

## **Epistemic Community in the Eastern Nile Basin: Promoting the Basin Cooperation or National Interests?**

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The Nile trans-boundary cooperation had started with technical cooperation before it was widened to cover non-water aspects in 1999 by founding the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI). In 1967, the Hydromet project was founded with the aim of observing the hydrometeorology of the main lakes in the Nile. Then in 1992 the Technical Cooperation for the Promotion of the Development and Environmental Protection of the Nile Basin (TECCONILE) was launched to endorse the technical capacity of the involved riparian countries in the environmental and water quality aspects .

Similarly, at confrontation situations in the Nile Basin, the technical voice controls the scope and pace of negotiations and decisions that taken later. The current confrontation in the Nile basin is between Egypt and Ethiopia regarding securing the flow of water to Sudan and Egypt (downstream countries) after establishing the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). The fact of GERD has transferred the focus of negotiations between Egypt and Ethiopia from legal and historical rights to technical negotiations about the time and the way of filling the reservoir .

Accordingly, the Nile politics is deeply dependent on scientists who feed decision makers with the possibility of cooperation and the framework of negotiations .

Peter Haas (n.d, 11579) claims that epistemic communities became critical actors in policy formation in the international relation because the globalized interactions are coated by uncertainty particularly in environmental side. Therefore, the state needs evidence based studies and causal ideas to manage global challenges. Nevertheless, epistemic communities involve scientists, who their expertise is built on the rules and values of scientific methodology; they are influenced by their social context, affiliating institutions and the political determinants of their countries .

Departing from Haas's explanation of the role of epistemic communities, this paper attempts to explore if there is a scientific network representing the Eastern Nile basin on the international level. The paper starts with a conceptual part demonstrates how the scientists became a significant actor in the international arena; then it states the definition and the roles of epistemic community. The third part maps the network of published articles on the topic of GERD according to co-authorship; links between citation and organizations and words co-occurrences in the selected articles.

The network of the selected publications shows the absence of an independent epistemic community representing the Eastern Nile Basin. And that indicates less cooperation on scientific level among the Eastern Nile Basin countries.

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