

How has the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam changed the legal, political, economic and scientific dynamics in the Nile basin?

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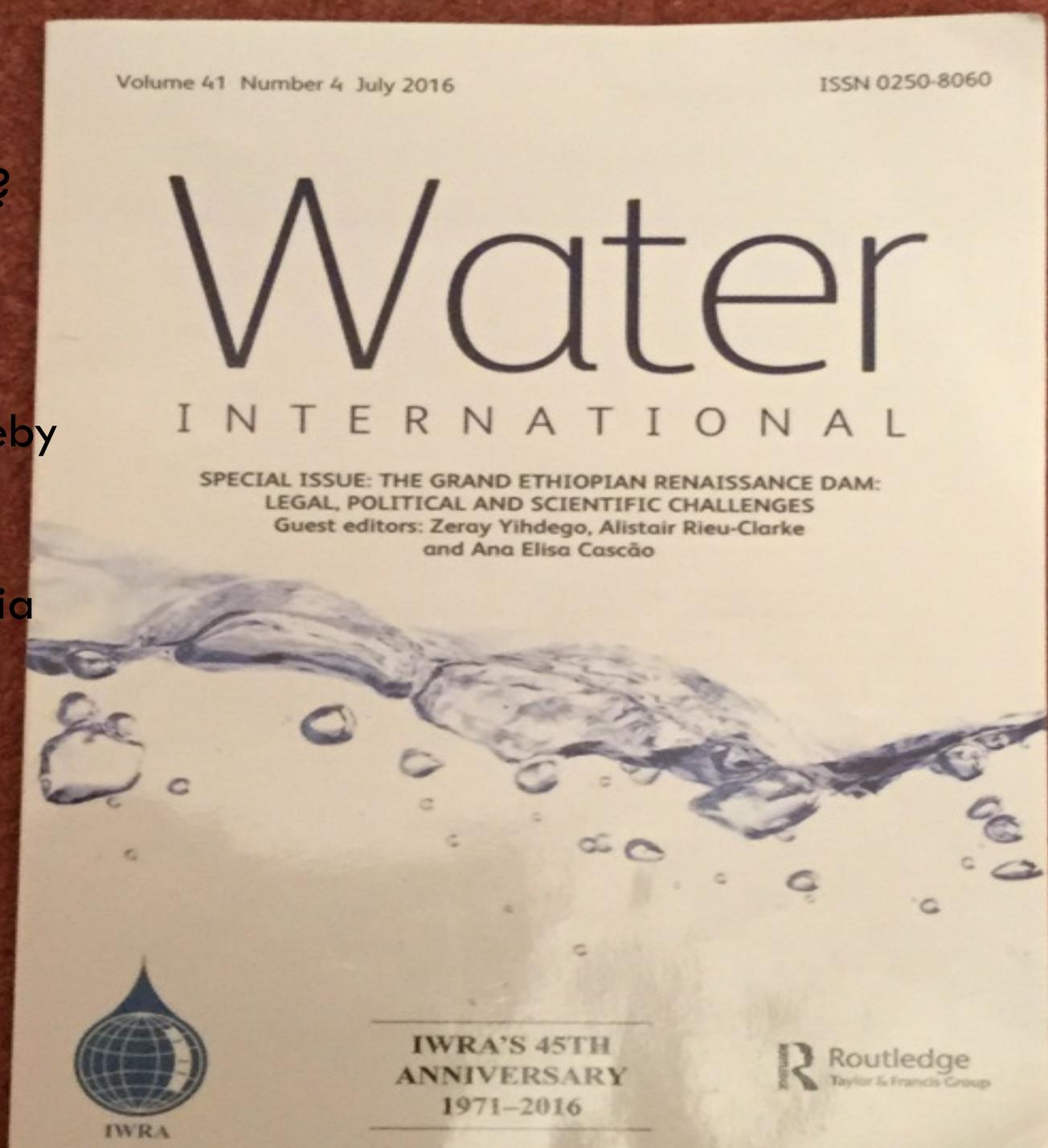
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IWRA GERD WEBINAR, 22/11/16

Zeray Yihdego, University Of Aberdeen,

(1) WHY SPECIAL ISSUE JOURNAL ON GERD AND THE KEY QUESTION ASKED?

- To look into the opportunities and challenges brought by the GERD
- To foster an informed scholarly debate thereby help policy makers
- To highlight the need for reconciling tackling poverty and lack of access to energy in Ethiopia and Sudan with that of preventing negative impacts on Egypt (and Sudan).
- Question: 'how has the GERD changed the dynamics in the Nile basin?'



(2) OVERVIEW OF SPECIAL ISSUE

- The genesis of the SI to be traced to the 25th World Water Congress 2015
- 19 experts involved, and all papers rigorously peer-reviewed
- Nature of the articles: 3 law, 2 politics and 2 hydrology papers accompanied by the editorial

(3) KEY FINDINGS/PERSPECTIVES

I. GERD brought a new era for cooperation in the eastern Nile basin—contributors used different phrases to explain this—‘game changer’ (Tawfik, Nicol et al), ‘Fair System’ (Yihdego & Rieu-Clarke) And ‘New Legal Order’ (Salman).

- This may be challenged on the basis of (a) the uncertainties surrounding the compatibility of newly agreed principles and old Nile treaties; and (b) the NBI and the CFA have existed before the march 2015 DoPs.
- But to say the least the deadlock of cooperation has been broken by the DoPs—this is a major breakthrough in the basin.

KEY FINDS/PERSPECTIVES....

II. GERD's global connotations: the developments including the DoPs followed the entry into force of the UNWC 1997; and the SDGs 2015 came up with the commitment 'to integrated water resources management at a transboundary level'. This may well encourage a basin-wide or/and global cooperation.

III. The potential of the GERD for a shared benefit and integration has been stressed.

- Yet, environmental and downstream impacts of dam remain divisive (and marred by political administrative and technical issues and delays of planned studies)
- Given that GERD is a national project benefit-sharing outcome might not be guaranteed
- If the three countries' address the several challenges relating to filling and operation of the dam, and building upon basin-wide existing initiatives such as the NBI and the CFA, however, GERD must be a catalyst for further cooperation and integration in the basin.

KEY FINDS/PERSPECTIVES....

- IV. Dam filling important to reinforce the momentum of cooperation: ‘both [technical] articles emphasize that a negotiated compromise needs to be established to minimize harm to Sudan and Egypt during filling without compromising on a reasonable and timely filling for best utilization of GERD’.
- V. The articles stressed the need for transparency and participatory process (Yihdego & Rieu-Clarke, Tawfik, Nanni)

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All articles strongly recommend sub-basin and basin-wide cooperation as the ultimate solution not only to share Nile water resources but also turn water use to wider integration and benefit-sharing efforts.
2. The GERD has not only changed the dynamics in the Nile basin but it has the potential to bring more significant changes in the future.
3. This is not without challenges. Resolving the challenges based upon an informed policy and cooperation benefits all concerned.