



SELINUS UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCES AND LITERATURE

**PEELING THE ONION IN THE REPORTAGE
OF CONFLICT ON THE GRAND ETHIOPIAN
RENAISSANCE DAM (GERD) NEGOTIATION**

By Zenebe Desta Teklewold

Supervised by Prof. Salvatore Fava Ph.D.

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DECLARATION

The dissertation titled “Peeling the Onion in the Reportage of Conflict on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) Negotiation” which is submitted for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Public Affairs at Selinus University of Sciences and Literature, Department of Public Affairs, is my original work. This dissertation has not been presented at any other institution to earn any degree, associateship, fellowship or any other academic merit before. Materials borrowed from other sources and used in the dissertation have been duly acknowledged and referenced. Articles published out of this study are also my original work. “I do hereby attest that I am the sole author of this PhD dissertation and that its contents are only the result of my own readings and research”.

February 2021

Student’s Signature: *Zenebe Desta Teklewold*

Student ID: UNISE 1075IT

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CFA- Cooperative Framework Agreement

CPA- Conflict Perspective Analysis

DOP - Declaration of Principles

ENTRO - Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office

EJN- Ethical Journalism Network

GERD- Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

GPPAC- Global Partnership for Prevention of Armed Conflict

ICG- International Crisis Group

CSJ- Conflict Sensitive Journalism

IGAD- Intergovernmental Authority on Development

INGOs- International Non-Governmental Organizations

JMP- Joint Multipurpose Project

NBI- Nile Basin Initiative

NSC- National Security Council

RQ- Research Question

SDC- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

SIDA- Swedish International Cooperation Agency

UN-United Nations

UNSC-United Nations Security Council

UNDP- United Nations Development Program

UNESCO-United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNSSC- United Nations System Staff College

USAID- United States Agency for International Development

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ABSTRACT

Conflict potentially turns violent when change become sine qua non and actors such as media might influence with favour of polarization by elucidating only position. News media associated with government are the most susceptible and pulled by nationalist cause besides the inherent symbiotic relation with their respective governments. Such news media resort to resonating divergence instead of common ground and becoming firing point of parties pursuing incompatible goals.

This study has interrelated bipartite intentions. One is to delve into pro-government news media's extent of fairing for conflict sensitivity in their report. The other is to validate conflict onion analogy (which is among the conflict analysis tools) so that it augments to the developing framework of conflict sensitive journalism. The coverage of the hassle over Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project is taken for the study. It entails that change has become an astir factor of the conflict specifically between Ethiopia and Egypt that remained latent for about a century and reaching an agreement as expected is seemingly grueling. Samples of coverage of *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Ahram Online* for two months (June and July 2020) purposely selected as a critical milestone of starting to fill up the dam reservoir. Explanatory sequential design is employed as a methodology by integrating both quantitative and qualitative method of content analysis of the extracted samples totaling 221 consisting of news and opinions.

The two news media are evaluated from three conceptual main categories of sourcing of news as well as the focus on common ground and diverging issues. Consequently, the results become comparably dissimilar though there is resemblance in ownership. *The Ethiopian Herald* found to be outpacing in entertaining views other than government official. It also better represented the search for common ground and not much preoccupied in resonating divergence. *Ahram Online* is on the other side of the gamut and appear to be dangerously more of driving intermittent escalation. As a theoretical input, the study also asserts that peeling the onion attest to the emerging conflict sensitive journalism with the aggregation of the inclusion of diverse articulations and searching and magnification of common ground of conflicting parties minus amplification of divergence.

Key words: Conflict sensitive journalism, conflict onion, uncovering interests and needs, news coverage of GERD

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

For reporters, change is news. And when there is change, there often is disagreement or conflict. (Ross Howard).

"A dispute between Ethiopia and Egypt about the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) has reached its most perilous point yet" reads statement by International Crisis Group March 2020 report (ICG 2020,p.1). The issue has attracted the attention of media based in the two countries as well as those global media covering the perspectives of elites and politicians (Belay 2018 P1). Media attracted in covering change that challenges status quo often questionably in state of violence and dramatic situation. "Journalism is about the impact change has on individuals, communities, groups and nations, political structures, economies and the natural environment" (due Toit 2012,p.7). Escalating statements and wording selected and represented by news media such as 'showdown', 'slam', 'dismiss' and 'threaten' are becoming frequent. "Media outlets in both countries compared the two sides' military strength in anticipation of hostilities" (ICG 2019, p.1).

The Nile River that originates from countries of East Africa, Lake Region and Ethiopia traverse longest distance in the world before empties into Mediterranean Sea watering the downstream countries of Sudan and

Egypt (NBI Corporate Report, 2020). The river touches and connects in one way or another with Burundi, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Eritrea (Ibid). Egypt, which relies heavily on the river, was alarmed when in 2011 Ethiopia started the hydropower project construction on the *Abay* River, the biggest of the three tributaries that originates from its highlands (Obengo 2016). The three rivers from Ethiopia Abay, Sobat (Baro-Akobo) and the Atbara (Tekeze) contribute more than 85 percent of the Nile water that drains through Sudan and Egypt.

The often appearing background mentioned on media report is that the colonial time treaty of 1929 and the legacy of it in 1959 that gave the two downstream countries, Egypt and Sudan, rights to nearly all of the Nile waters (Obengo 2016). The agreements gave Egypt veto powers over any projects by upstream countries that would affect its share of the waters. It is appropriate to reiterate the wording of veteran journalist and academician Ross Howard about change, disagreement and news. “For reporters, change is news. And when there is change, there often is disagreement or conflict” (2004, p.6). Lack of probing into details from the perspective of conflict analysis on the part of the journalist could result in misrepresenting the reality of the change, the proponent and the opponent and become contributor to violence.

Obengo (2016) in explicating the hydro politics of the Nile says “Different understandings of the rights to natural resources, and responses and

counter-responses, may lead to conflict, sustain the status quo or promote peace” (p.95). The move that compel change in the status quo of the sharing of the Nile water resource has been bringing the disagreement and drawing the attention of local media and international news media. Multilateral approach for developing the Nile river with the concept of equitable water allocation spearheaded by the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) formed in 1999 was not accepted by the two lower riparian countries to retain 'historical' share of the river water and this has been becoming an impediment on future upstream projects (Brookings, 2005) and (Salman,2013). Swain (2002) and El Fadel (2003) noted utilizing Nile water for development and extricating their people from poverty has been hampered by conflicts and instability in the riparian countries. However, the consequent move to feed their ever increasing populations has become inevitable for the countries to claim the rights to the use the water. The GERD project could be precedent for other upper Nile riparian countries to think of similar projects.

"Ethiopia says it will start filling the reservoir in July 2020 even if it and other two parties fail to strike a deal. Egypt, which says the reservoir should be filled only after agreement is reached, has vowed to use 'all available means' to protect its 'water interests' (ICG, 2020). The combative statements issued from the countries and echoing of such positions by the news media is imaginable security threat in the region. Is that the gullibility and conflict mongering nature of the news media? Or is

that their total submissiveness to serve as propaganda machine? Nicol (2003) states the demeanour of news media as flows:

The issue of water and conflict is the focus of frequent media reports, usually written by ill-informed journalists keen to cover column inches....Some reports even portray impending 'water wars', quoting out-of-context statements made by politicians and technocrats who mostly have vested national interests (p.167).

This dissertation is aimed to look into media's treatment of the escalating of the conflict of the two countries in light of principles of conflict sensitive journalism with the analysis of news media how positions, interests and needs of the countries are represented. This will be critical as both are seemed polarised staunchly after the round of negotiation held in US (with World Bank and US as observers) started in November 2019 and broke down by end of February 2020 following the withdrawal of Ethiopia from the negotiation. Then, negotiation resurrected in June 2020 and to be handled by African Union with dynamism towards the timing of the first filling in July 2020.

A person of meager or conversant with media and communication background might ponder to enquire why shouldn't media choose to present the collaborative and predominance of advantages of the equitable and fair share and use of the water of the river? The river existed for thousands of years and continues flowing. Isn't the river bonded the communality of people of the countries? Are the media playing warming

up tune for parties to flex muscles? Or shouldn't the news media probe and reach to crux of issues of contention in the effort for the quest for solution? These are among the motives for the conception of this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Media that take merely the positions of authorities without probing into the core of the setback may only do inflammatory purpose in the surfacing of conflict. Media Council of Kenya (2016) indicates "Positions that are stated before the public are far removed from conflicting parties' actual interest, demands and needs" (p.24). Conflict reporter bent on positions of diplomats and leaders by making them oft sources of information of the media where as conflict sensitive journalist distances herself/himself from this and cares that sourcing them over and over could embed propaganda (De Michelis, 2018).

There is a growing interest in communicating conflict by mainstream media by perusing the concept of peace journalism pioneered by Johan Galtung, in 1973. It has been developing since then by other scholars and academic institution working in communication and Journalism fields (Aslam, 2011). Before evolvement of peace journalism, most media and reporters took war journalism as the salient option in the context of conflict (Hällgren, 2012). Aslam (2011) noted "[t]he concept has gained greater acceptance among the academicians and journalists across the world and there is a paradigm shift of the traditional media approach towards conflict " (p. 137).

Conflict analysis and conflict sensitive reporting by news media are mutually reinforcing one another and media can play a role of third party as conciliator between rival parties facilitating understanding, engagement and action (Peleg, 2006) and (Karlson & Gürten 2018). Rama & Gürten (2018) categorise conflict analysis tool in journalism to four which are the Timeline, the Conflict Sensitive Journalism Triangle, the Actors' Map and the Conflict Onion. They suggest the use of one of the tool independently or in combination of two or more of the tools by a journalist will have crucial role in media communication and content framing in the context of conflict. However, testing these tools from empirical standpoint has not yet been scrutinised. From the aforementioned tools, this study came across only ABC or conflict sensitive journalism triangle was considered empirically from perspective of newspapers reportage of three protracted conflicts of the Northern Ireland, the Israel-Palestine and the Basque by Samuel Peleg (2006).

Antonia Koop (2018) collected 18 tools dubbed as 'significant principles' based on widely agreed journalistic values such as truth, accuracy, balance, impartiality and independence providing a means to provide guidance for practicing journalists and have been developed as strategies to prevail over the unconstructive practice of the media. Indeed the principles have been refined as tools for the discipline of conflict analysis. This research singles out the Conflict Onion principle for the analysis of the coverage of the news media for the study.

The underpinning question will be then how do the news media represent the parties to the negotiations on GERD which are Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia to reach win-win for mutual benefit and cooperation over the dam and beyond? It is to see the selected analysis tool to help determine the positions, interests and needs of the countries and others at play. The pro-government news media might escalate in the treatment of interests and needs of the impasse between the countries will be also at stake. Here it is paramount to note that it is purported that media sponsored by government unequivocally back the regime. Ersoy (2017) underlines “We should also remember that media institutions and politicians adopt a more nationalistic discourse during the peace/conflict/war process” (p.464). If this is so, as Galtung (1998) argues caring only for one side is tantamount to promoting mendacities. “If one side is backed by one's own country, nation, class or paper/ station/ channel, the low road invites untruthfulness” (Ibid, p.2). These is thus to uncover whether the sample data corpus of media selected, *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Aharam Online* venture to reach the crux of onion by resisting the eye irritating task to get to crux that is to interests and needs of the parties or just taking the positions and be contributor for the escalation of conflict.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The study is intended to investigate communication through *Ahram Online* and *The Ethiopian Herald* during the negotiation and stalemate on GERD from 1 June 2020 to 31 July 2020. The content analysis which dwells on texts of these news media using onion conflict tool specifically will:

- deconstruct the contents of the coverage of the news media on GERD negotiation and its stalemate with tool of conflict union,
- explain the difference of the media in question in covering the GERD negotiation and impasse that has possibly escalating,
- elucidate status of the respective media in going deeper to reach to the interests and needs of the parties and communicate the result to their audience and
- investigate how viable is the conflict union theory for news media communication and its applicability in situation of latent and fermenting interstate conflict.

1.4 Praiseworthiness of the Study

Academics in the field emphasise the need to undertake critical research about the function of news media in conflict situation in line with the dynamism of a period (Michelis, 2018) and (Gilboa, 2009). Study in the area of media communication in situation of latent and building up of conflict will be critical impetus to look a way of averting it. It also lends a hand to utilise the scrutinised tool for media constructive report on conflict. Particularly the research:

- is believed to have its contribution to the body of knowledge to the development of conflict sensitive journalism,
- contributes in helping perceive the media under consideration treatment of issues of contention that potentially lead to escalation of conflict and

- guide in employing the principle of conflict analysis specifically conflict onion tool for news media communication in the conflict context and become part of a solution with its methodical coverage than fueling conflict.

1.5 Demarcation

This study explores the premise of conflict analysis tool for content analysis of news media framing of conflict. From myriad of conflict tools developed by a number of scholars, it singles out conflict onion model so that to avoid the risk of wondering and risking in-depth consideration of the subject. An empirical exercise of conflict analysis has ascertained so far by this study is looking into situation, attitude and behavior which is also referred as ABC triangle by Samuel Peleg (2006) that underscored conflict theory's criticality for development of conflict sensitive journalism.

Hence, this study bound to look how the news media faired in the reportage by taking conflict sensitive journalism framework to uncover the interest and communality of three countries beneath their position during the negotiation on GERD in the time frame selected. The study will not venture to seek the perspectives of the news media institutions selected for the study and professionals involved in the production of the content. It also neither considered other than English in its literature review nor in its theoretical framework. The subjects of the news media made to represent the three countries but unfortunately not from Sudan because

of not finding conformable news media in English with that of from Ethiopia and Egypt.

1.6 Organization of the Research

In the subsequent chapters (2 and 3), the researcher summarizes key theories and tools related to conflict analysis and its pertinence to conflict sensitive communication of media with emphasis to conflict onion. Chapter 4 explicates the technique employed in the content analysis of *Ahram Online and The Ethiopian Herald* covering the period from June 1 2020 to July 31 2020. The research design of content analysis include adopting a guide and coding based on concepts of the conflict onion tool. Chapter 5 presents the findings of the content analysis of the news media in focus and validate qualitatively the result of quantitative data. It also relates the findings to the proposed research questions and hypothesis framed at the outset. The last chapter explains the implication and presents confines of the outcome of the study and formulates a conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Research on Media Report about Nile Water

It would be fair to think that media present the articulation of different perspectives on issues of Nile water resource. “[t]he way people understand Water and Environmental issues is influenced to a significant degree by media coverage, interpretation and presentation” (Wenje and Joseph 2018, p.4). The coders of the media message on the subject of the water could be positive, negative or neutral based on their cultural, structural and personal biases. There has not been much research conducted on what and how media presented the issues. The few works of research so far available are attributed to media workshops of professionals facilitated by pertinent project endeavouring for better cooperation of riparian countries and few other academics.

A study that looked into both international and national media of the countries of Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia barely provide perspective of Sudan and their focus more on Ethiopia and Egypt. Whereas, the bringing of Sudan and other riparian countries into picture seen to be yielding tamed the confrontational tone (Fantini, 2018). The other detection of the research is that the media only dwell on their particular national perspective and interest and thus lacking internal debate on management of the water resource and avert conflict (Ibid.). The study also suggested that media is facing challenges with regard to freedom of expression

which include getting scientific evidences on the river basin, lack of information on the costs of GERD and status of the project and debates are only limited to politicians, excluded media and researchers (Ibid).

A project entitled *Open Water Diplomacy Lab* facilitated workshop from Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt aimed to uphold the emergence of shared Nile narratives and has gone beyond local viewpoint. The participating journalists expressed commitment to brace up to be connected with researchers in the field (Fredric, 2017).

Another study on framing analysis on the coverage of GERD by a newspaper in Ethiopia (*The Reporter*) outlined development of national image, rights, victimhood, mutual benefit, and war as the salient frames of the newspaper (Belay, 2014). In the analysis, Belay highlighted that there were stories on the prospect of the dam for Ethiopia and the lower riparian countries mentioning also some of the stories on possible sabotage that may be taken by Cairo(Ibid).

A content analysis of three media (*Addis Zemen*, *Al Ahram Weekly* and *Sudan Vision*) about Ethiopia's decision to construct the renaissance dam on the Abay River has been conducted (Hailu, 2012). The study examined the stories appeared on these news media for the consecutive six months from the time the construction of the dam was launched. The study has conducted on the newspapers from the point view of analytical categories including theme, source, tendency and salient frames of the

stories (Ibid). According to Hailu, the media in focus framed GERD with mainly diagnostic, economic consequences and mutual benefit as well as emphasized the opportunities the dam will have in creating collaborative atmosphere (Ibid). He came up with the conclusion that the three media lacked balance and objectivity and inclined to align to respective countries national interest which will have consequence in potentially prompting and intensifying antagonism than cooperation (Ibid).

Researchers from Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) conducted a study on local newspapers -*The Daily Nation* and *The Standard* to understand the existing knowledge gap journalists encounter mainly in Kenya (Wenje and Joseph, 2018). They ascertained the minimal awareness about Nile Basin projects on the parts of media professionals, the researchers as well as the limited interactions between media professionals and expertise in the field of Nile River Basin (Ibid). They argue that the media- hype about Nile River in terms of source of information came mainly from media visits and recommend the strengthening and strategizing it by regularizing media excursion to Nile River projects (Ibid).

In summary, the research undertakings accessed by this study on Nile River Basin endeavoured to investigate the media they selected for the study mainly from the point of view of framing theory as well as looked into them with eyes of journalistic values and principles. Furthermore, the result of researches base themselves on content analysis with key

informants and spin around countries of Eastern Riparian countries and assert that the coverage have the tendency of alignment to national interest. It also found out that there has been low level of awareness on the part of media professionals on River Nile Basin. Despite the fact that there is growing antagonism and distrust befalling particularly between the three Eastern Nile River basin countries since the building of GERD on Abay River, the researches so far has not encountered any of it from the perspective of conflict sensitive journalism.

2.2 Conflict Analysis and Conflict Sensitive Journalism

Johan Galtung in his work *Theories of Conflict* defines conflict with four smaller unit of language: 'actors', 'pursuit', 'incompatible' and 'goals' – and constructed as “Actors in pursuit of incompatible goals” (1973, p.23). While McGoldrick and Lynch add up “Conflict is a process through which two or more actors (‘PARTIES’) try to pursue incompatible aims or GOALS while trying to stop the other(s) from pursuing their goals” (2015, p.6). The Merriam Webster Dictionary also defines conflict as “Competitive or opposing actions of incompatibles: antagonistic state or action”. Conflict can be said that divergent ideas or interests and needs pursued by the parties. With the missing of one of those of the main terms, the concept of conflict hardly is conceivable.

Conflict can come to pass within oneself, in family, in community and at societal levels which may lead to change with some intrinsic resistance by the one trying to maintaining the status quo. Concerning this, Howard

(2002) indicates conflict is something commonplace when change is approved by all concerned. Nonetheless,

If their disagreement or their conflict is managed peacefully, it can be a positive process. But when conflict is not managed properly, it becomes violent. In violent conflict, people fear for their safety and survival. When we say conflict, we are usually referring to violent conflict (Ibid, p.6).

Since the end of the Cold War, there have been countless conflicts that have involved the deaths of millions of people and the suffering as well as the displacement of millions more with its consequences (Puddephatt, 2006). A conflict analysis is thus the study of actors, their incompatibilities, the pursuit and goals with a purpose. “Conflict analysis is a structured process of analysis to understand conflict”, Herbert (2017) quoted *Conflict Sensitivity Consortium*, 2012. The analysis of conflict focuses on the conflict profile, the actors concerned and their perspectives, the grounds of divergence, and the dynamics of how these essentials interrelate (Ibid).

As aforementioned, analysis is with purpose. Conflict analysis includes a broader scope of designs and approaches with the objective with which the analysis is to be made and thus the purpose informs the effective approach (Initiative Mediation Support Deutschland, 2017). The field studying conflicts is not limited to itself but of multidisciplinary (Vinyamata, 2010). The discipline of conflict analysis is first and foremost explained as thoughts about mode of operation on how conflicts can be

sorted out positively. It is dubious to know the limits of the the discipline. “There are scholars, practitioners, and outside analysts who sometimes apply conflict resolution ideas and methods but who do not self-identify as belonging to the field”. (Neu and Kriesberg 2019, p.1). They all play their part to the field of conflict analysis which makes it interdisciplinary (Ibid).

The literature in academic and developmental fields rarely mentions media as conflict analysis participant. “Despite the critical significance of the roles played by media in conflict and conflict resolution, this area has been relatively neglected by both scholars and practitioners” (Gilboa, 2009, p.88). Nonetheless, with the emergence and envelopment of conflict sensitive journalism, institutions are considering on ways to create a condition in a conflict and post conflict situation to enable media to play a productive part in engaging in conflict analysis as its proper responsibility (Puddephatt 2006). Vinyamata (2010) also termed conflict analysis as 'Conflictology' emphasizing that it is multidisciplinary with its clear purpose and determination of disparaging the uncivilly of war and violence but also intercede directly with methodical facts to ending conflict and achieving settlement.

With regard to historical development of conflict analysis and resolution, Neu and Kriesberg (2019) well summarized major five epochs: period of 1914 to 1945 was its beginnings that use psychoanalytic tools, between 1946 and 1969, the cold war and national liberation period indentified with its emergence and characterized by the aversion of nuclear war

tensions with help of the United Nations and other non-governmental formations. From 1970 to 1989 expansion and institutionalization period that was when dialogue and problem-solving workshops became popular with the growth of non-governmental organizations. The period from 1990 to 2008 was characterized by growth of the field in academic world and multilateral organization, stepping up in conflict resolution and peacekeeping endeavour. Lastly, the period from 2009 through 2017 named by the scholars as 'advances' and 'challenges' known with the use of technology both made it to fuel and deescalate conflict and the field is caught in annulling *Arab Spring* resistance, climate change movements and the rise in terrorism.

When we relate media and the field of journalism to conflict analysis, it can be said that the media have greater function in escalating or deescalating conflict. Media contribute in averting conflict and in resolving conflict when in action as per its values (Puddephatt, 2006). The Mass Media Declaration of UNESCO (1978) in Article III also affirms “The mass media have an important contribution to make to the strengthening of peace and international understanding and in countering racialism, apartheid and incitement to war”. Such responsibility of media as some scholars arguably equate the movement of peace journalism or conflict sensitive journalism to advocacy or public relation for peace, disregarding that a journalist is individual with its inherent bias. Hence, before further discussing on the subject, it would be fair to touch upon the thesis and

antithesis through which conflict sensitive journalism's evolvement after pioneered by John Galtung and Ruge close to half a century ago.

The precursor of the concept of peace journalism is attributed to Lynch and McGoldrick with their extensive practical experience in journalism, inspired by Galtung (McGoldrick and Lynch, 2000) and nurtured the way with the oft quoted definition of it- "Peace Journalism is when editors and reporters make choices – of what to report and how to report it..." (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005,p. 5). A reporter or the gatekeeper choose among the issues and events around, the reporter choose source, the reporter chose among 'what' and 'how' the source talked, the reporter chose the angle from among information collected and the reporter choose the structuring of the content. In all of these, there will be likely influence and manipulation of the recipients or the public with the selection. Understanding of the consequence of what we choose and why we choose help to better value how imperative our role is in a conflict (Howard 2003). Howard (2009) also adds that the journalist's choice of constituents to accommodate in a reportage ultimately result in influencing public perception and policy formulation.

De Michelis (2018) puts it that the advocate of peace journalism including "(Lynch, 2014; Seaga Shaw, Lynch and Hackett, 2011; Keeble, Tulloch and Zollmann, 2010; Lynch & Galtung, 2010; Dente Ross and Tehranian, 2009; Shinar and Kempf, 2007; Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005)" posit that 'war journalism' fail short of considering historical context

and exhaustive of the actors affected and it assumes a zero-sum game and then (subsequent to violent conflict) assert that conflict resolution or peace is achieved (p.1).

At the other end are David Loyn and Hanitzsch who are the critics of the proponents of peace journalism. They disapprove of the proponents of peace journalism among others for giving much weight about media's role in influencing the public and decision makers and for imagining public as passive recipient as well as fail to take notice of the structural challenges media professionals face in the production of the communication content -individual journalist is unlikely to transform the make-up of professional practice of the media (Hanitzsch 2007).

The influence of media on the public is evidenced with the study of cultivation theory. In discussing George Gerbner's study on media specifically television influence, Witte (2013) indicated the vivid association in which violence in the media impinge on viewership. The profound exposure of public to media content possibly nurture attitudes consistent with what has been communicated though not out rightly bring about behavioural change noted Sreedharan (2013) in the writing *War and Peace Journalism* citing the same experiment and further notes :

Continuous immersion of audience in such news, of violence perpetrated against 'us' by 'them', will shape their version of reality and societal beliefs, contributing to a frame of mind that encourages the continuance even exacerbation of war.

Peace journalistic coverage, with its solution-orientation, on the other hand, could promote a different climate, one that is conducive to the cessation of war, to the promotion of peace (p.470)

Peleg (2007) also argues that peace journalism leaves the interpretation to listenership readership and viewership having provided all round accounts of the issue of the conflict which make them dynamic to make the most use of it for their own stand than to be passive recipients.

The structural impediment to internalise conflict sensitive journalism could have solution with the advancement of its framework and acceptability will be necessitated, yet remain a challenge for now. It is imperative that some structural formation need to be transformed including journalism's functionality for profit, manipulation for political and nationalist interest. "Structural constraints govern the content of news, but they do not altogether determine it" (*Shaw, Lynch, and Hackett, 2011, p. xv*). The change however needs to start from the reporter in embracing the new model and endeavouring to practice in the day to day role (Ersoy, 2017).

Among the other point of debate between pro-peace journalism and those censuring the model is on 'objectivity'. Peleg (2007) counter Lyon's argument of peace reporting attachment to specific outlook-peacemaking, it is less objective than the traditional reporting and the later praising of "objectivity and truth as the compass for journalists" (p. 3). According to

Peleg, it would be futile, ineffectual and vain when objectivity and neutrality may turn to be the cause of horrendous barbarism like a reporter observing holocaust against human kind by being a neutral observer (Ibid). Is it also possible to become dispassionate with those scientists making outmost efforts and behind the major discovery of vaccine and cure against pandemic like Covid-19 that wrecked human kind and global economy to its knee?

Jesuminure (2017) in his *Objectivity in Journalism: Philosophical Perspective* confronts the supposed objectivity of journalism positing it as performative communication crafted to influence readers that what it portrayed is authentic than evocative communication. The journalist is performative as a factory that takes raw material with its original form and manufacture into other somewhat different, in this case could be a style. Essentially, the journalist makes an assertion based on his /her cognitive framework of ideological, social and cultural structure. The journalist processes news through remembering, thinking, knowing, and problem-solving and “makes the decision about what to highlight or what to ignore, what to trivialise or what to mainstream through use of words, pictures, colours, and layouts among others” (Ibid, p, 24). McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) relate objectivity as feeling of responsible with what the journalist has reported.

The “Big O” can be an important ideal to aim for even if it is impossible fully to attain. If it means ‘reporting as we see it’ rather than deliberately distorting what we see in the service

of another agenda, then it is fully compatible with Peace Journalism. If it means “just reporting the facts” and not taking responsibility for the likely consequences of particular reporting decisions, then it can be deeply damaging (Ibid, p.22).

Here, it needs to be also underlined that conflict sensitive journalism maintains its perimeter and not to venture into advocacy. Adebayo and Blessing (2019) in a study, *The Limits of Peace Journalism* studied the 2017 Kenyan election. Media became conflict sensitive in the coverage of subsequent general election in 1913, from the learning of 2008 election that took the lives of people because of the inflammatory role of the news media. However, in 2017, Adebayo and Blessing with their review found out that the election in some way and in some areas had nonconformity to rules and there was manipulation and these were not given due coverage by media lest it incites violence. “Journalists should not hold back certain facts, but they should not sensationalise them either. These facts should be presented alongside voices that offer nonviolent solutions” (Ibid,p.83).

On the whole, debate on notion that may bring improvement to status quo whether it is transitional or transformational is essential. Aslam (2016) noted that no sole paradigm for journalism across generations, and ongoing careful thought and deliberation is required against new contexts and values on ways how to benefit citizens. It is also vital to bring in here the assertion of Antonia Koop (2028) that Peace Journalism and Conflict

Sensitive Journalism base themselves in the selfsame theoretical ground. “The difference is that Peace Journalism has yet to overcome its built in advocacy to be relevant and credible to journalism, while CSJ already emphasises that journalists must not adapt any kind of advocacy, also not one for peace” (p.7). Koop also caution the brining another ‘ethical baggage’ is unnecessary rather it is vital to build up the methodical skill of conflict analysis and reporting (Ibid). Patindol (2010) and Koop who are also academicians in the field indicated that the model of Peace Journalism with formation of network of Peace and Conflict Journalism and has membership of 15 countries. Trainings have been offered to practicing journalists with designation of ‘Conflict Sensitive Journalism’ evolving from designation of ‘Peace Journalism’ then to ‘Peace and Conflict Journalism’, suitable nomenclature for the concept and as remedy to the delusion of the name might have entailed. This study also concurs to refer the model as ‘Conflict Sensitive Journalism’.

2.3 Factors Influencing Conflict Reportage

Entman (1993) notes that frame is situated in the communicator, in the text, in the receiver, and in the culture. Frame has similar function: “selection and highlighting, and use of the highlighted elements to construct an argument about problems and their causation, evaluation, and/or solution” (Ibid, p.53). Based on Entman’s definition of frame, Jake Lynch fends peace journalism from critics who argues that peace journalism is blemishing objectivity as cited in the previous topic. His implied reference to the theory of framing is that when a journalist makes

selection and making particular reality outstanding then objectivity is imperiled.

On this, Gavilán (2011) elaborates conflict sensitive journalism from the perspective of framing theory with two fold standpoints: the first is as methods to elucidate a definite news frame and the second is “...as a type of frame called *peace framing*”.(p.9). Gavilán (Ibid) is also emphatic about the some resemblance between the definitions of framing and as how conflict reporting is handled.

So what are the variables influencing media’s conflict coverage? And how the influence manifests itself? Affirming Wolfsfeld theory of political culture of the media Gavilán (Ibid) consolidates the variables that manipulate political traditions in the media as : “...geographic location of the mass media; ownership of the media and/or who directs them; political leanings of the editors and journalists; type of public and historical period in which conflict is being covered” (p.7).

The geographic location is akin with conceptualization of the ABC of journalism in a college we used to have that proximity is a criterion with which a journalist selects and approaches news. A conflict next door is not given the same treatment with that is happening in other continent. Ownership is the other influencing factor as how conflict is framed. A multinational company that owns also media and whose interest is going to be affected by a given conflict will know how to cover it while a

government owned media positions a strong gate keeping apparatus that ensures its interest, could be national interest in the framing of conflict though both these counter to the standard of the profession. In a similar take, journalists unwittingly or wittingly have instilled political influence in the context they belong that also has its influence on how conflict is covered.

The ethics of journalism has too its leverage on conflict reportage. Wolfsfeld is quoted in Gavilán (Ibid) that there are four variables that influence the professional culture which are journalists set of attributes for news worthiness or news criteria, the responsibilities of the journalist in benefiting the public as a watchdog, the varying precedence and style followed by different medium such as TV, radio and press and a set of diverse viewpoint and ethics by each news media.

The Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) (n.d.) condenses ethical journalism into five core principles- truth and accuracy, independence, fairness and impartiality, humanity and accountability. All these principles are intrinsic in the practice of conflict sensitive journalism. Most importantly, it is vital to mention the principles of independence, fairness and humanity as expressed by EJN. A reporter need not act and become a voice representing political and other interests, she/he should look into to represent all sides of the story and “Journalists should do no harm. What we publish or broadcast may be hurtful, but we should be aware of the impact of our words and images on the lives of others” (Ibid, p.1).

Conforming and practice of the principles in situation of conflict entails conflict sensitivity reportage.

Back to the correlation of conflict analysis and journalism, this requires examining details on conflict instead of delivering piece of information to public. It would be of the essence that it destines us to conflict sensitive journalism. In the face of conflict, media may be prey to actors' positions. Detailed examination of conflict is what conflict sensitive reporting does to all intents and purposes. Galtung (1998) in his essay *High Road, Low Road* indicated, "But new types of knowledge would be needed, such as identifying the conflict formation, the parties, their goals and the issues, without falling into the trap of believing that the key actors are where the action (violence, war) is" (p,3). Media has a power to influence our way of life, selection and feelings by its varied service such information, education, and entertainment. "But there is another aspect to the media. It can be an instrument of conflict resolution, when the information it presents is reliable, respects human rights, and represents diverse views" (2002, p .1). Taking only position(s) of conflict would not take the reporter far as it is the low road and inflaming conflict make it also accomplice to the violation of human rights.

When media is supposed as instrument of conflict resolution, it implies that media should not preoccupy itself on the polarized views and restricting accounts of the people "...or making unconscious pre-judgments about what is and is not an area of legitimate debate" (Pauli,

2006,p.734). Rather it has been more and more predictable that media is an indispensable piece in averting violent conflict from breaking out, as well as vital constituent in the resolution of conflict (Puddephatt 2006). “It constitutes a *medium* for exploring the aspects and dynamics of physical, cultural, and structural violence, exploration that is considered vital for the orientation of knowledge and production of actions, which are needed to build more peaceful societies” (Michelis 2018,p.2). Such roles with moral imperative of media professionals are attributed to conflict sensitive journalism model.

There are two ways through which conflict could be approached; one is when media is lured to violence and the other with responsible purpose. According to McGoldrick and Lynch (2000), approaches are by and large either competitive or cooperative. The former dwells on two actors working against each other and expectation of win- loss option while the later on the roadmap to win-win, attempting to address issues of contests jointly through understanding. It is evident that the media with ethical value yield in bringing about the cooperative result. It is also makes justice, to mention the emphasis of Galtung (2006) “Which one to choose is *essentially an ethical question*” regrettably a number of media professionals are favouring violence journalism (p.1).

Du Toit (2012) in his toolbox of Conflict Sensitive Reporting expands the approaches to five: avoidance, total victory, bargaining, quick fixes and

collaboration. He rightly recommends the arduous but the sustainable one,

It's natural to assume that a collaborative approach to conflict offers the best conditions for the development of an agreement that will satisfy all groups concerned and allow parties to establish processes and relationships that will enable them to manage future conflict peacefully (p.24).

It is important here also to look into stages of conflict for the functionality of conflict sensitive journalism. Bläsi (2009) in discussing the role of conflict stages, indentified phases of conflict as 'nonviolent conflict, violent conflict and the aftermath of violent conflict' and indicated deliberation on the approaches to different stages in the academic world has not been yet thoroughly addressed. Peter du Toit (2012) categorizes stages of conflict into four. These are 'latent conflict'- the situation in which potential conflict exists but actors are not well aware of it, 'emerging conflict' - status quo are not tolerated and actors perceive their goals are incompatible, 'manifest non-violent' - parties mobilizes their powers and supporters to enforce change onto another including by threat and finally 'violent conflict'- a disparaging phase that bring physical force and giving new dynamics to conflict.

Gilboa (2009) in a study titled *Media and Conflict Resolution: A Critical Analysis* better puts forth four stages of conflict considered to be international in nature and based on different critical conditions and principal intervention goals adopted in the following table.

Stages of conflict	Characterization	Principal intervention goals
1 Onset- prevention	Surfacing of conflict, the beginning of disagreements, and growth in hostile verbal and behavioural exchanges	Effective prevention measures can stop the conflict from deteriorating into violence
2 Escalation- management	Settlement of conflict peacefully and the conflict process temporarily or permanently terminates	Limiting and halting violence to relatively tolerable levels Formal or informal ceasefire to end combat
3 De-escalation- resolution	Resolution (negative peace) Reconciliation (positive peace)	Reaching an agreement after actors negotiate to end violence Transformation of perceptions of issues and actions
4 Termination reconciliation	Friendship, cooperation and harmony between former enemies	Shifting the motivations, goals, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions of the great majority of the society members regarding the conflict, the nature of the relationship between the parties

Table 1. *Stages of conflict characterized by differing critical condition adopted from Gilboa's Media and Conflict Resolution: A Critical Analysis*

The above categorization is comprehensive that takes us from onset to crescendo and then to the resolution. Addressing conflict at latent stage is less complicated and this is also predominantly not given due reflection by news media. Shaw et al (2011) elaborates on this as flows:

Latent conflict is usually ignored because it is often not obvious enough to attract attention. It flies below the radar and is not recognised or appreciated for what it really is. On the other hand, manifest conflict is the stuff that makes for 'good' news and makes 'good' reporting. It does not call for much critical thinking. It is easier to describe and report than latent conflict, which calls for more profound understanding and analysis (p.161).

Engaging in good reporting is a critical thinking of what is the past, the present and the future for good of the people particularly focusing on latent state of conflict.

2.4 Constructive Conflict Reporting

News media practice reporting in all phases of conflict as summarized above. Nonetheless, the question is what effects the media's report will have and which stages attract media more? As has been cited above, it will be wise to look into this by weighing the traditional journalism model against conflict sensitive journalism. The former claim neutrality and objectivity which was questionable as discussed in the preceding topic but at least serve the purpose of informing. Both chose and select but the

latter's choice is information that could help change stances of the actors in potential deleterious status.

As a conflict emerges, actors are by and large in the middle-of-the-road or their stand is affirmative and has greater inclination for collaborative spirit to address the problem (Du Toit, 2012). In such scenario, the work of media could yield in positive but requires a great deal of efforts as opposed to during crescendo phase where there are a lot of dramatic events. This is when traditional media is well attracted towards, not also forgetting the saying 'if it bleeds it leads'. While working as public information specialist in the most conflict affected state in South Sudan, this researcher facilitated for a number of international news media as fervour gets high. Media and journalists are the first to be on the spot of such dramatic event like police force and fire fighters "They could also be first responders in conflicts that are still latent. But it would take the kind of peace journalism proposed here to do that" (Shaw, Lynch, and Hackett, 2011, p.172).

If a conflict is managed at the onset level, it will not reach to escalation stage. On the other hand, if it already escalated and open violence transpires, it will to pass through escalation management and reconciliation to turn the conflict into peace. Pre-empting onset of conflict leads us to the conception of early warning. Media's role in the early warning is paramount in managing before conflict breaks into conflagration and its toll on the people. Media Council of Kenya (2016)

sounds an alarm that making use of early warning system by media is critical in dealing with the root causes of conflict situation with empathy, understanding context, aspect of deteriorations of relationship of parties and the ways of resolving it.

In addressing escalating, de-escalating and termination phases of conflict, Howard (2002) has presented detailed interventions and media's positive initiatives that could overlap across phases and some of which require thorough appraisal of the context in which the media could function and significantly help design innovative approaches, seeking capacity building on conflict sensitive reporting and acting as critical channel of communication for the communities most affected. As a constructive role, it is also vital in employing investigative reporting, use alternative sources to discern issues and factors behind conflict and promote tolerance.

Conflict analysis according to Initiative Mediation Support Deutschland (2017) is for generating knowledge for policy action, guiding the planning of intervention process and for dialogue and mediation. The analysis is not only to approach for the above purposes. It too is needed for constructive responsibility of a Journalist. Du Toit (2012) well presented what is expected of media professionals as follows:

There is a tendency among journalists to simply report on what is happening, but this does not help our readers, listeners and viewers to really understand what is actually going on. In reporting on conflict journalists

need to be able to analyse what is happening and to draw on their own analysis in posing the kinds of questions that will help people understand what is going on and why (p.38).

It would be reasonable to concur with the argument of Bläsi (2009) in favour of intervention of conflict sensitive journalism at first or onset stage until its tools and knowledge are fully developed, “practitioners and scholars would be well advised to give priority to the implementation of peace journalism in nonviolent conflict stages”(p.8). “Peace journalism that has been practised or advocated in literature so far concentrates more on manifest conflict – the stage at which war has already replaced negotiation” and centring at stage of latent conflict is compelling to facilitate the de-escalation (Shaw, Lynch, and Hackett, R 2011, p.167). Indeed the media is more engrossed during violent phase. Galtung (2006) in his essay highlighted the ethical challenge media is tempted with and balance be given to all stages of conflict- ‘before, during and after violence’ and spotlighting only on the second is unmerited.

The positive reporting encompasses a range of purposes including serving as platform for differing views, outlets to express emotions, increasing knowledge of complex issues of conflict, improve governance, harbinger of ensuing danger and promotion of peace (The UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, 2017). Howard (2009) states that linkage of conflict resolution to news media “In fragile and post conflict environments a reliable,

responsible news media is a critical part of preventing and resolving violent conflict” (p.12).

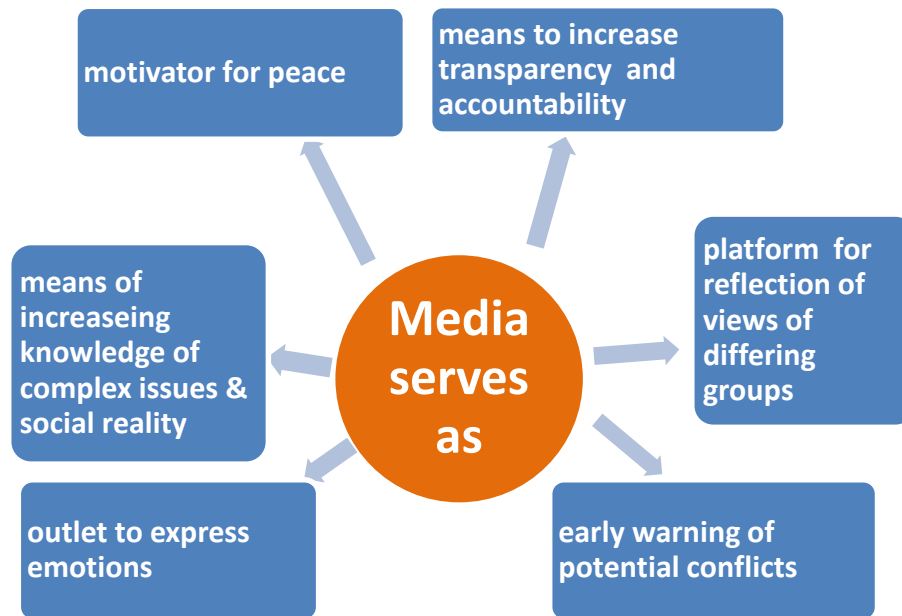


Figure 1. Adopted from background paper ‘How media can be an instrument of peace in conflict-prone settings for the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre’ (2017).

When we scrutinize the above services of news media, it would be viable to imply that it is beneficial ground for a mediational role. Howard (2002) puts the role of media this way: “It functions as a channel of communication that counteracts misperceptions. It frames and analyzes the conflict, identifies the interests, defuses mistrust, provides safe emotional outlets, and more” (p.4).

Carol Pauli (2006) in her writing *News Media as Mediators* explains what makes peace journalism from mediators are their goals. The principles of journalism would "...seem to lie in public truth-telling, holding a mirror up to society" to adjudicate or leaves the upshot up to the public and the actors, where as mediator lies in optimum settlement of the conflict (p.734). If the mirror is twisted only to extreme tendencies, constricting people's perceptions and makes comatose pre-judgments and this model of journalism is at peril.

In summary, as part of capturing existing knowledge and earlier arguments, this chapter reviewed studies conducted on news media report on Nile River basin, theoretical facets of conflict sensitive journalism with contending views and conflict analysis tools. The few studies on media coverage of Nile River were limited in examining media among others from framing theory and hardly trace work from the perspective of conflict sensitivity despite the gravity of violent conflict. It also examined conflict sensitive journalism evolvement and ongoing debate as well as the vitality of acquaintance of news media professionals with the conflict analysis theories.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CONFLICT UNION MODEL

A major source which peace journalism can rely on to bolster its analytical as well as its normative rigor is conflict theory (Samuel Peleg, 2006)

The subsequent discussion start with the tools of conflict analysis in general and then limit itself to a tool, conflict union, with which this study tries to embark on the analysis of conflict arising because of GERD across the *Abay* River in Ethiopia.

3.1 Ascertaining Conflict Union from among other Tools

Conflict analysis tools have developed with foremost purpose to help devise conflict prevention and management as well as help parties resolve conflict by intervening between parties with mediation. Fairly enough, media also do involve in conflict analysis from the argument of 'selection'. Mcgoldrick and Lynch say "All journalism is an intervention" (2002, p.22). Journalists take part in the conflict by choosing what and how to present and that is either to escalate or deescalate the conflict in view of the fact that there will not be presentation of 'bare facts' as discussed earlier. The skills of conflict analysis entail the tools or instruments applicable to comprehend conflict.

Employing conflict analysis tools help journalist to scrutinize options and present to parties in conflict to consider solving their opposing pursuit. Rose Howard (2004) noted analysis of conflict by this means allows

journalists to seek other viewpoint than duplicate accusation and counter accusation by leaders, examine and present possibilities for withdrawal, compromise or transcendence, understand the effort of negotiation and consistently present it and indentify more sources for their content. “These tools can help us get beyond the rhetoric of groups involved in disputes and confrontations and help us explore the underlying causes of a conflict” (Du Toit 2012, p.7). Herbert (2017) and Media Council of Kenya (2016) outlined four core analytical elements of conflict analysis which are actors, dynamics, causes and profile.

In the effort to go deeper in to conflict analysis, it is required to consider “What is the context that shapes conflict? Who are the factors that influence conflict? What causes conflict? What are the current conflict dynamics/ trends?” (Ibid, p.3). The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) developed a meta tool termed as ‘Conflict Wheel’ the components forming the wheel are conflict analysis dimension (Mason *and Rychard*). It has an additional options or strategies and is step forward in signifying to suggest resolution.

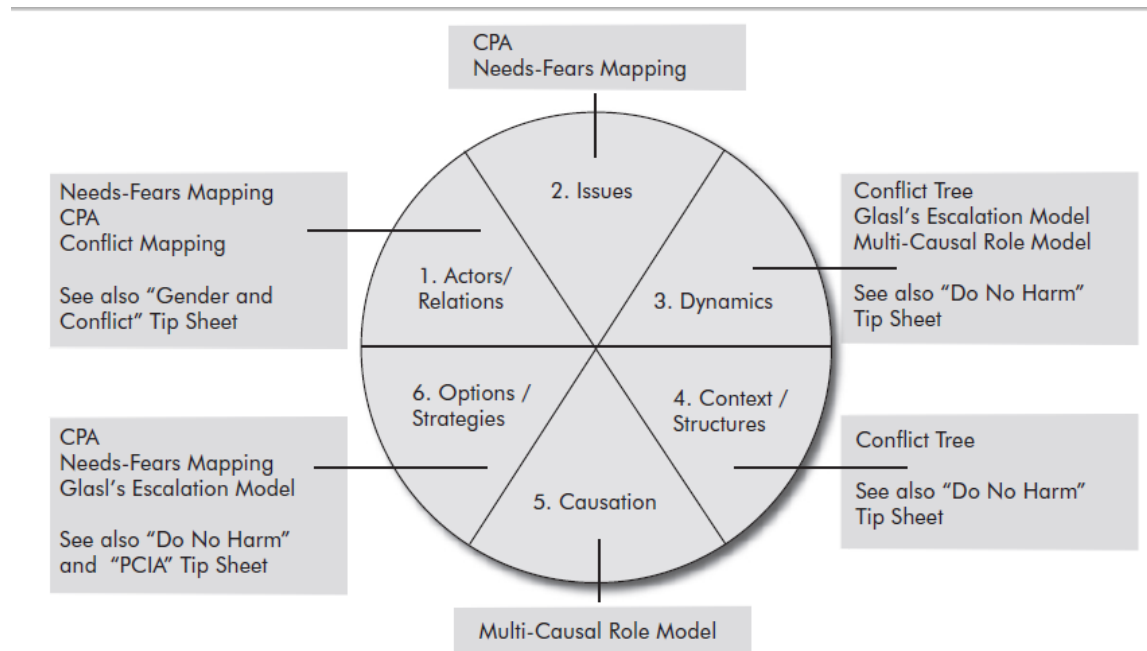


Figure 2. Conflict Wheel chart taken from *Conflict Analysis Tools* by Mason and Rychard (2005. p.3)

As illustrated in the diagram, 'actors', 'issues', 'dynamics' and 'options' have each two or more instruments assigned for analysis while 'causation' and 'issues' one each. The core elements in 'conflict wheel' help to have a general idea when first approaching the conflict by seeking responses to query for each six and then the likely appropriate instrument for the analysis will be selected and used to scrutinize the conflict in more depth (Ibid). SDC model does not mention conflict union. However, 'actors', 'issues' and 'options' denoted as components of the wheel as 'meta' tool have the diminution of 'needs, fears mapping' which imply conflict union.

Quest for common ground for parties to conflict might cut across the purpose for the analysis by making use of the instruments but there could

be further breakdown of the purposes. Global Partnership for Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) (2017) distils the purpose of conflict analysis as a tool for conflict sensitivity, as a first step towards programme development, preparation for working with stakeholders or parties to the conflict and as a conflict resolution or transformation process. GPPAC illustrates conflict onion with tabulation as one of the tools for the positive transformation of conflict by uncovering interests and needs underling the position.

The principles with which media need to approach in reporting conflict, crisis and war is for the positive roles or for its central responsibilities as demonstrated in the earlier chart. It is presumed that media in downhill position will not serve the ethical value it stands for. As McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) articulate, conflict sensitive reporting explores complexity instead of seeking simplicity and process oriented reporting than restricting to event.

Scholars and practitioners as well as international organizations in the field of conflict analysis and resolution have developed tools for conflict analysis. A number of donor government agencies, INGOs, training institutions, various UN agencies, funds and programs commissioned conflict analysis methodologies and tools for their specific purposes. Some of these include GPPAC, World Bank, Swedish International Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

(SDC), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC).

In the annotated bibliography of the conflict analysis frameworks reviewed by Olvia and Charbonnier (2016), some of the framework for analysis recommends tools but others refer as guiding questions, checklists, indicators and matrixes. The expounding of the tools by the agencies, however, is not cognisant of media or at least recognises media as major player in conflict and peace rather they work concerns for the broader conventional roles of intervention in the conflict and conflict sensitive programming, formulating strategy and policy approaches. Here it is also reasonable to underline that humanitarian aid that failed to act in conflict sensitive manner “unwittingly feeding into conflict and undermining peaceful recovery”, where as conflict sensitivity serves to amplify the efficacy of aid and reduce the impending violence (Haider, 2014 p.4). The Media Council of Kenya (2016) does include the tools in its publication, “A Conflict Analysis Handbook for Journalists: towards conflict sensitive reporting”. This is a step forward for media professionals to interplay with the tools in the conflict coverage. Conflict Onion is among the six tools included in this guide emphasizing the reporter’s requirement to use the ‘why’, the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of parities’ positions, concern and commonalities.

The other important publication is a teaching guide on conflict sensitive journalism that accommodates conflict analysis tools in journalism

communication programs aimed at emboldening educational institutions in Philippines with the model (Rama and Gürten 2018). This guide also commends conflict onion among the conceptual four tools journalists required to uphold to study the indisposed interest and needs of parties to “...transforming the assumptions about the sources’ Interests and Needs into clarificatory and confirmatory follow-up questions”(p.59).

The GPPAC presents eight tools and SDC offers seven while Olvia and Charbonnier (2016) spelled out twenty conflict analysis tools meant to be used as a handbook for UN in the field as well as headquarter levels. (Summery attached as Appendix). These all three have the principle of conflict analysis tasked in studying interests and needs of parties beyond what is publicly said which is conflict onion, even if not in all three cases mentioned exactly as such. In fact, there is a variation in identification or name of the tools as it does in the amount they consider suffice for the purpose the agencies aim for. For instance, what SDC calls as needs-fears mapping, GAPPAC names stakeholders analysis and Olvia and Charbonnier and Media Council of Kenya puts it as conflict onion. Rama and Gürten (2018) synthesized the tools adapting to conflict sensitive journalism as gap analysis and context-building, causal factors, multi-party geometry propaganda resiliency by uncovering interests and needs through the integration of two or more of them. As the main tool of analysis selected for this study, due attention is given to conflict onion in subsequent paragraphs.

The theoretical works so far offered for media in conflict sensitive journalism are less focused on the framework of tools of conflict analysis rather they are outlining principles or checklists. Ross Howard (2004) condensed this into checklists. Lynch and MacGoldrick (2000) have also explicated the principles of conflict sensitive journalism based on Galtung's comparison of Peace/Conflict Journalism against War/Violence Journalism. The guidelines aid in getting information and offer a chance for de-escalation of conflict at the same time upholding the indispensable standards of accuracy, fairness, balance and responsibility for building a just society (Howard 2009). (Summary of 'Dos and Don'ts' of conflict sensitive journalism presented in Appendix-B).

This study has so far discovered a work by Peleg (2006) which delved in empirical terms in conflict theory singling out the ABC conflict triangle model other than the one mentioned for educational institution in Davo, Philippines. The study by Peleg (Ibid) looked newspapers coverage of three protected conflict of the Northern Ireland, Israel/ Palestine and the Basque through the ABC conflict triangle model. The work commends not only that conflict theory contributes to enrich conflict sensitive journalism but also the other way round. "PJ could enrich conflict theory with hitherto unfamiliar knowledge and experience" (Ibid, p.16). Conflict union is ascertained amongst a number of literatures for intervention in meditation and news media's coverage of conflict sensitively as well as other functions such as well as programmatic interventions.

3.2 Perceiving Peeling the Onion

Actors who already on the go in perusing incompatible goals often guard or shroud the actual needs and interests with positions. Position is the veil of the interest and need. In discordant state of affairs, demeanours “...are often based on interests and, when those are threatened, people usually rely on positions further removed from their actual needs” and unveiling them is cognized as a peril that add to the susceptibility to the rival (Olvia and Charbonnier (2016, p.65). Peeling the outer enfold or position leaves us with interest. Further peeling lay bare the need and this schema is conflict onion tool. Conflict onion makes use of the concept of position to denote stated claim or public pronouncement of the actors.

How need, interest and position are perceived in conflict analysis? Need is what human must have to subsist and thrive. “These include material/physical, social and cultural elements. When basic needs are threatened, people often react forcefully” (GPPAC 2017, p.39). An actor of a conflict prefers a means or a way to pursue to secure the need and this approach is an interest. This notion of interest is also understood as what really the conflicting parties want. Lastly, position is what an actor claim publicly to achieve or what the actor say he/she wants (Ibid). Conflict onion model of analysis is peeling the layers built up over the course of a dispute. Its ‘visual analogy’ to perceive the positions, interests and needs that manipulate the behaviours of actors (Ibid).

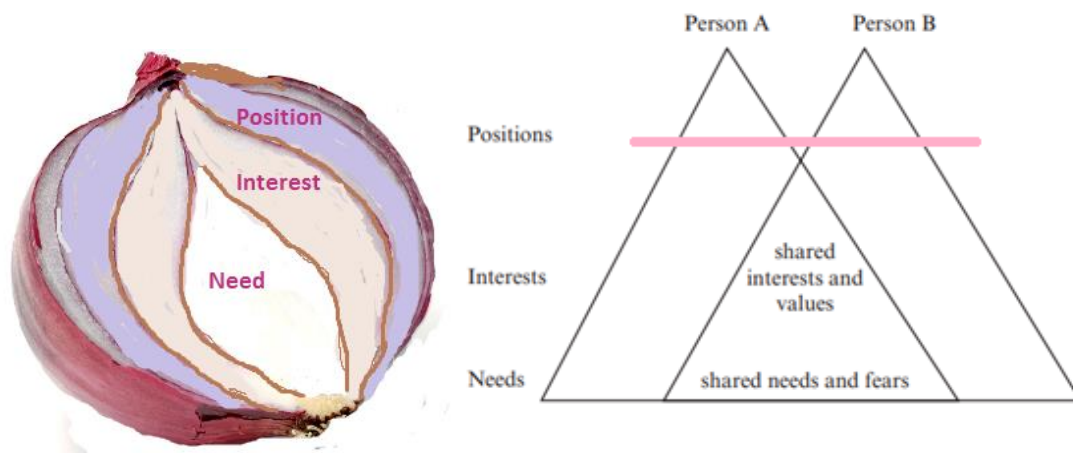


Figure 3. *Position, and onion analogy adopted from Olvia and Charbonnier (2016) as well as position, interests and needs triangles adopted from Ramsbotham (2011)*

The conflict analysis with onion analogy considers what the communalities conflicting parties have besides questioning what parties to conflict must have. “Shallow understanding by journalists leads to shallow reporting on matters of conflict which in turn impacts on the target audience” (Media Council of Kenya 2016, p.7). Target audience here entails primarily the parties to the conflict. In carrying out analysis of conflict with the help of onion model, it is essential to recognize possible resemblance and areas of departure in the interests or needs of the parties and mark the overlapping with the twin triangle as in the above figure (Ibid). By and large positions untie the actors while interests have greater chance in bringing them together (Search for Common Ground, 2020).

The duality of the triangles become visible as parties deviating in their position in contrast to coinciding and becoming a triangle in this case

since positions and interests are similar in both actors. For instance, competitive parties with diverging ideological view in a country can come together on certain issue of national interest and can reach in common position and make this public. It means when it comes to that national interest it signifies that they have common position and by implication they have coinciding interest and then don't have divergence regarding that particular national interest and the triangles overlap and become one. Comprehending only position could give the impression that parties are not utterly compatible in their interests. One of the main rationale for studying of interest of parties coated by position is to make out their common ground since "The interests of different groups are not always conflicting, but can also be compatible" (Rama and Gürten 2018, p. 57).

The conflict onion is also represented as Mediator's Iceberg metaphor. In a sea of polar areas-what is seen is tip of the iceberg and by analogy in conflict situation that is position (Ibid). The chubby and the more momentous part of the iceberg is under the level which is translated to concerns of the parties of conflict waiting to be uncovered. When parties stuck to their opposition, at best they may be reaching on compromise. According to Spangler (2003), however, compromise usually will not meet successfully their true interest and thus the peace may not be sustainable. The other scenario is parties persisting in their position apparently fail in reaching an agreement and this may lead to escalation or polarization.

The existence of ambiguities in comprehending position and interests are affirmed by some scholars. Chris Provis (1996) in a thesis *Interests: Vs Positions: A Critique of Distinction* says positions need not be ignored or excluded in tracing interests hidden under the cover of position since there arise ambiguities on the nuance of the two. “Much of the literature's emphasis on the distinction between interests and positions can be explained as an attempt to distinguish between what parties say they want and what their underlying motivation is” (Ibid, p.307). The distinction of the two takes us to the reference of subjective interest which is motivations. There are cases in empirical work in which needs are left out considering it as too basic (GPPAC, 2017). Going to the basics, however, could be necessary to make analysis comprehensible. Needs are “source of interests and positions, they can be compared to the core of an onion” (Rama and Gürten, 2018, p. 57).

Interest orientated	Position orientated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrate and looks on issues satisfying the interests of all parties (win- win) • Elevates creative solutions • Seeks to minimise polarity and accentuates agreement • Builds relationships and understanding • Emphasises issues of communality • Centralises co-operation rather than confrontation • Invokes more open discussion • Promotes issues of building trust and reducing uncertainty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upholds win/lose attitudes • Centers on taking articulation of elites • Fences itself from alternatives • Polarises parties and illuminates differences • Project statements obligating compromise • Constricts dialogue and discussions, • Limits accord and promotes warfare • Focus on afflicted relation of parties



Table 2. *Correlation of position and interest that also matches respectively to conflict sensitivity and non conflict sensitivity reportage adopted from Lynch and MacGoldrck (2005).*

In analysing conflict with onion model and with other tools, it is required to consider the features of traditional conflict analysis in which Olvia and Charbonnier (Ibid) and Herbert (2017) organised under four categories reflecting the most recurrent and widely accepted analytical structure: 1) Situation Profile; 2) Cause enquires, what the structural and proximate causes of conflict are ? 3) Stakeholder or actor focusing on analysis of interests, concerns, goals, hopes, fears, positions and preferences 4) Analysis of Peace and Conflict Dynamics, factors of the conflict reinforce or undermine each other.

Let us consider a simpler hypostatical approach of conflict with onion tool. The following is a typical part of the coverage of incident by reporting insensitively to conflict which potentially fuel conflict.

News Report-1

Conflict is brewing in County H between village X and Y

Two people wounded due to a conflict that arose yesterday between youth of village Y and X over intention of village X to pump water for the irrigation from a stream. Elder of village Y said their youth were agitated with words of youth threatening to stop the water used for ages.

Representative from village X said “Our youth were attacked in a place they work but they have capability to defend themselves and the members of their villagers”.

Nonetheless, it could be possible for media that peruse conflict sensitive journalism to address the potential conflict before such incident unfolds. The story may seem an early warning on the surface but actually capitalizes on the particular incident and loaded with escalatory words. The Media Council of Kenya (2016) notes media is required to bear in mind early warning as an apparatus to aware prevention of ensuing conflict.

Let us deconstruct simplistically with those key features determining elements.

Thus For both Village X and Y

Actors = Village X and Y

Profile = Unmatched resource to sustain growing population

Cause = Plan and move by village X to use the stream water and fear by village Y being left without water during dry season

Dynamics = unemployed youth village X and Y easily getting violent and agitated with simple personal disagreement.

A hypothetical Village X to self sustain with nutritious food by producing vegetables, fruits and by diary farming and In three years time there will be no more malnourished children and other members of their residents.

Breakdown Village X

Need = Villagers of X to self sustain with nutritious food

Interest = Produce vegetables, fruits and dairy products

Position = In three years time, there will be no more malnourished children and other members of village X

A hypothetical village Y categorically opposed the plan of the village made public as it is affecting a stream by the village X which is intending to use in dry season flowing down and leave inhabitants of village Y and their animals without water and thus village leaders demand villagers of X should not deprive of water by draining water of the stream that have used since their forefathers.

Breakdown Village Y

Need= to continue to secure drinking water for humans and animals from the stream

Interest = using the water during dry season leaves the inhabitants and animals without water

Position = The water of the stream that have been used since time immemorial should not be affected by village X

The contention of Both X and Y is the water of the stream. There is inspiration for change by village X by using the water and land to get rid of malnourishment (position) however, Y want to maintain status quo (position) for fear of its basic need for water is endangered. There could be assumed situations propelling, increase of population unmatched with resource of both villagers and youth hanging around without work and easily being dragged into violent activity. Deescalating option of looking for common interest and need require some effort and creativity than just reporting the incident.

After talking to water resource experts, local administrators and community representatives, the conflict sensitive journalist can amplify creative options which could be the following: holding water during the rainy season for the farming instead of using pumping the trickling water during dry season and commonly developing drinking water points closer to the stream which could be more safe water for drinking. Then, simpler but key supposed conflict sensitive story may goes along these lines:

News Report-2

Villagers X, Y to work ingeniously to solve water issues

Professions and government representatives say communities in village X and Y in county H need to solve jointly problems of disagreement arising over water resources by pursuing creative ways.

Water resource expert L noted that growing vegetables and fruits to self sustain and address problem of malnutrition by storing water through damming during rainy season. The expert adds “Holding some water during intense rain season and allowing full flow during dry season address shortage of water in dry season”. The farming also believed to create employment opportunities.

In the recent engagement of community representatives with both villages and county officials it was noted that local government representatives need to work with humanitarian agencies to look for developing potable water points or boreholes. The county officials also called on communities to play their part in solving longstanding problems of water mutually.

The first news is more or less reflective of position persistent and focuses on incident as in the second column of the table above, whereas the second news exemplifies the fair attempts exerted incorporating engagement of parities and other stakeholders which reflect interest orientated as listed in the first column of the same table. The succeeding chapter will focus on the presentation of the research design, how data samples are selected, categories and units of analysis are among others.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to take up content analysis. It is normative that an inquisitive to particular feature of media reportage is usually with content analysis. It is looking into news media by integrating quantitative and qualitative methods branded as explanatory sequential method. Before going to elucidate the research design, it would be important to briefly highlight content analysis and the selected design from the literature.

4.1 Content Analysis

The target of content analysis is communicated message. Weber (1990) defines content analysis as a research method aimed to formulate convincing presumptions from text reordered communication that could be oral, written or visual. The process of content analysis Saraisky (2015) mentions it implies denotation about approaches, mores, customs and social establishments from which deductions are eventually reached. With regard to its historical development, media content analysis began to be widely used in 1920's and 1930's to study content of booming movies and in 1950's expanded in the study of mass communication fields (Macnamara 2005).

There are particular purpose why inquiry is made on content of a given communication. According to Wimmer and Dominic (2006), there are five identified intents why content analysis is conducted: experimenting thesis or theory, define communication message, analogizing media subject to

the real life, appraising the representation of specific group in community and set up a springboard for studies of media effect. Thus, content analysis is meant to find out about the function, meaning, and consequences of communication content. It can also make presumption about the coders and recipients of the message under examination. This research is conducted to inquire and reveal the differences in communication of conflict over the construction of GERD in the contexts the news media under consideration and analyzing the possible consequences of the news media's communication content. It is also to experiment conflict analysis tool particularly conflict onion in reporting sensitively by uncovering the need and interests of parties.

Content analysis is not only about the inferences based on numbers but also about its deeper meanings, patterns, trends and implications (Saraisky 2015). This will lead us to the main forms of methodologies, quantitative and qualitative content analysis. There had been views that content analysis need to confine itself to quantitative methods as Neuendorf quoted in Macnamara (2015). Wimmer and Dominic (2006) described the contention and the coming to terms of the two methods:

For the past several years, some friction has existed in the mass media field and in other disciplines between those who favor quantitative methods and those who prefer qualitative methods. Most researchers have now come to realize that both methods are important in understanding any phenomenon. (p.29)

Thus, it is flawed to assume content analysis only from the perspective of occurrence of certain words and phrases and reach on inferences with quantification. Macnamara (2015) also reinforce this notion that “Researchers who advocate analysing latent as well as manifest content as a way of understanding meanings of texts integrate qualitative and quantitative message analysis” (p,4). According to (Creswell and Clark, 2007) mixed design methodology attracted attention of scientific research in 1950’s however debate to integrate both had not been sustained until the turn of the millennium when combining the two necessitated and advocated as an independent design.

Why is the need to integrate? Contents which are manifest could be open to be evaluated in terms of frequency and amount. Whereas, the latent issues require interpretation and uncovering of the text and the context. For instance, if one wants to see best music viewed over the last six month in a given language, it is downhill as these days such communication reaches the audience through virtual networks. However, it is not suffice to come up with the readymade number of ‘viewers’ and ‘likes’ from their selected interactive media. It would rather entail interpretation of contexts and the given period of release of their songs and the respective themes of the content to compare and have a comprehensive inference. Creswell (2007) argued mixed approach delivers comprehensive insights to the research conundrum than using qualitative or quantitative alone.

There are a number of mixed types of methodologies. As described by Guest and Fleming (2015), the typologies are categorized based on ‘temporality’ (the sequencing of the components of the mixture) and ‘weighting’, one is dominantly used and the other less dominant. Creswell and Clark (2007) consolidated them as triangulation, embedded, explanatory and exploratory designs. The challenge is in deducing which design best fits the particular research plan and the skill sets the researcher possess for the best use of the mixed design (Ibid). This research opted to use explanatory method and thus in the following paragraphs it is vital to shed light on it.

4.2 Explanatory Sequential Design

Explanatory design is a methodology in which an inquiry is described by quantitative method and then further explained qualitatively. Creswell (2007) notes explanatory design fits in the situation where the qualitative phase builds on quantitative phase and the intention is to elucidate results. “The quantitative data informs the qualitative data selection process ... a great strength in that it enables researchers to specifically pinpoint data that is relevant to specific research project” (Almalki, 2016, p. 292).

Let us take a hypothetical case of simple explanatory sequential design to demonstrate how it best help reach a conclusive level of result by basing the qualitative inquiry on quantitative result. Below is a table about media

reportage promoting indigenous trees planting in ‘Green Legacy’ in three years in a given country.

Planted tree types	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Exotic	1bln	1.2 bln	2bln
Indigenous	5mln	5mln	6mln

Next is the mention of indigenous trees across three years in two local news papers during the planting season

Newspaper	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
	Total coverage about seedling	Mention of indigenous trees	Total coverage about seedling	Mention of indigenous trees	Total coverage about seedling	Mention of indigenous trees
Newspaper A	24	2	32	4	40	1
Newspaper B	19	3	21	2	38	4

Table 3. Illustration of explanatory sequential design of frequency

First the number of exotic and ingenious trees planned over the period of three years comparably has marked difference in all three years. Second, the investigation in the sample of newspapers selected that mentioned indigenous trees during the ‘green legacy’ is also minimal. Third, further data on professionals’ awareness on indigenous trees and biodiversity (not exemplified above) with categories of no, low, and medium and high could be conducted. One can stop here satisfied with the quantitative data analysis result of low or no or medium awareness on the part of media

professionals of the news papers about the importance of indigenous trees.

However, it is necessary to select or pinpoint from the result of quantitative of low and high to further examine by seeking explanation through selection from these categories either with further interview and documents or combination of them. Suppose, the result of explanation with interview might have directed us to the easy unavailability of the indigenous trees because nursing indigenous seedlings takes about three years and hence seedlings were not ready for planting as the exotic seedlings did. Thus, the low level of awareness could be valid result for quantitative phase. Nonetheless, the result obtained with the additional method (qualitative) help us to further go deeper and discover that 'low' mention of ingenious trees is because indigenous trees are not readied in short periods and the newspapers (wittingly) resort to promote the campaign in general terms. In other words, emphasis by the media on the indigenous trees may undermine the green legacy when exotic trees are demonized. Indigenous tree is best to plant since they are critical to maintaining biodiversity, if they are not ready, exotics are better than planting nothing.

4.3 News Media for the Content Analysis

The discourse of GERD dam dispute and negotiation lasted for more than half a decade now. Questioning the coverage of news media from the perspective of conflict sensitive journalism is not evadable for this

researcher when witnessing skewed reporting from news media impending escalation of conflict. Above and beyond, the study brought aboard experimenting applicability of conflict analysis tool (conflict onion) aimed to supplement conflict sensitive reporting.

Two news media were selected for the content analysis. These are *The Ethiopian Herald* and Egypt's *Ahram Online (Ahram weekly)*. Established in 1943, *The Ethiopian Herald* is the English daily (except Monday) broadsheet and among the four government news papers published by the Ethiopian Press Agency. The newspaper appear on web of the Ethiopian Press Agency in *pdf* as well as *html* formats.

Ahram is weekly broadsheet established in 1991 and published by Al-Ahram Publishing House and according to data in 2000; it has a circulation of 50,000 copies (Al-Ahram Weekly, n.d). The news media updates its webpage with news and opinions daily which seemingly earned its name *Ahram Online*. Both the news media are owned by the respective states and are also a medium with which the countries project news values to the wider audience as they are in English and have dedicated WebPages with no borders to limit their circulation like the paper based version. It become appropriate news media to correlate projection of the intractable issues of GERD from the theoretical framework of conflict analysis tool selected.

This study tried to incorporate similar news media from Sudan as well as one from international news agencies. As with Sudan, there is no news media run by the government with English language at particular period. With respect to international wire services, the study tried to see those provided the GERD with better frequency and Reuters is found better however, far more minimal. For the selected period it had ten-fold less on average that of *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Ahram Online* samples obtained and it was left out since measurability will not be fair.

4.4 Hypothesis and Research Questions

The research formulated the following hypothesis which is tentatively suggested to be tested with this project. Hypothesis: pro-government news media take merely the position of their countries (wittingly or inadvertently) in situations of impasse over GERD negotiation which is escalatory instead of digging deeper to uncover the interests and needs of parties for cooperative mutual benefit and sustainable use of the water resource. Based on the hypothesis the following Research Questions (RQs) are framed.

RQ1. What is the extent of the news media in amplifying the positions of their respective countries by taking only position stated by officials?

RQ2. What is the extent of the news media in upholding fair and equitable share of the Blue Nile water resource?

RQ3. What is the extent of representation of common issues about GERD and sustainable use of the river water resource and which common issues are better amplified and by which news media?

RQ4. What are the main recurring incompatible issues the news media emphasized? Which news media give emphasis to issues at odds in the negotiation of GERD and utilization of the water resource?

RQ 5. What is the extent of news media's effort in unmasking interest and needs of parties to the conflict?

4.5 Sample Data Corpus

Distrust and contention over the Blue Nile River specifically between Ethiopia and Egypt goes back over hundred years, at some point latent and at other manifest, however, it become the centre of attention with the start of GERD project by Ethiopia in 2011. Negotiation related to filling and amount of water release initiated between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt continued with dynamism as a result of progress of dam project and Ethiopia's schedule to start filling in mid 2020 when the seasonal rain is at its highest peak.

The data body for the analysis is purposively collected from the GERD coverage of the two news media from June 1 to July 31 2020. This is to cover the timing of the fervour before the first filling as it is claimed by Ethiopia, an important milestone to showcase success of the project. It is a distasteful undertaking for the Sudan and Egypt. All published coverage by the two news media in abovementioned two months were those

appeared posted on their respective web pages. Retrieval of the data was made by way of search engines with 'GERD', Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam key words/phrase. The stories by *Ahram Online* were collected as it appears online which is the daily posted (not the *pdf* format of the *Ahram Weekly*) to make even handed with *The Ethiopian Herald* which is also daily. However, in the case of *The Ethiopian Herald*, the samples were retrieved as it appears online for the month of June and from pdf print for the month of July to represent both formats. Thus, all samples from *Ahram Online* were taken as it appeared posted online not to miss some coverage, because the pdf is only the weekly version. The outcome of search results from the two news media are summed to 221 news and opinions, *The Ethiopian Herald* (n=118) *Ahram Online* (n= 103).

4.6 Categories and Units of Coding for Analysis

A word set of words or phrases is a result of the reduction of text with selection to help guide to the formulated research question. In establishing the level at which the chosen content is examined, categories are formulated. The categories are thus 1, genre /type of story 2, Source of the news story 3, issues at variance 4, issues in common which also can be termed as solution.

The units of meaning are facets broken down from the categories. The units constituting each category are at conformable level to comprehend for analysis. Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen, & Kyngäs (2014) also note that the acceptability of units need to be large enough to be

taken as whole and fine enough to give sense as unit in the analysis process. The segmentation of the categories to units for coding is as follows:

Genre/type of story

The types of stories evident in the data are

- news,
- opinion,
- editorial and
- feature stories.

Among the genre in the data are also two poems. Coding the types will aid to enumerate to what extent each of above are available in the news media and whether the media has inclination to events or processes. Opinion variable encompasses those by staff of the news media and writings by expertise and argumentative views of such sources.

Source – sourcing the news stories of the samples

- government officials,
- experts in the relevant fields ,
- and secondary sources (documents) and
- people whose lives are directly affected by GERD.

Identification of the source help to learn the extent whether story is restatement of familiar demands of government officials or went deeper with the inclusion of diverse voices. This is specific to news stories where the source will be identified from the main body of a story (lead) or in the first two or three paragraphs of the story.

Issues at variance - in this category, the units are:

- protecting historical Nile water rights,
- redressing hegemony of Nile water,
- filling reservoir is a process of dam project,
- no filling the reservoir before reaching negotiation and
- binding agreement on filling the reservoir .

These units of coding help to learn which news media is more focused in shaping only differences and incompatibility. On the other hand it also assist to know the extent of the media taking the justification for status quo or the other way round that is change.

Issues in Common- this category has the following variables:

- win-win solution,
- fair and equitable share of Blue Nile water,
- blue Nile River water as source of livelihood and development,
- GERD as source of electric power,
- GERD a mutual benefits project and
- cooperation for Blue Nile water resource sharing.

The higher the result of the extent of this variant, the better the particular media in revealing the interests of the parties that help champion in reaching agreement and cooperative engagement.

Hence, coding guide is prepared based on the listed five categories and further units of each to make smother the activity for two coders involving in the activity. The research design as referred in this chapter will employ explanatory sequential method and as per the ‘Green Legacy’ exemplified

above. Qualitative interpretation will be performed on pattern of concepts or categories basing the result of quantitative data analysis.

4.7 Reliability Measure and Coding Agreement Tests

Ensuring reliability of the samples processed is one of the main tasks of the research method. Reliability according to Hayes and Krippendorff (2007) "...amounts to evaluating whether a coding instrument, serving as common instructions to different observers of the same set of phenomena, yields the same data within a tolerable margin of error" (P.78). It is also benchmark of worthiness of a given research. For this to come about, there needs to be a thorough acquaintance of coders with the subject matter and well conceptualization of categories and units of coding by the researcher among others (Kolbe and Burnett (1991).

Though measuring intercoder reliability for content analysis is core tasks of research, literature in the area points to the difficulty in having expedient reliability measures and seemingly there has not been clear consensus in the fields of statistics which measure to use for what situation. There are about half a dozen of intercoder reliability measurement tools to gauge quality of coding judgments by multiple subjects in the fields of communication study (Lombard, Bracken and Snyder-Duch, 2005). Among them, percent agreement is considered to be most liberal index of intercoder reliability and higher value approaching 100 percent is acceptable. By and large 90 or greater are always acceptable as presented in Neuendorf coefficients. Scott's pi, Cohen's

kappa and Krippendorff's alpha are classed as more leaning to conservative and thus lower criteria are used (Ibid). All the three have common characteristics of estimating error ascribable to chance agreement, based on the calculated agreement. Cohen's kappa is widely used measurement to demonstrate reliability where result by chance gets 0. Lately, there has been argument that Krippendorff's alpha is doing better seems there is intricacy in computing it by accepted statistical packages in use in the social sciences (Hayes and Krippendorff, 2007). This study there for opts the measurement of Kappa which can be performed by popular means with SPSS application. The reading of Kappa values ≤ 0 as indicating no agreement and 0.01–0.20 as none to slight, 0.21–0.40 as fair, 0.41– 0.60 as moderate, 0.61–0.80 as substantial, and 0.81–1.00 as almost perfect agreement.

Two coders (Coder 'A' and Coder 'B') that involved in the task have education at BA level in journalism and communications. One of them has working experience in news media while the other is recently graduated with internship experience in news media. The intercoder reliability test was conducted as a whole at three levels: during coders' orientation, with pilot testing and after completion of coding of the full sample. During the orientation of coders and as part of acquainting with category and unit of analysis, a sample of 15 stories were considered by the coders independently and seen against simple percentage agreement. The result of all the four categories became 91 percent.

This exercise was basically a drill to refine efficiency of judges and seemed they were on the right track. Among the challenges reflected after the assignment was that the time taken to go through the given samples was longer than what both coders have assumed at the outset. This is because they have to go over the stores for each variance conceptualised for the study. Next, is the pilot level experimenting after going through the orientation. The coders were given time to run a coding exercise with 30 stories 15 each from the samples of the two news media. This constitutes 13 percent of the total sample data for the study. During this pilot testing and the full sample 'genre' and 'sourcing' are left out from the measurement since these are more or less given. For example, in making out the genre, the questions are which is news and which is editorial. With source identification, it is also looking who is quoted or sourced in the main part or lead of the news story. In the former case it is mostly given besides both coders are from the media background and precision had been witnessed during orientation of coding. The pilot test becomes 93 percent with simple percent evaluation. After reflection on some minor issues the whole coding of the whole data is conducted. Consequently, the result with measurement of simple percentage agreement is 96.1 percent where as Kappa processed with SPSS turned to be 88.9 percent and thus falls in the upper category of 0.81-1.00 as almost perfect agreement.

Rater A * Rater B Crosstabulation

Count

		Rater B		Total
		No	Yes	
Rater A	No	1911	87	1998
	Yes	10	511	521
Total		1921	598	2519

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement	Kappa	.889	.011	44.779	.000
N of Valid Cases		2519			

- a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
- b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Table 4. Kapa result of coding agreement of categories of ‘issue at variance’ and ‘issue in common’

In the next chapter, qualitative interpretation will be performed on pattern of concepts or categories by basing the result of quantitative data results the reliability of which is validated after reviewing the conflict with core conflict analysis tools which are conflict, context, cause and dynamic.

CHAPTER FIVE

PEELING THE ONION: THE REPORTAGE OF CONFLICT ON GERD

NEGOTIATION

5.1 Preliminary: GERD with Key Conflict Analysis Tools

Valuating context, the causes the conflict is capitalizing on and the stakeholders concerned, along with pertinent peace and conflict dynamics are paramount in conforming to a scheme of conflict analysis process (Oliva and Charbonnier 2016). As a key preliminary analysis , this chapter starts with the presentation of the overview what is at stake of the GERD /context or profile/, causes for the contention, conflict players and dynamics and the pattern of change in this case mainly during the negotiation over the GERD. Then, it proceeds to the presentation of the result of analysis of the selected data corpus as well as discussion after validating the result and hypothesis and answering framed research questions.

5.1.1 Profile /Context

In review of context of conflict, Galtung (2006) posits the criticality of identifying it. "There is always a *context*, the broader conflict formation of parties and goals and issues" (p.2). Hence, key historical events befalling in Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan related to the Blue Nile and the political, economic and socio-cultural realities will be reviewed briefly as key preliminary analysis. The conflict which is latent and seemingly more inclined towards manifestation is mainly between Ethiopia and Egypt in the period under consideration. The discord between the two takes us

back over a century to Khedive of Egypt and European colonial scramble for Africa, particularly interest to control the main tributaries of the Nile River, the major content of the water originating from Ethiopia (Alebachew 2011).

By mid 1870's seeking to control the Abay River and expand its empire, the Khedive of Egypt recruited officers from America and Europe and joined ranks and files of Egyptian force to occupy the red sea coast, the present day Eritrea. Consequently, in November 1875 Egyptian expeditionary force was annihilated at Gundet by Ethiopian warriors of the then emperor Yohannes IV (Kalpakian 2015) and (Alebachew 2011). The renewed motives of conquest of Ethiopia in March 1876 by Egyptian forces once again were foiled in Gura which diminished Egypt in the face of European powers (Alebachew 2011). This phenomenon continued in a different form in later periods.

Among the treaties and agreements include an Anglo-Italian Protocol signed in 1881 between the two under the guise of delineation of boundary and contains article (3) limiting Italy from undertaking water project across Atbara River, tributary of Nile as Swain (1997) and Tafesse (2001) were quoted by Ferede and Abebe (2014). The Anglo-Ethiopian treaty signed in 1902 which was also camouflaged under the delimitation of the frontier between Ethiopia and Sudan. The boundary itself has not yet been marked yet and intermittently a source of contention between Sudan and Ethiopia. The treaty also included article 3

dealing about the construction of dam across the tributaries of Nile and Lake Tana with discrepancy of meaning between English and Amharic. The Amharic text states, "...any work that fully arrests the flow of the Blue Nile, Lake Tsana or the Sobat," while the English text says "...any work across the Blue Nile, Lake Tana, or the Sobat which would arrest (Ferede and Abebe 2011 p,59). Seen against the context, Ferede and Abebe (Ibid) argues as follows:

[t]he Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty was to limit Ethiopia's right to reach agreements on water use with possible colonial contenders to Britain. The agreement belies Britain's fear of other colonial powers interfering, this fear complementing Britain's underestimation of Ethiopia's capacity to build water projects (p,59).

According to argument of the same authors (Ibid), the treaty is not succeeding since the then Organization of African Unity only recognized the applicability in this regard to the treaties in reference to boundaries. The discrepancy between the two languages and that it was not sanctioned nullifies the agreement though Egypt insists it is valid it power not dam is to be constructed without its consent (Degefu 200). Even if it is valid the reading of clause only prohibits arrest or total blockage of water. However, the simple logic is also that if that agreement is to be valid, those countries used to be under colonial authority would have been still under colonial rule, in fact the then East African colonies rejected the validity of the treaties made by Britain had on their behalf.

The other two agreements were the 1929 and the next after three decades that apportioned the Nile only to Egypt and Sudan and vetoing any projects on tributaries by Egypt (Obengo 2016). With the 1929 Anglo-Egyptian treaty Egypt was apportioned 48 bcm while Sudan was given 4 bcm. Further the agreement gave Egypt veto over any projects to be taken in upstream countries under British colony. The 1959, agreement between Egypt and Sudan once more alienated the water needs of Ethiopia and other riparian states and reinforced the provision of 1929 accord. The treaty increased the allocation of both, 7.5 bcm for Egypt and 14.5 bcm and reserved 10 bcm for evaporation and seepage. Nonetheless, the treaties exclude despite it is the origin of the majority of Egypt's water supply. Both of the agreements also is against the principles of equitable and reasonable use of Trans-boundary Rivers.

Since Egypt is dependent on Nile, millions of people often affected by its irregular flow, flooding in high rain season and drying up during the erratic period and to unravel this, President Nassir's plan to build Aswan High Dam with the support of US and Britain was not successful. It had to turn its face to the Soviet Union ultimately and attained to finalize the project with the money it obtained from nationalized Suez Canal albeit its original criticism of negative effects of the dam (Muller, 2020). The dam became operational in 1970 enabling the boosting of irrigated land and hydropower supply. Muller (Ibid) deplored that it is insincere for Egypt to others replicating project potential in alleviating people from poverty.

Mistrust between Ethiopia and Egypt is importunate, the later working to undermine the former. Muller (2020) and Bayeh (2015) noted Egypt backed Somalia during Somalia's expansionist motives and invasion of south eastern part of Ethiopia as well as the then internal opposition groups such as in Eretria . "Anwar al-Sadat ran afoul of Ethiopia when he took Somalia's side in the Ogaden War (1977-1978)" (ICG,2019, p.9). Taking opportunity for proxy in undermining Ethiopia is seemingly the strategy of Egypt.

In 1999, the formation of NBI as an institutional mechanism by 10 riparian states with the principle of forging equitable utilization and shared socio- economic development benefit from the common Nile Basin was a step forward for cooperation between the states which also later become a recipe in challenging the status quo of lower riparian countries giving rise to unilateral move to utilize the resource for growing need (Cascão 2009). Even if the ideals backed by international community, a decade of efforts to functionalize the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) of NBI has not been realized with difference of Sudan and Egypt as it goes against claimed 'historical and acquired rights' of the two (Salman,2013).

The Joint Multipurpose Project (JMP) was endorsed in 2003 from among a number of the Subsidiary Action Project of Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO) includes "...the Power Trade Study; the associated prefeasibility study of three hydropower sites on the Blue Nile;

and an ongoing feasibility study of power transmission interconnection among the three countries” (Cascão and Nicol, 2016.p554). A scoping study asserted water reservoirs across Blue Nile tributaries in Ethiopia that has multipurpose benefits for the three countries paramount as an initial JMP investment (Ibid). Nonetheless, despite efforts by Ethiopia and Sudan to explain and persuade that it is exemplary proposal “...the Egyptian authorities contested the findings and challenged the technical validity of the study conducted by the independent experts, following which their involvement in the JMP started to wane” (Ibid p,555).

The gradual emergence of Ethiopia from civil war from mid 1990s and growing affiliation with China “... substantial economic growth have transformed Ethiopia into a country with increasing demand for new infrastructure and food and energy resources and, at the same time, a growing capacity to mobilize external funds and to self-finance implementation of large-scale projects” among the main contributing factors to the advent of new hydro politics (Cascão and Nicol, 2016 p.557)

A year after unveiling GERD project, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi passed and his deputy took over the leadership, however, a couple of years later popular protest against the government surfaced in the country. Abiy Ahmaed took office in April 2018 with the resignation of Hailemariam Desalegn and Abiy undone the tight grips by ruling party and made reforms as well as signed peace agreement with Eretria after no peace no war situation following border war 20 years back which won him Nobel

Peace Prize (The World Factbook,2020) and (The Radius 2020). He also transferred part of contract of GERD project by local inexperienced government corporation that resulted in delay of project and huge financial loss (Global Construction Review 14 Dec 2018).

Thus, the context with which GERD was incepted has been attributed to Ethiopia's growing economic need, population growth and the long aspired need to light 65 million of poor rural homes, meet growing power need by the economy and earning foreign exchange with power export. In the same year of the unveiling the construction of GERD project in 2011, the three neighbours decided to initiate a trilateral process to establishing a technical dialogue that would later evolve into a negotiation and political process.

Going back to the end of 1990s, Egypt exerted by redoubling effort to harness more of the water in the Nile with development of Toshka and other projects and reclaiming millions of acres of desert which appear to surpass hitherto consumption or beyond the claimed acquired right (Cascão, 2009). Despite this, Egypt has strained to be up to the need of swiftly increasing population because of restricted resources such as arable land and water though it has been taking economic reform (The World Factbook 2020).

In 2011, with popular movement sparked across North Africa marred the Mubark establishment and resulted in his eventual overthrow. The

following few years were characterized by descent of national economy and political impact (Cascão and Nicol, 2016). Muhammad Mursi who became elected president in 2012 removed after a year by the military as a result of protest. Following a brief transition and amendment of some of the rule politics former defense minister Abdelfattah El-Sisi elected president (The World Factbook 2020). In respect to GERD, the short ascent of Mohamed Mursi characterized by all rounded confrontational behaviour against Ethiopia, from destabilizing politically to military action (Kalpakian, 2015). It was indeed the GERD was unveiled by Ethiopia in the context of Egypt's more of turbulent timing.

Sudan had been bogged down in civil war because of the non-Muslim and non-Arab people domination by the Islamic leaning military government subsequent to independence from Anglo-Egyptian rule in 1956 (The World Factbook, 2010). After decades, with the autonomy given for six years, South Sudan became independent with referendum in 2011. As a result, Sudan lost three fourth of income from oil which it enjoyed for about a decade and the GDP contributor was left to agriculture which is rain-fed and susceptible to drought and with consequent inflation on top of the comprehensive sanction imposed by US for claimed sponsoring of terrorism (Foreign Policy, 2019). The Protest began in the end of 2018 resulted in the removal of 30 year in power Omar al-Bashir on 11 April 2018 accused of human rights violation and genocide in Darfur region.

Looking into the recent past move with respect to the Nile River, Sudan turned to the utilization of water resource of the Nile and Blue Nile river

as hydropower and irrigation. “At the end of 2008, Sudan started the heightening of the Roseires Dam. A few months later, Khartoum inaugurated the large-scale Merowe Dam, a hydropower project that can also be used for irrigation in the future” (Tawfik, 2015 p.24). The effort made by Sudan and Ethiopia to bring back Egypt to NBI was in vain which described by (Cascão and Nicol (2016) as “the best-case scenario for all three countries, including (and perhaps above all) Egypt, in particular when compared to unilateral developments” (p. 555).

Albeit the brawl on Nile water resource, the cordial relation in bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Egypt is the oldest in the African continent (Egypt-Ethiopia Relations, n.d.). In the economic front, presently more than 70 Egyptian entrepreneurs are involved in agriculture, livestock production, industry, tourism and infrastructural development in Ethiopia as well as there is growing export of Egypt’s processed goods to Ethiopia (Ibid). Christianity is one of the institution that bound Egypt and Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church patriarchs had been appointed by the Coptic Orthodox Church until 1959. There was cooperation of the two in an effort to modernizing education in Ethiopia in 1930’s and 1940’s the later sending educational mission.

As part of profile or context under security, briefer timeline is included. Oliva and Charbonnier (2016) assert “The Timeline is a simple but valuable conflict analysis tool” (p. 88). To pinpoint key tendency on prevailing situation, even if there could be to some extent contention

between the actors how they perceive the peculiar event. The overall timeline of contention on GERD from different sources as well as those major events affecting the study mainly focusing in June and July and included in section of Appendix.

5.1.2. Cause

In conflict, casual analysis tool looks into sources of tension between the actors as proximate precursor for conflict (Ibid). Comparably, in conflict sensitive journalism, “stories must expose the cultural and structural causes and/or reinforcing factors behind the already noticeable reason in order to guide readers towards a more nuanced understanding”(Rama and Gürten 2018, p.47). As posited by Gauteng (1969) social structure or social institution may harm a group by putting it off from achieving its basic needs which could be a causation of conflict. “When the structure is threatened, those who benefit from structural violence will try to preserve the status quo” (Ibid, p.179). In the analysis of cause, it is paramount to spot the key genesis of hostilities that became constituent part of policies, institutions and typical trait of societies (Ibid). In discussing causation, it also essential to suggest possible thought for way out of the impasse.

A setting of differing hydro-topography in which Ethiopia became the major origin and Egypt recipient of the Nile water resource has resulted in “a shadow of mutual suspicions, hostile perceptions, conspiracy theories, and deeply entrenched emotions directly related to their positions to the Nile River” (Alebachew 2011,p.6).The backing of colonial period

agreements over the share of Nile water since the beginning of 20th century enabled the unlimited utilization of the water of the Nile by lower riparian countries of Sudan and Egypt (ICG 2019). The NBI that encompass 10 countries of the basin and Eritrea as observer came into being in 1999 grounded on principles of cooperation between all parties. A Cooperative Framework Agreement of NBI that stipulates “equitable utilisation” of the Nile water was objected by Sudan and Egypt as they claim it is against the 1959 agreement which allocated entire water for the two. This can be taken as hallmark of the structural cause of contention entrenched for long with the series of the treaties and agreements disregarding all other watercourse countries.

The proximate cause of the conflict is Ethiopia’s announcement of the GERD project in 2011 to begin utilizing the Abay brushing aside the two lower riparian exclusive agreements. That announcement was a jolt for Sudan and Egypt even though the countries were aware of the overall ambient discourse of the upper riparian states. “Both downstream countries reacted immediately and furiously, demanding that the project be frozen” (Ibid,p.4). The GERD project created fear of diminishing water supply. Ethiopia needs the project to generate power for its electric deficient population and for industrial purpose besides intention for export. Egypt under Mursi expressed openly on media to stop the project with military means which is oft claimed ‘options on the table’ and on the longer term to undermine Ethiopia by supporting opposition militants. This has been escalating the divergence between the two.

Sudan, however, later on convinced and became optimistic on its part that GERD will regulate water by limiting flooding and silting. This in turn said to help Sudan for boosting irrigated agricultural productivity with regulated water all year round. The inevitability of the progress of GERD project is among the pull factors for Egypt and Sudan to the negotiation but genuineness of cooperation and mutual benefit aligned with modern international trans-boundary water sharing principles instead of historical and acquired rights of the lower riparian states remained to be seen.

According to the ICG, factors potentially contributing to reaching accord could be Egypt's reconsideration of rejoining NBI's dialogue in bringing about cooperation of all basin countries beyond the issue of GERD (ICG,2019). The ICG (2020) in its report recommends:

Addis Ababa could link the GERD reservoir's filling rates to reasonable projections of how much electricity it will consume domestically and sell abroad during the corresponding period. Egypt needs to edge toward more equitable arrangements on trans-boundary water sharing, a huge step that might become more politically feasible and less economically painful if it adopts improved water management measures, as long proposed, at home (p.6).

Mbaku (2020) in his argument on the controversy over the GERD recommends for negotiated agreement, Ethiopia to develop and adopting

an effective drought mitigation protocol to release water from the reservoir to mitigate drought and Egypt and Sudan to resolve the disagreements that caused the two to decline to sign the NBI's CFA, and use it as a model for a prospective requisite legal system that ensures mutually beneficial rights.

Mbaku (Ibid) also noted the worthiness of upstream states' recognition of Egypt's reliance on the waters of the Nile River and the development of a set of rules of water management augmenting equitable and reasonable use while lessening significant harm to Egypt and Sudan. Egypt needs to also abandon continued references to its so-called 'natural historical rights' to resolve the impasse with upper riparian countries. He further argues that a dispute resolution mechanism at a basin wide ministerial level of the countries should be in place and the decision of which is binding as well as Egypt to endeavour to resolve issues of contention with countries and states in the riparian states than to seek external intervention (Ibid). The filling and operation of the dam is a negligible concern compared to the potential long term predicament and the countries need to take the opportunity of the latter to harness cooperative water disagreement as exemplary for others beyond Africa (Lapin, 2020). Arsano (2012) also emphasises "The Nile basin countries should think beyond drops of water. It is not only the amount of water that we need to discuss, but the potential to maximize mutual benefit from each drop" (p.5).

5.1.3. Stockholders /actors

Scrutiny of the stakeholders is vital part of any conflict evaluation. The Community Tool Box (n.d.) notes stakeholders are those individuals or group that affect or affected by an action. Oliva and Charbonnier (2016) underscore the role of understanding panoramically those who have stake in the discordance. “It identifies and examines critical local, national, regional and international actors who can affect and influence, or who are affected by, the conflict” (p.64). After demarcating the stakeholders as primary, secondary and external stakeholders, attempts will be made to discern their characteristics, positions, interests, needs and their power of influencing the conflict positively or negatively based on Oliva and Charbonnier’s guide (Ibid).

The primary stakeholders in the GERD negotiation are those that directly involved and affecting or being affected by actions taking place. In this case, Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt are the three parties which have first and for most stakes. The three are the Eastern Nile basin countries. Any interventions on the tributaries and Nile River have positive or negative bearing on each. The people of the respective countries and their diasporas at the same time are said to have primary stake in any efforts and outcomes that can directly benefit or harm them. The Ethiopian public, private and public firms have bought bond in the effort made by the government to self finance the project has impetus in ensuring the claimed fair utilization of the water resource of the River. The case in point here is the diasporas in US and Europe played their part to influence the

negotiating Ethiopian government delegation to listen their say and consult the public.

The secondary stakeholders are those actors that indirectly affected positively or negatively by what is taking place (Ibid). In the GERD project, the international and local firms taking part and implementing the construction and functionalizing of the project are classified among the secondary stockholders as decisions and changes to the project directly affect them. Here it is vital to mention the *Salini Impregilo* as major international contracting firm and China Gezhouba Group among others that came in latter to finalizing some of the work (Global Construction Review 2019). The other nine Nile Basin countries save the three Eastern Nile Basin countries are also among the stakeholders. This is because the legal and claimed historical rights that became point of contention in the Nile water utilization as well as the GERD project and the outcome of the negotiation have implication for the current and future efforts on the remaining basin countries.

The key stakeholders are those actors in situation of conflict that can have potential positive or negative consequence of conflict situation. The US government with strategic interest on both Egypt and Ethiopia involved at about the end of 2019 so that the three countries reach agreement on the GERD negotiation as observer and facilitator on its soil with the involvement of World Bank. Ethiopia skipped the thought to be concluding agreement as it believed an inflicting unfair terms drafted by

US and World Bank on the filling of the GERD reservoir by overstepping its original role. Then, warning by US ensued not to start filling the dam before agreement is reached (ICG, 2020). Ethiopia described the move as unfair and ‘external interference’. Later in August 2020, the US government did suspend USD 131m support to Ethiopia. That testifies the manipulative power of US under President Trump Administration to exploit Egypt’s role in geopolitics of Middle East for its interest. Within the US, The Congressional Black Caucus stance and expression for the support for mutual beneficial and peaceful resolution on the implementation of the GERD negotiation can have impact in trying to balance the US government’s partiality to Egypt (Congregational Black Caucus, 2020).

The African Union is also a key stakeholder that took over the negotiation to be under its auspicious, ‘African Issue by Africans’ referred by UN Security Council which earlier Egypt had pleaded for the world body to handle the issue that could entail instability in the region. The European Union is also a key stakeholder with a good deal of weight as partner to all the three Eastern Nile Riparian countries and influence the effort of negotiation and its outcome. The Arab League, the other regional block with 22 members (Egypt and Sudan among the membership) warned Ethiopia to refrain from starting to fill reservoir unilaterally calling it ‘integral part of Arab National Security’ (Gomma, 2020, July 1). This one is considered the upshot of diplomatic rally by Egypt to influence the trajectory. Nonetheless, Sudan reserved itself as it is “not serving its

interest” while Ethiopia downplayed it as ‘blind support’ to Egypt’s position (“Ethiopia, Sudan reject Egypt’s draft Arab...”, 2020 March 8).

Media is the other key stakeholders that influence with how it selects and frames the information it collected and transfers on the one hand and competition of other stakeholders for dominance to impose their interests with the use of media on the other hand (Voinea and Kraneburg, 2017). The international media is observed to give emphasis oft in major events of resumption and disruption of negotiation as well as intermittent escalation. The respective media operating from countries specially Ethiopia and Egypt amplify positions with their peculiar influence on their respective audience by means of how they select issues and make salient. This will be the focus of topics later on. The other stakeholder is IGAD. Among the 9 members of IGAD seven are Nile Basin countries including Sudan and Ethiopia and as a regional organization it expressed support for GERD (IGAD,2017, April 9).

The state of affairs of water resource sharing dispute among the primary stakeholders appears not yet ceasing positively. Ethiopia’s interest is to assert rights of equitable rights of the resource as a major get-go of water of the Nile River to utilise to solve the dearth of power and improve livelihoods of people by motivating economy but Egypt and Sudan seems to have a self-serving interest. “Both countries would like more cooperation, but on the basis of the status quo” (Arsano 2012, p. 2) which unlikely to yield agreement. The three countries along with the key

stakeholders need to visualize the bigger picture and redirect their efforts to addressing their potential ensuing water resource challenges. Lashitew and Gebeyehu (2020) caution:

Notwithstanding the raging dispute over the dam, Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan are expected to face a severe water shortage because of population growth, economic development and climate change. To alleviate a potentially devastating water crisis, they must redirect their focus from short-term problems to a strategic, long-term cooperation to address the expected shortage through water conservation, economic trade and technological adoption.(p.1).

Country	Position	Interest	Need
Ethiopia	Utilize Abay river in tandem with the international principles with no significant harm to downstream countries.	Generate hydroelectric power and avail electric power for more than half of its people as well as earn income by exporting the hydroelectric power by GERD.	Serve more than half of its population on the breadline with voltage for domestic use and extricate citizens from abject poverty
Sudan	Ensure that Nile River water flows into its territory naturally and without endangering the safety of people living along the banks, their livelihoods and dams	Utilize regulated Nile water for irrigation and hydropower generation	Feed its people and provide hydroelectric power for domestic and industrial use.

Egypt	Ensure historical and acquired rights of Nile water resource by all means, interfering with the historic stipulation of 55 bcm of annual flow of the river is existential	Continue utilizing Nile River water utmost for expanding irrigated agriculture, municipal use and hydroelectric power	Feed its growing population, and provide water for municipal use and generate hydroelectric power, for domestic and industrial purpose.
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Table 5. *The major position, interest and needs of Ethiopia Sudan and Egypt over GERD*

The attempt to present positions, interests and needs of the stakeholders with the preliminary review will provide opportunities to further explore with forthcoming practical consideration of the two news media and reach what these imply and how to reach to those levels in the process of news media content representation.

5.1.4. Dynamics

The conflict analysis with the key tools of context/profile, cause and stakeholders are static. A dynamic analysis is one that makes sense of the different static factors and, in particular, the interaction between the conflict situation, stakeholders and the identified causes of conflict (Olvia, p.104). Conflict dynamics entails issues that drive conflict such as competition over resource and violation of rights as well as trends which periodically occurs and reoccurs as well as triggers that set off change in

the case of conflict are factors escalating or de-escalating (The Media Council of Kenya , 2016).

Considering the dynamism with in the eastern Nile basin states from the time of NBI formation and its upshot, CFA showed a tendency of transformation from hitherto reliance on historical rights by lower riparian state. The principle of shared Nile water resource gave birth to cooperative framework and project identification of multi propose projects at sub region level (JMP and Easter Nile Subsidiary Action Programme) but later reservation by the two downstream countries specifically Egypt's reluctance to accept stumbled the vision of cooperation in spite of its high expectation by member countries and donors ultimately turning to unilateral move (Casção 2009 & Nikol) and (Casção 2016).

This can be explained by Sudan's boosting of the height of the Roseires Dam and inauguration of Merowe Dam, a major hydropower and potential for irrigation (Tawfik, 2015). Important of all is the game changer unilateral GERD project that was incepted in 1960s through the help of US Reclamation Bureau with the identification of four potential hydropower cites and irrigation project as a result of alliance of Russia to support in the construction of Egypt's High Aswan Dam (Ibid). Trilateral negotiation between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt was initiated as latter's request for the suspension of the project had not been not realized. Sudan convinced and stood in support of the project for its claimed regulation of water for irrigation and flood control among others after assessment by

joint international panel of experts, nonetheless, Egypt under president Mursi turned down the result of the assessment and reverted to narrative of water war (Cascão & Nicol 2016). Across –the-board, the dynamics of hegemony of water become vivid. Tawfik (2015) puts this way:

It heralded the transformation of Ethiopia’s counter-hegemonic policy from the reactive diplomacy of occasional contestation of Egypt’s Nile policy to a proactive diplomacy that creates new facts on the ground. It also reflects the shifting balance of power in upstream-downstream relation (p.38).

Chekol (2018) in his investigation of Ethio-Egyptian hydro-political relation outlined seven major developments becoming factors for the changing relation of Ethiopia and Egypt.

- Ethiopia’s relative economic growth and interest to harness its water resources to extricate its people from poverty;
- Commitment of Egypt to move from extravagancy to efficient utilization of Nile water resources;
- The signing of CFA by most of the upper riparian states potentially help Sudan and Egypt to reconsider their reluctance would entail;
- The creation of South Sudan as a new nation between the upper and lower riparian of white Nile river basin where a vast amount of the river water is lost to evaporation and an independent country South Sudan believed to contribute to dynamism though the country has been caught in internal conflict;

- The popular Arab spring that also sparked reevaluation in Egypt deposed Mubark and then Mursi who took over with election short lived in power and the coming to Power of Al Sisi seemed better to believe in negotiation than the predecessors;
- As one of the driver of growth and transformation, Ethiopia's commencing of GERD project arguing that it also expected to benefit Sudan and Egypt by regulation of water, minimizing evaporation and complement electric power need particularly for the former;
- The signing of Declaration of Principles (DOP) in March 2015 was a step forward in propelling change towards cooperation and building trust on GERD project and water sharing.

The conclusion of agreement on DOP seemingly transposed a positive manifest of understanding; however, later the negotiation to reaching agreement on mechanism of filling and operation of GERD has been slowing down and more of grueling. There were two factors to be considered, one of it is the Washington sponsored negotiation on the initial filling and operation of GERD. The US's role as observer along with the World Bank shifted negotiation culminated in end of February 2020 with Ethiopia's pulling out claiming it was not in its best interest and considered the US's sidestepping original role and dictating terms of agreement and imposing on Ethiopia as trickery. This has ultimately roughened the relationship between Ethiopia and Egypt and the course of negotiation as well. With this backdrop, the insistence of Ethiopia with filling of GERD reservoir during the 2020 main wet season and

accordingly completion of the first year proportion of 4.9 bcm in spite of the hazard by US, Egypt and Egypt not to do it was the other dynamism.

Indeed that amount of water held in the reservoir believed in reducing the disaster by the river that flooded parts of Khartoum in August and September 2020. Thus, the cycle of dynamism hinges on exclusive colonial and its legacy water sharing, a structure that saw the seed of discord since the upper riparian state left relegated from asserting their rights whereas the lower riparian cling on to it to maintaining the status quo. The move for change and affirming rights by the former through institutions (such as NBI) and unilateral project (GERD) has been contested which also could be conducive to protracted negotiation and failure for long in achieving agreement.

5.2. Data Result

The subsequent section is presentation of data processed according to their interrelationship to categories and units conceptualized as types of writing, sourcing, and issues at variance and issues of common ground. The units of the first two categories are represented each one time as frequency. To make it more clear, a writing can belong to either of the four units under the category of genre or type of writing and similarly a news is sourced in either of the four units of the category in its main part or lead. However, in the case of the last two categories, a sample can be associated with one or more units and percentage is thus taken against each unit from the total sample (The *Ethiopian Herald* n=118 and *Ahram*

Online n=103) since this units can stand alone but not referred as a categories.

	Category	Unit	The Ethiopian Herald		Ahram Online	
			N	%	N	%
I	Types of writing	1. News	60	50.8	82	79.6
		2. Editorial	16	13.6	2	1.9
		3. Opinion	39	33.1	17	16.5
		4. Feature	3	2.5	2	1.9
		Total	118	100	103	100
II	Sourcing of news story	1. Government officials	30	50	80	97.5
		2. Expertises	24	40	1	1.2
		3. Secondary/Documents	1	1.7	0	0
		4. People whose lives is to be affected by GERD	5	8.3	1	1.2
		Total	60	100	82	100
III	Issues at variance	1. Protect historical and acquired Nile water right	5	4.2	18	17.4
		2. Redress hegemony of Nile water	14	11.9	1	0.97
		3. No unilateral filling before agreement	1	0.85	64	64.1
		4. Filling is process of Dam construction	45	38.1	38	36.9
		5. Binding Agreement on filling	2	1.7	60	58.2
IV		1. Win-win solution	27	22.9	2	1.9
		2. Fair/equitable share of Nile water	33	28	43	41.7

Issues of common ground	3. Nile water as source of livelihood & development	10	8.47	8	7.8
	4. Nile water as power generation	31	26.2	13	12.6
	5. GERD a mutual benefit project	33	28	14	13.6
	6. Cooperation for water resource sharing	40	33.9	18	17.5

Table 6. Data frequency across units by the two news media

5.2.1 Genres

News, editorial, opinion and feature stories are the identified genres of writings that covered the issue of GERD from the sample taken from *The Ethiopian Herald* (118) and *Ahram Online* (103) in the months of June and July 2020 totaling 221.

News takes up 50.8 percent from the total of *The Ethiopian Herald* reportage while it is 79.6 percent in the case of *Ahram Online*. It is apparent from the result of the data that *Ahram Online* had more multiple of news on same issue of GERD in several of the days since there were 82 news for the period of 61 days (June and July 2020). For instance, four news were posted on July 13 and five news on July 14 by *Ahram Online* on the same subject of GERD which is suggestive of the overtone to events than *The Ethiopian Herald*.

Editorial is the opinion and stand of the news media and thus the sample data exhibits that *The Ethiopian Herald* has 13.6 percent of editorial whereas *Ahram Online* takes up only 1.9 percent. The latter limits its readers to learn its stand on the recurring issue of GERD during the period by interpretation of the events from the point of news media. Opinions of expertise pertinent in field take 33.1 percent in *The Ethiopian Herald* coverage while 16.5 percent in the *Ahram Online* publication. Opinion writings are about 100 percent less in *Ahram Online* as compared to *The Ethiopian Herald*. Stories qualifying as feature writing style are seen to be minimal for both, *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Ahram Online*, 2.5 percent and 1.9 percent respectively.

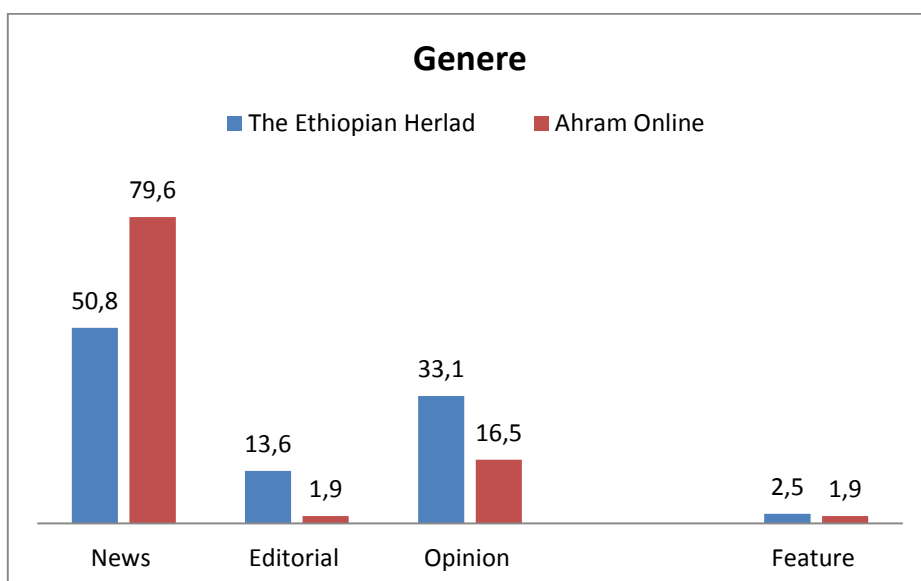


Figure 4. Percentage comparison of genre/type of writing of the two news media

5. 2.2 Sourcing of News Story

The sourcing of news is considered from the perspective of one of the four categories. First, government officials and its representatives accounts 50 percent and 97.5 percent as a source of news stories by *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Ahram Online* respectively. The latter made the source government entities close to entirety. These arguably confirm that the news media dedicates itself to amplifying the position of the Egyptian government on GERD. Taking only official sources, according to McGlodrick and Lynch (2000) limits the opportunity to include views of ordinary people on the fear and prospect on issue of conflict.

Second, *The Ethiopian Herald* resorted to making 40 percent of news coverage of its source expertise in various fields, where as *Ahram Online* has only 1.2 percent of the same sort of source. Inclusion of views of expertise basing science and evidence is critical in looking options to contributing in reaching agreement on issues, which in this case *Ahram Online* lacks among the corpus of news in the sample.

Third, *The Ethiopian Herald* ventured 8.5 percent of the news stories to hear voice of people whose lives are going to be affected by GERD project where as *Ahram Online* 0.97 percent. Both the news media seem to disregard to present the voice of people to be affected positively or negatively by the GERD, *Ahram Online* is worse in this regard, almost next to nothing in this regard. Finally, News reporting with a secondary

source by *The Ethiopian Herald* is 1.6 percent while *Ahram Online* has not sourced secondary document.

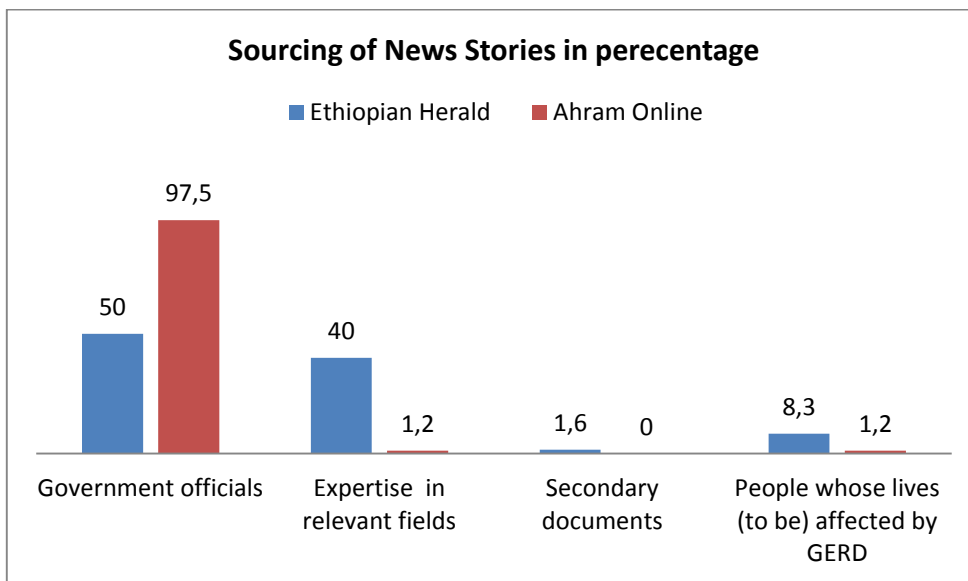


Figure 5. Sourcing of News Stories by Ahram Online and The Ethiopian Herald

5.2.3. Issues at Variance

Issue at odds signifies how far the news media choose to publish developments minding difference over the GERD project. The coverage with all forms of writing are considered against five categories of variables. Protecting historical and acquired Nile water rights is the first category and *The Ethiopian Herald* account 4.2 percent. For the same category *Ahram Online* is 17.4 percent. Maintaining status quo is at play resisting change and the later is more focused on to this than the former.

On the other hand *The Ethiopian Herald* published 11.9 percent of stories focusing on redressing hegemony of Nile water resource while *Ahram Online* posted 0.97 percent of stories. In this respect, *The Ethiopian Herald*

has more coverage about bringing about change on the status quo that base itself on colonial interest of unilateral apportioning of Nile River water between only the two downstream countries and invalidating any project to utilize the water resource.

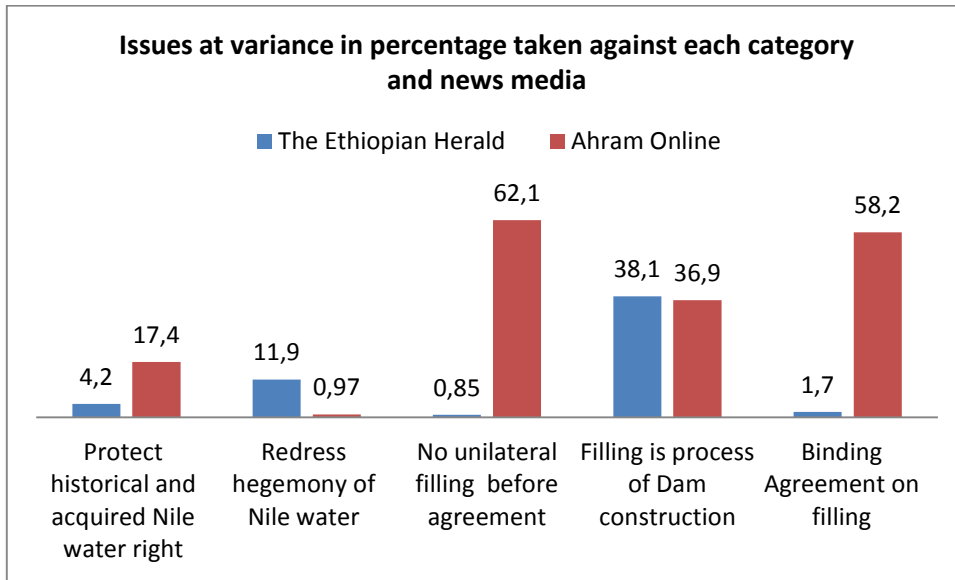


Figure 6. Issues at variance taken against each category of the news media

Stories by *The Ethiopian Herald* focusing in outlawing unilateral filling of reservoir of GERD before agreement is reached is 0.85 percent and *Ahram Online* 62.1 percent. In a similar take, *Ahram Online* has significant difference with the former which selected and made prominent against filling the reservoir without reaching agreement.

Conflicting to the above, stories about starting to impound the GERD reservoir taken as part and parcel of dam construction by *The Ethiopian Herald* amounts to 38.1 percent and *Ahram Online* 36.9 percent. This issue is at about the comparable level by both.

Finally, stories recommending binding agreement on filling reservoir of GERD by *The Ethiopian Herald* is 1.7% percent while 58.2 percent by *Ahram Online* on the same issue. The later media gave more precedence in obligating binding agreement about the filling reservoir.

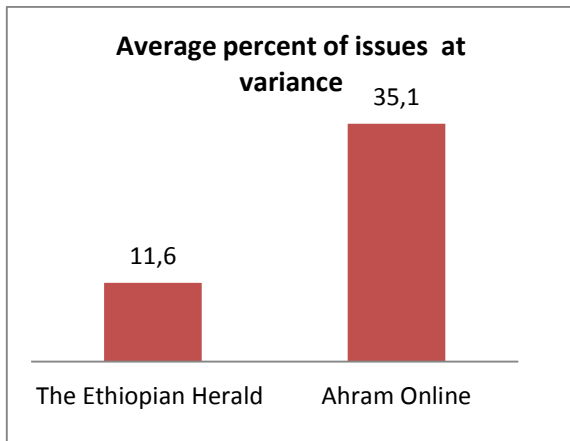


Figure 7. Average percentage comparison of issues at variance

Taken as a whole, issues at variance significantly differ in the two news media. Average percentage representation of the issue by *The Ethiopian Herald* is 11.6 whereas *Ahram Online* contained the issues more than threefold greater (35.1).

5.2.4. Issues in Common

Reportage on issues believed to advantage both countries over the GERD project is considered from six main identified categories. Proposing and presenting by the news media about win-win solution is 22.9% and 1.9% by *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Ahram Online* respectively. Selection and presentation of issues about fair and equitable share of Nile water

resource by *The Ethiopian Herald* accounts is 28 percent and while it is 41.7 by *Ahram Online*.

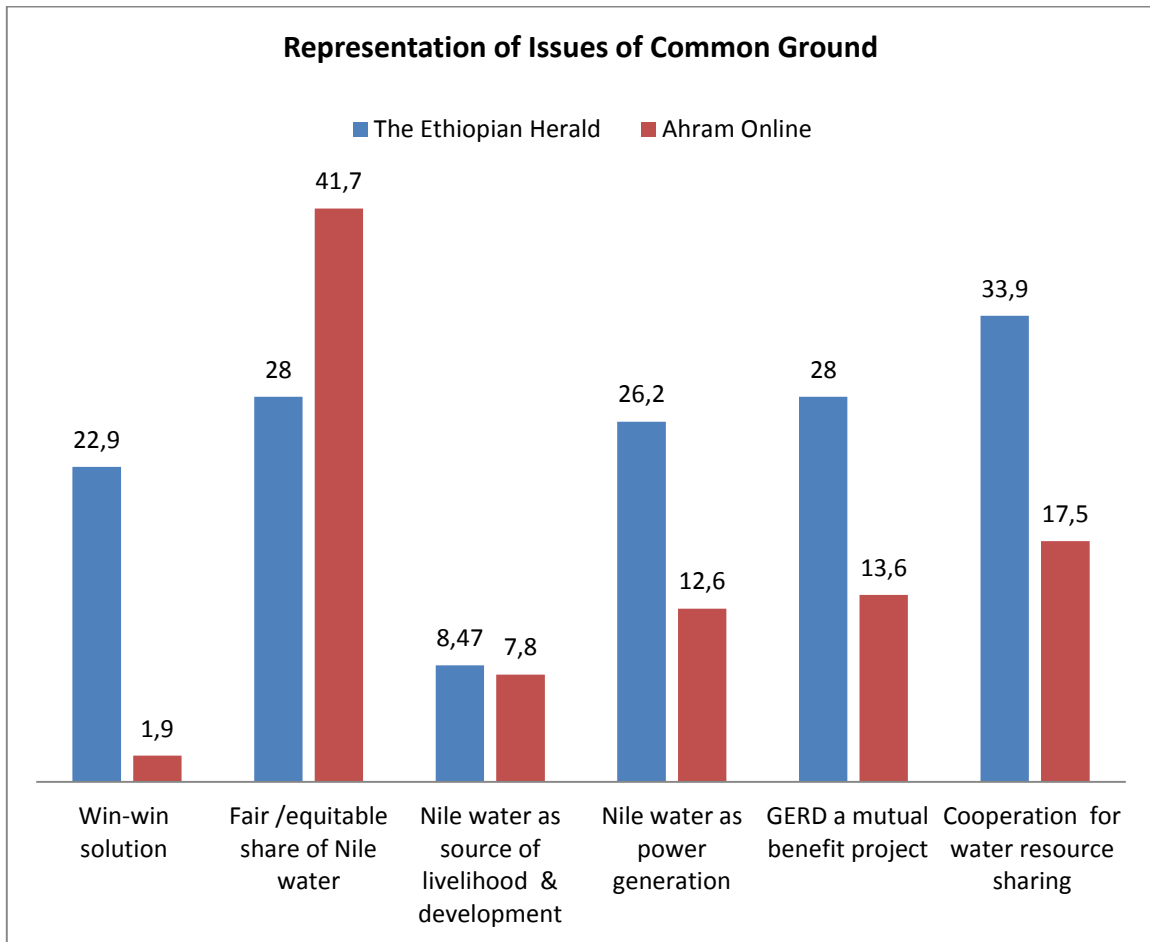


Figure 8. Representation of common issues for the two news media. Percentage taken from each category, for *The Ethiopian Herald* form 118 total samples and for *Ahram Online* from 103 samples.

The other common issue is reportage about the dam across Abay River as a source of livelihood and development. Accordingly, *The Ethiopian Herald* offered 8.47 percent coverage while the *Ahram Online* is 7.8 percent. GERD as a significant hydroelectric power generation is also category taken to be one of the issues of commonality and thus *The Ethiopian Herald* has given coverage of 26.2 percent and *Ahram Online* 12.6 percent. GERD as a project that can have mutual benefit for the countries of lower

riparian countries of Sudan and Egypt is considered a common issue and this accounts 28 percent by *The Ethiopian Herald* where as 13.6 percent by *Ahram Online*. The focus on collaborative effort for Blue Nile water resource sharing by *The Ethiopian Herald* is 33.9 percent while *Ahram Online* is 17.5 percent.

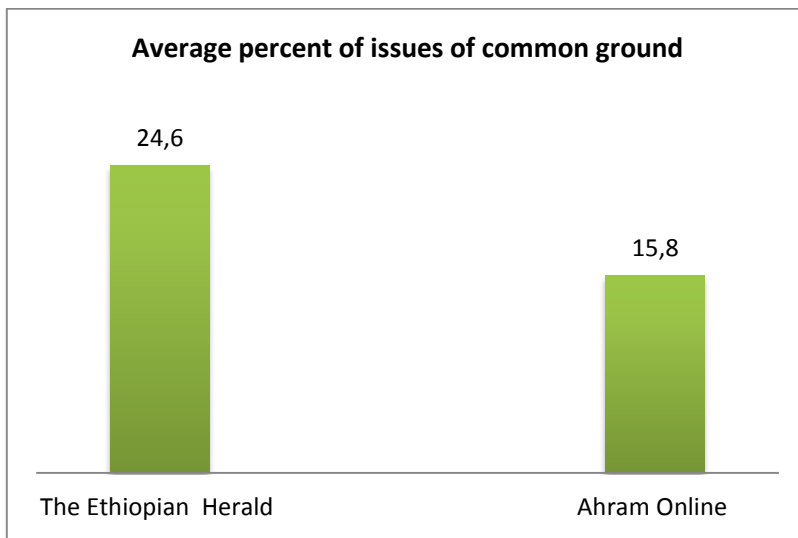


Figure 9. Average percentage comparison of the two news media

In general terms, *The Ethiopian Herald* exceeds significantly in giving prominence to issues of communality compared to *Ahram Online* in four of the six categories. Thus, win-win solution, GERD as hydropower generation, GERD a mutual benefit project and GERD as cooperation for water resource sharing are the common ground this news media has fairly given emphasis in comparison to *Ahram Online*. The two media however, stand comparably at similar status with regard to Nile river water as a source of livelihood and development and a little bit higher by *Ahram Online* as fair and equitable share Nile water compared to *The*

Ethiopian Herald. The overall average percentage of the common ground issues also shows marked difference, *The Ethiopian Herald* 24.6 and *Ahram Online* is 15.8.

5.3. Explanatory Inquisition of Data Results

This stage is the qualitative reading with the inquisition basing the quantitative result of data corpus described above to validate as well as complement the findings.

5.3.1. Sourcing of News Stories

Sourcing tells a lot in conflict sensitive reporting. Lynch and MacGoldrck (2005) highlight that as more and more of the articulation of government officials leads in the story, then, it becomes position oriented which fences against alternative views. The domination of source of news by government officials rebuts the principles of rights of ordinary people's voice disregarding also the watchdog role of media (Grabe, Zhou, and Brooke, 1999). McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) recommend to "Avoid letting parties define themselves by simply quoting their leaders' restatements of familiar demands or positions....Instead inquire deeper into goalsIs the position stated by their leaders the only way or the best way to achieve the changes they want?"(p.30).

The more than 97 percent attribution of sources by *Ahram Online* to higher political elites promotes divergence against the move to reaching agreement on GERD. It is worthy to note that majority of sourcing within the government is attributed to Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

the president. The following leads of such stories can exemplify the assertion. “Egypt President Abdel Fattah El Sisi stressed on Thursday the importance of reaching a comprehensive agreement...” (MENA, 2020 June 26) “Egypt’s Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said on Tuesday that Ethiopia had withheld updates on the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)...” (“Egypt says Ethiopia withheld...”, 2020, June 30). There could be possibilities to create variation and include alternative voices which this media is missing from the perspective of sensitivity in reporting on conflict. Sourcing expertise by *Ahram Online* is only a little over 1 percent. The stories, such as in the former case are more of iteration of the position of the government while in the later exemplifies stories leaning to disapprovals of the other party. Attribution to expertise of relevant fields for alternative views accordingly is very minimal including ordinary people whose life is to be affected. Consequently, the news media has overlooked the voice of those millions of people to be affected by GERD’s claimed effect which is also considered existential.

On the other hand, the sourcing of news stories by *The Ethiopian Herald* ascribing to government officials which is 50 percent can be argued as pretty much level-headed. The stories indeed source government clearly stating position. For instance stories stating position like “Ethiopia has restated its position on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance...” (“Ethiopia restates its position...”, 2020, June 20) are common representations. There are also stories that denounce claims of the other which is also

prevalent while stating position like in the following: "...futile attempts to link the recent confrontation along the Ethiopia and Sudanese border to the agenda of the Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam (GERD), according to Head of Ethiopian Prime Minister's Office Press Secretariat" (Demeke, June 6). The same newspaper equally gave significant amount for the voices of expertise in a range of fields which is 40 percent. This is enabling the reader to have blend of views and interpretation of the issue of GERD by those different from holding government power. The sources are mainly academicians specializing in areas of trans-boundary water resource, law, politics and environment.

Talks regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) should be limited to the filling and annual operation of the dam. As it is not part of the deal, there should not even be a space to discuss long term drought, dry period, and other related aspects, disclosed Mokedelawit Messay a Ph.D. candidate at Florida International University (Mulat, 2020, July 3,p.3).

There are number of examples of such views people in the academic world, to see the different perspective albeit in support of government on issues of negotiation and those not to be negotiated. Lastly, though not at a fair mix level, sourcing those people to be affected by the project to express concerns and hopes is not negligible (8.3 %) compared to *Ahram Online* (1.2).

Hunegnaw Abere, Owner of Nu Bar and Restaurant around Kotebe on his part said that it is so hard to run hotel service

in Addis Ababa without electricity. For him constructing the GERD is not a luxury but a basic need for Ethiopia (Hailu, 2020, June 27).

This is an example of the few news stories by *The Ethiopian Herald* reflecting views of people going to be positively affected upon GERD realisation to improve livelihoods.

5.3.2 Issues at Variance

To discern the orientation of the news media, it is paramount to see against the polarising concepts identified as part of the analysis and to validate quantitative result. Rama and Gürten (2018) stress that “...parties become locked into promoting and defending their own positions and become less open to the views of others” (p.29). In all five contentious issues conceptualised by this study, the two news media advocate their respective governments’ position by their coverage mainly with news and opinions. Nonetheless, there is exception in which *Ahram Online* carried in its coverage the filling of reservoir as a process of dam construction which is the position of the Ethiopian government.

To start with the binding agreement on filling the reservoir of dam, ‘first year filling’ and ‘no filling before negotiated agreement’ are main causes of impasse between the countries. The dam is for the hydropower and filling the reservoir is scheduled. On the other hand, for the two downstream countries, filling without binding agreement contravenes with their historical rights and will reduce the flow of the water as the two have

professed. If negotiation ongoing is not yielding binding agreement, bypassing would be unacceptable, according to representation of *The Ethiopian Herald* which implicitly elucidates Ethiopia's position. "Such an agreement would provide them a legal and binding guarantee that would entitle them to their share of the waters of the Nile..." (Gudeta, 2020, July 5, p.16). The story tries asserting that no agreement with given period does not mean Ethiopia will wait another round of negotiation to reach agreement to fill the reservoir.

The opinion reinforces the position of the country's commitment to reach on an agreement on GERD within two weeks, if not it will go ahead to impound the reservoir as scheduled without being bound to two weeks ultimatum. Ethiopia takes this as a tactic by Sudan and Egypt to delay filling for a year. On same issue, *Aharam Online*, represents Egypt and Sudan's position of binding agreement and restating their rejection what is adhered to from the Ethiopian side. To halt filling the reservoir before agreement is reached means ensuring the veto power the lower countries will have according to representation of the following:

The previous round of negotiations between the three countries, held from 9 to 17 June, failed to produce an accord due to Ethiopia's refusal to enter into a legally binding agreement and its announcement that it will begin filling the dam in July with or without the approval of the two downstream countries (MENA, 2020, July 6).

The two news media, besides presenting controversial concept about binding agreement, they carried and represented in their publications statements of officials voicing military threat and counter threat such as the following: “If things take a turn for the worse it will not just be Egypt that pays the price. The entire region will be dragged in, said one concerned Egyptian official” (Ezzat 2020, June 16). And “... the solution is for Ethiopia to withstand any diplomatic pressure or military threat and start filling the dam as soon as possible” (Belachew, 2020, July 2).

As aforementioned, no unilateral filling of the GERD reservoir before agreement on one hand, and filling is a process of dam construction on the other is the subsequent contentious issue for discussion. This has greater implication for the three countries locked up in stalemate upon Ethiopia’s surprise announcement of the completion of the first year filling on 21 July 2020. The former is the position of Egypt and Sudan and the later of Ethiopia. The extensive coverage (62.1%) in its news and opinions by *Ahram Online* that there is push to impose on Ethiopia not to attempt filling dam reservoir without the approval of the two. This position also hardened in earlier months following the failure of US and World Bank facilitated negotiation and the issuing of statement by President Trump Administration not to start before agreement is reached. “Sharaki expects the UNSC will now examine the three countries’ stated positions and recommend to Ethiopia that it refrain from filling the dam in the absence of an agreement” (El-Bey, 2020, June 23). Here the story tells us that Egypt attached importance to no filling of the reservoir since it brought

the issue to UNSC and waged diplomatic campaign to win leverage. Thus, no unilateral filling of GERD reservoir is the position by Egypt and given extensive coverage by *Ahram Online* until the filling was announced complete and for the time has become faint accompli.

In an opposite take of the sample of data corpus, *The Ethiopian Herald* made prominent (38.1%) the Ethiopian position in filling the reservoir as part of dam construction process. “Ethiopia is filling the dam because the dam itself was built to be filled and that a dam deserves its name only when it is filled as part of the construction package of the dam”(Dibaba, 2020, July 15). Such a position of not to skip the filling during the main rain season is given resonance with this news media by refuting the opposing position from the other side. It is interesting to note the comparable amount which is 36.9 percent to the above with the inclusion of the similar issue of contention in the coverage by *Ahram Online*. “...Ethiopia's refusal to enter into a legally binding agreement and its announcement that it will begin filling the dam in July with or without the approval of the two downstream countries” (“Addis Ababa hasn’t started filling...”, 2020, June 13). Representation of such position by *Ahram Online* is critical departure from the pattern in this category of issue at variance though the news media included in the background part of the corpus of stories.

The last combative notion carried in the two news media are protecting historical and acquired Nile water rights on one hand and the need to

redressing this structure on the other. Analysis taken on the sample data from *Ahram Online* in this regard is in defense of the 1959 exclusive use of Nile water agreement (17.4 %) reached between Sudan and Egypt. Some of the stories are reportages of the justification of the exclusive rights not only of the whole of the Nile river water volume but also by including in the computation of the rain falling in the river basin. The 16 June 2020 *Ahram Online* opinionated analysis posits that from 450 bcm rain falling in Nile basin within Ethiopia from which Egypt claims 55.5 bcm of the river is minimal and claims its exclusive rights. This implies Ethiopia doesn't need the river since it is endowed with abundant rainfall. This is against modern principles of water sharing which "...support fundamental tenets that counsel 'reasonable' and 'equitable' division of international watercourses" (Talozi, Amelia, Hussein and Reich, 2019, p.911). Other types of coverage that guards against the status quo are statements and background information preserving the claimed historical rights "...talks to reach a fair, balanced and comprehensive agreement that would preserve Egypt's water rights and the interests of both Sudan and Ethiopia" (Soliman, (2020, June 9).*The Ethiopian Herald* do have such notion in its coverage (4.2 %) but it is for argumentative intention to refute claimed debate. For example, "It fabricated a narrative that purported historic and natural rights to Nile waters" (Bekerie, 2020, July 3).

Redressing the structure evolved into historical rights of Nile water is the position advocated by *The Ethiopian Herald* coverage (11.9) "Egypt appears in the negotiation with this mentality to own 90 percent of the

Nile ignoring the rest 10 riparian countries including Ethiopia” (Jemaneh, 2020, July 21). The newspaper cites such claims of Sudan and Egypt to make a point that the historical rights scenario over the river is not workable and acceptable by all other riparian states, since they were not part of the 1959 agreement. Similarly, the next to nothing (0.97%) or inclusion of one opinionated writing on this point by *Ahram Online* about redressing hegemony of Nile water is a presentation that Ethiopia desires to go beyond redressing and become hegemonic power by herself. “..its procrastinating strategy in reaching an agreement on GERD filling and operating rules; all this suggests a different objective to the construction of GERD; a Water Hegemony Power rather than just Hydropower” (AbuZeid, 2020 , June 16).

In rundown, the two news media bent on the respective countries position which are apparently the main antithetical issues with the inclusion of meager amount of the other position, when it happens, it is to rally round points in refuting the other’s standing. There appears, however, *Ahram Online*, used the series inclusion of issue of ‘filling the dam reservoir as part of the GERD project’ with significant proportion which indeed used as background for the stories which is situated at the bottom of the inverted pyramided or included in the background information. It is fair at least to represent the other position even if with as background information.

5.3.3 Issues in Common

Representation of issues of communality and collaboration are among the ways of defusing disagreement. Çiftcioğlu (2017) asserts that conflict sensitive reporting help for a conflict to be lucid with the representation of common grounds of contending parties. This undertaking of representation and going deeper is aimed toward reaching to the interests of the parties.

Fair and equitable share of the water is among the six common ground variable conceptualization by this study to see how it is represented by the two news media. As described earlier, both included the concept in a significant amount (*Ahram Online* 41.7% and *The Ethiopian Herald* 28 %). However, it is critical to examine how this issue of common ground is represented. On this common issue, *Ahram Online* for instance incorporated in number of stories from the appeal statements Egypt has sent to UNSC “Egypt has asked the Security Council to intervene to affirm the importance of the three countries resuming the negotiations with goodwill...to reach a fair and balanced solution” (“Exclusive: Egypt's letter to UN...” 2020, June 20). This statement appeared in several of the stories as a background.

The other recurrent inclusion of the same issue by *Ahram Online* is a statement by US National Security Service (NSC's). "...257 million people in East Africa are relying on Ethiopia to show strong leadership, which means striking a fair deal." (Morsy, 2020, June 17). Here it is also

important to raise what really is the claimed discourse of fair and balanced by disputants?. For Egypt and Sudan fair is to maintain status quo of river water while for Ethiopia to utilize the river for hydropower and possibly for other consumptive purposes.

The Ethiopian Herald's representation of fair and equitable share while arguing the necessity of it to reach an agreement. This is mainly appeared in news, opinion and editorials formats in voicing Ethiopia's goal. It will be vital to see a couple of examples. "Reaching a fair deal is a joint project and not a burden Ethiopia should shoulder alone" (Mohammed, 2020, June 19). Such representation is to explain that when the Sudan and Egypt exclusively utilize the water resource basing what Ethiopia avers as outdated accord become fair and when upstream countries move to assert rights should be unfair. It also tries to include best case scenarios of fair share of the resource. This is exemplified by a news story that sources a member of parliament. "He noted that the best solution for Ethiopia and Egypt is working together and developing mutually by using common resources fairly" (Mohammed, 2020, July 19). Such statements also imply the other way round is what the speaker argues of fair share is denied.

The other common ground concept represented more or less at equivalent level by both news media (*The Ethiopian Herald* 8.47 % and *Ahram Online* 7.8 %) is the Nile water as source of livelihood and development.

Egypt has created much access of electricity for its people.

But Kenya and its neighbours are facing several problems.

They need electricity not only for light but also to improve

their livelihoods by creating jobs for the youth and preventing migration, said Musumbaye (Tibebu, 2020, June 28)).

The Nile basin countries become elaborate in claiming to benefit from the river water including with the formation of institution such as NBI. In the excerpts as above, the Kenyan scholar voices for the improvement of livelihoods of their citizens shared interest. On the other hand, *Ahram Online* attention in bringing the issue is in argument to maintain the livelihoods of all Egyptians exclusively based on the river. This can be exemplified with the following excerpts: "...the Nile has since time immemorial dominated the souls and livelihoods of all Egyptians" (July 10 2020 *Ahram Online*) and "...a threat of potentially existential proportions has emerged that could encroach on the single source of livelihood of over 100 million Egyptians" (Ezzat, D. (2020, July 1). Hence, it means the claimed source of vital development resource within their own disposal could only be possible for the others to utilise in as far as not affecting the livelihood of its citizens.

The remaining four representations of issues of communalities have notable difference; *The Ethiopian Herald* has given more prominence to those concepts than *Ahram Online* did. This is a critical move by the former to revealing interest and needs. In amplifying, win-win solution (22.9%) "...the three countries to focus on and approach the negotiation with good faith and commitment to achieve a win-win outcome" ("Ethiopia, Sudan Egypt to resume..." 2020, June 13). It includes such reiteration of win-win solution in its news report implying the stalemate

on GERD project. In opinion writing the newspaper also reflects this: “Ethiopia is still maintaining that a win-win solution is attainable and calling on the other side to follow suit” (“Ethiopia’s diplomacy in GERD...”, 2020, July 9). The trifling figure (1.9 %) of win-win proposal by *Ahram Online* (“Ethiopia says ‘negotiated agreement’ only...2020 July 14) is the quotation of the statement from the Ethiopian side “Ethiopia’s irrigation ministry said on Tuesday that it is committed to showing flexibility to reach a win-win outcome on all outstanding issues...”.

There are indeed divergent views in literature of hydropolitics about ensuring equitable share and reaching to win-win level. For instance, Yacob Arsano is optimistic that equitable water sharing could be achievable between Eastern Nile riparian states with application of equitable utilization of water sharing principles as he presented in his book *Ethiopia and the Nile: Dilemmas of National and Regional Hydropolitics* (2007). Belay (2019) who is critical of this optimistic view argues that win-lose will be the real scenario the downstream states need to prepared for to realise a lasting win-win state of affairs.

The implementation of GERD by Ethiopia with disparate need to generate power is not only for Ethiopia’s long afflicted population because of lack of electric power but also to provide the service for neighbouring countries including the downstream Sudan, according to the representation of *The Ethiopian Herald*. This is in fact the issue of communality that ought to be considered by the news media in their coverage given there is demand

least by Sudan. This issue, as has been explained above, given prominence more than twice by *The Ethiopia Herald* (26.2%) compared with *Ahram Online* (12.6%).

There is an argument that power generation benefits lower riparian countries than it is harming. “The availability of regulated stream flow for downstream countries better supports hydropower generation...”(Taye, Tadesse, Senay & Block 2016, p. 3). The representation of electric power is more focused on benefit of the dam that could render to the people in Ethiopia and beyond. “Ethiopia to develop its vast potential for hydropower generation in the Nile Basin to meet its rising demand and become a regional hub for electric power export” (“Ethiopia’s GERD aspiration...” 2020, June 11). Thus, the issue of electric power by the newspaper is considered in the coverage as an option of common issue.

Ahram Online’s inclusion of electric power generation could be seen from two perspectives. One of the representations is generation of power without significant harm. “...Egypt has taken in pursuit of a fair deal that allows Ethiopia to generate electricity without inflicting significant harm...” (Ezzat, D. (2020, July 1). On the other hand, there are representations of suspicion about the purpose of GERD by Egypt “...the other side’s plea that it does not have sufficient electricity for its people is unconvincing” (“The GERD at the UN...I” 2020, July 4). Thus, majority of representation by this news media is rarely taking electric power generation as a common benefit issue.

Mutual benefit (28 %) and cooperation (33.9 %) are the other remaining two conceptualized issues given more prominence by *The Ethiopian Herald* as compared to *Ahram Online* (13.6 %) and (17.5 % respectively). The word ‘mutual’ as defined by Collins Dictionary is ‘situation, feeling or action experienced’ by individual or groups for the other or others. Mutual benefit is featured in *The Ethiopian Herald* with reiteration of the concept through the realization of GERD project. “That is why it has been consistently stating that it stands for mutually beneficial and sustainable benefit-sharing from GERD” (“Ethiopia’s GERD aspiration...” 2020, June 11). Such representations also assert the necessity of the promotion of mutually beneficial program that would facilitate shared programmes for the benefit of the three countries. On the other hand, it also incorporates rebuttal opinionated writings as well as news stories by sourcing experts against the claims by the Egyptian side and what sources allude as ‘false information’ about the side effects GERD might cause. The following is an example of such opinions: “Provided we do not constantly undermine goodwill, trust and mutuality by false alarms, or clever media ‘messaging’ what Eastern Nile is facing is a solvable, technically fixable, manageable resource management challenge” (Temam, 2020, June 12). There are argumentative writings conformable to the above which also hinges on starting the first filling of reservoir of GERD and realise mutual benefit instead of unconstructive narrative escalating disagreement.

Ahram Online mentions the concept ‘mutual’ as background in its news stories from what UNSC stated after appeal from Egypt for intervention “...urging the three countries to avoid adopting any unilateral actions and to conduct talks based on mutual understanding” (“Addis Ababa hasn’t started filling GERD...”, 2020, July 13) is a case in point. It also accommodates statement about the issue by the Ethiopian part. Even if it is minimal, it also represented in its coverage mentioning concept of mutual benefits in conformity with international principles.

Cooperation between countries on trans-boundary rivers is the other potential centre of interest for coverage. Cooperation across riparian states augment to solving intricacy and polarization and according to The Global Water Partnership reward and motivation of media covering such issues is pertinent in building capacity of reports (“GWPEA Commitment to Actively...” 2017, Nov.15). There are a number of exemplary cooperative frameworks between basin countries in Asia, Latin America and Europe on trans-boundary rivers. Spotlighting the cooperation, *The Ethiopian Herald* takes environmental protection perspective to minimize impending challenge on the sustainable utilization of the water resource. “Ethiopia has been championing environmental work as an opportunity for cooperation with downstream countries, especially with Egypt” (Dibaba, 2020, July 1). Such is one of the realms of cooperative efforts for the reforestation of vast areas of the Ethiopian highlands which are the sources of 85 percent the Nile water.

On the supposed shared issue of cooperation, *The Ethiopian Herald* also invokes institutional formations for the cooperation of the river basin countries. "...the entire project of the GERD as an opportunity to effectively set an example of cooperation for mutual benefit based on the provisions of NBI and not as a threat to the lower riparian countries" (Dibaba, 2020, July 18). Such writings further represent that GERD is a tool of cooperation in the technical and economic fields, among others, rather than portraying it as source of contention. It is worth including here the more optimistic view as noted by *Leddy and Cropper (2020)*; "Historically, tension over shared bodies of water has led to more cooperation than conflict. An equitable water-sharing agreement will help put the GERD on the right side of history" (p.3).

Highlighting the criticality of cooperation, Obengo (2016) in his assessment of hydroponics of Nile also said "lack of cooperation will pose grave challenges for Egypt and Ethiopia in the future, in particular for Egypt, where declining fresh water resources will lead to further political instability and human suffering"(p.96). On the other hand, *Ahram Online* in its representation of cooperation (17.5 %) stresses issues of obstacle for reaching an agreement on GERD. These include Ethiopia's stance with the filling of the reservoir of dam according to its plan with or without binding agreement which is negative implication for cooperation. "Instead of being a tool of cooperation and integration among Nile Basin countries, it became the biggest crisis facing the African continent in the 21st century"

([Salama 2020](#), June 22). Thus, there is such bleak representation of uncertainty clouding cooperative engagement.

The other is the depiction of Sudan's stance on the vitality of agreement on GERD for mutual engagement. "Abdalla Hamdok stated that reaching a binding agreement on the filling and operation of the GERD is a necessity for paving the way for future cooperation on the Nile" ("Ethiopia wants non-binding...", 2020, June 24). This same statement has appeared in more than four stories in the samples. In summary, the corroborative look into the representation of considered common ground conform with quantitative apart from the recurrence of 'fair' concept from UNSC statement which seemed given emphasis by *Ahram Online*.

5.4 Hypothesis and Research Questions Validation/Invalidation

As part of validation, it is important to look into the framed hypothesis at the outset of the study. Pro-government news media take merely the position of their countries (wittingly or inadvertently) in situations of impasse over GERD negotiation which is escalatory instead of digging deeper to uncover the interests and needs of parties for cooperative mutual benefit and sustainable use of the water resource.

The explanatory sequential inquisition of the sample coverage during the months of June and July 2020 about the negotiation of GERD more leaned to *Ahram Online* supporting the premise. Though government founded, *The Ethiopian Herald* has approached diverse voice as its news

source and minimized polarization and has tendency in capitalizing on common ground.

RQ1. What is the extent of the news media in amplifying the positions of their respective countries by taking only position stated by officials? In what situation do the news media take the position of government sources? The result of the analysis of the corpse of data denotes that *Ahram Online* made close to the entire of its stories sourcing government officials compared to *The Ethiopian Herald* which is half of the sample. This has direct correlation, as more government officials are sourced, the more stories are position oriented and the less the media is venturing to look and represent interests of the parties. Thus, *Ahram Online* is notably position oriented.

RQ2. What is the extent of the news media in upholding fair and equitable share of the Abay water resource? Fair and equitable share of the Nile water resource is featured in both news media. However, it is depicted in diverging grounds. For *Ahram Online*, fair and equitable share is maintaining Egypt's historic and acquired rights by claiming that those countries including Ethiopia from which the river originates have copious water resource and unfair for them implementation projects drawing down the river flow to downstream. For *The Ethiopian Herald*, fair and equitable is benefiting Ethiopia from the river originating from its territory by correcting unfair share of the resource which it claims the structural legacy of colonial period.

RQ3. What is the extent of representation of common issues about GERD and sustainable use of the river water resource and which common issues are better amplified and by which news media? Both *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Ahram Online* portrayed at closer proportion about fair share of the river water resource and projects such as GERD on the river which will become source of livelihood. Nonetheless, *The Ethiopian Herald* significantly represented common issues of win-win solution over GERD negotiation, GERD as hydropower project including for downstream countries, working for mutual benefit and cooperation to mitigating the predicament straining the sustainable flow of the water.

RQ4. What are the main recurring incompatible issues the news media emphasized? Which news media give emphasis to issues at odds in the negotiation of GERD and utilization of the water resource? The salient recurring incompatible issue are protecting historical and acquired Nile water rights, redress hegemony of Nile water, no unilateral filling before agreement, filling is process of dam construction and binding agreement on filling. Both the news media accentuate issues of difference by the respective countries. *Ahram Online* gave comparatively higher emphasis in representing two issues of contention which are no unilateral filling before agreement is reached about dispute on GERD and requirement of binding agreement on filling GERD reservoir.

RQ 5. What is the extent of the news media's effort in unmasking interest and needs of parties to the conflict? Among the proposed principles of conflict sensitive journalism is the commitment to diversified voices, searching common ground and minimizing issues at variance. This study conceptualized these dominations to uncovering interests and needs. *The Ethiopian Herald* outmatches *Ahram Online* with all the three. This apparently also suggests that *Ahram Online* wittingly or unwittingly oriented to choose the 'low road' of remaining on the position of the government than going to interest and needs.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

The intention of this section is to spell out the nuance of the result of the study from the perspective of the conflict analysis tool denoted as conflict onion as well as explain the implication and confines of the outcome of the study and make a conclusion.

6.1 Exegesis

The study examined the extent of pro-government news media in cohering to position on one hand and the media's endeavouring in uncovering interest and needs on the other. It is a venture to peel the onion with this principle of conflict analysis, a potential road to solution when countries are in situation of impasse. This principle is recommended as an evolving conceptual facet of conflict sensitive reporting this study is aspiring also to validate from the investigation of sampled data.

Representation of position might be the sole option of pro-government news media in particular when their respective countries are in a situation of conflict as they have symbiotic relation. One needs the other to thrive. Indeed literature indicates journalist working for media corporations purported to be independent exhibit the interest of the owners (Ciftcioglu, 2017). There are those weighing news from commercial side and some others reproduce facts from the perspective of embedded agenda of influencing policy. In general, for news media that have under the impacts of structure and ownership, it is

paramount to consider the illustration this study has proposed with synthesis of concepts. Revealing interests and needs of parties to the conflict contribute to easing tension and transforming conflict into cooperation. On the other hand is the downside, persistent to the position and contribute unconstructively in fuelling conflict by unlashes polarising and non-cooperative communication that result in violent conflict.

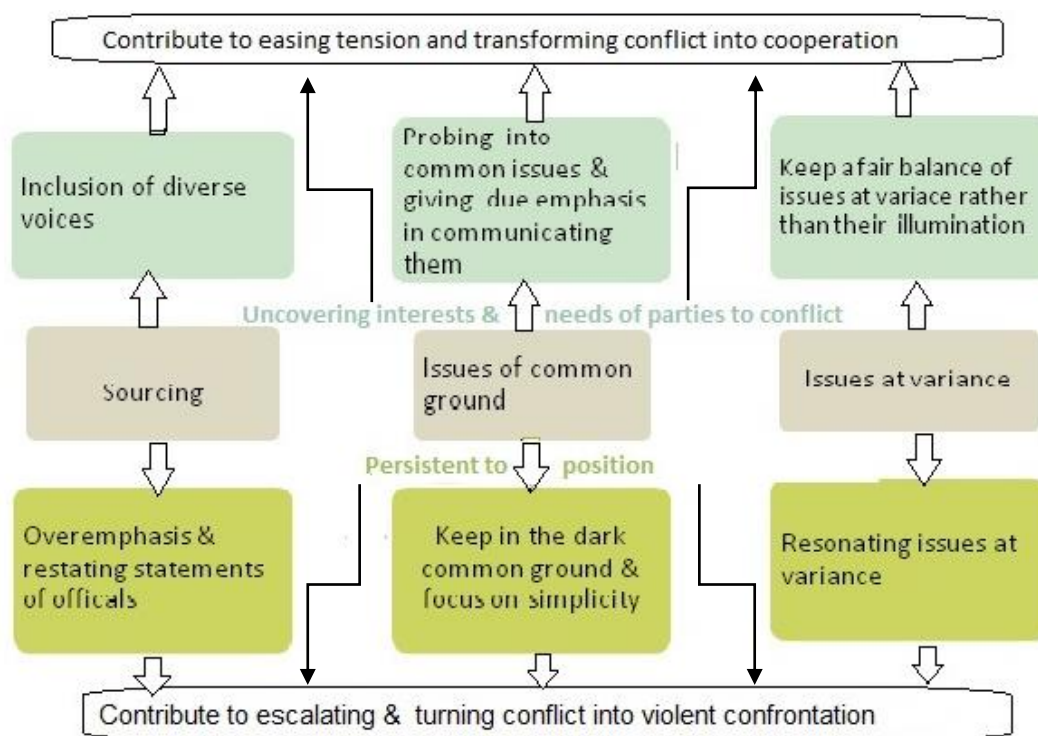


Figure 10. Synthesis of the two opposing sides of uncovering interest and needs on one hand and persisting to position on the other

The study considered the sample data corpus from the three vintage point of inclusion of diverse voices instead of re-echoing officials, minding interests of the parties believed to be common grounds rather than pointing to issues at variances. A significant difference has been observed between *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Ahram Online* despite in

spit the fact that both are in a similar state of interdependence with their particular government. For the most part of the three perspectives, the former mostly departed from dwelling on position and endeavoured in the inclusion of diversified voices and centred on common grounds. *The Ethiopian Herald's* divide to the government officials as a source is 50 percent leaving remaining half to other voices while *Ahram Online* dedicate close to entirety (97.5%) obliterating other voices and instead which makes it to cling to the position. Confining sources to political elite is the 'low road' and far removed from what is real, deep motivation, fears and worries of parties to the conflict. News media centring on elite articulation is only serving the duplication of accusation and counter accusation.

The representation of issues of difference by parties to conflict is seemingly proper for news media as a platform for reflection of different views. The analysis of data however showed that *Ahram Online* (35.1 average percentage) has over three times that of *The Ethiopian Herald* (11.6 average percentage). This is an over representation of the variable considered as issues of variance possibly propelling conflict option of *Ahram Online*. It significantly limits search for common ground for the parties to work towards cooperation. In a similar manner, there is a clear distinction between the two media in treating the search for common ground that believed to facilitate to the way of mutual benefit and cooperation. Thus, *The Ethiopian Herald* (24.6 average percentage) is more orientated to promoting common ground compared to *Ahram Online* (15.8

average percentage). In peeling the layers built up over the course of a dispute, *The Ethiopian Herald* has by and large inclined to the selection of diversified voices as a source of news and leaning to accentuating common ground by giving due regard to semblance and areas of departure compared to *Ahram Online*.

This result is seemingly unanticipated from the putative perspective that pro-government news media are symbiotically related and parroting the position of their governments in the face of conflict. Even if it is in comparative terms, the result of this study evidenced that *The Ethiopian Herald* attempted to include diverse voice and promoted common ground for mutual and cooperative advantage to stop the conflict from deteriorating into violence.

6.2 Implications and Confines

News coverage in the face of conflict by predominantly sourcing political elite means anchoring to position. The excessive portrayal of divergence by news media also implicitly promotes 'win-loss' in which the loser is made to wait a timing for vengeance. Parties might also opt or forced to 'loss-loss' scenario by backing away but the cause of conflict is put aside temporarily. Both these scenarios are not bringing sustainable and real solution for the conflict; this is the tendency exhibited by *Ahram Online*.

Studies that concerns conflict sensitive journalism assert that conflict analysis tools are among the main theories that nurtures conflict

sensitive reporting. Peleg (2006) in his examination of 'ABC triangle' (one of the conflict analysis tools) to validate its application to peace journalism states that it is "...a powerful tool in the hands of reporters and their readers to realise the futility of conflict and to bring about its resolution" (p.1). Correspondingly, this study attempted to imply the applicability of 'conflict onion' with the empirical consideration of *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Ahram Online*. Though eschewing relation with their owner is existential matter for government dependant news media, conflict onion tool can have opening in helping to turn around disastrous consequence of violent conflict. Lingering in the position characterized by such news media is surely to be an accomplice for marathon negotiation and not yet approaching the finish line.

The non-inclusive water sharing pact built into a structure has become a source of contention, the upstream countries exerting for change and the downstream stiffness in keeping status quo which could be recipe for brittleness of later stance. In retrospection, the news media are one of the institutions dependable in managing sensitively the eminent change affecting hundreds of millions of the basin countries.

The study espouses for more empirical work on other conflict analysis tools to augment conflict sensitive reporting for news media predisposing and distancing itself from bellicose behaviour and mitigate conflict from surfacing with the evolving validation of conflict sensitive reporting principles. This study proposes further security on conflict onion on

those believed to be non-mantra news media to underpin corroboration of the tool. It is also paramount to see the tool in the face of violent conflict as this has not yet manifested to that level.

With regard to the limits, the study could have detected what engendered the two news media with such marked difference if it has included questioners to editorial staff of respective news media. It would have helped to learn implication of the difference may cause. Comparing systematically the two with other international news media could have also yielded some advantage as they appear to be neutral; however, there is very nominal coverage of the issue to have sufficient data for contrast. The absence of English language and Sudan government run news media in the period had also a limiting factor to include its perspective as this country is one of the three main stakeholders of the negotiation over the dam.

6.4 Conclusion

The socio economic and political context drives stakeholders to challenge Nile water sharing agreements built into a structure for over half a century through the formations of NBI and the framework for cooperation. The detestation of the lower riparian countries to this has been resulting and will result in the manifestation of unilateral actions, one of such is GERD.

Peeling of the onion of impasse over the GERD as a preliminary effort of conflict analysis boils down to figure out 1) Ethiopia's and Egypt's defense

spot or what they declare what they want? 2) The real and the way to pursue what they must have and 3) what they must have so that to manage to survive. Ethiopia's position is to make use of Blue Nile with conformity of international principles with no significant harm to Egypt and Sudan while Egypt's 'position' is to warrant historical and acquired rights of Nile water resource by all means. Interfering with the status-quo is existential.

After the 'position' layer is uncovered, what appears next is the 'interest' level of the conflict onion. Accordingly, Ethiopia's interest is generating hydroelectric power with GERD and avail voltage for domestic consumption as well as generate income by exporting power in excess. Egypt's stance is maintaining the utilization of Nile River water resource and making the most use of it for municipal consumption, expanding irrigated agriculture and generating hydroelectric power. 'Need' layer for Ethiopia is serving more than half of its impoverished population with electric power from the ample water resource and export power in excess of the demand for growing industry to help improve livelihood of its citizens. For Egypt, the 'need' level is nourishing its growing population, and supply water for municipal use and generate electric for domestic and industrial use as well as export agricultural produce developed by irrigation.

The study evaluated the sample data with three conceptualizations: sourcing from perspective of news, common ground and divergent

issues of all type of writing (including news and opinions) to discern the extent of the selected media in reaching to level of interest and needs lying under the positions. The finding point to non diversified voices of sourcing by *Ahram Online* with event focused about the professed outcome of unyielding agreement of GERD negotiation and reproducing mainly position. In other word, such framing focuses on ‘which official says what?’ about the negotiation.

The search for common ground approach is more represented by *The Ethiopian Herald*. This is the other core concept to be pursued by representing what parties can have in common and what the ordinary citizens could benefit when cooperating for mutual benefit including showing a way for all to win. Lastly, the study reveal that illuminating what makes parties antipodal is more exhibited by *Ahram Online*. This concept is contrary to the previous, driving the latent status of conflict to violent.

The intervention of news media in the conflict over the GERD before its escalation into violence requires greater effort. This is not a dramatic stage and not pretty niche for traditional media as it is not ‘where it bleeds’. Among the pre-emptive role to circumvent escalation of conflict is through exploring where the triangles overlap or interests and needs are shared and make these the most of the news media’s coverage. It is worth to remind oneself of Galtung’s (1998) notion of exploit conflict for constructive enterprise “But in conflict there is also a clear opportunity

for human progress, using the conflict to find new ways, transforming the conflict creatively so that the opportunities take the upper hand – without violence” (p.2).

By now, conflict onion concept can be well said that it is one of the pertinent tools in contributing for media reporting conflict sensitively by comprehending crux of the problems which are interest and needs and there by probing and communicating the common ground with intensity. Resonance of difference between parties should be also eschewed by such news media. It shouldn't mean concealing the differences. “Peace journalists have the moral duty to bring aspects of those conflicts into light, instead of hiding them” (Ersoy, 2027 p. 462). The communications by the news media need to be illuminative of the existing and future predicament. It also calls for aligning with the milieu of eminent demand for the water resource to meet the development and growing population. The limited and indispensable nature of this resource could not match with ever-increasing demand for water. “Various analysts portend that a lack of cooperation will pose grave challenges for Egypt and Ethiopia in the future” (Obengo 2016, P. 96). Taking into consideration of this predicament, directing news media communication for the sustainable solution and pacifism is an overriding role of conflict sensitive media. At the end, it will be ideal to abstract conflict onion as one of the relevant conflict sensitive reporting device derived from conflict analysis theory with following recipe:

*Peeling the Onion (PO) (Uncovering Interest and Needs) = Sourcing Diverse
Articulations (SDA) + Centring on Common Grounds (CCG) - Issues at
Variance (IV)*

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APPENDICES

Appendix -A

Coding reference and coding sheet

Coding Reference

Coder _____

Date: _____

A, News Media

EH. *The Ethiopian Herald*

AO. *Ahram Onlie*

B, Genre of Story

1. News
2. Opinion
3. Editorial
4. Feature

C, Sourcing of News Story

5. Government Official
6. Expertise in the field
7. Secondary Documents
8. People whose lives are to be affected by GERD

D, Issues at variance

9. Protect historical and acquired water rights
10. Redress hegemony of Nile water
11. No unilateral filling before agreement
12. Filling is process of dam construction
13. Binding Agreement on filling

E, Issue in Common

14. Win-win solution
15. Fair /equitable share of Nile water
16. Nile water as source of livelihood & development
17. GERD as power generation project
18. GERD a mutual benefit project
19. Cooperation for water resource sharing

Sample coding sheet

Coding Sheet																		
Genre				Source				Issues at variance					Issues in Common					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
News	Opinion	Editorial	Feature	Government	Expertise	Secondary Doc	People whose lives to be affected	Protect historical and acquired Nile water right	Redress hegemony of Nile water	No unilateral filling before agreement	Filling is process of Dam construction	Binding Agreement on filling	Win-win solution	Fair / equitable share of Nile water	Nile water as source of livelihood & development	Nile water as power generation	GERD a mutual benefit project	Cooperation for water resource sharing
01-Jun-20																		
02-Jun-20																		
03-Jun-20																		
04-Jun-20																		
05-Jun-20																		
06-Jun-20																		
07-Jun-20																		

Appendix -B

Timeline of some of the major events on Nile River

Timeline of main events to help understand key trends affecting the situations as compiled by ICG as well as collection from various news media coverage.

21 July 2020 -The AU extraordinary bureau meeting held to review the progress pertaining to the GERD's trilateral negotiations welcomed the willingness of all involved parties to work on a comprehensive agreement on the Blue Nile as soon as possible.

21 July 2020- Ethiopia has announced long intended filling the GERD with the water has been archived which is it said filled naturally and meant for turbine test in the upcoming months.

15 July 2020- Ethiopia unveiled it has started filling the GERD to retain close to 5 billion cubic meters of water during the high rain falling in the months of July and August

3 July 2020- Ethiopia slammed alleged backing of the Arab League as for Egypt "blind support" in relation to its stance on GERD

3 July 2020- The three countries reconvened to discuss the outstanding legal and technical issues pertaining to the GERD matter presided by Chairman of AU Cyril Ramaphosa.

2 – 5 July 2020- A global virtual campaign aimed at raising awareness and support for the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) took place.

29 June 2020- Ethiopia strongly opposed arbitration by the United Nations Security Council during a video conference

26 June 2020- Meeting of the AU Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held, a ministerial delegations of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan, supported by technical experts.

23 June 2020- Arab League emergency meeting passed a resolution that rejecting any unilateral Ethiopian move that could affect the water rights of downstream nations. Djibouti and Somalia opposed the resolution, believing instead there should be more focus on dialogue between the parties.

17 June 2020- The American National Security urged the Ethiopian government to reach a "fair" deal on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) with the downstream countries of Sudan and Egypt.

9 June 2020- Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan resumed talks on the filling and operation of GERD after its disruption since February in Washington. The talks, held virtually due to COVID-19. Failure of reaching agreement assumed rising tension because of Ethiopia insistent in the filling as part of the construction of the dam.(ICG)

10 April 2020- Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed proposes an agreement to cover the first two years of filling. Cairo rejects it. Khartoum, stressing the need for a comprehensive accord, also declines. Two months after the proposal, the parties resume negotiations.

29 February 2020- Ethiopia refuses to sign a draft agreement that is initialed by Egypt. Ethiopian claims that the U.S. and World Bank overstepped their roles and proposed drought mitigation proposals that favoured Cairo.

6 November 2019- After the study group failed to produce an agreement, Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan resume talks on the GERD observed by the U.S. Treasury and the World Bank.

15 May 2018- The three countries' intelligence chiefs and foreign and water ministers establish the National Independent Research Study Group to discuss the dam's impact, filling and operation.

23 March 2015- The leaders of three countries signed the Declaration of Principles on GERD that outlined their commitment to cooperation and to peacefully resolve differences.

20 September 2014-The Tripartite National Committee, comprising four members each from Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan, was established to conduct the studies but these are never completed.

15 May 2012-A ten-member International Panel of Experts (two each from Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia plus four international specialists) was set-up to examine all aspects of the dam. In a May 2013 report, it recommends additional impact studies.

2 April 2011-Ethiopia announced construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) after signing a \$4.8 billion construction contract with Italian firm Salini Costruttori. Egypt expresses concern over the surprise announcement and size of the dam.

22 February 1999-The Nile Basin Initiative is formed. The partnership of Nile riparian states aimed to provide a forum for the cooperative development and management of the Nile waters, including a new multilateral treaty.

21 July 1970-Construction of the Aswan High Dam - across the Nile in Egypt - was completed.

8 November 1959- Egypt and Sudan signed a bilateral agreement that allocates 55. Billion cubic meters of Nile waters while Sudan 18.5 Billion cubic meters which allocated all of the river's water to the two countries.

7 May 1929- In an exchange of letters with Egypt's semi-independent administration, the British government representing at that time Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika (now Tanzania) and Sudan signed agreement giving Cairo the right to veto projects in upstream countries that would affect its water share.

Appendix -C

Dos and Don'ts of Conflict Sensitive Journalism

Summary of rules and guidelines adopted (dos and don'ts) from Ross Howard (2000) *A Checklist of Conflict Sensitive Journalism*

- Find affected interests groups other than the two opposing parties and include their stories, opinions and goals. Don't report a conflict as consisting of two opposing sides.
- Go beyond the elites. Report the words of ordinary people who may voice the opinions shared by many. Avoid defining the conflict by always quoting the leaders who make familiar demands.
- Ask the opposing sides questions which may reveal common ground. Report on interests or goals which they may share. Avoid only reporting what divides the opposing sides in conflict
- Treat all sides' suffering as equally newsworthy. Don't focus on the suffering and fear of only one side
- Only quote someone else who uses victimising words. (eg. Say "The show of weaponry and military drill by Government X will not terrify and compromise to pursue its goal, says an analyst H." Avoid words like devastated, tragedy and terrorized to describe what has been done to one group. These kinds of words put the reporter on one side. Do not use them yourself.
- Use strong language carefully in describing what has happened to people, groups and individuals. (eg. Say "According to report by X 29 civilians were massacred in a day". Avoid emotional and imprecise words. Assassination is the murder of a head of state and no-one else. Massacre is the deliberate killing of innocent, unarmed civilians. Soldiers and policemen are not massacred. Genocide means killing an entire people. Do not minimize suffering. (eg. Don't say "According to report by X 29 civilians were killed in a day which has become common this days.")
- Call people or group with what they call themselves. (eg. Say "In X country Y is fighting government.") Avoid words like terrorist, extremist or fanatic. These words take sides, make the other side seem impossible to negotiate with. (eg, Don't say "In X country , the *terrorist* group Y is fighting government.")
- If someone claims something, state their name, so it is their opinion and not your fact. (eg. Say "Party A states that compromise is unlikely so as to reach an agreement."). Avoid making an opinion into a fact (eg. Don't say "Compromise is unlikely so as to reach an agreement.")
- Explore peace ideas wherever they come from. Put these ideas concretely to the leaders emphatic to the affected and report their

response. (eg. Say “As a government higher official, how do you view the demand of internally displaced persons due to the conflict to reach a deal with opposition before New Year?” Avoid waiting for leaders on one side to offer solutions. (eg. Avoid asking “As a government higher official, what is your plan to reach a deal with opposition in the near future?”)

Appendix –D

Sample features of cover page of the two news media



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LE 10

Work is at full swing in a production factory for artefact replicas to be inaugurated early next year. The first of its kind in Egypt, the factory will boast state-of-the-art equipment and high standards of authenticity. With both handmade and automated production lines for casting metals, wood and ceramics, the products will be sold at museum bazaars and arts and archaeological sites.



INSIDE

Algeria's alarming déjà-vu
Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune has been receiving medical treatment in Germany since October, with his absence giving rise to alarm in the country, reports Amira Howaidy **7**

10-11

A geologist's journey along the Nile
Mohamed Al-Barhoui celebrates the birth of renowned Egyptian geologist Roshdi Said 100 years ago, whose work on the River Nile, land reclamation, and mineral wealth in Egypt has yet to be fully appreciated **13**



Staking out common ground

Dina Ezzat reviews Egyptian-French cooperation in the light of President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi's visit to Paris this week

President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi's two-day visit to France this week foregrounds the willingness of Cairo and Paris to focus on areas in which they are in agreement rather than concentrate on issues, such as the contentious human rights file, over which they differ.

The visit began on Sunday and ended the following day with a joint press conference attended by Al-Sisi and his host Emmanuel Macron during which the French president clearly stated that military and economic cooperation with Egypt would not be linked to the country's record on human and political rights.

"I will not condition matters of defence and economic cooperation on these disagreements [over human rights]," said Macron. "It is more effective to have a policy of demanding dialogue than a boycott which would only reduce the effectiveness of one of our partners in the fight against terrorism."

During a visit to Egypt in early 2019 Macron had been vociferous in calling on his hosts to better observe human and personal rights. This time round, however, he chose to back peddle on his earlier position, though he said he had brought up a number of human rights cases with Egyptian officials behind closed doors.

According to an informed Egyptian government source, the French are quite open in expressing their views "in private", and their "interventions have often been accommodated". He added, however, that "France has extensive economic interests in Egypt — not just in terms of arms sales but also wide-ranging cooperation — and clearly the French president does not want to undermine these interests.

"European countries that had taken tough positions against Egypt over human rights in recent years have inevitably back-tracked given the weight of their political and economic interests, and I don't think the French want to go there."

Engaging with Egypt within a constructive relationship that allows for cooperation and candid discussions over points of disagreement is the language France is adopting with regard to Egypt, Macron said in his joint press conference with Al-Sisi in Paris.

France, Macron continued, is mindful of the "sovereignty of states and peoples" and unwilling to take any measures that might undermine Egypt's war against terrorism and its role in securing stability in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The visit to the east of the Mediterranean was high on the agenda of the two presidents during their Monday afternoon meeting in the French capital.

Egyptian officials say containing Turkish expansion is a major concern in both Cairo and Paris: to the south of one. "If there are two men in this region who truly respect the policies of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan they are Al-Sisi and Macron, though each for a different reason."

Al-Sisi has long regarded Ankara's opposition to the political transition that Egypt passed through in 2013, as well as Erdogan's continued backing and promotion of political Islam across the Arab region, Macron, meanwhile, is particularly worried about Erdogan's attempts to impose a degree of control over the east of the Mediterranean that would be detrimental not just to Greece but to countries, like France, that have interests on the north of the Mediterranean Sea. Macron is also

professedly opposed to the role Turkey is playing in supporting small Islamist groups in Europe, particularly in France.

In the last three years Egypt and France have also cooperated to contain Erdogan's influence in Libya, and the situation in Egypt's secure neighbour will also have been high on the agenda of the Al-Sisi-Macron talks on Monday, as would Erdogan's attempts to create closer ties with regimes across North Africa, from Tunisia to Algeria, and Morocco to Mauritania.

According to Egyptian officials, the two leaders addressed Libya's future political path, how to consolidate the fragile coalition, and which political figures, from the east, west and south of Libya, Cairo and Paris should support.

According to a source at Al-Ahram, France is also counting on the influential Sunni institution to hold training courses for proachers in French mosques in order to strengthen moderate interpretations of Islam. The source said that Ahmed Al-Tajeb, the grand imam of Al-Ahram, had previously helped along these talks so the French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian during the top French diplomat's visit to Cairo a few weeks ago.

"The French authorities are unhappy about the way the Turks have been using their influence with some mosques preachers in France to promote aggressive readings of Islam and they would like Al-Ahram to step in," the source said.

Al-Sisi and Macron are both acutely aware of Erdogan's proximity to a wide range of Islamist groups in North Africa. The two leaders will also have discussed Turkey's role in the north of Syria and the possible managed decline of Ankara's presence on the ground as part of a deal with Moscow to allow Russia to consolidate its influence.

Cairo's view, say sources, is that the best way to help Syria rid itself of foreign military meddling is for the world to re-engage with Bashar Al-Assad. The US, under outgoing President Donald Trump, had opposed any rapprochement between regional capitals and Assad. With the arrival of the Biden administration, sources add, Al-Sisi found it opportune to remind his French host of the need to bring Syria back into the fold to avoid further fragmentation.

In addition, Al-Sisi and Macron d the possibility of cooperating to re-launch long-stalled Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. After receiving some positive signals from the Biden foreign policy team, to the effect that the new US president's administration will work on the basis of a two-state solution, the Palestinian Authority has signalled that it is more willing to engage in talks to restart negotiations and Cairo is counting on the role Macron could play in encouraging Palestinian and Israeli leaders to share the political will necessary to start picking up the pieces of the long-abandoned negotiation process.

Egypt, Jordan, France and Germany have already engaged in four-way coordination this year in an attempt to chart a pathway towards the restart of Palestinian-Israeli talks. Aware that it may well be months before Biden has time to don the file, the four countries are willing to push slowly to re-start indirect talks.

The two leaders, inevitably, will also have discussed expanding military cooperation, including military drills and counter-terrorism collaboration in the Sahel and Sahara.



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PM Abiy driving first-ever locally assembled electric car

Premier stresses creating more jobs, receives electric vehicle

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has set a direction to Investment and Jobs Creation National Committee to create far more jobs next Ethiopian year.

The premier noted this yesterday while he met the Investment and Jobs Creation National Committee to evaluate the national jobs creation activities that were taken place over the past year and to set direction for the

year ahead.

The information released from the Office of the Prime Minister indicated that this

See Premier stresses ... Page 3



WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

What WTO membership holds for Ethiopian Private Sector?

BY BILAL DERSO

With a growing globalization, Ethiopia's trade integration and accession to the World

Trade Organization (WTO) expected to provide an opportunity for the private sector to expand its trade, acquire better

technology and quality labor force and provide value-added jobs thereby bringing a better economic growth, experts in the area say.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations (ECCSA) President Melaku Ezezew says that the major advantage Ethiopia's private sector obtains from the country's membership to the WTO is the market-access security that guarantees domestic companies to penetrate global market.

The president states that as members of the WTO are expected to significantly reduced.

See What WTO ... Page 3

"Brazil and Ethiopia are enjoying excellent bilateral relations."

- Ambassador Villarinho Pedroso
Page 6

Ethiopia: A land with abundant unique tourist destinations

Page 19

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Ready for Tomorrow!

Coalition to support 1.2 M COVID-19 vulnerable here

BY BILAL DERSO

ADDIS ABABA- Addis Ababa Mayor's Office has formed coalition with private sector companies and non-governmental organizations and launched a project dubbed "Tenaschin Bejachin" Which literally means "Our Health is in Our Hands!" last week with a total potential value of six million USD to support 1.2 million COVID-19 vulnerable population in the metropolis.

The project is expected to help people living in highly dense communities that struggle with access to water, soap, and other compounding challenges. Member manufacturing companies will commit to zero profit for the first six months of the project and ensure retention of employees. In return, the coalition will guarantee cost recovery for operating expenses relating to manufacturing of the critical items.

With the launch of the project, the coalition will oversee the manufacturing and distribution of facemasks and soaps, installing of water tankers, and deployment of behavioral change education to address the needs of 1.2 million vulnerable population and reinforce broader efforts to fight the pandemic.

Two private firms, namely Dalberg Group and Roha Group have taken the initiative to organize the first of its kind public-private partnership in an effort to add sustainable impact to the national response to COVID-19. The one million USD required for the pilot project was secured by Roha while the remaining five million of the funds will be secured from donors.

See Coalition in ... Page 3

Let us unite with love; surpass in forgiveness!



GERD (photo AFP July 2020)