

The Controversy of Hydropower Project in East Africa: The Case of Gilgel Gibe 3 Dam in Ethiopia

Tekalign Gunjefo Dubale¹

¹University of Jyväskylä, Finland, Social Sciences and Philosophy, Helsinki,, Ethiopian studying in Finland

tekalign_gunjefo@yahoo.com

The increasing concern of climate change across the world diverted the attention of using nonrenewable and costly energy sources to renewable, cost effective and sustainable ones. Evidences indicate that Non-renewable energy sources have been causing a devastating impact on the global climatic conditions. Change in the global climate condition in turn adversely affects human activities at large. The gradually growing concern of climate change is affecting the social fabric, economic and political establishments in every nation. Besides, the volatile nature of an increasing fuel price militated against the global economic progress. Based on this fact, the use of water resource as hydropower house, become one of the alternatives to generate electricity. As part of the global consensus to promote energy source, Ethiopia has recently started its largest development project that emanates green energy for its mostly darker rural settlements. The hydropower project called- Gilgel Gibe 3 Dam is the second largest and the tallest in sub-Saharan Africa which is expected to generate 1800MWP. It is expected to be exported to the East African countries including Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda. The project has been launched since 2010 and currently in progress. The construction of the Dam was started by Salini Costruttori, an Italian firm. The key agents involved in the project include the Ethiopia government; Salini Costruttori- Italian based multinational company; the African Development Bank; the European Investment Bank; Government of Italy; Government of Kenya; Ethiopian Diaspora, and East African Power Pool including Burundi, Congo Republic, Egypt, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. However, the project has embarked/ triggered critical debate among the environmentalists, the international financial institutions (World Bank, EU banks) the local public and the Ethiopian government. Each of the agents has its own point of argument for and against the case. It is found essential to probe this complex nature of Africa and the global political economy based on green Energy prevailing in the 21 century. Whose decision matters?