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Empowering women in water diplomacy: a basic mapping of the challenges in Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan

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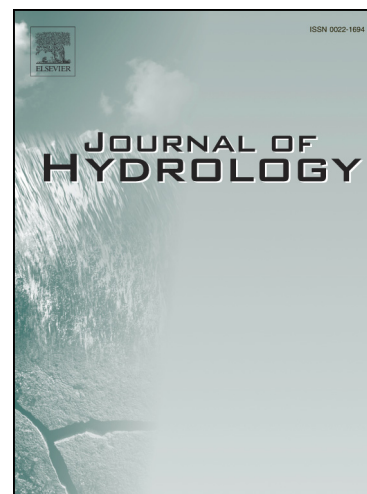
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Abstract:

Until now, limited attention has been afforded to the role of, and challenges faced by, women involved in water diplomacy. In addition to research being at an early stage, it is mainly focused on addressing the challenges imposed by gender inequality. Thus very few applicable policy recommendations have emerged in this field to date.

This paper will explore and identify current challenges that face the women interested in attaining high level positions in water diplomacy, in three Arab countries in which hydropolitics prevails, including Jordan, Lebanon and the State of Palestine. Female experts working on water-related issues were surveyed and interviewed to ascertain key qualitative issues, perceptions and various challenges. The focus of the paper was to identify the additional skills to be developed and acquired, for these women to better qualify as water diplomats both nationally and globally. In addition, the paper explores how to better equip women as leaders in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 5 on Gender Equality and Goal 6 on Clean Water and Sanitation, in their national water sectors. The results provide a basic and initial mapping of current challenges and makes recommendations that would assist in the empowerment of those women in water diplomacy decision making positions in the regions investigated specifically, as well as globally.

Keywords: women empowerment; water diplomacy; decision-makers; SDGs; Lebanon; Palestine; Jordan; challenges; peace; security

Introduction

Rationale for women, water diplomacy, water and peace & security – linking of concepts

Globally and nationally the United Nations and its member States, as well as an array of actors recognize the role of preventive diplomacy in mitigating and/or limiting the escalation of disputes between the parties (UN, 2011 p2). The tendency in modern diplomacy is to take preventive measures and use different vehicles of peace including that of natural resources to foster cooperation and eliminate potential contributors to conflict.

Diplomacy itself has evolved, and it is now multidimensional, and multi-lateral (Petrovsky, 1998; Diplo; Pamment, 2017) . Among the new trends in diplomacy, is the emergence of more specialized forms that require diplomats to gain expertise in specialized fields including water, energy, and agriculture due to increasing global governance and international cooperation (Ton, 2015). In 2017, the Security Council held a briefing on Preventive Diplomacy and Transboundary Waters, emphasizing the role of water diplomacy and cooperation in conflict prevention. Mr. Guterres emphasized that “water, security and peace are inextricably linked.” (UNSG, 2017)

Water diplomacy, one of many forms of preventive diplomacy, includes all measures by state and non-state actors that can be undertaken to prevent or peacefully resolve (emerging) conflicts and facilitate cooperation related to water availability, allocation or use between and within states and public and private stakeholders. However, theoretical foundations to cooperation over shared resources and best approaches to implement water diplomacy in practice are still weakly developed. Concepts and approaches such as multi-level water, adaptive water governance, a mutual gains approach and instruments for benefit sharing need to be further developed and made operational (Huntgens et al., 2016).

In relation, and in July 2013, the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union (EU) adopted conclusions on EU water diplomacy to “proactively engage in transboundary water security challenges ..”, and recognized the importance of the 1992 United National Economic Commission for Europe water convention (UNECE) and

the 1997 United Nations Convention on the Non- Navigational Uses of International Water Courses UNWC (Council of European Union, 2013). More recently (November 2018), the Council recognized the direct impacts of water scarcity on EU peace and national security, most notably through migration flows. (Council of European Union, 2018).

The statistics to date are alarming on future water shortages, including predictions that by 2050, at least one in four people will be living in a country that is affected by chronic or recurrent freshwater shortages (WWDR, 2016). On a more positive note, the benefits of transboundary water cooperation and its potential role as a bridge to peace is widely documented and researched (Jagerskog, 2007; Phillips et al, 2006; Wolf, 2009; Earl et al, 2010; Zeitoun et al, 2017).

In recognition of the role of water in peacebuilding, in 2015, fifteen (15) co-convening countries launched the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace in Geneva. The latter produced the report “A Matter of Survival” with concrete implementable recommendations to transform water from a source of potential crisis to an instrument of cooperation and peace. (GWH, 2017). Similarly, in Spring 2016, the United Nations Secretary-General and President of the World Bank Group convened a High Level Panel on Water (HLPW), consisting of 11 sitting Heads of State and Government and one Special Adviser, to provide the leadership required to champion a comprehensive, inclusive and collaborative way of developing and managing water resources, and improving water and sanitation related services. (HLPW, 2018)

Current status of women involvement in water diplomacy, and decision-making

The linkages between women, peace and security have been increasingly recognized, within the past two decades. On the 31st October 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, acknowledging the essential role women play in peacebuilding, conflict management and sustaining security (S/RES/1325). It was “the first international policy mechanism explicitly recognizing the gendered nature of war and peace processes”, according to Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, who was President of the UN Security Council in 2000, and shared his disappointment about the record of implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 after one decade (Chowdhury, 2010). Although 7 other resolutions

were adopted in what came to be known as the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda (Figure 1), yet the progress made to date is still slow. UNWOMEN, 2012)

Figure 1: Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security (ESCWA, 2017a)

With the intention of bringing water diplomacy, peace, and women together, and during the 60th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 2016, the permanent mission of the Netherlands to the UN in New York, and the Women for Water partnership and partners, hosted a side event on “Women’s Role in Water Diplomacy as Key for Empowerment”. The latter focused on the acknowledgment of women as leaders, experts, partners on equal footing and agents of change in the Water – Sustainable Development nexus, and called for the inclusion of women at all levels in the decision-making process (WfWP, 2016). In the subsequent years, the discussions were further taken forward, and recommendations were fed into the upcoming World Water Forums of Korea and Brazil. (CSW60, CSW61)

According to the UN World Water Development Report on Water and Jobs of 2016, there was a significant positive contribution to the economy by women in formal, high level positions; yet 15 national human resources assessments found an average of 17% of staff of the water sector to be female (IWA, 2014a). In addition, the global recognition for the involvement of women and gender issues in water management is more at the national level. Given that international law is silent on gender issues in terms of transboundary water management, it is expected that the institutions built upon its principles would also recognize less the role of women and gender issues. (Earle & Bazilli, 2013, p116).

During the same year and at the International Symposium on Water Diplomacy, , the session on the role of women in water diplomacy emphasized the need to encourage environments in which women feel confident about talking and contributing to the decision-making process (SIWI, 2016) Around the same time, the first UN Women Forum, held during the Budapest Water Summit 2016, highlighted, the need to recognize women as agents of change in the decision-making realm rather than simply as a vulnerable water-user group (Budapest 2016)

Clearly, there has been a definite progress in terms of placing women, water and peace on the agenda of important global forums. However, there remains a large untapped potential and role for women to play in national, regional and global peacebuilding with water as a possible vehicle, among others. This is supported by one of the recommendations of a joint UNEP/UNWOMEN (2013) report on unlocking the peacebuilding potential of women in terms of water resources management in conflict areas, it proposes to include “..women and gender specialists early on in peace negotiations in a variety of positions – as negotiators, as expert advisors and as civil society observers – and in mediation support teams, as well as supporting their capacity to engage effectively in these processes.”

Why this paper

This paper will explore and identify current challenges that women experts interested in attaining high level positions in water diplomacy face, in three Arab countries in which hydropolitics prevails, including Jordan, Lebanon and the State of Palestine. The paper will first present the geographic background, and the different sections of the questionnaire, that was formulated and shared with women experts working on water-related issues to ascertain key qualitative issues, perceptions and various challenges. In the subsequent sections, the results of the various parts of the questionnaire will be presented, and a discussion will follow. The focus of the paper is to identify the additional skills that these women would need to develop and acquire, to better qualify as water diplomats both locally and globally. In addition, the paper explores how to better equip women as leaders in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 5 on Gender Equality and Goal 6 on Clean Water and Sanitation, in their national water sectors. The results provide a basic and initial mapping of current challenges and make recommendations that would assist in the empowerment of those women in water diplomacy decision making positions in the regions investigated specifically, as well as globally.

The geographical scope of this paper is the Arab Levant; Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan are part of the eastern Mediterranean region, and share the same language, similar societal cultures, and regional challenges.

We, as authors, recognize the social, political and institutional barriers to women's advancement in water diplomacy related fields globally and in Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine specifically and emphasize that it is incumbent on all members of society to address gender equality issues and associated repercussions. We believe that overcoming the individual shortcomings will improve women's standing vis-à-vis the societal and institutional obstacles, and the claims used against having women on the water negotiating tables both nationally and globally.

Therefore, we have decided, in this paper, to address the current limited role of women in water diplomacy and decision making roles from a different angle, by addressing the individual social and technical shortcomings that influence and/or hinder professional women from attainment of professional women of being members and/or leading of water negotiating teams, that are often "the boys club". (Carmi, 2017) We strongly believe that given the appropriate capacity building and right opportunities, more women decision makers will be involved in transboundary water management in the 3 chosen countries.

The choice of the particular countries for this paper was based on the expertise of the 3 authors; themselves having been involved in different capacities and levels of water diplomacy. More importantly, the Jordan River Basin, to which the 3 countries are among the 5 Riparians, is one of the most researched basins in the world (Phillips et al, 2007a, Phillips et al 2007b, Zoubi 2014). Different modalities of cooperation have been proposed from as early as the 1950s, yet today a basin wide agreement, has not been reached. Hence, the Jordan River Basin provides a good example of how different levels of water diplomacy (can) play(s) in peacebuilding in the shared transboundary river basin. , There are clearly opportunities to use the untapped potential of women water professionals in negotiations on transboundary water resources. Another reason that supported our decision was the presence of national women governance structures including the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs (as a full-fledged ministry), the Jordanian National Committee for Women (as an Inter-ministerial committee), and the National Committee for Lebanese Women, as a commission under the authority of the Prime Minister) as a first important cornerstone towards gender mainstreaming in those government policies. Although, these institutions are "vulnerable to shifts in priorities

and budget reshuffling in comparison with other ministries” (ESCWA, 2016), yet, there exists at least a framework for women empowerment generally, that could be used for water diplomacy more specifically.

Why Arab Women? Their current Status in decision making

Although in the Arab World, there is a patriarchal influence on norms and customs (ESCWA, 2017d, p. vii), that also influences stereotypes of the role of women (Joseph, 1996), yet there are many promising developments that pave the way for a more effective role for women in decision making. As a first step, the Arab countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In addition, and in 2013, the League of Arab States adopted a regional strategy on the women, peace and security (WPS), and a regional action plan in 2015 (ESCWA, 2017a, p.4). The Beirut Call for Action summarizes the main recommendations of an international conference whose purpose was to engage international, regional and national stakeholders in strategic dialogue on women, peace and security in the Arab region. (ESCWA et. Al, 2016). Furthermore, Karama and its partners launched the Arab Regional Network on Women, Peace, and Security.

. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, 20 years after the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995, the Arab States women’s political rights and opportunities have expanded but have not yet fully materialized (IPU, 2015), going from an average of 4.3 in 1995 to 16.1 by 2015, in comparison to a world average of 22.1 in 2015. (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Percentage of Arab Women in political decision making (ESCWA, 2017b).

Why should more women be involved?

Women should be more involved in decision making on water issues, not because of quotas or to claim gender equality per se. Women are needed, side by side, to men in all various tracks of negotiations by virtue of the added benefits including, but not limited to, inclusiveness, ensuring equality and human rights in peace agreements. The linkage between sustainable peace and inclusion of women is supported by research, which

has shown that peace agreements are more likely to be reached and be sustainable when women are included. (Maoz, 2009). A policy brief by Feron/Clingendael (2015), argues that the inclusion of gender issues in peace negotiations is a key to success of both pre- and post-reconciliation and negotiation processes. The conference on women, water and peace, held in Istanbul in 2016, highlighted the added value of women negotiators, (Alsayegh, 2016).

We as authors, acknowledge that one must be careful of making generalizations about what characteristics or traits women bring to the table that men don't and vice versa. From a behavioral perspective, and according to De Janasz, a professor of leadership and organizational development, women are more competent in integrative negotiations, which calls for a concern for people, sensitivity to emotions and nonverbal messages and better listening skills (De Janasz et al, 2015). Men and women do negotiate differently, yet, both sides exhibit valuable behaviors that the other gender could benefit from borrowing. (Conti, 2016)

Examples from modern history testify to the added value of women negotiators generally. Monica McWilliams, co-founder of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and one of the two women to sit at the multi-party peace negotiations, talks about the contribution they made to civic rights, equality, and ensuring the rights of victims to the conflict, in the conclusion of the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. (McWilliams, 2015). Senator George Mitchell, acknowledged that one of the factors that led to an Agreement was the emergence of women as a political force. (Mitchell, 1999).

Unfortunately, in spite of the evidence above, the statistics to date with regard to women involvement in the implementation of the women peace, security agenda and in related negotiations are quite discouraging. An open letter to UN Member States mentioned that ".only 11 out of 70 members of the restructured High Peace Council in Afghanistan are women,..." (NGO Working Group on WPS, 2017) According to UNWOMEN (2012), a "...sample of 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011 reveals that only 4 per cent of signatories, 2.4 per cent of chief mediators, 3.7 per cent of witnesses and 9 per cent of negotiators are women." Even at the yearly World Economic Forum, and per its Global Gender Gap report, gender parity still exists, even if gap is slowly shortening. (Hutt, 2016).

Methods

A short questionnaire was developed to map the main challenges facing women, and various factors (political, societal, technical and others) that limit more major role for women in water diplomacy and decision making. The total number of questions was 19; 12 were closed questions, 2 open questions, and the rest combined.

The questionnaire was designed to provide specific insights into four main issues:

1. Their current status in the Water Sector in their national countries;
2. The main challenges and /factors limiting their role;
3. Their understanding of the definition and the role of water diplomacy; and
4. Linkages between the Sustainable Development Goal 6 and Sustainable Development Goal 5 in their daily work, if applicable

The questionnaire was shared electronically with a total of 55 women working in the water sector in the three selected countries. For this mapping, the water sector includes all stakeholders in line ministries, universities, NGOs, and partners. In Palestine in particular the snowball sample was used, in which the questionnaires were first sent to the Palestinian Water Authority female professionals, and additional ones sent to their own counterparts. The total number of respondents was 33, i.e. 60% (12 from Jordan, 6 from Lebanon and 15 from Palestine). The selection of the sample group was based on the expertise and experience of the authors, each in her home country, with the main female actors in the water sector, from different age groups, different institutions, and different lengths of work experience in the water field. All of the female respondents who answered the questionnaire were offered confidentiality should she choose to.

The intention of the questionnaire was not to provide a statistically representative sample but to provide an indicative understanding of the role of women in the three countries in water diplomacy and decision-making realm.

The closed questions for Palestine and Jordan were analyzed using the “Statistical Package for the Social Sciences” SPSS software. (SPSS); while the open ended responses were qualitatively analyzed to provide more in- depth and narrative explanations of the responses, and contributions of the respondents

Given time limitations it had not been possible to conduct the same kind of analysis in Lebanon; instead interviews conducted with key water experts in the sector. A total of nine interviews with senior experts and directors at the governmental level and university were undertaken. The interviews were based on the questions of the questionnaire, with a few additional ones (Appendix A). Al Sayegh chose the interviewees based on the scope needed and her own experience.

In Palestine, the respondents were invited to a round-table to discuss the preliminary findings and to exchange. It was equally informative for both the respondents and the Palestinian author as it provided an opportunity for clarification and elaboration on certain questions, and choice of answers.

Results and Discussion

Current Status

The main responses to the first part of the questionnaire, that addressed the current status of the female respondents working in the water sector, are summarized in Figures 3 and 4 for Palestine and Jordan questionnaire respondents. The term water sector, as used for the purposes of this mapping exercise, refers to water-related jobs, including those at the line ministry, prime minister’s office, line NGOs and/ or line universities.

In Palestine, as seen in Figure 3, the highest percentage of females working on water related issues was of the age group of 30-39, with work experience of 11-20 years, 50% of whom are Government employees. Two-thirds of the respondents hold a Master’s Degree, and are in management positions. The highest ratio of

male-female in workplace as perceived by the respondents (the respondents personal input on what the percentage is) was less than 10%.

In Jordan (figure 4) the highest percentage of females working on water related issues was in the age-group of 40-49, with work experience under 10 years, three quarters of whom are Government employees. It is important to note that the experience referred to is that within the water sector only; some of the respondents in Jordan were previously working in other fields and joined the sector within the last decade. Almost 60 % of them hold a Bachelor's Degree, and the majority hold senior management positions. The highest ratio of male-female in workplace as perceived by the respondents was in the range of 25-50 %.

In Lebanon , the female professionals interviewed working on water related issues were spread evenly between the two age groups of 30-39 and 40 +, 70 percent of whom are Government employees. The majority hold a Master's Degree and are equally involved in senior, e management positions and /or are heads of department. The highest perception of the ratio of male-female was less than 20% at Government level, although this ratio was perceived to be higher by interviewees from intergovernmental organizations and universities.

The main message to be concluded from the first part of the questionnaire is the need for sex-disaggregated data given that the data is variable, an argument that has been made globally by different women-related and non-related institutions. (UNESCO, 2015). Another key message is that there is a good potential and room for the inclusion and active participation of more female experts into the world of water diplomacy in the 3 countries.

Figure 3: Current status of the female respondents in Palestine

Figure 4: Current status of the female respondents in Jordan

In order for readers of this article to have a better background, and smoother understanding of the dimension and context for women in the three countries, the next paragraphs present a brief country sector profile, limited by the availability of data.

In Jordan, young women currently comprise only 13% of the economically active population. While they are more educated than their male counterparts, they still experience twice the amount of difficulty in finding a job (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Statement, 2017). This was confirmed by a gender assessment that of the water sector in 2012 showing similar observations (USAID, 2012). Gender policies are in place but are not implemented; women are represented in several committees, are qualified but not directly in water management. Furthermore, they are not given the opportunity to practice their knowledge in the water sector, which is still considered a male dominated world. A change in the attitude of both women and men is imperative if gender roles and responsibilities are to be understood in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).

In Lebanon, and at the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW), there are seven women as heads of departments, three women engineers as Heads of services within the water establishments, while most water quality officers and laboratory analysts are women. (Fakih, 2018) One of the interviewees in Lebanon is a member at the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW); the latter's mission is to empower women to reach decision making positions. She emphasized that "women are more present in the second tier of decision making positions, adding that three quarters of the ministers' advisors are women ". As this current generation of male decision makers retire, there will arise more opportunities for gender equality that are based on merit and not merely gender.

In Palestine, a preliminary study was conducted on the role of women in leadership and decision making positions in the environment sector, mainly in water and solid waste management (State of Palestine, 2012). This study highlighted the poor representation of women- according to which only 11 % of second tier decision making positions in service provider institutions were held by women. In comparison, only four (4) % of the second tier higher management positions in the official Palestinian institutes of relevance were held by women, although they represent 30% of the workforce there. On the positive note, this preliminary study led

to the formulation of a strategy to empower women in leadership positions in water and solid waste sectors. At the Palestinian Water Authority, women make up 30% of the staff, and hold around 36.5 % of decision making positions. (personal communication)

Next section: the second part 2 of the questionnaire is meant to identify the main challenges encountered by the female respondents, and their own interpretation and perception of the male-female ratio in their workplaces.

As seen in Figure 5 below, the two main factors contributing to the male-female ratio in the workplace in both Jordan and Palestine, include having a patriarchal society and the dominant strong negative perceptions of female decision makers.

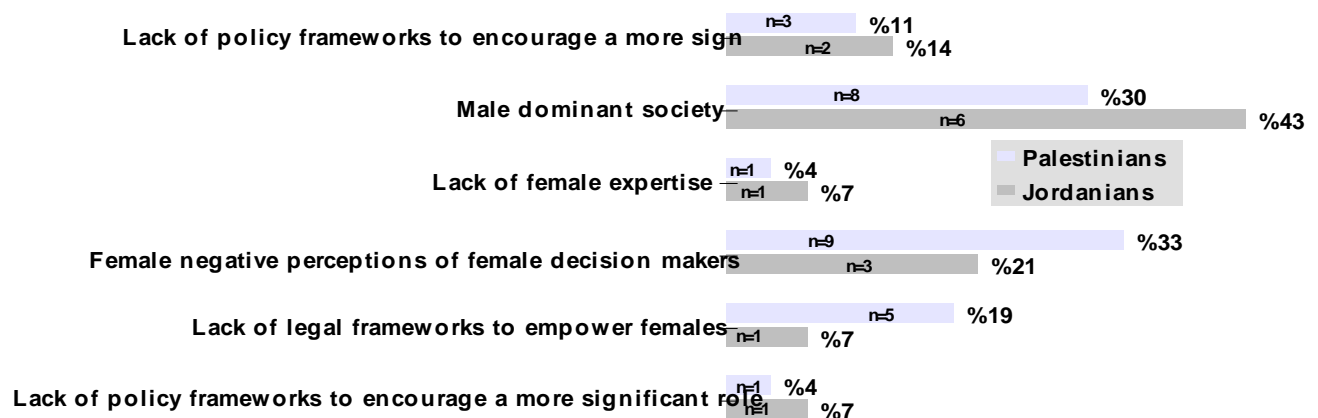


Figure 5: the main factors contributing to the workplace male-female ratios according to the female respondents (Jordan & Palestine)

By patriarchal society we are referring to one that "... consists of a male-dominated power structure throughout organized society and in individual relationships" (Napikoski, L. 2017), and there are many examples documented globally that speak to the challenges of being females in a patriarchal society.

In relation to the negative perceptions of female decisions makers, women who work in the political sector in the Middle-East are often subjected to ill-intentioned rumors, slander and scandals, which negatively affect their image before the public, as well as their families (Karama, 2009). Women's leadership capacities are often doubted by a significant share of women (SWMENA, 2011). When former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright spoke about being a woman and a diplomat in an interview, one of the main challenges she stated she faced was the criticism she received from women, and the feelings of guilt she was made to feel.

Both these factors are inter-related; since the female perceptions are also inherently influenced by dominant patriarchal views, adopted by females themselves, towards other females holding senior position. The "clichés" are strong and perceptions towards women need to be changed. (SIWI, 2016)

The challenge of male dominance is not limited to this part of the world; it resonates globally as well. An annual participant at the World Economic Forum, highlights the slowly increasing participation of women (at 18 percent in 2016). However, this has helped elevate the discourse on gender disparity. (Metcalf-Kupres, 2016)

In addition to the above two limiting factors, it was interesting to examine the various other factors that influence the acceptance of female water experts of positions that require more decision making and involvement in official water diplomacy negotiations. According to the responses (summarized in Figure 6), the predominant factor is the "lack of opportunity" both in Palestine and Jordan.

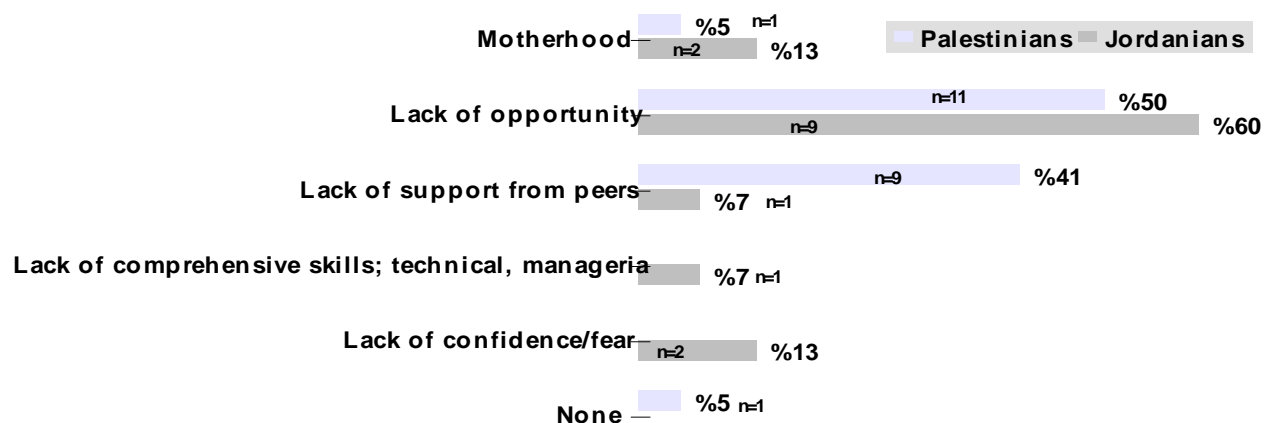


Figure 6: Factors that influence the acceptance of a decision making position, according to the female respondents

Interestingly, the difference between the respondents in the two neighboring, similar culture countries was that in Palestine, the factors of highest ranking were mainly what one could term as “external “ones: either lack of opportunity (50%) or lack of support from peer (41%), while in Jordan, they were more of what one could identify as “internal” or personal factors, including motherhood, lack of confidence/fear and lack of comprehensive skills. The questionnaire also examined whether respondents were willing to relocate for work, and to work longer hours. Both in Jordan and Palestine, more than 65% of the respondents expressed their willingness to both relocation or longer working hours that might be required for more senior positions. If one were to search for stereotypes of working women, one can easily reference many cases where women are unjustifiably excluded. A new negotiation research study finds that female negotiators, as well as racial minorities, are likely to face bias in negotiations for employment even before they have a chance to begin bargaining (Shonk, 2016).

Similarly, in Lebanon, the male dominance (patriarchal) society, is one of the main limiting factors. Quoting an interviewee, she said: "If there are women in high level positions they are subject to sextortion or they have to use their feminism to be or stay in decision making positions ". The term “sextortion” was coined by the International Association of Women Judges and refers to the abuse of power to obtain a sexual benefit or advantage. It is a problem all over the world, with far-reaching costs in terms of physical and mental health and human dignity. (IAWJ, 2012) At the local level, water sector sextortion is common for delivery of water

services; getting water meters installed/getting permits, and avoiding cutting off water services (SIWI, 2017; SIDA, 2017). However, it is not easy to find documentation of sextortion for being promoted as a female to higher positions in the water sector, and water diplomacy careers..

In order to surmount those challenges, and bridge the gap between males and females, the respondents were given options to define, in their views, a variety of skills, they feel they need to develop and/or acquire to be more in the decision making processes of water diplomacy: the respondents in Palestine and Jordan were majorly confident about their own skills (93% and 75% respectively). However, an examination of a following question on needed skills gave room for controversy. Clearly, there are cross-interlinkages that need to be used to serve the higher good. (see figure 7).

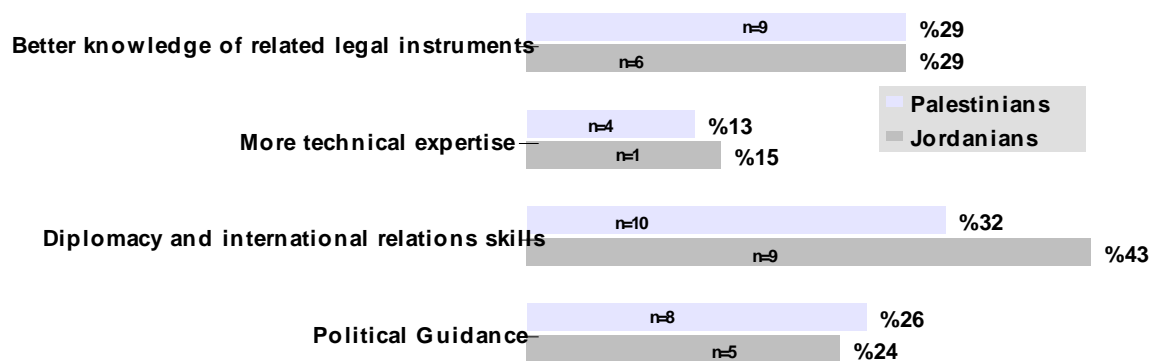


Figure 7: Skills needed to better lead in water diplomacy positions, per female respondents

During the roundtable discussion with some of the Palestinian female respondents, the latter clarified, that their understanding of 'skills' was in reference to their technical expertise. This explains, the over-estimation of the percentage vis-à-vis overall skills they feel are needed for a water diplomacy related position. This was further supported by the need for further skills. While the majority (around 80-85% of respondents) felt that they had the needed technical skills, they also acknowledged the need to develop and brush-up on their diplomatic and international relation skills, their knowledge of legal instruments, and access to political guidance.

In Lebanon, and according to the interviewees, there are fewer women who studied the traditionally male dominated fields of specialization like engineering This trend still continues, even if at a slowly decreasing

rate. Among the opinions shared was that there is no difference between women and men in terms of diplomacy; and that women are sometimes considered better negotiators, as they are better listeners. The main challenge, according to the personal experience of one of the interviewees, is for women to build on their technical expertise through capacity building programs and training. Another senior water engineer, who has been working in the water sector for almost two decades called on other women to focus on leadership positions: "when women gain experience at the technical level, they can be involved at the diplomatic level; a woman's perseverance, logic and patience will help her to reach her goals; .. women, my advice to you is do not be afraid and focus on leadership positions".

Part 3 of Questionnaire: definition and role of water diplomacy

Water diplomacy is often defined differently, depending on different factors including, but not limited to, the political context, and the specific purposes for which it is used. In the questionnaire, the related question was open-ended, and female respondents chose one or more definition(s).

Figure 8 below summarizes the respondents understanding of the definition and role of water diplomacy.

Figure 8: Definition of water diplomacy by female respondents ? Comparison Palestine-Jordan

Looking at figure 8 above, water diplomacy is perceived mainly as a high level dialogue among states on water issues. It is also considered to be an effective tool for peacebuilding, and/or an attempt to progress under conditions of political deadlock. The perceived role(s) of water diplomacy is (are) highly reflective of the dominance of hydropolitics in the region in the management of transboundary water resources (Allan et al, 2002 & Wolf, A. 1995), and explains why water is one of the core issues in permanent status negotiations among the Palestinians and the Israelis. It is well acknowledged that water is life and that securing water rights, and control and management of water resources is an important pillar of viable sovereign states. (NAD, 2018)

The definitions chosen by the Jordanian water experts reflects the experience of Jordan, as a Sovereign State, with access and control of its national resources, and a 1994 Peace –Agreement with Israel that included a water sharing agreement from the transboundary Jordan River Basin (The Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty, Annex II; both as an effective tool in peace building (32%), and as an exercise of benefit sharing among Riparian countries (23%). In comparison, the Palestinian water experts, given the denial of control and access to water resources, and driven by the limitations of a water allocation interim agreement with Israel, look less favorably to water diplomacy as an effective tool in peace building (17%), and more as a means to progress in the face of political deadlock. These differences are in line with the global discussion with regard to the definition of water diplomacy, with different meanings to different actors. (Molnar et al. 2017, p.26).

In Lebanon, the interviewees emphasized the need to agree on a definition of water diplomacy, that ensures dialogue, negotiation and reconciling conflicting interests among riparian states, prior to assessing women's role in water diplomacy. One interviewee believes that water diplomacy is a political issue, and in general the role of women in politics in Lebanon in particular is very limited, in her words "...water diplomacy is a transboundary issue, but for the time being, with no relations with Israel and a complicated situation in Syria, diplomacy is far away, despite the fact that Water Diplomacy is not a luxury but a catalyst for peace", adding that, "we tried through the Blue Peace initiative (SFG, 2011) to advocate for a Water Consortium for 5 countries, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Turkey, but we faced many obstacles due to difficult conditions in Syria and Iraq". This re-emphasizes the complexity of having an agreed upon definition of water diplomacy, and the challenge that comes with it, includes the identification of the potential roles for negotiators generally, and female ones particularly.

Next section - SDGs

Globally and regionally, it is recognized that development is a main enabler of stability, and hence is considered as another tool of preventive diplomacy. There is also a consensus, that all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have gender aspects, and for nearly all development water is crucial. In this initial

mapping, and due to limited scope and time constraint, the inter-relation of SDGs 5 and 6 were only considered. This does not in any way exclude the interlinkages to other SDGs. While it is not necessary for water diplomats to be working on the attainment of SDGs, the inclusion of SDGs 5 and 6 in this mapping exercise, has been undertaken from the perspective that development is another form of preventive diplomacy, and could be coupled with water diplomacy, towards stability, peace, and cooperation.

In the Arab region, since 2014, the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development is an annual high-level regional platform, where multiple stakeholders discuss coordination pathways for the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The findings and recommendations, conveying key messages from the region, are usually submitted to and presented at the annual High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council ECOSOC, ensuring that Arab countries have a voice at global level. The 3 countries of focus in this paper have submitted their Voluntary National Reviews, and are committed to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven" per paragraph 79 of the 2030 Agenda.

The questionnaire, included 4 questions on the inter-linkages of SDG 5 and SDG 6; one was closed while the remaining 3 were open. Figure 9 below encouragingly confirms the commitment to the interlinkages and understanding of the important role of the two specific SDGs in the related water issues, both in Jordan and Palestine. This, according to the respondents whose work is related to SDGs, is achieved through the integration of women's needs in the planning of projects, plans, and policies in which they themselves are engaged in. In addition, some are involved in programs of specific target indicators for gender mainstreaming in the water sector.

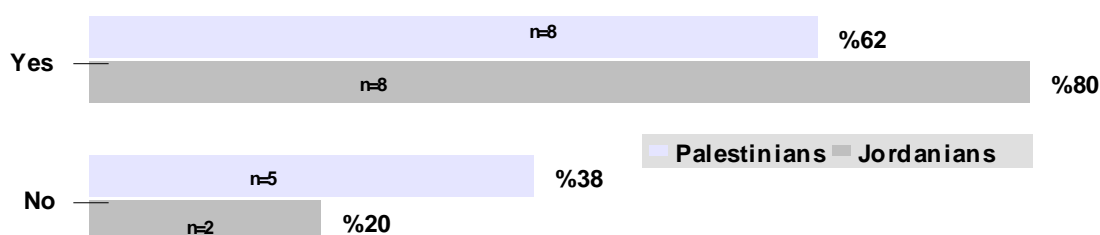


Figure 9: Emphasis on the inter-relation of SDG 5 and SDG 6 towards meeting the targets of both SDGs, in work of female respondents, if applicable

In question eighteen (18) of Appendix A on requirements to engender SDG6 for real implementation, different global approaches were proposed including the adoption of appropriate policies and legislative frameworks, development of gender sensitive action plans, and indicators, and raising public awareness in particular of decision makers. In addition, and more specifically, one expert opinion was that it is better to invest at present in ensuring adequate access to safely managed drinking water and sanitation services in vulnerable communities (in households, schools, places of employment, hospitals) for women and men based on quick assessments and a set of short gender-sensitive consultations, rather than spending scarce time and resources on additional large-scale surveys and complex methodologies to compile national reports. Although it is recognized that gender and age disaggregated indicator methodologies and data collection efforts help to raise awareness, but they should be pursued as the means, and not as the goal of engendering SDG6.

In relation, one quote that was shared by a colleague from the UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme WWAP appropriately summarizes the different proposals “Water is not engendered, is endangered”

The final question of this SDG related section was meant to provoke a reflection of mainly governmental actors on the value of cooperation with the private sector and/or women civil society organizations to strengthen the linkage between SDG5 and SDG6. In Palestine and Jordan, there was a general positive outlook. (Fig. 10)

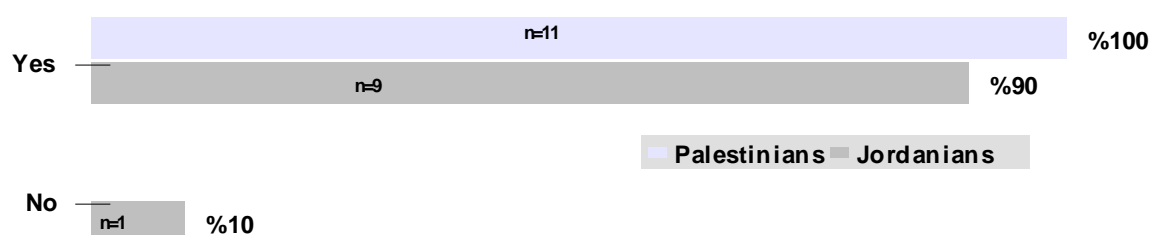


Figure 10: The need for further assistance from E.g. private sector /women CSOs or others to empower women and strengthen the linkage between SDG5 and SDG6

For this question, the respondents were asked to elaborate on their choice. Those that were in favor of the need to cooperate with the private sector and the CSOs emphasized the need for the water sector and its related fields to include all key players, to ensure inclusiveness and to have joint and continuous coordination efforts. The experience of the CSOs offers more practical examples, and reflects the women needs and interests. It was mentioned that there are more women working in the private sector; the latter being a significant employer of the labor force. The capacity building offered and the increase in the percentage of women could encourage more public acceptance of the role of women in the sector. Both civil society organizations and the private sector have rich on ground experiences and active networks with the local communities and women groups. The circular policy (homes to social media to workplaces) role of women is highly effective.

One interesting reflection of the respondent who disagreed with the need of engagement of the CSOs and private sector was that the Government is responsible to lead on the implementation of the sustainable development goals and their interlinkages, and hence the roles and mandates should be clearly defined and respected

Final question of the Questionnaire:

The final question was again an open question to allow those expert women in the water sector of the three countries, that participated in this basic mapping to voice and share their thoughts and recommendations on their personal and their peer women water expert empowerment in terms of water diplomacy and water related decision making. Several highlighted that women, along the spectrum from housekeepers to senior water experts, are affected most by decisions made on water related issues. There is definitely an unrealized potential for a more influential role for women that needs to be acknowledged.

In addition to the general recommendations in the next section under conclusions, several interesting reflections and suggestions were made:

- There is an added benefit to the ability of women to prioritize, build trust and negotiate differently than men;
- There is a need to link water issues with social ones, and integrate women associations with water user associations to better reflect women interests and role;
- It is rewarding to connect readily available cost-effective technological solutions for water and sanitation with principles of gender equity;
- There is a need to tackle the issue of nepotism in the water sector whereby skilled and capable people need to be at the relevant job, regardless of being woman or man; It was proposed to look into building water-women informal groups, along the concept of farmer to farmer schools, and Oxfam-Future Pioneers' water ambassadors initiative

Limitations

Prior to the final conclusions and recommendations, it is noteworthy to point out to some limitations based on this basic mapping exercise:

- The literature in relation to the empowerment of the role of women in water diplomacy to date, per our literature review, is limited and has looked more into the challenges imposed by dominantly male driven societies and fields;
- Given the limited timeframe, and manpower, the analysis is indicative;
- The interview analysis is based on the understanding and the interpretation of the interviewees;
- The sample group was chosen initially from the governmental sector, and their counterparts. There is thus a possible over-representation

Conclusions and Recommendations

Patriarchal societies, related gender inequalities, and customs place constraints on women and limit their ability to participate in decision making generally, and on water issues more specifically given that water

diplomacy requires the use of a combination of traditionally male-dominated fields of specialization. Accordingly, women are often isolated from the job-market and lack access to technologies and training that provide opportunities for employment in the field of water diplomacy. Through capacity building and training, women will be better equipped to use available instruments and institutions and act as agents of change in the water decision-making realm. It is imperative that women be empowered to take part in water-related decisions on all levels. This means enhancing women's civic and political participation, strengthening the role of women in local economies, and bolstering their efforts in society and the work place by tackling discrimination and marginalization, and cultural attitudes, building partnerships and supporting the innovations that will help women live up to their potential. In addition, it is important to institutionalize a gender-responsive approach to peace and security, to promote women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding and decision-making, to engage women in conflict prevention, early warning, and disaster risk reduction and finally to invest in their health, education, and economic empowerment to build stable societies.

Considering that 60-80% of water related work, at the ground level, is undertaken by women (UN WWDR 2016), it is imperative that more women are involved in water management decision making processes. (GMI08 Module 1 Forum: Gender and IWRM) Although this paper provides only indicative ideas on the challenges experienced by a small sample of women professionals in relation to an enhanced role in decision making on water related issues, it is nonetheless an important first step in the articulation of what is needed in the future to continue a more in-depth analysis on this vital topic. Some suggestions for further research include to

Expand the number of female respondents in the target countries;

- Share the results of this basic mapping with the female respondents and formulate focus groups to discuss and expand the scope;
- Design a questionnaire targeting male respondents in the water sector on their perspective of empowering women in water diplomacy in their national countries;
- Assess the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the target countries;

- Conduct a more in-depth desk review of all Jordanian, Lebanese, and Palestinian initiatives that involve women in water diplomacy;
- Expand the scope of inter-relatedness of SDGs, to include in addition to SDGs 5 & 6 at least SDGs 3, and 16
- Review the legislations and regulations governing the role of women in water diplomacy; and
- Prepare a policy brief linking SDG 5 and 6 in the Arab region.

Recommendations for Women:

The most pertinent recommendation to women in the diplomacy world is captured in the words of Susan Jane le Jeune d'Allegeershecque, who was appointed British High Commissioner to Canada in August 2017: " *I think the most important is to believe that anything is possible. I have met far too many young women who impose limitations on themselves*".

Through our exercise of basic mapping, our literature review, our interaction with our colleagues in water sector and its related fields, we would like to make the following general and relevant recommendations towards empowering our role as women in water diplomacy, in its various levels, that also voices the proposals of our respondents and interviewees. It is important to:

- Develop a global perspective to local issues, through the down-scaling to the local context of the principles needed to meet SDG5 and SDG6 collectively;
- Learn from other successful women;
- Initiate a campaign to lobby for governmental policy intervention, led by universities and women movements, to raise awareness and highlight the importance of the Water related fields to attract more women to engage in line with SDGS, given there is already a significant number of women engaged in international relations, foreign missions, international and national advocacy on water;
- Call for universities and schools to encourage and direct young women to pursue more science-based degrees and to diversify specialization into other fields of water science, beyond water engineering to include among others, hydrology, hydrogeology, modeling;

- Lobby for an increased quota for women in the water sector;
- Request for more vocational training in water-related disciplines; and
- Promote whenever possible for the inclusion of women at all levels of decision making.

In conclusion, there is a lot of potential, untapped one, in female water professionals in the 3 target countries, which could be put to use to engage in more fruitful water negotiations both nationally and regionally. It is a joint effort for men and women to enhance and empower the role of women in water diplomacy. From where we stand, women need to do their own “homework” to walk into and lead in the arena of water diplomacy, and the time is ripe and it is now.

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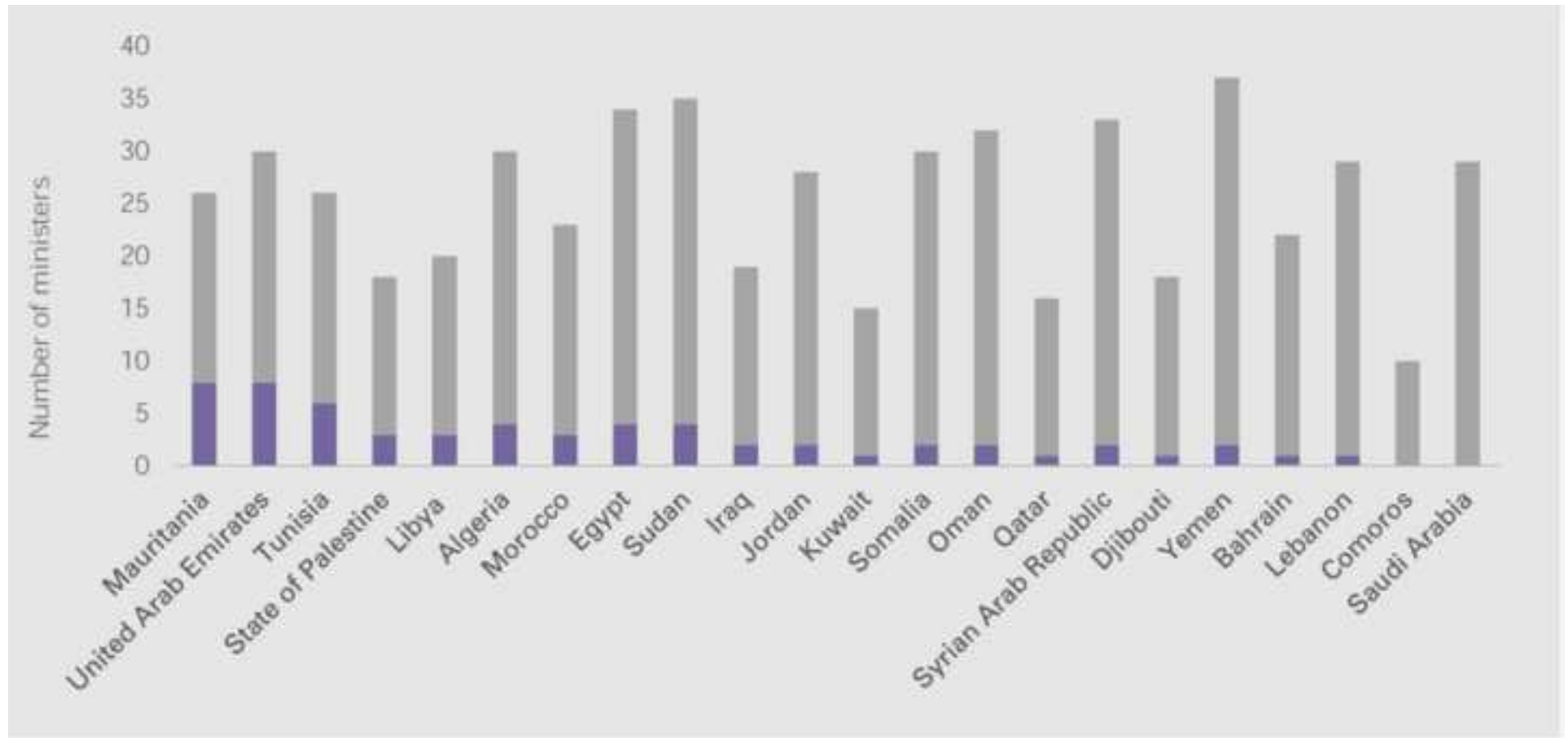
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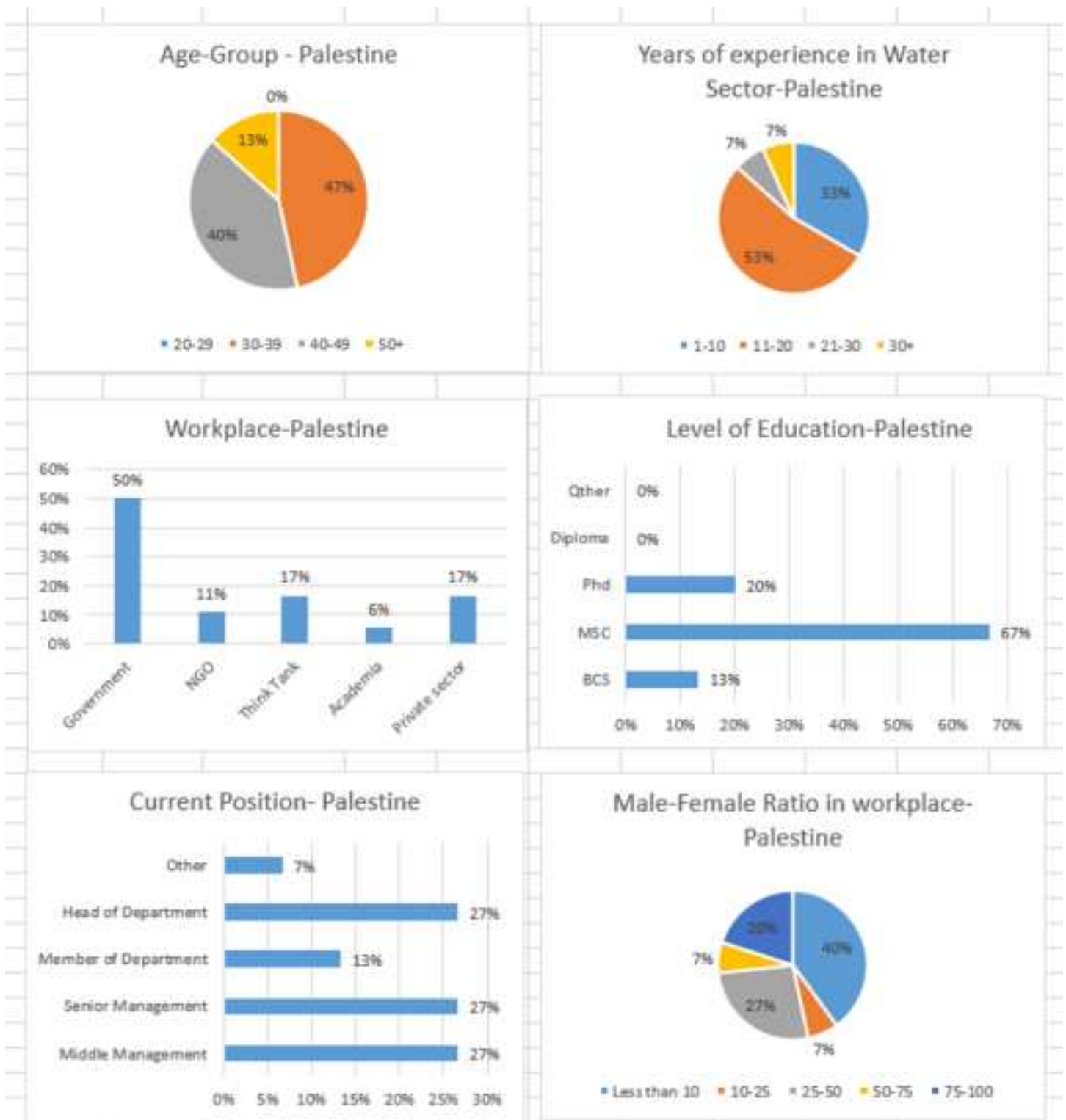
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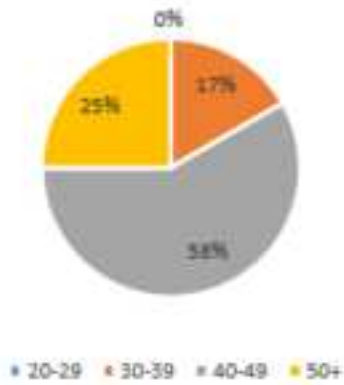
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- 1888 (2009): Called for the appointment of a Special Representative, the deployment of a team of experts on the rule of law and sexual violence in conflict and improved coordination between stakeholders involved in addressing that issue.
- 1889 (2009): Called for the drafting of indicators to monitor the implementation of resolution 1325 and requested that the Secretary-General submit a report to the Security Council on women's participation and inclusion in peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict.
- 1960 (2010): Established a monitoring and reporting mechanism on sexual violence in conflict and set forth the role of United Nations peacekeeping missions in addressing it.
- 2106 (2013): Focused on the accountability of the perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict, and stressed the importance of women's political and economic empowerment during and after conflict.
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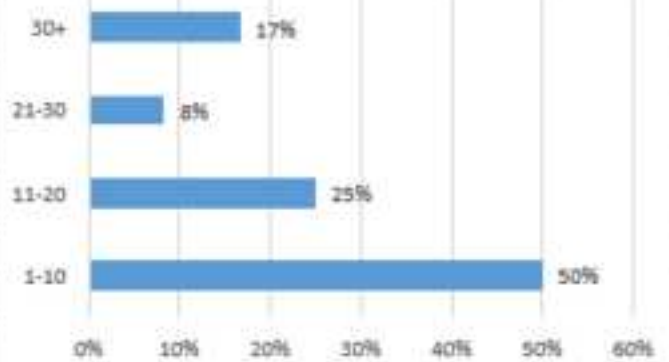
Source: IPU, with data obtained from national governments, permanent missions to the United Nations and publicly available information.



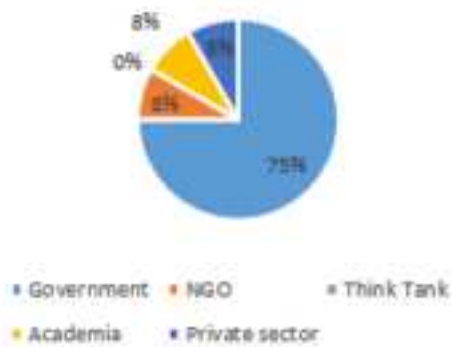
Age Group- Jordan



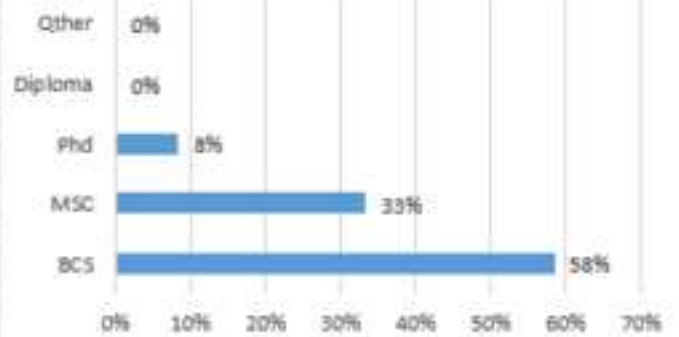
Length of Work Experience- Jordan



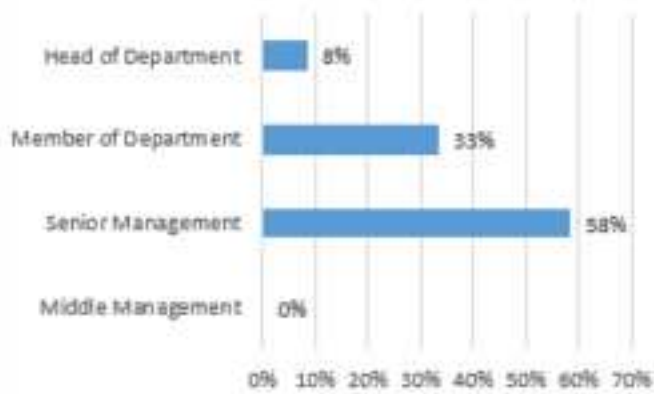
Workplace- Jordan



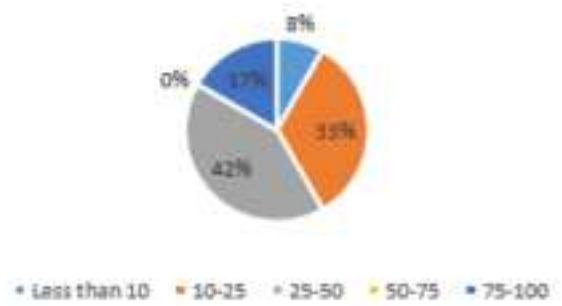
Level of Education- Jordan



Current Position- Jordan



Male- Female Ratio in Workplace- Jordan



Highlights

- This basic mapping is indicative of challenges experienced by a sample of women water experts in their water diplomacy work
- There is an untapped potential that can be enhanced through the development of skills in cross related disciplines, needed in modern water diplomacy
- There is an added value of women inclusiveness for a negotiating team and decision making positions.
- It is a joint effort for men and women to enhance and empower the role of women in water diplomacy

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