

The Politics of the GERD: Decision Making in the Negotiations between Securitization and De-securitization

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Abstract

The GERD is a single hydropower project that Ethiopia is building on the Abbay River, also known as Blue Nile, the biggest tributary of the Nile River which is shared by eleven countries. Since Ethiopia officially announced the project and initiated a tripartite discussion on the filling and annual operation of the Dam with those riparian countries directly linked with the River, Egypt and Sudan, the objective was to solicit understanding and enhance confidence. After nine years despite understanding is reached on many issues, agreement is not yet reached between the riparian countries. Besides, the dam has become subject to a struggle between securitization and de-securitization by the riparian countries. This was further exacerbated when third parties came to the scene since November 2019. The process was highly affected by the decision making process in the Basin countries and how they look at the GERD issue. In this regard, an attempt will be made to demonstrate how the GERD issue in particular and the Nile are securitized and the efforts of de-securitizing the process. Furthermore, missed opportunities of reaching agreement will be highlighted.

Keywords: Abbay River (Blue Nile), GERD, Securitization and de-securitization, Nile riparian countries, GERD negotiations

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