scarcity."

Ahram Online, framed that Ethiopia displayed a radical in the latest round of negotiations. It was also covered on Ahram Online, that "Egypt will not allow any one party involved in the GERD issue to impose its will on another." And that Egypt will never permit Ethiopia to impose the status quo. It was covered several times that after the negotiations between Egypt and Ethiopia reached a deadlock; Egypt was seeking a mediator that can resolve differences in a scientific way.

Through the chosen samples that were eight articles on Ahram Online, eight articles on The Ethiopian Herald and nine on Sudan News Agency. The Ethiopian coverage was more emotional than both the Egyptian and Sudanese coverage regarding to the GERD topic. This was clear through the comparison between the appeals used in the headlines related to the GERD topic in the three coverage of the different governmental online media of the three countries. The number of the emotional appeal used in the headlines in The Ethiopian Herald were seven while the number of emotional appeals used in the headlines on Ahram Online were three and no emotional appeal in the headlines in Sudan News Agency coverage. The number of headlines that used the rational appeal on Ahram Online were five headlines and on The Ethiopian Herald it was only once where the rational appeal was used in the headline.

On Sudan News Agency, the coverage was neutral in relation to the headlines used that was related to the GERD topic and it was used in only two articles in a direct way. The other seven articles that were chosen among the sample of Sudan News Agency didn't mention the GERD topic in a direct way, however, it focused on the bilateral relation between Sudan and Egypt and Sudan and Ethiopia in separate coverage.

The Egyptian utilization of the Nile water of Aswan Dam was questioned in the Ethiopian coverage and the Ethiopian coverage pointed that's why the Egyptian proposal was rejected and was described by 'un fair.' And the proposal was also described as harmful to Ethiopia's development. On the other side, the Egyptian coverage presented that there are plans for desalination plants and rationalizing the use of water.

The Egyptian coverage referred that the acceleration in the building process of the GERD was unclear. On the other side, The Ethiopian Herald clarified that it's crucial that no delay should take place regarding the time of the completion of the GERD project so as to prevent extra expenses. It was clarified in the Ethiopian coverage that the budget invested on the dam; fifth of it is debt. That is why they have made serious evaluation and taken actions on GERD to avoid any more inflation.

On the Ethiopian coverage the GERD project had been symbolized by the mega, iconic and best project ever that had been implemented in Ethiopia's proud history. The economic benefit of the GERD on the Ethiopian citizens was highlighted that it's going to affect their standard of living through bringing foreign currency to Ethiopia and sustainable electricity to the majority of the Ethiopians. The GERD had been portrayed as a source of hope and pride to the Ethiopians in its online coverage and it finally brought Ethiopia's right to use its resources. It was also covered on the Ethiopian coverage that no one can stop the completion of the GERD as it is a matter of life or death and no negotiation will be accepted that open a chance to compromise.

On the other side, The Egyptian coverage stressed on its fear that the GERD will diminish its water supplies from the Nile. Where Egypt is known, that its supply from the water relies totally on the Nile while the receiving capacity of Ethiopia from the rainwater is 936 cubic meters a year which is considered to feed 10 other rivers.

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