

# Review of: "GERD: A Catalyst for the Nation-Building Process in Ethiopia"

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The article deals with a crucial topic – not only for Ethiopia, but also for the largest part of post-colonial Africa. Although it is true that Ethiopia was never colonised similar to other African countries, the country deals with similar challenges than other post-colonial African countries, namely a highly heterogeneous and culturally and linguistically diverse population. Societal heterogeneity has consequently been one of the most important reasons why many post-colonial African governments have seized nation-building as a panacea in dealing with the challenges associated with the diversity within their borders.

The introductory sections dealing with the theoretical understanding of key terms such as “nation”, “state nation”, “nation-building” and “state-building” can be improved and deepened. Only a relatively small number of sources are consulted. Some of the discussions are too limited and does not reflect recent developments. For example, the term “nation” is primarily discussed within the primordial viewpoints of Smith (1992). However, the shift towards viewpoints on the civic nation is not covered. Today, we speak of the United Nations referring to all countries of the world. However, only a few of these countries are linguistically and culturally homogeneous according to the primordial viewpoint. The discussion of nation-building and state-building should also be linked to the discourses on ethnic and civic nations.

The author refers to nation-building in Africa. The impression can be given that it has been successful. However, he fails to address criticism of African nation-building as voiced by Dersso (2008), Deng (1997) and others as well as the limited success of attempts to eradicate ethnicity (or “tribalism” as it is often referred to) in Africa as indicated by Berman, Eyoh and Kymlicka (2004). The discourse on nation-building in Ethiopia should be reviewed within the context of these discourses.

I must admit that I do not know much about the GERD dam project and its impact on Ethiopian society. I however agree with other reviewers that it is probably unlikely to serve as a panacea in solving the challenges associated with the diversity of the Ethiopian population. Most importantly, a civil war-like situation currently characterises politics in Ethiopia. How does the author reconcile this war with his viewpoints of the nation-building effects of the GERD dam project?

Overall, more scientific resources should be consulted. All discussions and conclusions should be substantiated by appropriate sources.

The article should be edited for language and style.

## Sources

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