

A Comprehensive Approach to Water Diplomacy

Embracing decoloniality, intersectionality and multi-track analysis

Case-study: the GERD dispute between Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan

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ALEXANDRIA

CAIRO

NILE

EGYPT

LUXOR

ASWAN

LAKE NASSER

SUDAN

KHARTOUM

ERITREA

BLUE NILE

LAKE TANA

GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM

SOUTH SUDAN

ETHIOPIA

WHITE NILE

JUBA

UGANDA

DEMOCRATIC

LAKE

For the benefit of
the flowers, we
water the thorns,
too. *Egypt*

A fool is thirsty in
the midst of
water. *Ethiopia*

Never refuse
to give **water**
to your enemies.
Sudan

Proverbs from Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan.

Inspired by the workshops in the Nile River Basin, which seek to gather women together and create a common space to dialogue about shared waters.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper provides an unorthodox approach to water diplomacy, concretely, in the GERD dispute framework. It analyses water diplomacy as a subject that goes beyond the state-centric, Western and masculinised perspective of carrying out current International Relations. Instead, the paper adopts a decolonial, intersectional and multi-track approach that permits inclusivity at all levels and sectors. Water is a natural resource belonging to all members of the society and needs to be protected in a sustainable, inclusive and regional/local-based way. As a result of an extensive research and the experiences of experts in the field, we craft a *manifesto* that challenges conventional water diplomacy into a more comprehensive framework.

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LIST OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

ANWIN	African Network of Women In Infrastructure
AU	African Union
CFA	Cooperative Framework Agreement
DAFNE	Decision Analytic Framework Nexus
EU	European Union
FDP	Final Degree Project
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
IPoE	International Panel of Experts
IPPC	International Panel on Climate Change
IR	International Relations
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NBI	Nile Basin Initiative
PESTEL	Political, Economic, Socio-cultural, Technological, Environmental and Legal
SIWI	Stockholm International Water Institute
SADC	Southern African Development Community Treaty
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TNC	Tripartite Nacional Committee
UNDP	United Nations Development Projects
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WDF	Water Diplomacy Framework
WEF	Water – Energy – Food
WPI	Women’s Power Index
WB	World Bank

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Depiction of how we visualise decoloniality, intersectionality and multi-track water diplomacy all in one.

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

I. Preface

International relations (IR) is the study of how world's sovereign states interact among each other. Today's understanding of IR adopts a multidisciplinary approach, hence the relationship among the world's governments can not be comprehended in isolation. Instead, the government's interaction is intrinsically connected to additional players such as international organisations, multinational companies, NGO's, individuals... as well as other social processes and systems. Thus, IR concerns a multidisciplinary field of study that intertwines international affairs to economics, domestic politics, culture, history, sociology, and other social sciences.

Water diplomacy is a concrete subset of IR that fosters the achievement of established foreign policy goals by promoting the containment, prevention, and settlement of conflicts in order to facilitate regional integration and transboundary water cooperation.¹ In water diplomacy, there is a common awareness of the importance of incorporating the interests of multiple dimensions and actors in the cooperation processes. Understanding the socio-political and environmental background in transboundary basins is critical for water diplomacy practitioners who want to work towards an inclusive and productive cooperation. Hence, a proper water diplomacy can not be understood without a holistic approach that considers not only the socio-political factors but also the different existing levels of action within water governance.

This project analyses the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and its ongoing dynamics. The case considers a dispute among three sovereign states - Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan- in regard to the filling of the GERD. A sustainable water diplomacy- one that contemplates a decolonial, intersectional and multi-track approach- is pivotal for a beneficial and long-lasting resolution to the issue raised among these three countries.

¹ Gloria Salmoral, Nynke C.E. Schaap, , Julia Walschebauer and Areen Alhajaj, "Water diplomacy and nexus governance in a transboundary context: In the search for complementarities", *Science of The Total Environment* vol.690 (November 2019): 85-96, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2019.06.513>

This project is divided into two main methodologies: a theoretical framework- analysing the historical background and the socio-political dimensions- and a *manifesto* - which represents the final product and therefore the applied part.



Figure 1. Graphic representation of the FDP within the IR field (own design)

II. Relevance of the chosen topic to the field of International Relations

Water diplomacy is gaining strong relevance in the International Relations' arena. The importance of water has also become a considerable issue in the foreign policy agenda since water scarcity is threatening many states. As a direct consequence, it is raising tensions across borders: more than 40% of the world's population² is dependent on freshwater from rivers, typically shared among two or more countries.

On-going tendencies such as climate change, environmental deterioration, the expansion of the economies, growing populations and gender inequality, among other political and socio-economic factors will accelerate the need for water diplomacy.

III. Motivation of the chosen topic

After taking Seminar V: Middle East and North Africa Studies, we realized that we liked very much studying the characteristics of the region as well as its trends. In particular, we focused on the GERD dispute. From an international perspective, it was interesting getting to know the dynamics of the conflict, the geopolitical interests behind it and the on-going negotiations. During a 6-month stay in Egypt for the exchange program, we saw that the conflict itself went further beyond the international lenses.

It has been among our interests the correlation between gender and climate change issues- in concrete the close relation between women and water-, the decolonial praxis of knowledge and how to let go of the idea that IR is only constituted of sovereign states. That is why our FDP tries to analyse not only the inter-state level dynamics of the conflict but also the other existing tracks within water diplomacy. Our focus is to adopt a more deconstructed path and go through all the premises of water diplomacy under a decolonial and intersectional lense that takes into account all the levels of water governance.

² Martina Klimes, "What is water diplomacy? Special issue out now!", SIWI, April 4, 2019, accessed May 4, 2021, <https://www.siw.org/latest/what-is-water-diplomacy-special-issue-out-now/>

IV. General and specific objectives of the research

The **main aim** of this FDP is to analyse which features should water diplomacy include to be decolonial and intersectional while pursuing a multi-track approach. As this paper constitutes an applied project, we have designed a *manifesto* that advocates for a new perspective for water diplomacy, and in which we have included the adjustments we believe should be made. As a fundamental purpose we question the technicality that is a resource of liberalism, by these means, we consider it is an incongruence to build a technique as it represents falling into colonial thinking. That is the reason why the proposed *manifesto* does not target a specific group or individual, as we do not intend to claim an absolute truth but provide a tool that enhances plurality, inclusion and lets go of the colonial past.

First and foremost, it is crucial to acknowledge the meanings behind the particular focus we have chosen. We adopt the following definitions:

i) decolonialism/decoloniality: school of thought centred on untangling the development of knowledge from what it is believed as a predominantly Eurocentric "episteme." It refers "to the process of deconstructing colonial ideologies regarding the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches." ³

ii) intersectionality: theoretical framework for analysing how different facets of a person's social and political roles interact to produce various forms of prejudice and privilege. Multiple factors of benefit and disadvantage are defined by intersectionality; gender, caste, sex, race, class, sexuality, religion, disability, physical appearance, and height are examples of these influences. These conflicting social identities have the potential to be both empowering and oppressive.⁴

³ Shannon Paige, "Time to Decolonise Aid: Insights and lessons from a global consultation," *Peace Direct*. (May 2021): 13. https://www.peacedirect.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/PD-Decolonising-Aid_Second-Edition.pdf

⁴ "Intersectional feminism: what it means and why it matters right now", UN Women, July 1, 2020, accessed May 19, 2021, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/explainer-intersectional-feminism-what-it-means-and-why-it-matters>

iii) **multi-track diplomacy**: study that reaffirms the potential of actor-inclusive approaches, arguing that it is necessary to recognise the possibilities of cultural norms in informal cooperation processes in addition to formal legal norms. ⁵

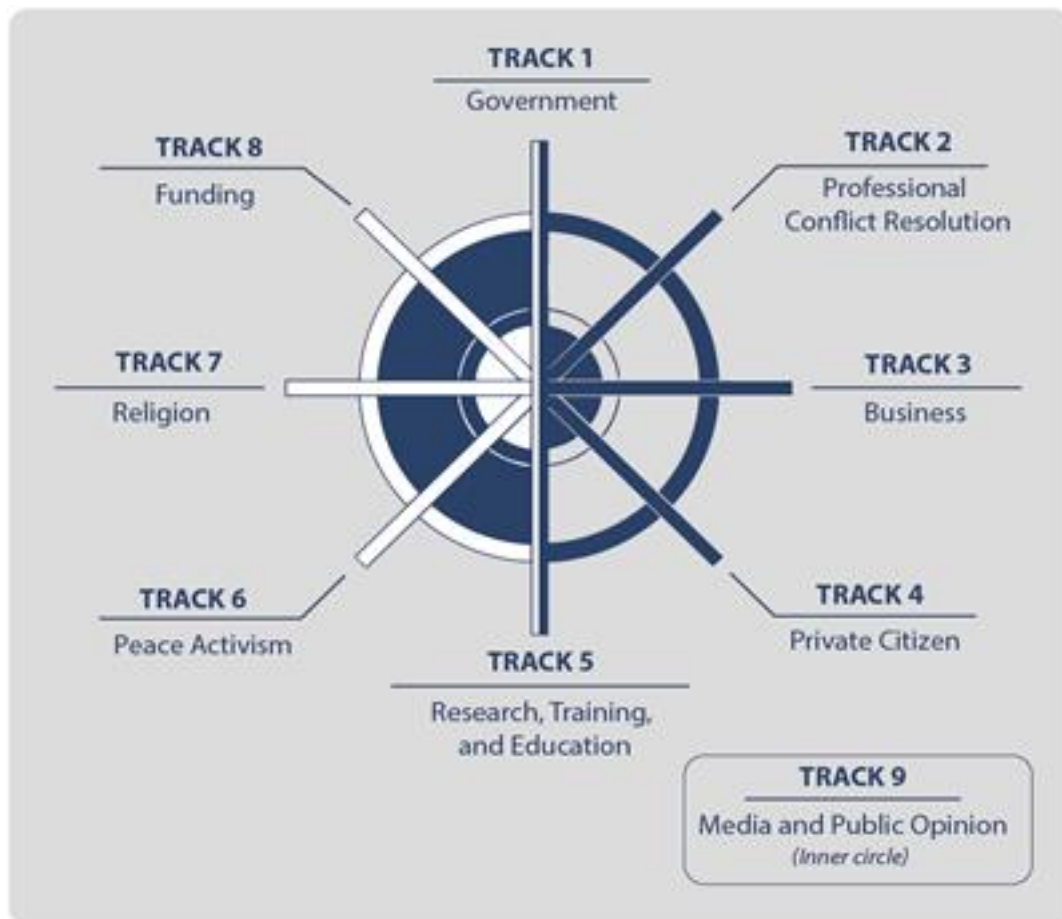


Figure 2. Multi-track diplomacy diagram (Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy)

V. Explanation of the methodology to be used

In order to provide the proper theoretical framework and mechanisms for this FDP, we will conduct the methodology according to the following premises. The first ground on which this thesis lies upon is its nature of applied research rather than a dissertation. Hence, our project will be aimed towards the development of procedures rather than theories and predictions,

⁵ “What is multi-track diplomacy?”, Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, (nd.), accessed May 19, 2021, <https://imtdsite.wordpress.com/about/what-is-multi-track-diplomacy/#:~:text=Multi%2DTrack%20Diplomacy%20is%20a,goal%3A%20a%20world%20at%20peace>

meaning that the purpose is not to grow knowledge-based cognition but to solve a functional problem.

To start with, the data will be collected through inductive reasoning and our evidence will be obtained using qualitative data. For further explanation on which will be the main research methods we will be using:

- Primary Research: involves active participation from the researcher themselves.

Interviews: following our premises of adopting a multidisciplinary approach, we have conducted interviews to different professionals on the subjects. There are a variety of profiles, ranging from water diplomacy experts, peace and conflict analysts, water security specialists, water consultants, hydrologists, gender theory scholars and decoloniality theorists.

Following the nature of the interviews, we have executed:

- i) Structured interviews: everyone is asked the same questions in the same order and there has been no further debate. This has been the case of our interviews done via mail exchange.
- ii) Semi-structured interviews: combination of standard questions that we asked all respondents, as well as individualized probes to get more information from them. This has been the case of our interviews done via video phone call.

As a last remark, all the interviews have been self-transcribed by us and the ones conducted in another language have been self-translated.

- Secondary research: data previously collected by experts for other purposes. We have gathered a summary and synthesis of data and literature that has been published.

Another premise of our methodology is its exploratory nature rather than explanatory. By these means, this research's purpose is to examine the main characteristics of an under-researched problem. The theoretical framework approached in the water diplomacy realm is indeed an established issue, but our practical focus is on a newly-identified one.

With respect to the process used and following Christopher Lamont's premises in *Research Methods in International Relations*⁶, this project is guided through empiricism, meaning that it will be grounded on measurement of incidents and even though the collected data could be weighed against other theories or hypothesis, the results are based on a real experience.

All things considered, this project will be procured through a decolonial and gender-based perspective in terms of the writing and also a gender-balanced bibliography, as well as an approach far from the classical Western manner of interpretation.

VI. Literature review

The structure of this literature review tackles already existing literature on decoloniality, intersectional feminism, water diplomacy and the correlation of the latter with women.

On decoloniality

While formal and explicit colonialism ended with the decolonization of the Americas in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the decolonization of most of the Global South in the late 20th, its "descendants", Western imperialism and globalization continue to perpetuate the oppressions under an euphemistic approach. As a general statement, it is of utter importance to distinguish between postcolonialism and decolonialism: the aim of postcolonialism as a critical viewpoint is to gain a better understanding of the processes involved while decoloniality takes into account postcolonial thought and aims to abolish lingering colonial systems and thinking through political action.

Decoloniality as such was developed as the colonial matrix of power was established during the 16th century. Some scholars have argued about the significance of this matrix of power, as Anibal Quijano stated "the colonial matrix of power produced social discrimination eventually variously codified as racial, ethnic, anthropological or national according to specific historic, social, and geographic contexts"⁷. Moreover, the professor Walter Mignolo -known for coining the group Modernity/Coloniality in which post-colonial studies are situated- questions in which

⁶ Christopher Lamont, *Research Methods in International Relations* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2015).

⁷ Anibal Quijano, "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality", *Cultural Studies* vol.21, n°.2-3 (April 2007): 168-178.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09502380601164353?journalCode=rcus20>

ways one can lead to decolonisation if they are not critical on the principles upon which the Western political theory is built.

On a final note, María Lugones, a feminist philosopher, built knowledge on the term decolonising gender, in which she refers as “the enactment of a critique of racialised, colonial and capitalist heterosexualist gender oppression as a lived transformation of the social”⁸. We have taken this term as reference for our *manifesto*, when dealing with the epistemology of the decolonial.

On intersectional feminism

The most important framework chosen for this project *in situ* is that of intersectionality. Following up the feminist theory, we considered of utter importance to project this thesis in a manner that uplifts gender issues in the international relations arena. The main representative scholar for this approach is Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, the academic who coined the term intersectionality in 1989. Crenshaw considers intersectionality as “a prism for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other,”⁹ Intersectionality broadens the scope of feminism's first and second waves, which mostly centred on the perspectives of white, middle-class women, to include the diverse experiences of women of colour, poor women, immigrants, and other classes. Intersectional feminism seeks to distinguish itself from white feminism by recognizing the diversity of women's experiences and ideas.

As per another scholar's perspective, Kimberly Hutchings a professor of international relations, argues that “feminism challenges realism by bringing in different sources of explanation, different ways of thinking about central practices like war, it brings to debate that the state is not the only significant actor within international relations.”¹⁰ By these means, it opens up the range of non-state actors, giving importance to individual men and women.

⁸ María Lugones, "Toward a Decolonial Feminism", *Hypatia* vol. 25, n°. 4 (2010): 742-59. Accessed May 4, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40928654>.

⁹ “Intersectional feminism: what it means and why it matters right now”, UN Women, July 1, 2020, accessed May 19, 2021, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/explainer-intersectional-feminism-what-it-means-and-why-it-matters>

¹⁰ *International Relations – Feminism and International Relations (4/7)*. YouTube. YouTube, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajAWGztPUiU&t=2s>.

What has been said about water diplomacy?

Though it is a relatively recent subject matter, scholars and journalists have entered the debate with a very precise approach. To enter in the topic, scholars Aida Cecilia and Ana Isabel wrote “Un debate global sobre el agua: enfoques actuales y casos de estudio” in which they portray water as one of the natural elements that acquires a relevant weight in the great debates of international relations of the XXI century. It also shows how the use of this natural resource is generating tensions at the local and international level.¹¹ Journalist Bryan Lufkin wrote an article for BBC called “Why 'Hydro-Politics' Will Shape the 21st Century.”; he outlines the narrative behind water resources referred to as the “next oil”, and forecasts that while water presents obvious potential conflict, it could also accelerate global cooperation.¹² Pursuing this line of debate, our last studied scholar, Shafiqul Islam tackles the dilemma of how water diplomacy can serve as an approach to manage complex water problems; he takes the Water Diplomacy Framework (WDF), an emerging approach that diagnoses water problems and proposes sustainable resolutions that incorporate diverse viewpoints and compares it with the Conventional Conflict Resolution Theory.¹³

The debate on water diplomacy has gone far beyond the limits of the WDF. By these means, a new approach has emerged, the so-called water-energy-food nexus (WEF Nexus), which recognises the interdependencies between water, energy, and food systems, where changes in demand, policies, and management have an impact on the other systems and the broader environment.¹⁴ As a result of this complexity, many sectors and actors need to interact and cooperate for proper outcomes in the field.

According to Mohammad Al-Saidi and Amr Hefny, the current diplomatic negotiations in the Nile Basin do not address this multi-sectoral framework. Thus, both scholars propose to address water diplomacy through the WEF Nexus to explore and identify synergies for better

¹¹ Aida Cecilia and Ana Isabel, “Un debate global sobre el agua: enfoques actuales y casos de estudio”, *UAM Ediciones* vol.45 (January 2021), https://revistas.uam.es/relacionesinternacionales/issue/view/relacionesinternacionales2020_45/615

¹² Lufkin, Bryan. “Why 'Hydro-Politics' Will Shape the 21st Century”, *BBC*, June 16, 2017. <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20170615-why-hydro-politics-will-shape-the-21st-century>

¹³ Shafiqul Islam and Amanda C. Rapella, “Water Diplomacy: A Negotiated Approach to Manage Complex Water Problems”, *Water Research & Education* vol.155 n°1 (August 2015): 1-10, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1936-704X.2015.03190.x>

¹⁴ Gloria Salmoral, Nynke C.E. Schaap, , Julia Walschebauer and Areen Alhajaj, “Water diplomacy and nexus governance in a transboundary context: In the search for complementarities”, *Science of The Total Environment* vol.690 (November 2019): 85-96, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969719330864?via%3Dihub>

cooperation among key sectors, actors and institutions.¹⁵ In Figure 3, it can be seen how the WEF Nexus interacts with water diplomacy.

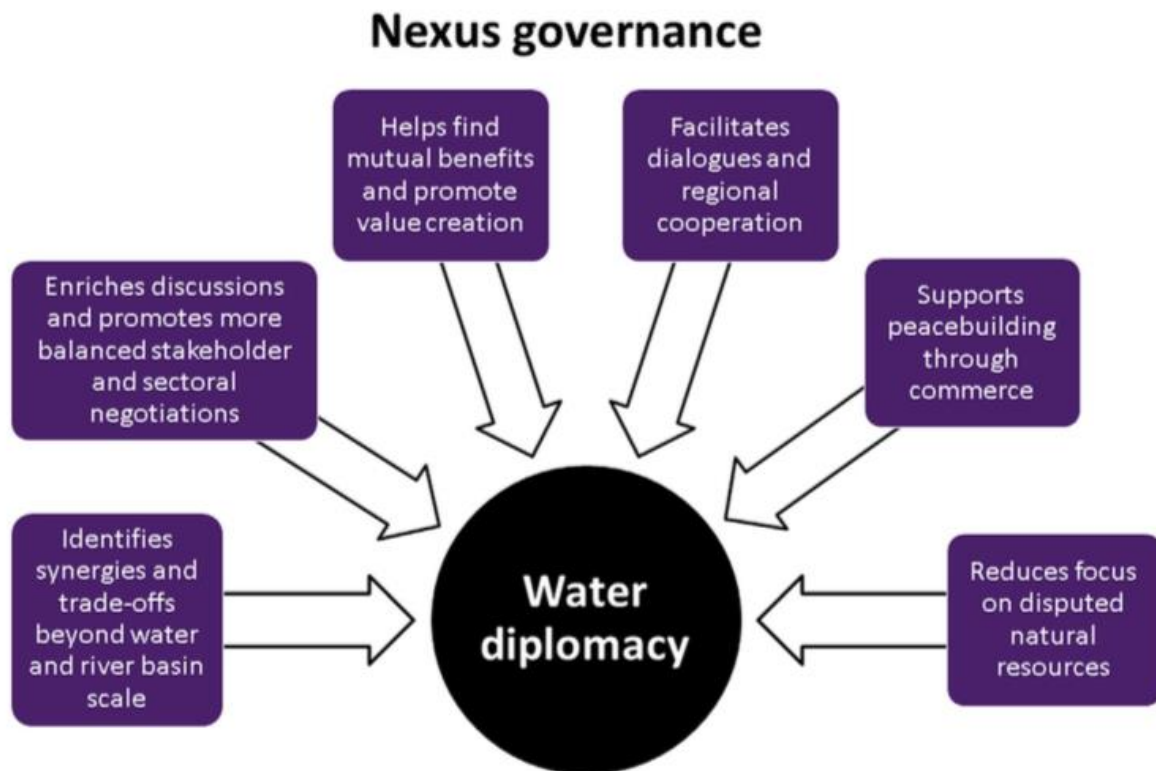


Figure 3. Nexus governance within water governance diagram (Science of the Total Environment)

Women and Water

As the scholars Habib Ayed and Reem Saad state in their article Gender, Poverty and Agro-Biodiversity Conservation in Rural Egypt and Tunisia, women throughout history have had a special link with their surrounding ecosystems. They have participated in the conservation and management of the natural resources for basic survival and food security.¹⁶ The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) also estimates that women are responsible for more than 50% of agricultural food production in the world, and this is directly linked to the use of water resources for agricultural production.¹⁷ Ayed and Saad describe in their research analysis that there is a correlation between women and food security. They document that women contribute

¹⁵ Mohammad Al-Saidi and Amr Hefny, “Institutional arrangements for beneficial regional cooperation on water, energy and food priority issues in the Eastern Nile Basin”, *Journal of Hydrology* vol.562 (July 2018): 821-831. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhydrol.2018.05.009>

¹⁶ Habib Ayed and Reem Saad, “Agrarian Transformation in the Arab World”, *Cairo Papers in Social Science* vol.32, n°2 (Summer 2009): 1-17. <https://seketmaaref.files.wordpress.com/2018/11/agrarian-transformation-in-the-arab-world.pdf>

¹⁷ “Women's contributions to agricultural production and food security: Current status and perspective”, FAO (n.d), <http://www.fao.org/3/x0198e/x0198e02.htm>

to food security more than men and that they use more efficiently the same amount of resources. Moreover, women in rural areas participate significantly in most agricultural activity, thus using water resources. Their paper also describes that even though the role of women in reducing food insecurity and food production is important, they are not taken into account when it comes to decision-making processes as it happens in the GERD Dispute.¹⁸

During an interview conducted with the specialist in the field, Kanika Thakar, she mentioned that women have a really intimate knowledge on how water is collected and how it should be managed. Because of their interaction with the natural environment, women better understand patterns that are happening within the natural environment because of that exposure. Therefore, so much information is being lost in the process of avoiding women's representation in such matters. According to specialist Stefan Döring, women's empowerment in Arab states (and everywhere) should be a top focus in any development effort, and the water sector is no exception. The most significant distinction from other sectors is that women are disproportionately affected by water shortage and inadequate WASH conditions.

VII. Limitations

During the course of this project, we have faced diverse constraints that have had an impact in its procedure and outcome. Among the limitations; 1) **decolonial language** has never been taught to us in the degree and therefore we have challenged ourselves to learn how to conduct it on our own. There is still terminology that we have not introduced because of our lack of expertise on how to proper use it; 2) **liquidity of gender**, in this sense, our project has adopted a sort of binarity of gender, adopting the dualities of men and women and leaving the non-binarity of gender and the queer theory aside, as the existing literature on water diplomacy does not consider this liquidity; 3) **lack of previous research studies** in the topic, in particular, a decolonial and intersectional approach to water diplomacy, which has presented the opportunity to highlight new gaps and further development in this area of study; 4) **refusal of interviewees to answer**, as some of our questions were interpreted as possibly politically sensitive.

¹⁸ Habib Ayed and Reem Saad, "Agrarian Transformation in the Arab World", *Cairo Papers in Social Science* vol.32, n°2 (Summer 2009): 1-17. <https://seketmaaref.files.wordpress.com/2018/11/agrarian-transformation-in-the-arab-world.pdf>

CHAPTER II - CONTEXTUALISATION

I. Historical context and the current state of affairs of the Nile dispute

The Nile River is the longest river in north-eastern Africa, and it crosses 10 countries; Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. The Nile is formed by the Blue Nile, which is born in the highlands of Ethiopia and by the White Nile, coming from the Great Lakes region of central Africa. The Nile River is endowed with natural water resources and it has been the lifeline of nearly half a billion people by providing fertile agricultural land, for being a source of irrigation and for being an important trade route in the region. Even though most of the riparian countries have relied upon it, the pressures and conflicts over who owns the Nile River have never ceased. These tensions have their roots in the 19th century when colonialism was settled.

The Legacy of the British Colonialism in the Nile Dispute

In the mid 19th century, the diplomatic confrontation between the different European states led to the Scramble for Africa. The European contact with the Horn of Africa was rather limited until the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, which caught Europe's attention due to the area's strategic position and importance. In the Berlin Conference in 1884, the basin of the Nile fell under the rule of the British empire. The British controlled the Great Lakes region (the source of the White Nile) and then, they turned their attention to ensure hegemony over the Blue Nile (originating in the Ethiopian highlands). The British understood that the economic development and the political stability depended on the Nile control and so in May 1902, they signed the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement.¹⁹ Within the agreement it was promised that Ethiopia would not build any dam that could affect the flow of the Blue Nile in Egypt.

¹⁹ Wuhibegezer Ferede and Sheferawu Abebe, "The Efficacy of Water Treaties in the Eastern Nile Basin", *Africa Spectrum* vol. 49, n°.1 (2014): 55-67 <https://d-nb.info/1065610211/34>

Furthermore, as the British were producing cotton in the Egyptian's lands and they wanted to maximise their production, they constructed the first dam in the Nile, the Aswan Low Dam.²⁰

The political environment in the late 19th century in Egypt was marked by the increasing Egyptian nationalism and the desire of independence. Egypt first became a protectorate in 1914 and it later gained limited independence in 1922. As a punishment for the turbulent relationship between the Egyptian society and the British, the colonial empire created another dam in a very strategic region, in El-Gezira, where the Blue and the White Nile rivers confluence. The Nile was an effective political weapon and the construction of the dam affected Egypt's flow of the Nile.

The relationship between Egypt and the British empire began to deteriorate and that threatened the control of the Suez Canal. In 1929, and as a result of this potential threat, letters were exchanged between Egypt's semi-independent administration and the British government. The outcome of this exchange resulted in the Anglo-Egyptian Nile Water Agreement, in which Britain awarded Egypt with exclusive control over the full course of the Nile waters, leaving indigenous people upstream out of control of the shared resources.²¹ The agreement favoured the Egyptians over the other riparian states. As it may seem obvious, the agreement reached was bilateral and the nature of the problem -the use of shared water resources- remained. Ethiopia never recognised the validity of the Anglo-Egyptian Nile Water Agreement and today it still rests unsolved.²²

The Spillover Effect of the Cold War Era over the Nile Waters

In the post-Second World War context, the international system changed and so did the relations of power. The United States (US) was the hegemonic power and the dynamics of the Cold War started to shape. Britain lost control over territories and the US wanted to finance the

²⁰ Travis Cook, "Engineering Modernity: The Aswan Low Dam and Modernizing the Nile", *Department of History* (2013): 1-30. <https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=his>

²¹ Wuhibegezer Ferede and Sheferawu Abebe, "The Efficacy of Water Treaties in the Eastern Nile Basin", *Africa Spectrum* vol. 49, n°.1 (2014): 55-67 <https://d-nb.info/1065610211/34>

²² Elias Ashebir, "The Politics of the Nile Basin" (Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 2009), pp.1. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/39666211.pdf>

Aswan High Dam in Egypt, with the aim of getting closer to the actors of the region. However, the offer was withdrawn when Egyptian President Nasser adapted the Egyptian foreign policy closer to the nonalignment movement. In order to finance the Aswan High Dam, Nasser nationalised the British and French-owned Suez Canal and this led to the Suez Canal crisis in 1956. Britain, France and Israel attacked Egypt as they were about to lose a valuable waterway but soon withdrew their troops with the intervention of the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping force.²³

New states were emerging and so were the requests over the shared waters of the Nile River. This is the case of Sudan, which became independent of Egypt and the British rule in 1956. The newly African state comprised around 60% of the entire Nile Basin area and had huge agricultural potential.²⁴ However, the agreement signed in 1929, under the Sudanese British rule, over the use of water resources was not benefiting Sudan. Two years after Sudan's independence, the Sudanese army perpetrated a coup d'état and overthrown the former government. Ibrahim Abboud, Sudanese General, had strong links with President Nasser and as a result, Egypt and Sudan signed in 1959 the first bilateral agreement over shared water resources under the name of the Nile Waters Agreement.²⁵

Sudan has been in domestic turmoil since its early independence, The First Sudanese Civil and the Second Sudanese Civil War. The former ended with a peace agreement signed in Kenya and with the Southern secession of Sudan following a referendum in 2011. The creation of South Sudan, the last new state in Africa since the decolonisation, brought new questions over the ownership of the Nile waters and asked for the revision of the agreements signed over the Nile, since the new state was not included in the agreement. A new Nile basin country emerged and the complexity over water shared resources over the River Nile became even more difficult to solve.

Sudan and Ethiopia had gone through similar paths for the last two decades. During the transitional government of Ethiopia in 1993, Ethiopia and Egypt agreed to settle their water

²³ “Why was the Suez Crisis so Important?” IWM, accessed June 15, 2020.

²⁴ AlJazeera English. “Struggle Over the Nile - Legacy of dispute” *YouTube* video, 47:35. June 15, 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGPJXQ9aJ7M>

²⁵ *Ibid.*

dispute under the Framework for General Cooperation, in which the countries committed themselves not to implement water projects that could harm the interests of the other's party.²⁶

A Continuous Dispute over the Shared Water Resources of the Nile

The agreements that still lie at the heart of today's struggle over the Nile are the ones signed in 1929 and 1959. Nile upstream countries have seen these past agreements as colonial legacies and they have demanded their own rights over the share of the Nile waters. The launching of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) in 1999 is a clear example of the grievances resulting from these historical agreements. The establishment of NBI was the first step to tackle the share of water resources over the Nile from a multilateral and cooperative perspective. The creation of this forum which comprised the 10 Nile Basin countries could be described as the emergence of the first water diplomatic talks over the Nile waters. One of the main goals of the NBI was the establishment of a framework agreement that could replace the earlier bilateral treaties signed in the past. This framework is known as the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) and it was signed in 2010 by some Nile riparian countries. The CFA has not been ratified neither by Egypt nor Sudan due to disagreements over some articles.²⁷

The game changer of the situation came in 2011, when Ethiopia announced the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in the Blue Nile, located about 30 km upstream of the border with Sudan.²⁸ Huge and long negotiations have been carried out among these three countries since the announcement of the construction. Nevertheless, constant political turmoil and continuous domestic instability in the region have not yet brought a solution to the long-lasting disagreement. The dispute over the GERD has become a potential threat to the population of the neighbouring countries and the situation has been aggravated by the social, economic and environmental realities.

²⁶ "Nile river agreements and issues", Reuters, July 27, 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-nile-factbox-sb-idUSTRE56Q3MD20090727>

²⁷ "Nile River Basin Initiative." International Waters Governance. Accessed March 4, 2021. <http://www.internationalwatersgovernance.com/nile-river-basin-initiative.html>

²⁸ "Ethiopia - Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)", *International Hydropower Association*, (nd.), accessed March 4, 2021. <https://www.hydropower.org/sediment-management-case-studies/ethiopia-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam-gerd>

II. Nature of the problem and actors involved

Early Years after Decolonisation and Third Wave of Feminism in the MENA Region

Once the historical background of this case study has been previously developed, the following step is going deep into the nature of the problem that causes this project's *raison d'être*. For the past century, gender inequality has endured several changes in what regards to the political, social and economic scope, both in the Middle East and the North Africa region. The mid and late 20th century marked, together with the end of colonialism, a rise in women's consciousness for their rights and liberty and so a new wave of feminism emerged. This motivated the later legal, economic and social reforms implemented in the area, together with women's involvement in political movements and social life. As part of this third wave of feminism, postcolonial feminism was developed in the 1980's. It considered power relations as a direct consequence of colonialism and identified gender binarism and "female" gender oppression as colonial issues forcibly introduced to racialized communities in the Global South. It defended that sexism, racism, classism and other forms of oppression are a consequence of coloniality and intended, through decoloniality, to abolish them, eventually returning to pre-colonial dynamics or developing new dynamics.

Modernity/coloniality

African societies started to be forced to implement a modernisation theory to transform themselves into "reformed nations". Hence, there were several waves of modernisation movements which invaded the regional discussions. Modernity actually emerged in the aftermath of the 18th-century's "Enlightenment," when a set of specific socio-cultural norms, behaviours, and practices were born. According to Walter D. Mignolo, a theorist in the field, there is no differentiation between modernity and coloniality, for they both reside in the pillars of Western Civilization.²⁹ Mignolo defines the matrix of power in which coloniality is depicted as a framework of control and hegemony over authority. In his book "On decoloniality" written together with Catherine E. Walsh, he explains how this matrix is constructed over domains of control that support one another-and how these domains have been invented by rhetoric of

²⁹ Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics and Praxis* (London: Duke University Press, 2018), pp 18-152

modernity-. For instance, the flows that run from the domain of political authority (e.g the state) to the economy (capitalism) enforce racial and sexual classifications and rankings.³⁰

Modernisation Movements and Gender Gaps

What made the modernism discourses more relevant was the role that women would play in them. “Modernists argued that reforms in the position of women in the economic, educational, and legal spheres would lead to greater gender equality in all spheres.”³¹

Despite modernist’s theoretical beliefs, it was women in the region who first acknowledged the contradictory nature of modernisation projects and proved that they did not lead to more gender equality but instead were perpetuating it. A clear example of how this rationale can be accounted for is through the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), one of the indicators provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which quantifies the amount of inequalities between women’s and men’s opportunities. It includes three sectors of scope: political participation, economic participation and control over economic resources. According to GEM, the Arab region's ranking is lower than any region except sub-Saharan Africa. Arab countries have the lowest rate of women's participation in the workforce and the lowest rate of representation in parliaments.³²

Another index that helps visualise the lack of gender parity particularly in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region is the Women’s Power Index³³, created by Women and Foreign policy, which aims to picture the gender gap in political representation. As this case study is based on the countries involved in the GERD Dispute, the scores of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan can be found below on Figure 4, 5 and 6.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Pinar Ilkcaracan, "Women, Sexuality, and Social Change in the Middle East and the Maghreb", *Social Research* vol.69, n°3 (Fall 2002): 753-79. <http://0-www.jstor.org.biblio.url.edu/stable/40971572>

³² Ibid.

³³ B. Vogelstein, Rachel and Alexandra Bro. “Women's Power Index Tracks Women's Political Representation”. Council on Foreign Relations. February 2, 2020. Accessed March 4, 2021. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/womens-power-index-tracks-womens-political-representation>

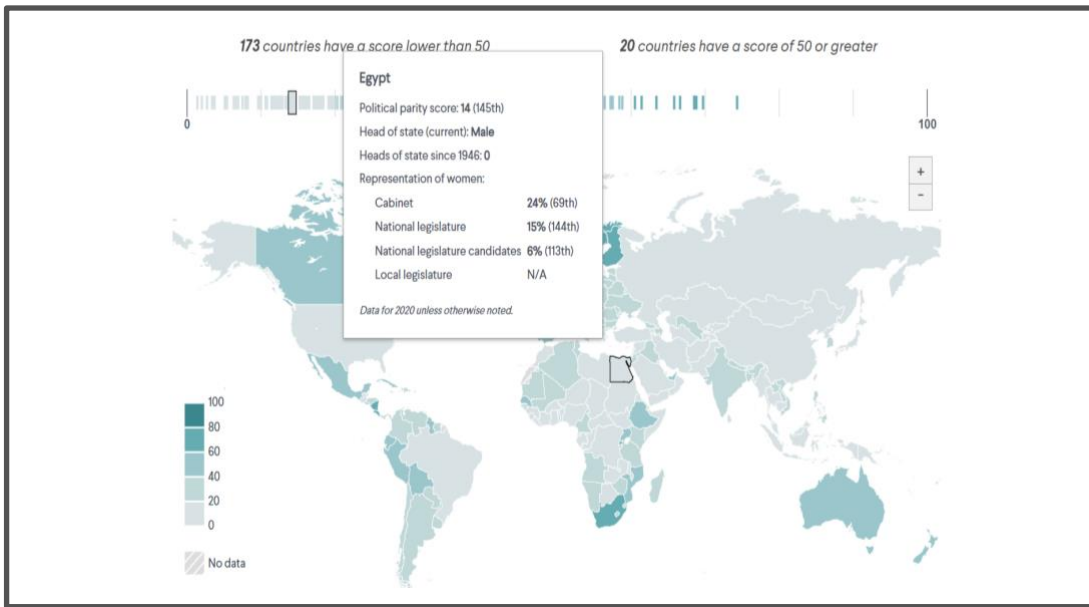


Figure 4. Egypt in Women's Power Index (Council on Foreign Relations)



Figure 5. Ethiopia in Women's Power Index (Council on Foreign Relations)

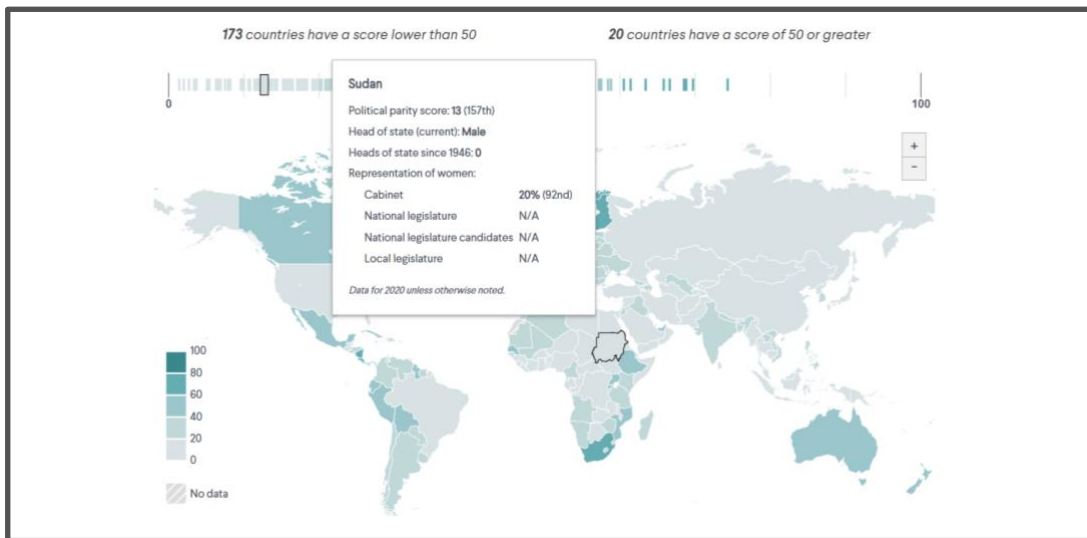


Figure 6. Sudan in Women's Power Index (Council on Foreign Relations)

As shown in the indexes, Ethiopia is the only country close to a general trend in parity, having almost half of equality in the cabinet and a female head of the state. However, Egypt's political parity score is as low as it could be with only a 14% while Sudan does not even have female representation either in national or local legislature.

Chronological Analysis of the actors involved in the several negotiations taken place since Ethiopia announced the project of the GERD in 2011

- **2012. International Panel of Experts (IPoE):** 2 national experts from each country and 4 international experts from UK, Germany, France and South Africa (all of them men)³⁴: Dr. Sherif Mohamady Elsayed / Dr.Khaled Hamed from Egypt, Eng.Gedion Asfaw / Dr.Yilma Seleshi from Ethiopia, Dr. Ahmed Eltayeb Ahmed / Eng. Deyad Hussein Deyab from Sudan and Dr. Bernanrd Yon / Mr. John D.M.Roe / Mr.Egon Failer/Dr.Thinus Basson as International Experts.
- **2014. Tripartite National Committee (TNC):** water ministers of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan and their teams of advisors and the experts of the IpoE (all of them men)³⁵: Dr. Hossam Moghazi from Egypt, Alemayehu Tegenu from Ethiopia, Mutaz Musa Abdalla Salim from Sudan.
- **2015. Declaration of Principles on GERD:** the 3 leaders of the involved countries sign the Declaration of Principles on Gerd (all of them men)³⁶: Abdel Fattah El Sisi from Egypt, Hailemariam Desalegn from Ethiopia, Omer Hassan Elbashir from Sudan.
- **2018. Establishment of National Independent Research Study Group:** the 3 countries' intelligence chiefs and foreign and water ministers established the National Independent Research Study Group (one woman was involved).

³⁴ “International Panel of Experts (IPoE) on Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Project (GERDP)”, (May 31, 2013), accessed May 28, 2021. https://www.scidev.net/wp-content/uploads/site_assets/docs/international_panel_of_experts_for_ethiopian_renaissance_dam_final_report.pdf

³⁵ “Briefing: 1st Meeting of Tripartite National Committee on Renaissance Dam”, *Horn Affairs*, September 29, 2014. <https://hornaffairs.com/2014/09/29/briefing-1st-meeting-of-tripartite-national-committee-on-renaissance-dam/>

³⁶ “Agreement on Declaration of Principles between The Arab Republic of Egypt, The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia And The Republic of the Sudan On The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Project (GERDP) Preamble”, (n.d.), accessed May 28, 2021.



Figure 7. Lack of parity during a negotiation session (Crisis Group)

Bearing in mind the difficulties that are carried with the intention of transforming a paternalistic and patriarchal system, there are in reality some existing tools that can help with this shift towards a gender balanced structure. The 31st of October 2000, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted the resolution 13/25.³⁷ It calls for a gender balanced way of carrying out negotiations determined to solve disputes of any nature. An existing tool can be the so-called gender mainstreaming which is “the process of assessing the often different implications for women and men of any plans, policies, and activities of all actors involved. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is often described as achieving gender equality.”³⁸ Other drivers of change shall be found within regional and national institutions, for instance the African Union with its aspirations to end inequalities by 2063.

³⁷ “S/RES/1325. Security Council Resolution on women and peace and security”, United Nations Security Council, (October, 2000), <https://peacemaker.un.org/node/105>

³⁸ Robert Egnell, "Gender Perspectives and Military Effectiveness: Implementing UNSCR 1325 and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security", *PRISM* vol.6, n°.1 (2016): 72-89. Accessed March 4, 2021. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26470433>

CHAPTER III – DEVELOPMENT

I. SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis is a tactical planning strategy for identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in relation to project planning. Concretely for this project, the strategy behind is designing a water diplomacy *manifesto* that is both decolonial and intersectional. The analysis presumes that both strengths and weaknesses rely on internal factors meanwhile opportunities and threats rely on external ones. These factors are presented in the following figure (see Figure 8).

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance in water diplomacy is forecasted to increase. • New approach to water diplomacy (decolonial and intersectional) • Taking into account the nexus approach (water-food-energy) with a multi-track diplomacy (not only state-centric). • Manifesto with no specific target, therefore, no risky and relevant for new literature. • 3rd actors such as the interviewees have rated positively our approach as an innovative and timely. • Even though the water diplomacy is specific to each particular case, this decolonial and intersectional approach could be applied to other cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-normative methodology therefore more complex to approach. • Terminology is very important not to fall into what we are trying to challenge (decolonial and intersectionality). • Political sensitive topic: interviewees are sometimes reluctant to respond to certain questions. • We lack technical expertise on water, agriculture and energy literature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking of experts from the field and willingness to contribute. • Ongoing dispute, therefore, there is scope of action. • Already existing local and regional initiatives on water diplomacy and the inclusion of women in these processes. • Existing international and regional organisation (UN, AU) that pave the way and call for the implementation of certain directives that we are tackling (gender parity, sustainable development, decoloniality, climate change...). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little local literature on women's role in political life and negotiations. • Difficult to be updated on the negotiations in the GERD as the progress made is not published. • Not easy to go in deep within the GERD's negotiations. • Because of cultural and religious constraints doubtful feasibility of the possible implementation. • Neoliberal system impedes to approach the GERD negotiations with this decolonial and intersectional method. • Game changer: conflict escalating to a larger scale or increased instability in the region.

Figure 8. SWOT analysis (own design)

As seen in the prior figure, strengths are the characteristics of the initiative that have an added value over other possible alternatives. As for this case, the major strengths and driving forces are the fact that a new approach to water diplomacy is introduced. The priority for this SWOT relies on improving the weaker areas. In concrete, the primary weakness of this strategy is that water diplomacy as such conforms sectors that we lack expertise on, for instance, the technical terminology and literature on agriculture, energy, climate change, water irrigation, etc. When it comes to opportunities, we have taken advantage of the fact that the conflict over the filling of the GERD is still on-going, and the already existing initiatives that have paved the way for us to try and elaborate this new approach. The threats are more difficult to enhance as they rely upon external factors that could wreak havoc on the project, such as the socio-economic elements mentioned above.

II. PESTEL analysis

The PESTEL analysis (political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, environmental and legal) is a system used in strategic management and due its usefulness it is now being utilised as a method in research as well. When undertaking a strategic review, it is part of an external analysis that provides a summary of the various macro-environmental variables to be considered. The different components of the analysis will be further elaborated below (see Figure 9 and 10).

POLITICAL	ECONOMIC	SOCIO-CULTURAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egypt and Sudan's rule under the British colonists. • Egypt became independent in 1922. • Creation of the GERD brings instability and tension in the region, between the riparian countries, in particular Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan. • Women's Power Index aims to picture the gender gap in political representation. Ethiopia has almost half of equality in the cabinet and a female head of the state. However, Egypt's political parity score accounts only for 14% while Sudan does not even have female representation either in national or local legislature. • Out of five major negotiations on the GERD, lack of gender parity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nile river provides fertile agricultural land and is an important trade route in the region. • Construction and filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in 2011. • Agricultural sector is the third largest economic activity in Egypt. • Main economic sector in Sudan is agriculture. • Energy security, in particular hydropower, threatened by water scarcity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth's high rates in all 3 countries aggravate the already tense situation. • In Egypt, most of the inhabitants are concentrated in the Nile River basin. Majority of Sudan's population lives near the Nile River, since the rest of the country's lands are desert. • Mid 20th century: end of colonialism rule and new wave of feminism emerges (post-colonial feminism in the 1980's). • According to Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) Arab countries have the lowest rate of women's participation in the workforce and the lowest rate of representation in parliaments. • The Western world has not yet given up on the deeply rooted colonial mindset and still marginalises discourses from the non-Anglo-European sphere. • Framework of a <i>colonised gender</i>. • The patriarchal approach is embedded in all domains of society but water diplomacy, in concrete, presents a high rate of gender disparities. Many barriers prevent women from participating in decision-making and leadership in most regions, especially in the natural resources and diplomacy sector.

Figure 9. Part 1 PESTEL (own design)

TECHNOLOGICAL	ENVIRONMENTAL	LEGAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technological factors have little or no implications for this project as it is a social science degree. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change and global warming expected to provoke great damage in the already arid areas of study (both Egypt and Sudan). • High probability of sea level to increase will have an impact on the Nile Delta, creating climate refugees. • Water scarcity and food insecurity threaten all 3 countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement 1902: it was promised that Ethiopia would not build any dam that could affect the flow of the Blue Nile in Egypt. • Anglo-Egyptian Nile Water Agreement in 1929: Britain awarded Egypt with exclusive control over the full course of the Nile waters, leaving indigenous people upstream out of control of the shared resources. • Nile Water Agreement in 1959 between Egypt and Sudan: over shared water resources. • Launching of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) in 1999, created to re-shape the past colonial agreements. • Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) in 2010 ratified by all riparian countries except Egypt and Sudan.

Figure 10. Part 2 PESTEL (own design)

Out of all six spheres of analysis, the most important domains for our project are the socio-cultural and the political. The socio-cultural not only has an impact on the public sphere but it also directly affects other sectors of our approach, for instance the population growth contributes to aggravating already existing problems as mentioned above. The political instead, serves us to explain the political disparities between gender, as well as the analysis that could possibly wreck the GERD situation and subsequent negotiations.

III. Project Model CANVAS

The Project Model Canvas is a tool for turning an idea into a project plan and encouraging cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders. This canvas template is a guide for visualizing our project and developing a common vision with all stakeholders, such as scope, target, milestones, and deliverables, among others (see Figure 11).

The most important variable for us is the definition of our final goals. Once defined, the deliverables have also been developed quicker. As for what has required most of our attention, the stakeholders have been quite important as in the beginning we had a more specific target but once we read more on how to approach a decolonial posture, we realised we cannot address this matter to a sole end but broaden the scope to not fall into a normative focus. In our particular case, the participants (interviewees) have been crucial when writing down the *manifesto* as they provided us a more reinforced approach based on our initial ideals. To conclude, we had to consider very deeply the constraints explained above as they could act as main restrictors of our project.

PARTICIPANTS	GOALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authors of the project. • Scholars belonging to our used literature. • Interviewees coming from a range of academic background. For instance, Maysoon Al-Zoubi, who has been the Secretary General of the Jordan Ministry of Water and Irrigation. Alexandra Said whose expertise is on water cooperation in relation to gender and security, inclusive processes and gender mainstreaming in the Nile Basin. And Walter Mignolo, known for being one of the central figures of Latin American decolonial thought and as a founding member of the Modernity / Coloniality Group. • Civil society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a decolonial and intersectional water diplomacy. Decolonial as a way to look at settler-colonialism, racial capitalism (especially as it manifested itself in full racializing force with the enslavement of black Africans), modernity, and, more recently, neoliberalism and neo capitalism, and how they've replaced a variety of forms of living, thinking, and being in our natural world. • To apply a multi-level water diplomacy as water issues affect a large number of actors, ranging from groups and communities, companies, institutions and states as such. Concluding that water diplomacy can not only be made at an inter-state level. • To reinforce the importance of the WEF Nexus Approach (Water-Energy-Food), which considers water, energy and food as a whole object of study, and taking into account the environmental factors. • Outcome of the negotiations of the GERD solved by our approach

STAKEHOLDERS	STAKEHOLDERS BENEFIT	ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>manifesto</i> is directed toward any actor/stakeholder involved in the water diplomacy sector in the GERD. • Government of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan. • Institutions related to water, energy and food issues (SIWI, NBI...). • Institutes dealing with the empowerment of women and gender equality. • Legislative bodies. • International and regional organisations (UN, AU, Arab Council) • Civil society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersectionality and inclusion in the field of practice. • Long lasting and sustainable output from the negotiations over the GERD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Extensive literature review. • Contextualisation and historical background. • Theoretical framework upon which the project is based on. • Different tools (SWOT, PESTEL) used to analyse the weaknesses and strengths of the project as well as the opportunities and threats. Having a general overview of the different components that need to be taken into account when carrying out the project. • Interviews with experts on the different fields we tackle. • <i>Manifesto</i> with bullet points of a different approach towards conventional water diplomacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FDP with all the contextualisation, historical context and theoretical framework of the project. • Final <i>manifesto</i> as the applicable outcome of the thesis.

MILESTONES	RISKS	CONSTRAINS	SCOPE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement 1902: it was promised that Ethiopia would not build any dam that could affect the flow of the Blue Nile in Egypt. • Anglo-Egyptian Nile Water Agreement in 1929: Britain awarded Egypt with exclusive control over the full course of the Nile waters, leaving indigenous people upstream out of control of the shared resources. • Nile Water Agreement in 1959 between Egypt and Sudan: over shared water resources. • Launching of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) in 1999, created to re-shape the past colonial agreements. • Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) in 2010 ratified by all riparian countries except Egypt and Sudan. • Agenda 2063 from the African Union. • Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 from the United Nations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game changer: conflict escalating to a larger scale or increased instability in the region. • <i>Manifesto</i>'s proposals not accepted in the current framework and way of thinking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extensive literature review. • Contextualisation and historical background. • Theoretical framework upon which the project is based on. • Different tools (SWOT, PESTEL) used to analyse the weaknesses and strengths of the project as well as the opportunities and threats. Having a general overview of the different components that need to be taken into account when carrying out the project. • Interviews with experts on the different fields we tackle. • <i>Manifesto</i> with bullet points of a different approach towards conventional water diplomacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FDP with all the contextualisation, historical context and theoretical framework of the project. • Final <i>manifesto</i> as the applicable outcome of the thesis.

Figure 11. Project Model Canvas developed (own design)

IV. Comparison with other alternatives

In order to get to design the *manifesto*, we have gone through several already existing studies and projects that have served us as inspiration, both for what we want to follow and what we want to add. The first example of benchmarking we came across was an article all written by women (Gloria Salmoral, Nynke C.E. Schaap, Julia Walschekbauer and Areen Alhajaj) in the sector in which they contribute with several proposals and literature. Out of all their inputs, we fixated into the so-called DAFNE Project, utilised for the first time in the Zambezi River Basin. Its purpose is to follow the directives established by the regional framework, for instance the Southern African Development Community Treaty (SADC). The basin is enduring a series of socio-economic factors that require transboundary water management. DAFNE Project analyses the Water Energy and Food Nexus (WEF) as a whole for the better understanding of the pressures faced in the basins.

We also took already existing initiatives working not only in the water management field but also within the inclusion of women's role in water diplomacy and management. The first initiative is at a regional level, launched by the African Union and hosted by the Department of Infrastructure and Energy of the Commission, called *African Network of Women in Infrastructure (ANWIN)*.³⁹ Its objective is to connect and support individuals, civil society, the private sector, and governmental organizations with an interest in gender-responsive infrastructure development. Gender responsiveness is a must if the African Union's vision of integrated, dependable, and affordable transportation, water, electricity, and information and communications infrastructure is to be realized.

An additional initiative already tackling the issues merged within water diplomacy and the gender perspective is the *Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile* from SIWI. Women's involvement in high-level water diplomacy processes is encouraged through this initiative. This project draws inspiration from the Nordic Women Mediators Network and Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy.

³⁹ "African Network for Women in Infrastructure (ANWIN)", PIDA Information Centre, (n.d), accessed March 29, 2021. <https://www.au-pida.org/african-network-for-women-in-infrastructure-anwin/>.

On a more practical level, the already existing manifestos served us as benchmarking for our own. We took an example of the *AMWAJ Manifesto* on water management (**waves** in Arabic) and the *European Water Association Water Manifesto 2020* to understand the specificities of what a proper and applicable manifesto should look like.

Once analysed already existing initiatives and concrete proposals, we took the ideas that better suited our desirable approach, such as regional based application, inclusive participation, gender perspective and the WEF Nexus approach. As an addition, our project and *manifesto* will also include the decolonial perspective.

CHAPTER IV - MANIFESTO

We- signatories to the Manifesto- commit to protect the value of water under a decolonial and intersectional approach, as we believe that the relevance of water and its nature belongs to all, and needs to be protected in a sustainable, inclusive, and local-based way.

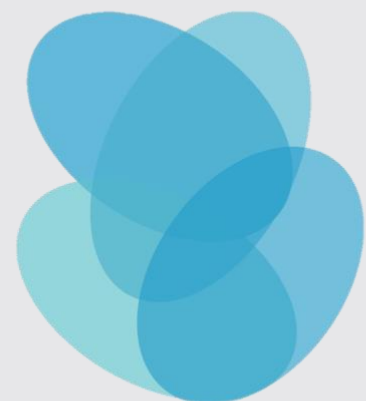
Our objectives

- To **build trust** among Nile Basin countries by creating a **tripartite legal water basin** initiative among Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan. It is better for water diplomacy to be managed between the riparian countries themselves. This ensures the sovereignty of states and the **independence of decisions**.
- To commit to **international law**, concretely the principle of **not causing harm**, obligation of **prior notification** and **consultation** on projects that would affect other riparian states and the principle of **sharing information**.
- To **comply with UNSCR 13/25** on Women, Peace and Security, which emphasises the relevance of **gender parity** in the promotion of peace and negotiations.
- To **bring an agency** on the dispute, if **agreed by all three** parties. The agency could make public the composition of the negotiating team, by gender and other identity markers (even if the negotiators' names are to be left anonymous), as a powerful tool for "**naming and shaming**" governments into including more representation. Agencies should **collaborate** with scholars of the Global South and **include** them when developing and delivering training.
- To directly **ask** those in the **Global South** how they wish to be **empowered**, and to listen to their needs. In some cases, it can be helpful to think of the idea, "solidarity, not charity" – asking countries and communities what they want, and what they need: do they really want to be represented by a 'Western' negotiator, or encouraged instead to use their own voice?
- To **acknowledge the impacts of the colonial era** on the current situation. Find the **balance** between offering technical/scientific support, and influencing/controlling. Let the focus be on science based and technical information, coming from both ends of the conflict.
- To **encourage water practitioners** to recognise whether their perspectives are wide-

reaching enough, **encompassing ideas on diplomacy from the Global South**, and to identify what power structures are embedded in the training literature that they are given.

- To **include all possible stakeholders** and the interests of the multiple dimensions throughout the cooperation processes, by adopting a **community perspective** and understanding the deep rooted social aspects and the **local realities**.
- To **consider the close relation between women and water**, as they possess an **intimate knowledge** on how water is collected and how it should be managed. Avoiding this reality, leads to an incomplete and insufficient resolution. **Gender-balanced representation** at all levels in the decision-making processes in water diplomacy is crucial.
- To **collaborate and build partnership** between the **water, energy and food sectors** as they are intricately connected; changes in demand, policies, and management have an impact on these systems and on the broader environment.
- To **incorporate ethnographic and quantitative data** improves the understanding of sub-state contexts and dynamics. Better data within a state can help policy-makers, NGOs, and local actors to take more targeted actions.
- To **avoid a state-centric** lense. **Multi-track water diplomacy** is required to navigate the complexities of building cooperation, undertaking collaborative or joint investments in shared river basins, and addressing local or community-based conflicts.
- To **let go of the nature-culture-divide** which has dominated much of Western thinking since the Enlightenment, and ends with the understanding that **not only water, food and energy are inextricably linked**, but also that mankind cannot exist pretending it is somehow separate from the planet we exist on. It is central to **sustainable development** for any community.
- To **train journalists** from the riparian countries in water related issues, as they are **responsible to break conflicts in society**. There is a large potential to educate general public on water issues through access to unbiased media.

*Disclaimer: these written objectives are a result of our own ideas coming from the research as well as the contributions from the interviewees, which provided us with extensive inputs.



Why decolonial and intersectional

Our mission in this manifesto is that of *deconstruction*. Primarily we channeled ourselves into acknowledging our privileged background, and then through research and thanks to the existing literature of postcolonial scholars we have been able to adopt a critical, deconstructed and decolonial lens through which we are writing down this manifesto. As a disclaimer it is important to remark that there is no single target in this manifesto as we do not want to fall into what we're trying to challenge- a neo-colonial perspective that implies Western moral superiority over the Global South's issues in any political, social, economical and cultural matters-.

It is known that to this day, the mainstream discourse has been predominantly Anglocentric/Eurocentric and follows their praxis, ways of interpreting and acting. The Western world has not yet given up on the deeply rooted colonial mindset and still marginalises discourses from the non Anglo-European sphere. For this reason, decolonial theory brings us alternatives to approach the world through a different lens, one that switches from universality to pluriversality and that embraces intercultural dialogues.

Another challenge we faced when

approaching this manifesto is that of questioning the so-called masculinised spheres in everyday life. Following decolonial theorists, such as María Lugones, we acknowledged that our main task was to start by decolonising gender, meaning to proclaim a critique of racialised, colonial and capitalist gender oppression as a lived transformation of the social.

The patriarchal approach is embedded in all domains of society but water diplomacy, in concrete, presents a high rate of gender disparities. Many barriers prevent women from participating in decision-making and leadership in most regions, especially in the natural resources and diplomacy sector. Common roadblocks include gender roles and biases against women in decision-making: women are thought to be more emotional and "neurotic," and therefore less "adequate" for such demanding positions.

In order for water diplomacy to bear fruit, all stakeholders must be fully engaged in the process, meaning that there has to be a total inclusion of actors-starting with women.

As of this particular case, the GERD negotiations present a clear lack of gender parity; out of five main negotiations that

have been carried out since 2012 women have not had proper representation at all. Thus, showing successful examples of women's positive influence in leadership at all levels of management is critical in equipping water professionals with the expertise they need to understand women's potential and, as a result, ensure more women's participation in driving and making progress.

If water diplomacy is approached through an intersectional and decolonial manner, the outcome of the negotiation process is more likely to be successful and long lasting. Given that what is trying to be achieved is a resolution that leaves all parts at least partially satisfied, the barriers against structural violence (by not allowing women in the public and political sphere) must be broken so that these actors who are actively implicated can have a voice.

Following AU's directives

AU calls for

- Aspiration 2: An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance
 - Decolonisation

- Aspiration 5: An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics
 - Africa cultural renaissance is pre-eminent
- Aspiration 6: An Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children.
 - Full gender equality in all sphere of life
 - Engaged and empowered youth and children

Existing initiatives supporting women in water diplomacy

- (ANWIN): African Network for Women in Infrastructure by African Union Commission and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)
- Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Voluntary Stakeholder Group on Disaster Risk Reduction, Arab States
- (NAWW): Network of Arab Women in Water promoted by Arab Water Council
- Women and Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile Basin launched by SIWI

Following SDGs

SDG calls for

- SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Why now

Dispute over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

It was already in 2011 when the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) took place. Since then, various negotiations have occurred but none of them had a successful outcome. This has been mainly due to the fact that Egypt does not relinquish its rights over the Nile waters, concretely those acquired in the signment of the Anglo-Egyptian Nile Water Agreement in 1929 (Egypt was awarded control over the course of the Nile waters). Later on, in 1956 Sudan became independent from the British and Egyptian control and in 1959 both Sudan and Egypt signed a bilateral agreement over the share of the Nile. On the other hand, the Nile riparian countries signed the

Cooperative Framework Agreement in 2010, which creates principles, rights and obligations for the equitable sharing of the Nile waters and that tries to get rid of the colonial past as well. Among the countries that did not sign this agreement, there is Sudan and Egypt which remain reluctant to give up on their *exclusive* rights. To this day, there have been five attempted negotiations which resulted in a failure.

Socio-economic and environmental factors being aggravated in time (action now)

The Nile basin is critical to the socioeconomic growth of the countries that share it. In most Nile riparian countries, agriculture remains the economic backbone. Reliable water access is critical for rising agricultural production, creating the majority of jobs, and raising the living standards of the Nile basin's population. In particular the filling of the GERD will have direct implications on a socio-economic scale in all three countries- Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan. The primary repercussions are the following:

i) **population growth** is estimated to expand in all three countries. By 2025 it is expected that Egypt will increase its population to 111,7 Million people, Ethiopia to 129,7 Million people and Sudan

to 49,3 Million people.⁴⁰ Population growth, directly or indirectly, impacts across the water, energy and food demand.

ii) **access to water** is becoming more scarce in the Nile basin region. Climate change is exacerbating an already severe water shortage. Egypt has approximately 570 m³ of water per human per year. The United Nations defines water scarcity as less than 1,000 m³ of water per person. Egypt would have less than 500 m³ of water per person per year by 2025, as a result of population growth and increasing temperatures, which the UN describes as absolute water scarcity.⁴¹ In Ethiopia, the per capita green water footprint is 1128 m³ per year which means that it isn't yet scarce but with the urbanisation rate rising as it is, it is expected to lower.⁴² Finally, Sudan accounts with 38% of people living in water scarce areas, suffering from shortages of clean water for drinking purposes and reliable water for agriculture. This accounts for 2,9 million

people.⁴³ The agricultural sector is directly affected by water scarcity as it concerns the main pillar for agrarian development, the irrigation system. For instance, in Egypt around 80% of the share of water is used for agricultural purposes, meaning that as scarcer it is the water, the scarcer it will be the food offer, causing a food insecurity issue.⁴⁴ It is important to add that there is also a problem of mismanagement of water resources that contributes to this scarcity issue. Another of the reasons why the management of the agricultural sector is of utmost importance is the fact that it accounts for a large proportion of labor in each country. In Egypt, agriculture hires about 30% of the labor force and provides a living for 55% of the population.⁴⁵ In Ethiopia, the employment in agriculture accounts for 73%⁴⁶ and in Sudan it contributes to the livelihood of active

⁴⁰ Max Roser, Hanna Ritchie and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, "World Population Growth", *Our World in Data*, May 2019, accessed April 10, 2021. <https://ourworldindata.org/world-population-growth>

⁴¹ Nadeen Ebrahim, "This is the Water Crisis that Egypt is facing", World Economic Forum, November 7, 2019. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/11/water-crisis-builds-in-egypt-as-dam-talks-falter-temperatures-rise/>

⁴² "Country Water Footprint Profile, Ethiopia", *Water Footprint Network*, (October 2016), accessed April 10, 2021. https://waterfootprint.org/media/downloads/Ethiopia_Water_Footprint_Profile_1.pdf

⁴³ Water Scarcity Clock", *World Data Lab* (n.d), accessed April 10, 2021. <https://worldwater.io>

⁴⁴ Nadeen, Ebrahim."That is the water crisis that Egypt is facing", World Economic Forum, November 7, 2019. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/11/water-crisis-builds-in-egypt-as-dam-talks-falter-temperatures-rise/>

⁴⁵ "Egypt at a glance", Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (n.d), accessed April 10, 2021. <http://www.fao.org/egypt/our-office/egypt-at-a-glance/en/>

⁴⁶ "Country Water Footprint Profile, Ethiopia", *Water Footprint Network*, (October 2016), accessed April 10, 2021. https://waterfootprint.org/media/downloads/Ethiopia_Water_Footprint_Profile_1.pdf

population for 66%⁴⁷.

iii) access to food also suffers from lack of availability, mainly due to the reliability on the agricultural sector. The population of these three countries is already suffering from food insecurity; 6 million Egyptians are unable to maintain a daily calorie intake necessary to remain active and efficient⁴⁸, Sudan accounts for 6,2 million of people that are food insecure⁴⁹ and in Ethiopia 8 million people require food assistance⁵⁰. Taking into consideration these food insecurity indicators, it can be concluded that the effects of water scarcity not only affects the agricultural sector as such but it challenges the provision of food to the populations.

iv) energy security is intricately connected to water. For instance, after natural gas and petroleum, hydropower is Egypt's third-largest energy source.⁵¹ The filling of the

GERD will reduce Egypt's water flows, thus affecting the already existing hydropower plants in the country. On the other hand, the GERD will provide power to 64 million Ethiopian citizens who are at the moment not energy-supplied⁵². Moreover, Ethiopia plans to become the main exporter of renewable energy in Africa. In the case of Sudan, the country's energy stability is jeopardized due to its heavy dependence on hydroelectricity for energy production. The Nile River is the major source of electricity, accounting for 55.8% of total generation. The energy demand in Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan goes hand to hand with the population growth.⁵³ If the energy sector depends on fossil fuels or the energy is being produced in an unsustainable manner, it will contribute to the environmental degradation and climate change aggravation.

⁴⁷ Sudan at a glance", Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (n.d), accessed April 10, 2021. <http://www.fao.org/sudan/fao-in-sudan/sudan-at-a-glance/en/>

⁴⁸ Salma, Hussein."Egypt's Uncure Hunger Problem", *Alternative Policy Solutions (American University in Cairo)*, November 3, 2019.<https://aps.aucegypt.edu/en/articles/82/egypts-uncured-hunger-problem>

⁴⁹ Muhammad, Salah. "Sudan", United Nations World Food Program, (n.d), accessed April 10, 2021. <https://www.wfp.org/countries/sudan>

⁵⁰ Abeer Etefa, "What the World Food Programme is doing in Ethiopia", United Nations World Food Program, (n.d), accessed May 4, 2021 <https://www.wfp.org/countries/ethiopia>

⁵¹ "National Investment Profile: Water for Agriculture and Energy", *Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations*, (n.d): 9-59.

http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/agwa/docs/NIP_Egypt_Final1.pdf

⁵² Addisu Lashitew and Haim Kassa Gebeyehu, "Could the Nile dispute be an opportunity to boost freshwater technology?", *BROOKINGS Institution*, June 19, 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/could-the-nile-dispute-be-an-opportunity-to-boost-freshwater-technology/>

⁵³ Mugahid Elnour, "The impact of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Water-Energy-Food security nexus in Sudan" (Master thesis in Sustainable Development, Uppsala University, 2019), pp 11-29. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336591659_The_impact_of_the_Grand_Ethiopian_Renaissance_Dam_on_the_Water-Energy-Food_security_nexus_in_Sudan

v) the region is commonly known for being affected by **climate change**. Rising sea levels Growing water levels have already started to have an effect on the Nile Delta, which may result in the displacement of over 2 million people and the destruction of substantial agricultural production in the immediate future.⁵⁴

Following SDGs/ Following AU's directives

SDG calls for

- *SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture*
- *SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*
- *SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all*
- *SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*

AU'S directives call for

- Aspiration 1: A prosperous Africa based on inclusion growth and sustainable development.
 - A high standard of living, quality of life and well being for all

- Healthy and well-nourished citizens
- Modern agriculture for increased proactivity and production
- Blue/Ocean Economy for accelerated economic growth
- Environmentally sustainable climate and resilient economies and communities

- Aspiration 4: A peaceful and secure Africa
 - Peace security and stability is preserved
 - A stable and peaceful Africa
 - A fully functional and operational APSA

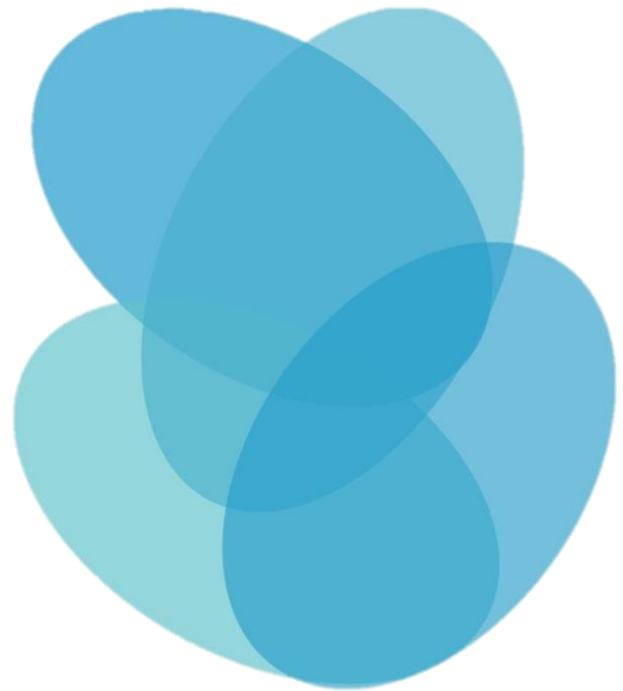
Why water

Water is a scarce resource and the socio-economic factors contribute to its deficiency, that is crucial for human existence and sustainable development. Thus, water management and water negotiations are needed at all levels. This implies that water diplomacy should follow the premises that the nexus approach incorporates, so as to be more coherent, by recognising the water, food and energy

⁵⁴ "Middle East and North Africa", Bank Information Center, (n.d), accessed April 11, <https://bankinformationcenter.org/en-us/region/middle-east-and-north-africa>

linkage at all levels of action. It is important to have a multi-track water diplomacy as water issues affect a large number of actors, ranging from groups and communities, companies, institutions and states as such. The GERD negotiations have been carried out through a state-centric manner, in

which local perspectives have been dismissed. The inclusion of such standpoints is crucial to achieve a long-lasting outcome for the process as well as an easier benefit sharing for the different stakeholders.



CHAPTER V - CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of this project aims to frame an unorthodox approach to water diplomacy. Following our understanding of today's manner of conducting IR, water diplomacy should as well follow the premises of multidisciplinary. Bearing in mind that its functional role is to encourage the achievement of established foreign policy goals by promoting the containment, prevention, and settlement of conflicts, it has been proved that the way to properly perform it is by reinforcing a multidisciplinary path.

This final statement emerges out of our extensive research not only during this project but also during our four-year-experience in the degree, in which we have acknowledged the importance of multiple actors, intersectionality and the significance of inclusivity at all levels.

With reference to the contributions to knowledge that this project has provided, the most significant input has been the existing theoretical framework that we have come across with, as well as the personal convictions of the people we have interviewed. Beforehand, we were approaching the GERD dispute from a geopolitical perspective that only took into account a state-centric level of analysis. Nonetheless, once we started getting in touch with the field of study, the academic background of the people involved in water diplomacy and the importance of the historical background as well as the socio-political and environmental realities, we comprehended that water diplomacy went further to the simplistic assumption of a state-centric governance. Thus, both the multi-track diplomacy and the WEF Nexus governance within water diplomacy have provided us with these tools of inclusion and multidimensionality that were lacking to be implemented. On the one hand, engaging a larger diversity of stakeholders in the negotiation process, and on the other hand, linking the interdependencies between water, energy and food systems in a transboundary context. In other words, all water management must assimilate the contending demands and competing interests of multiple sectors and stakeholders across different geographic scales, time frames, and levels of government. Multi-track water diplomacy is needed to navigate the complexities of building partnership, to undertake collective or cooperative investments in shared river basins and to address local and community-based water issues.

Furthermore, this project has signified a process of deconstruction. If we already had notions of the importance of history in all scopes of study, we have only deepened our belief that an acknowledgment of the impacts of the colonial era on the current situation has to be made. We must not forget that even though colonialism as such found the end by the 20th century, it is still perpetuated under the so-called neoliberal imperialism. Adopting a decolonial outlook on water diplomacy calls for reflexivity. Water practitioners must determine if their viewpoints are broad enough to include ideas on diplomacy from the Global South, as well as recognize what power dynamics are embedded in the training literature they are given. For this project we have aimed to approach the project through a decolonial lens. That is, conducting research and using a methodology not only balanced but also critical towards Eurocentrism. By these means, we have avoided all types of technicalities that could fall into colonial thinking. This is why in our *manifesto* there is no specific final target, as we, by all means, wanted to avoid the perspective that implies a Western moral superiority over the Global South's issues in any matter.

Moreover, through our analysis and further application, we have deepened our understanding that intersectionality is not only a term to be used in specific gender studies but must be present in all fields and levels. In our concrete case, for water diplomacy to bear fruits, the inclusive participation of all stakeholders in the process is an absolute must. The final aim is to be able to dismantle the conflicting social identities so that there is no more duality of the oppressive and the oppressed.

As per the identification of the work left open by the project, linked with our prior mentioned limitations, there needs to be a hypothesis further than the binary "male-female" gender division, therefore, more engagement with non-binary, LGBTQI+ views and intersectional approaches to environmental conflicts, as neither "women" nor "men" are a homogeneous group.

Our Final Degree Project concludes with the proposed *manifesto*, a tool which enables any stakeholder interested in water diplomacy to be able to take action. Even though this *manifesto* is particularly framed in the GERD dispute, it could be adapted to other cases as it is versatile and easily adaptable.

To conclude, we remain convinced that the relevance of water and its nature belongs to all, and needs to be protected in a sustainable, inclusive, and regional/local- based way.

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ANNEXES

All the interviews attach in this Annex were *structured interviews*, therefore, they all had the following format when sent:



Dear X,

Thank you so much for agreeing to this interview and collaborating with us.

We are two students from University Ramon Llull (Barcelona) coursing International Relations degree. This our final year and we are carrying out our Final Degree Project, focused on Water Diplomacy and the Nile Dispute (in particular, the GERD dispute between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia). This is an applied project whose final purpose is to create a *manifesto* that tries to challenge conventional water diplomacy so that it is decolonial, intersectional and with a multi-level/actor scope. Through our study we have realised that the negotiations that have been carried out until the moment have been biased towards a male-based action and from an inter-state level. That is why our commitment goes to create a policy paper that includes not only a gender-based perspective but also local communities, since they are the ultimate affected by these issues. Since we are not professionals in the field we have been researching existing literature and we would like to deepen our knowledge by asking you these questions.

In the following section, it will be attached the answers of the respective interviewees:

1. Charlotte Grech-Madin

1. According to your knowledge and experience, why do you think that the GERD negotiations are not being fruitful? Why a common decision hasn't been agreed yet, taking into account the socioeconomic and environmental circumstances that the region is facing and the "negative effects" of a possible unilateral decision by Ethiopia in filling the GERD?
 - o No comment, as I have not been following the GERD negotiations recently.

2. As of our knowledge, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile aims to empower women leadership in high-level decision-making in transboundary waters in the Nile basin. The literature says that international agencies, as it could be SIWI in this particular case, invest in efforts to provide enhanced and systematic training to water professionals in order to prevent conflict. This network was launched in 2017 and it is expected to provide long term solutions. Given the fact that the GERD negotiations started earlier and the tensions are escalating instead of decreasing, do you think that is there any possible short term solution that could bring women at the top in these negotiations?
 - While I cannot speak specifically to the Women in Water Diplomacy Network (as I am not involved in it), an immediate solution is simply to invite more women onto the negotiating table. Furthermore, an international agency could make public the composition of the negotiating team, by gender and other identity markers (even if the negotiators' names are to be left anonymous), as a powerful tool for “naming and shaming” governments into including more representation of marginalized groups.
3. Water diplomacy and diplomacy in general is not only a very masculinised field but also Westernised. In our project we are trying to write a manifesto rooted in a decolonial thought. Which could be some ways to approach water diplomacy with a decolonial lense?
 - Reflexivity is key when adopting a decolonial perspective on water diplomacy. It is imperative for water practitioners to recognise whether their perspectives are wide-reaching enough, encompassing ideas on diplomacy from the Global South, and to identify what power structures are embedded in the training literature that they are given. Relatedly, international agencies that champion water diplomacy should collaborate with scholars of the Global South, and include them when developing and delivering training. Representation matters. If young water practitioners in the Global South are exposed to trainers and ways of behaviour that resemble their own, then it can encourage them to pursue water diplomacy as a career, along the lines of “if you can see it, you can be it.”
4. How are third actors (mostly Western) in water diplomacy negotiations perceived by non-Western countries (Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia)?
 - Negotiators from non-Western countries are best situated to answer this question, though I would speculate that they view Western actors with some distrust.
5. In which ways could intersectionality play a substantial role in the field of water diplomacy?

- Intersectionality can certainly help with identifying ways to make water diplomacy more inclusive: if we acknowledge only one part of a negotiator's identity (e.g. gender), then that "one scope" perspective would miss the differences and many diverse challenges faced within that one group (e.g. females) during water diplomacy. Hence there is a need for a more nuanced, intersectional approach.
6. What are the main obstacles that women face in their equal participation in water diplomacy/leadership positions in the water sector? What are the gender stereotypes, norms or institutional practices that need to be challenged in order to empower women to equally participate and use their full potential?
- Barriers to participation faced by women in the water sector are often rooted in a deeper, structural bias within the policy world: More men have historically been employed in power positions than women. This means that more effort may be needed to identify and recruit female negotiators in water (although they certainly exist). There is a stereotype that women are more fair negotiators, and will compromise too much, rather than playing hardball to get the best solution. There are also norms that authority equates to males. In some parts of the world women are seen as belonging in the home, responsible for primary caregiving and collecting water for their family, rather than holding powerful negotiator positions. These stereotypes obviously hinder the empowerment of women.
7. Can you think of examples where the inclusion or, conversely, the exclusion of women, in environmental diplomacy and decision making at the national or local level has positively or negatively affected outcomes?
- The exclusion of women means that traditionally female traits of negotiation (as identified in negotiation literature), such as openness to emotional sensitivities, may be missed. The inclusion of women may create more opportunities for effective compromise.
8. Much of the existing policy tools on water diplomacy are dedicated to the interstate level. How can water diplomacy be more inclusive, in particular, to those levels of the society that are excluded from the negotiations but are directly involved in water issues (groups and communities)? How could we create a more inclusive water diplomacy covering multiple scales of water governance?
- This is a very big question. Reflexivity is important here, whereby negotiators and policy practitioners should consider what perspectives they are missing, and whether they are only validating those who think and behave in a similar manner to

themselves. The latter relates to the concept of homosocial reproduction, which should be challenged.

9. Why is it important to address the water, food and energy nexus within water diplomacy?
 - Water, food and energy are intimately interconnected, and decisions in one sector have flow on effects to those in the other sectors.
10. Sometimes external financial and technical assistance is needed for inter-state water diplomacy in the so called countries of the Global South, as they “lack” the sufficient resources or technical expertise. At the same time, the inherent insecurity of post-colonial state in Africa and the Middle East creates an apprehension in these countries that international agencies may insert so-called “outside” or “Western” agendas that are not in the best interest of their nation, such as by putting global environmental concerns above domestic economic development. Which should be the best ways to craft a decolonial water diplomacy?
 - In this context, it is important to directly ask those in the Global South how they wish to be empowered, and to listen to their needs. In some cases, it can be helpful to think of the idea, “solidarity, not charity” – asking the marginalized groups (countries or communities) what they want, and what they need: do they really want to be represented by a ‘Western’ negotiator, or encouraged instead to use their own voice?

2. Christiane Frölich

1. According to your knowledge and experience, why do you think that the GERD negotiations are not being fruitful? Why a common decision hasn’t been agreed yet, taking into account the socioeconomic and environmental circumstances that the region is facing and the “negative effects” of a possible unilateral decision by Ethiopia in filling the GERD?
 - I don’t know much about GERD specifically, since I work on the Jordan basin, not the Nile. But from my experience, negotiations stall or go wrong for two reasons:
 1. Because water is depoliticized and treated as something separate from the sociopolitical and economic realities of the negotiating parties, or
 2. Because water is seen as a national security issue, thereby negating the transboundary nature of the resource and the need for transboundary cooperation to sustainably manage it.

2. Following this last question, what is the role of journalists in the Nile Basin in the GERD dispute and what are the main challenges they face? As of our understanding, there are already existing initiatives (SIWI's Nile journalist network) that try to bring together journalists from all Nile basin countries to share their expertise and create greater transparency as sometimes water issues are contentious issues.
 - I don't know anything about that, sorry.
3. As of our knowledge, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile aims to empower women leadership in high-level decision-making in transboundary waters in the Nile basin. The literature says that international agencies, as it could be SIWI in this particular case, invest in efforts to provide enhanced and systematic training to water professionals in order to prevent conflict. This network was launched in 2017 and it is expected to provide long term solutions. Given the fact that the GERD negotiations started earlier and the tensions are escalating instead of decreasing, do you think that is there any possible short term solution that could bring women at the top in these negotiations?
 - Again, I don't know anything about this specific initiative. But your question pertains to more general issues of gender equality, and this is also where your answer lies: if there is political will to challenge and dismantle a patriarchal system, then there is room for women to be part of or even to become key driving forces of such negotiations. I do invite you to think further than the binary male-female gender divide, however; do engage with non-binary, LGBTQI views and read about intersectional approaches to environmental conflicts. "Women" are not a homogenous group.
4. Water diplomacy and diplomacy in general is not only a very masculinised field but also Westernised. In our project we are trying to write a manifesto rooted in a decolonial thought. Which could be some ways to approach water diplomacy with a decolonial lense?
 - Acknowledge the legacy of colonialism for today's world order and power distribution
 - Apologise and atone for colonialism
 - Think about ways in which water diplomacy can be more inclusive (see my answer to question 3)
5. How are third actors (mostly Western) in water diplomacy negotiations perceived by non-Western countries (Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia)?

- That really depends, e.g. on the respective colonial history and previous attempts to influence regional negotiations. As I am not a scholar focusing on the states in question, I cannot answer this.
6. In which ways could intersectionality play a substantial role in the field of water diplomacy?
 - See answer above. As in most or all areas of public life, intersectionality could and should play a central role in the design and implementation of future policies.
 7. What are the main obstacles that women face in their equal participation in water diplomacy/leadership positions in the water sector? What are the gender stereotypes, norms or institutional practices that need to be challenged in order to empower women to equally participate and use their full potential?
 - I would argue they are the same as in all other fields of interaction between different genders. The glass ceiling is the same everywhere.
 8. Can you think of examples where the inclusion or, conversely, the exclusion of women, in environmental diplomacy and decision making at the national or local level has positively or negatively affected outcomes?
 - I have no expertise here. I would venture that the lack of participation of 50% of the population cannot be positive, however.
 9. Much of the existing policy tools on water diplomacy are dedicated to the interstate level. How can water diplomacy be more inclusive, in particular, to those levels of the society that are excluded from the negotiations but are directly involved in water issues (groups and communities)? How could we create a more inclusive water diplomacy covering multiple scales of water governance?
 - I invite you to check out the Good Water Neighbours Initiative in the Jordan Basin as an example for more inclusive water diplomacy.
 10. Why is it important to address the water, food and energy nexus within water diplomacy?
 - We need a more holistic approach to environmental problems. This starts with letting go of the nature-culture-divide which has dominated much of Western thinking since the Enlightenment, and ends with the understanding that not only water, food and energy are inextricably linked, but also that mankind cannot exist pretending it is somehow separate from the planet we exist on.
 11. Sometimes external financial and technical assistance is needed for inter-state water diplomacy in the so called countries of the Global South, as they “lack” the sufficient resources or technical expertise. At the same time, the inherent insecurity of post-colonial

state in Africa and the Middle East creates an apprehension in these countries that international agencies may insert so-called “outside” or “Western” agendas that are not in the best interest of their nation, such as by putting global environmental concerns above domestic economic development. Which should be the best ways to craft a decolonial water diplomacy?

- See my answer to question 4. The short answer is “by levelling the playing field”.

3. Sylvester Domasa

1. According to your knowledge and experience, why do you think that the GERD negotiations are not being fruitful?
 - Well, to me I would say its lack of political will and limited desire to see the potential of a minor sacrifice that each part is willing to make. The sacrifices must be for both Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan. I would be the last person to blame mediators who have honestly tried their part but ended up failing. Negotiations can only be fruitful if the conflicting parties are willing to reach consensus and here neither is Egypt nor Ethiopian are not ready.
2. Why a common decision hasn't been agreed yet, taking into account the socioeconomic and environmental circumstances that the region is facing and the “negative effects” of a possible unilateral decision by Ethiopia in filling the GERD?
 - It can be a sabotage. Ethiopia and Egypt understands that the African Summit recommended a legal filling agreement to be signed before Ethiopia can embark on filling the great dam. Egypt said in a Moscow sometime that it was ready and prepared for all possible scenario for at least five years. However, it seems Egypt has been pushing its own agenda that I would say are not so scientifically to threaten construction of the dam. This isn't a new thing it dates back in 1978 when its presented sought to wage war with Ethiopia that had considered building series of dams. I said sabotage, knowing that Egypt knows what it is doing and it can receive international sympathy. This isn't right for everyone and at some point I feel Egypt can do more and hasn't done so later alone to present scientific evidence of their claim that respond to Ethiopia's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
3. Following this last question, what is the role of journalists in the Nile Basin in the GERD dispute and what are the main challenges they face? As of our understanding, there are

already existing initiatives (SIWI's Nile journalist network) that try to bring together journalists from all Nile basin countries to share their expertise and create greater transparency as sometimes water issues are contentious issues.

- I had a presentation during the last Nile Basin Development Forum on “How East African Journalists Really Write about NBI—Rethinking Public Service Journalism.” Your question on the role of journalist I said apart from educating and informing the society, media or journalist must understand that they play a key role in conflict mediation and resolution. Media or journalist are responsible to break conflicts in society. There are the best platform with whom conflicting sides can air their grievances and still they provide answers to the question of “So What?” Likewise, the challenges that most journalist face is lack of in-depth knowledge on what they report. In the end we see limited critical reporting but more of the spoon-fed stories that don't help readers or institutions. So media and journalists face resource challenge as well as interest. Limited resources also affect media houses from recruiting specialized reporters.
4. As of our knowledge, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile aims to empower women leadership in high-level decision-making in transboundary waters in the Nile basin. The literature says that international agencies, as it could be SIWI in this particular case, invest in efforts to provide enhanced and systematic training to water professionals in order to prevent conflict. This network was launched in 2017 and it is expected to provide long term solutions. Given the fact that the GERD negotiations started earlier and the tensions are escalating instead of decreasing, do you think that is there any possible short term solution that could bring women at the top in these negotiations?
- Definitely, I agree. Negotiation is a long term solution.
5. Water diplomacy and diplomacy in general is not only a very masculinised field but also Westernised. In our project we are trying to write a manifesto rooted in a decolonial thought. Which could be some ways to approach water diplomacy with a decolonial lense?
- I think the approach should be that which aims at strengthening public and popular water diplomacy which include voices from both players, the civil society organization, communities and government institutions. As of now, negotiation, for instance are too narrowly focused on high-level dialogue between States. For as much as am following the escalating tension between the Egyptians, Ethiopians and

Sudanese we want an approach that aim at enhancing negotiation skills. Egypt and Ethiopia are no longer interested with the founding or existing principals but individual interests. So we are looking at the type of negotiation that doesn't have reservation for threats but trusts and any other elements of good communication. Since water is a resource used by everyone and managed at multiple scales, many types of arrangements are needed for effective governance of transboundary waters, representing a 'multiplicity of agreements.

6. How are third actors (mostly Western) in water diplomacy negotiations perceived by non-Western countries (Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia)?
 - They do not have best interest for these African countries.
7. In which ways could intersectionality play a substantial role in the field of water diplomacy?
 - Considering the aspects of gender, like you highlighted in the previous question, triangulating different aspects of human; race, class, interests can help in understanding the inner-connected genesis of existing disagreements or "to be" expected conflicts.
8. What are the main obstacles that women face in their equal participation in water diplomacy/leadership positions in the water sector? What are the gender stereotypes, norms or institutional practices that need to be challenged in order to empower women to equally participate and use their full potential?
 - Hydroponics which also limits opportunities, limited attention to the role of and challenges faced by women, lack of confidence, lack of comprehensive skills and lastly I would say lack of support from fellow women.
9. Can you think of examples where the inclusion or, conversely, the exclusion of women, in environmental diplomacy and decision making at the national or local level has positively or negatively affected outcomes?
 - In Tanzania for example, water is enshrined by water bodies. These could be basin or authorities and in most cases the top decision makers are men. In some instances, where the dominance are women we have seen a steady growth and limited water related conflicts.
10. Much of the existing policy tools on water diplomacy are dedicated to the interstate level. How can water diplomacy be more inclusive, in particular, to those levels of the society that are excluded from the negotiations but are directed involved in water issues

(groups and communities)? How could we create a more inclusive water diplomacy covering multiple scales of water governance?

- We need to put in place a more holistic approach that responds to global threats and conflict drivers, including the need to respect and responsibly manage water. This approach clearly links between water, peace and security. It is under this approach that no one will be left behind. For instance, we have seen countries that are struggling with water stress resulting from immigrants, pollution and several other factors.
11. Why is it important to address the water, food and energy nexus within water diplomacy?
 - It is central to sustainable development for any community.
 12. Sometimes external financial and technical assistance is needed for inter-state water diplomacy in the so called countries of the Global South, as they “lack” the sufficient resources or technical expertise. At the same time, the inherent insecurity of post-colonial state in Africa and the Middle East creates an apprehension in these countries that international agencies may insert so-called “outside” or “Western” agendas that are not in the best interest of their nation, such as by putting global environmental concerns above domestic economic development. Which should be the best ways to craft a decolonial water diplomacy?
 - Borrowing concepts from African Founding Heads of States; Julius Nyerere, Kenyatta, Kaunda and alike countries from the global south must craft solutions from within. I believe their alternative to everything and approaching water diplomacy from decolonial angle should in-fact discourage donations that comes with “unfriendly” conditions. It is not development if it is risking the sustainable future of the nation and the continent.

4. Job Kleijn

1. According to your knowledge and experience, why do you think that the GERD negotiations are not being fruitful? Why a common decision hasn't been agreed yet, taking into account the socioeconomic and environmental circumstances that the region is facing and the “negative effects” of a possible unilateral decision by Ethiopia in filling the GERD?

- There are three reasons for not being fruitful:
 - There are parties that lose control and parties that win control over water resources,
 - National pride and interests prevailing over regional pride and interest.
 - Lack of trust between parties,

Negative effects

- Limited, over time it will be solved.
2. Following this last question, what is the role of journalists in the Nile Basin in the GERD dispute and what are the main challenges they face? As of our understanding, there are already existing initiatives (SIWI's Nile journalist network) that try to bring together journalists from all Nile basin countries to share their expertise and create greater transparency as sometimes water issues are contentious issues.
 - To be patient. One cannot expect miracles from a few articles. It is not the Nile it is the belief in the prosperity of a region.
 3. As of our knowledge, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile aims to empower women leadership in high-level decision-making in transboundary waters in the Nile basin. The literature says that international agencies, as it could be SIWI in this particular case, invest in efforts to provide enhanced and systematic training to water professionals in order to prevent conflict. This network was launched in 2017 and it is expected to provide long term solutions. Given the fact that the GERD negotiations started earlier and the tensions are escalating instead of decreasing, do you think that there are any possible short term solutions that could bring women at the top in these negotiations?
 - As I mentioned I do not believe in short term solutions. It is a cultural challenge. Women certainly will play the most important role as they are the drivers to change.
 4. Water diplomacy and diplomacy in general is not only a very masculinised field but also Westernised. In our project we are trying to write a manifesto rooted in a decolonial thought. Which could be some ways to approach water diplomacy with a decolonial lens?
 - There are various options, and each one needs a consensus of all Nile parties. This consensus is the key. For example, the African Union to lead the process and chair the negotiations.

5. How are third actors (mostly Western) in water diplomacy negotiations perceived by non-Western countries (Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia)?
 - most relevant acc to me are WB, EU, GER, FRA, NL
6. In which ways could intersectionality play a substantial role in the field of water diplomacy?
 - It is a process of change of mindset and opinion the wider public
7. What are the main obstacles that women face in their equal participation in water diplomacy/leadership positions in the water sector? What are the gender stereotypes, norms or institutional practices that need to be challenged in order to empower women to equally participate and use their full potential?
 - I already see a gradual change, looking to the younger generation, students in the water programmes, political, etc that will eventually lead to a balanced playing field.
8. Can you think of examples where the inclusion or, conversely, the exclusion of women, in environmental diplomacy and decision making at the national or local level has positively or negatively affected outcomes?
 - No clear examples, sine I mostly have worked with women. In the NL and even in Africa (Kenya) I have worked with very very strong woman. There are many studies (Hofstede) which all refer to masculinity vs femininity societies, it is a cultural challenge and politicians, general public, change agents and policies together will make the shift.
9. Much of the existing policy tools on water diplomacy are dedicated to the interstate level. How can water diplomacy be more inclusive, in particular, to those levels of the society that are excluded from the negotiations but are directly involved in water issues (groups and communities)? How could we create a more inclusive water diplomacy covering multiple scales of water governance?
 - As mentioned it needs a political solutions and for politicians public opinion is important.
10. Why is it important to address the water, food and energy nexus within water diplomacy?
 - The importance is the discussion at the level of the general public, information has to come from media, social media, etc. it all will have an economic impact. It is the strategy Im following with the FAO WaPOR financed by NL. Make data open source and follow-up on a wide range of stakeholders to use and translate info ready

to be understood. Of course, be open that a nexus change will have socio-economic consequences. Discussion and change hopefully will follow.

11. Sometimes external financial and technical assistance is needed for inter-state water diplomacy in the so called countries of the Global South, as they “lack” the sufficient resources or technical expertise. At the same time, the inherent insecurity of post-colonial state in Africa and the Middle East creates an apprehension in these countries that international agencies may insert so-called “outside” or “Western” agendas that are not in the best interest of their nation, such as by putting global environmental concerns above domestic economic development. Which should be the best ways to craft a decolonial water diplomacy?
 - Well, I have difficulties with your assumptions.

5. Maysoon Zoubi

1. According to your knowledge and experience, why do you think that the GERD negotiations are not being fruitful? Why a common decision hasn’t been agreed yet, taking into account the socioeconomic and environmental circumstances that the region is facing and the “negative effects” of a possible unilateral decision by Ethiopia in filling the GERD?
 - The Nile in the time of the Pharaohs, was used exclusively by Egypt. That is no longer the case. Today, there are other States, particularly Ethiopia, which have a role in how this great river is used. And as a result, to avoid conflict, the principle of equitable and reasonable use is applied. So each riparian has a share and this share is defined by the criteria that is listed in the 1997 Convention. Egypt relies heavily on the Nile to supply water for its agriculture and to its more than 100 million people, while Sudan warned that millions of lives would be at “great risk” if Ethiopia unilaterally fills the dam. But the principle of not causing harm renders the application of the equitable and reasonable use principle impossible. Because if Ethiopia claims a new use for the river, or increases an existing one, using the river more intensively than before, this will be at the expense of Egypt, which already uses the river to its maximum. Ethiopia views the project as essential for its electrification and development and insists that the flow of water downstream will not be affected. But Egypt and Sudan have expressed concerns the dam will reduce

the flow of the Nile waters to their countries. Egypt has emphasized its acknowledgement of, and support for, the right of Ethiopia and other upstream countries to develop and utilize their water resources to meet their developmental needs. However, it equally highlighted that this utilization should not come at the expense of downstream interests. So in my opinion to help those countries to reach an equitable agreement; a stress on the importance of commitment to principles of international law, especially the obligation not to cause significant harm, the obligation of prior notification and consultation on projects that would affect other riparian states and of sharing information. Incremental steps for building trust between the three Eastern Nile basin countries are needed to provide an enabling political environment for future technical negotiations. On the part of Ethiopia, providing transparent information about the project and its progress would not only build trust, but also facilitate the negotiations over the specific benefit sharing mechanisms that would be acceptable to the three parties. Broadening the modalities of cooperation, as proposed by the benefit-sharing concept, to include areas beyond the project could also help build trust between the three Eastern Nile countries.

2. Water diplomacy and diplomacy in general is not only a very masculinised field but also Westernised. In our project we are trying to write a manifesto rooted in a decolonial thought. Which could be some ways to approach water diplomacy with a decolonial lense?
 - Water Diplomacy is an adaptive, preventive, multidisciplinary form of diplomacy centred on water sharing. A framework that challenges conventional wisdom in water resources research and practice, focuses on networks rather than systems and value creation rather than zero-sum thinking. It is an approach that enables a variety of stakeholders to assess ways to contribute to finding solutions for joint management of shared freshwater resources. It is a dynamic process that seeks to develop reasonable, sustainable and peaceful solutions to water management while promoting cooperation and collaboration among riparian stakeholders.
3. In which ways could intersectionality play a substantial role in the field of water diplomacy?
 - Policymaking should be participatory and transparent to ensure public legitimacy. To secure the commitment and contribution of relevant actors and navigate trade-offs among competing users and demands, authorities should promote stakeholder

dialogue and input to policy design and implementation. For water diplomacy to bear fruits, the inclusive participation of all stakeholders in the process is an absolute must; including women. the importance of including the interests of the multiple dimensions and multiple stakeholders in the cooperation process. Practice shows that water-related conflict prevention and resolution is largely the outcome of processes of research and fact finding, negotiation, mediation and conciliation that are rooted in an in-depth understanding of the social/ cultural/ economic/ environmental conditions and the political context.

4. What are the main obstacles that women face in their equal participation in water diplomacy/leadership positions in the water sector? What are the gender stereotypes, norms or institutional practices that need to be challenged in order to empower women to equally participate and use their full potential?
 - 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. 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. Obstacles that women face are mainly threefold: negative stereotypes, a considerable gender pay gap, and social expectations that negatively influence their career choices, including the need for balancing family and professional life, fitting into existing social structures, or simply struggling with lack of self-confidence. Enhancing women's civic and political participation, strengthening the role of women in the local economies, and bolstering their efforts in society and the work place by taking on discrimination and marginalization, and cultural attitudes and building the partnerships and supporting the innovations that will help women live up their potential. Institutionalize a gender-responsive approach to peace and security, promote women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding and decision-making, engage women in conflict prevention, early warning, and disaster risk reduction and invest in their health, education, and economic empowerment to build stable societies
5. Can you think of examples where the inclusion or, conversely, the exclusion of women, in environmental diplomacy and decision making at the national or local level has positively or negatively affected outcomes?
 - The Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile: Since its launch in 2017, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile has contributed to

building trust and an enabling environment for cooperation. The Network engages senior and mid-career women professionals from Ministries of Water and Ministries of Foreign Affairs, as well as other relevant line ministries from across the Nile Basin. Since its establishment, the Network has hosted annual workshops in 2017 (in Uganda), 2019 (in Ethiopia) and 2020 (in Kenya), as well as regular online learning activities. In 2019, the Network released a key summary publication ‘Tapping our Potential,’ and in 2020 a Network Joint Statement was issued in support of inclusive water governance. The initiative has been met with significant interest for its innovative approach. In turn, it draws inspiration from Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy and the Nordic Women Mediators Network.

6. Much of the existing policy tools on water diplomacy are dedicated to the interstate level. How can water diplomacy be more inclusive, in particular, to those levels of the society that are excluded from the negotiations but are directly involved in water issues (groups and communities)? How could we create a more inclusive water diplomacy covering multiple scales of water governance?
 - o Water governance is inherently conflictual. By its nature, water cannot be managed only for a single purpose in isolation. All water management must assimilate the contending demands and competing interests of multiple sectors and stakeholders across different geographic scales, time frames, and levels of government. Multi-track water diplomacy is required to navigate the complexities of building cooperation, undertaking collaborative or joint investments in shared river basins, and addressing local or community-based conflicts. Adaptive governance of water resources is a vital way to practice water diplomacy, a dynamic approach that responds to conditions of uncertainty and complexity, integrates scientific knowledge with local knowledge. It helps create and maintain the essential building blocks that assess water diplomacy, such as science policy and state/non-state networks, sustained and iterative relationships, and social learning. Adaptive governance of social-ecological systems relies on the social institutions involved in use of and decision-making about resources as well as the social networks that form in the process; therefore, the adaptive capacity of the institutions and networks is key to the success or failure of adaptive governance processes. Key components of adaptive governance include: social learning; diverse networks of state and non-state actors and institutions; sustained and iterative relationships; and flexibility and innovation.

7. How are third actors (mostly Western) in water diplomacy negotiations perceived by non-Western countries (Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia)?
 - External intervention may continue remaining a threat in the future. In my opinion, it is better for water diplomacy to be managed between the riparian countries themselves without the interference of any third party. This ensures the sovereignty of states, the independence of decisions, and does not give opportunities to others to accuse the decisions of being decisions with a foreign agenda or donor driven decisions.
8. Sometimes external financial and technical assistance is needed for inter-state water diplomacy in the so called countries of the Global South, as they “lack” the sufficient resources or technical expertise. At the same time, the inherent insecurity of post-colonial state in Africa and the Middle East creates an apprehension in these countries that international agencies may insert so-called “outside” or “Western” agendas that are not in the best interest of their nation, such as by putting global environmental concerns above domestic economic development. Which should be the best ways to craft a decolonial water diplomacy?
 - Yes of course, external financial and technical assistance for the purpose of: promoting the advancement of international water law; providing development and technical assistance; capacity-buildings training; good offices, mediation, fact-finding and conciliation, and donors would better support joint hydraulic projects, programmes aimed at the long-term sustainability of the shared water resources, as well as projects that would increase regional integration beyond the shared water resources.

6. Rawia Tawfik

1. According to your knowledge and experience, why do you think that the GERD negotiations are not being fruitful? Why a common decision hasn't been agreed yet, taking into account the socioeconomic and environmental circumstances that the region is facing and the “negative effects” of a possible unilateral decision by Ethiopia in filling the GERD?
 - I believe the reason or not reaching an agreement is Ethiopia's adoption of a concept of absolute sovereignty over the river which promotes unilateralism and contradicts

the spirit of cooperation stipulated in the Declaration of Principles signed in March 2015.

2. Following this last question, what is the role of journalists in the Nile Basin in the GERD dispute and what are the main challenges they face? As of our understanding, there are already existing initiatives (SIWI's Nile journalist network) that try to bring together journalists from all Nile basin countries to share their expertise and create greater transparency as sometimes water issues are contentious issues.
 - This question would better be addressed to journalists, but I believe their central role at the moment is to present a balanced account on the negotiations and the reasons for failing to reach an agreement, and point out to the challenges to the region, the river and local communities in downstream countries that could be faced in case of unilateral filling.
3. As of our knowledge, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile aims to empower women leadership in high-level decision-making in transboundary waters in the Nile basin. The literature says that international agencies, as it could be SIWI in this particular case, invest in efforts to provide enhanced and systematic training to water professionals in order to prevent conflict. This network was launched in 2017 and it is expected to provide long term solutions. Given the fact that the GERD negotiations started earlier and the tensions are escalating instead of decreasing, do you think that is there any possible short term solution that could bring women at the top in these negotiations?
 - As far as I know women diplomats, especially from Egypt, have been part of the negotiating team for sometime. I don't think bringing women at the top of these negotiations would make a difference given the reasons of failure cited earlier. However, an analysis of the impact of non-cooperation on women in downstream countries may be worth analyzing.
4. What are the main obstacles that women face in their equal participation in water diplomacy/leadership positions in the water sector? What are the gender stereotypes, norms or institutional practices that need to be challenged in order to empower women to equally participate and use their full potential?
 - I have not done research on this theme, but you may find this source useful:
<https://www.genevawaterhub.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/women-in-water-diplomacy-study.pdf>

5. How are third actors (mostly Western) in water diplomacy negotiations perceived by non-Western countries (Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia)?
 - It depends on which of these three countries is concerned, As far as Egypt is concerned, the US under Trump administration was seen as an actor that has done, together with the World Bank, sincere efforts to mediate for reaching an agreement which was already drafted (Washington agreement) and initialed by Egypt, but Ethiopia declined to sign at the last stage. Ethiopia claims that Trump administration is not neutral, which is used as an excuse to justify its last minute defection. Sudan proposed that the E.U, U.S and the World Bank turn into mediators, rather than observers, in the AU led process, a proposal proposed by Egypt to address Ethiopia's critique on the neutrality of US mediation, but Ethiopia refused the proposal.
6. Much of the existing policy tools on water diplomacy are dedicated to the interstate level. How can water diplomacy be more inclusive, in particular, to those levels of the society that are excluded from the negotiations but are directly involved in water issues (groups and communities)? How could we create a more inclusive water diplomacy covering multiple scales of water governance?
 - International consultations are needed in various stages of negotiations or at least communication with the affected communities on what the points of contention are and what to expect in case unilateral filling continues (what the impacts on their livelihood will be and how to adapt to expected changes).
7. Sometimes external financial and technical assistance is needed for inter-state water diplomacy in the so called countries of the Global South, as they "lack" the sufficient resources or technical expertise. At the same time, the inherent insecurity of post-colonial state in Africa and the Middle East creates an apprehension in these countries that international agencies may insert so-called "outside" or "Western" agendas that are not in the best interest of their nation, such as by putting global environmental concerns above domestic economic development. Which should be the best ways to craft a decolonial water diplomacy?
 - Suggesting agendas and crafting solutions based on the inputs of concerned riparian states can help overcome this challenge and moving towards what you call a 'decolonial water diplomacy'. Again what the case of the GERD shows is that this would only work if the parties are ready to transcend the zero-sum mentality and look for win-win solutions.

7. Sergio Mothé

1. According to your knowledge and experience, why do you think that the GERD negotiations are not being fruitful? Why a common decision hasn't been agreed yet, taking into account the socioeconomic and environmental circumstances that the region is facing and the "negative effects" of a possible unilateral decision by Ethiopia in filling the GERD?
 - In general terms, the level of Commitment of the Political Power with the needs of society is scarce, and in the less developed countries even more evident. I do not know if this is the case, but it would be necessary to look very cautiously, if there are interests of large multinational Corporations in the Exploitation of the Large Dams of each of the three Countries, because if so, the use of disagreement as a source of profit can never be discarded. This would be neither the first nor the last case. It is absolutely obvious that they will have to come to some kind of agreement. A river can only be properly managed if the whole of its river basin is managed; any action on the river directly or indirectly affects downstream users.
2. Following this last question, what is the role of journalists in the Nile Basin in the GERD dispute and what are the main challenges they face? As of our understanding, there are already existing initiatives (SIWI's Nile journalist network) that try to bring together journalists from all Nile basin countries to share their expertise and create greater transparency as sometimes water issues are contentious issues.
 - I do not believe that Journalists have a crucial role in the dispute. If already in the First World, journalism responds to economic interests, you cannot imagine how cheap it is to condition journalism in Developing Countries. From what little I have read, international technicians have already drafted filling standards and management plans, which have been validated. These are not the proposals that journalists should disseminate, to know the whys and hows. This would be a proactive attitude for the resolution of the conflict. When opinionated journalists begin to talk and give their opinions on technical issues, things generally get worse. Just look at what is happening with the Covid-19 vaccines, with Astra-Zeneca and Janssen.
3. As of our knowledge, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile aims to empower women leadership in high-level decision-making in transboundary waters in

the Nile basin. The literature says that international agencies, as it could be SIWI in this particular case, invest in efforts to provide enhanced and systematic training to water professionals in order to prevent conflict. This network was launched in 2017 and it is expected to provide long term solutions. Given the fact that the GERD negotiations started earlier and the tensions are escalating instead of decreasing, do you think that there any possible short term solution that could bring women at the top in these negotiations?

- I cannot comment on either organization. I have no experience and I cannot assess their influence or lobbying capabilities. I can say that Development Projects in Africa, which aim at production for self-consumption, either count on women or are destined to fail. It is a cultural problem, especially in countries with an Islamist majority. It is the women who make the self-consumption plots work, if they do not believe in the project, for whatever reason, usually an error of approach, it will hardly succeed. Another thing is the Projects that are aimed at companies, whether local or foreign. But that will be from the start-up and basically for Ethiopia, since the other two countries already have their models in place. The one of Egypt is for you to take a look at it, you only need to use Google map to follow its border with Sudan or on the west sides of the lake formed by Aswan, to find a lot of circles, which are irrigation Pivots, it is a transformation for large companies or government agencies.
4. Water diplomacy and diplomacy in general is not only a very masculinised field but also Westernised. In our project we are trying to write a manifesto rooted in a decolonial thought. Which could be some ways to approach water diplomacy with a decolonial lense?
- Continuing with what I said before, for cultural reasons it is essential to incorporate women into development processes as soon as possible. As for Diplomacy in general, its masculinization is evident, but they are high positions and therefore respond to the same model as the rest of society, the percentage of women in high positions is very low, although not so much in the intermediate levels, so it is not surprising. Surely, in the diplomatic activity the participation of women would give a different vision that would allow to solve entrenched situations and I am not saying this because you are both women. It is absolutely so, most of the Diplomacy, not only of water but in general, in Developing Countries, is with colonial optics. You only have to look at the Development Projects in the agricultural sector

in general. The aim is to impose our productive systems, hence the amount of failures harvested in many of them. It is essential to study first, their circumstances, their culture, their prejudices, their customs and their reality. Technology is NOT neutral, it requires a certain level of development of the environment, therefore trying to incorporate a technology that the level of development does not allow to maintain IS A MISTAKE, this is one of the most frequent failures. It is necessary to propose those improvements that really can be implemented and incorporated without traumas in their lives, that is to say, to produce improvements at the speed that the reality can assume.

5. How are third actors (mostly Western) in water diplomacy negotiations perceived by non-Western countries (Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia)?
 - I do not know the specific case of these countries, but in general: With distrust, they do not trust us, they think that we will surely make some profit. That we are rich and the money is coming out of our ears, so we have to find a way to take advantage of it. That we have no idea what we are like and what is good for them. That we want them to do things that are not good for them. How can they get us to bring them to Europe?
6. In which ways could intersectionality play a substantial role in the field of water diplomacy?
 - I don't understand the question, I assume you are referring to the feeling of oppression? If so, only if trust is generated.
7. What are the main obstacles that women face in their equal participation in water diplomacy/leadership positions in the water sector? What are the gender stereotypes, norms or institutional practices that need to be challenged in order to empower women to equally participate and use their full potential?
 - Cultural, Religious, Training in these countries, The presidency of the Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro is held by a woman, a civil engineer.
8. Can you think of examples where the inclusion or, conversely, the exclusion of women, in environmental diplomacy and decision making at the national or local level has positively or negatively affected outcomes?
 - It only affects positively or negatively when extreme situations arise. The agricultural sector in general has a macho drift, so in a tense situation the result, favorable or unfavorable, receives the comment of "woman had to be", for better or worse. It is true that my experience in Algeria with an Agronomist Engineer

of the Ministry, showed the need for her to be tougher with her colleagues to impose her authority. In the environmental field there is a higher % of women than in strictly productive fields

9. Much of the existing policy tools on water diplomacy are dedicated to the interstate level. How can water diplomacy be more inclusive, in particular, to those levels of the society that are excluded from the negotiations but are directly involved in water issues (groups and communities)? How could we create a more inclusive water diplomacy covering multiple scales of water governance?
 - Basically making it crystal clear that water is a public good and therefore any negotiation that affects a public good requires that the whole of society be represented. This is part of the merit of the Spanish River Management System, all users are part of the management of this public good, from electricity generation, drinking water, farmers, etc.
10. Why is it important to address the water, food and energy nexus within water diplomacy?
 - It is not that it is important, it is that it is essential, without water there is NO LIFE, it is also a public and scarce good. The production of food and almost any good is based on :RAW MATERIALS - ENERGY – KNOWLEDGE. To produce Raw Materials water is needed and we have not yet found a way to produce them without water. Water can be used to produce Energy.
11. Sometimes external financial and technical assistance is needed for inter-state water diplomacy in the so called countries of the Global South, as they “lack” the sufficient resources or technical expertise. At the same time, the inherent insecurity of post-colonial state in Africa and the Middle East creates an apprehension in these countries that international agencies may insert so-called “outside” or “Western” agendas that are not in the best interest of their nation, such as by putting global environmental concerns above domestic economic development. Which should be the best ways to craft a decolonial water diplomacy?
 - It is not easy, because the messages are contradictory: important thing is to maximize production and be competitive and to export to improve the balance of payments and thus repay the credits. But you have to open up your economy to let in new, innovative, knowledge-transferring air. But you have to have the production standards that I impose on you so that I buy from you. Neoliberalism is very colonial. Therefore, the proposals for water management have to start

from helping to solve its really important problems. First, its real problem, which is self-sufficiency. Then Education, as Pascual Maragall used to say, the solution to Development can be summed up in three words: "education, education and education". Of course, for children to learn they have to eat at least twice a day. From the first meeting it has to be clear that the assistance will not benefit any group of Power, neither foreign nor NATIONAL. The level of corruption of money is immeasurable and the one who charges is as corrupt as the one who pays.

8. Stefan Döring

1. According to your knowledge and experience, why do you think that the GERD negotiations are not being fruitful? Why a common decision hasn't been agreed yet, taking into account the socioeconomic and environmental circumstances that the region is facing and the "negative effects" of a possible unilateral decision by Ethiopia in filling the GERD?
 - I think there is a need for a more decisive mediator or third-party actor that can help bring the members together, as well as making sure stipulated agreements are being followed. Ideally this could be a river basin organization with third part backing, but it also be a UN back organization.
2. Following this last question, what is the role of journalists in the Nile Basin in the GERD dispute and what are the main challenges they face? As of our understanding, there are already existing initiatives (SIWI's Nile journalist network) that try to bring together journalists from all Nile basin countries to share their expertise and create greater transparency as sometimes water issues are contentious issues.
 - I am not qualified to speak about the role of journalism, but generally there are many restrictions to open press in the region in general, in some countries very drastic. Water issues are highly politicized which make the role of journalism even harder. Clearly, there is a large potential to educate general public on water issues through access to unbiased media. This could in turn have an effect on elites and political leaders. However, this is perhaps a more long-term project. For now, the Nile issues rest almost solely with political leadership.

3. As of our knowledge, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile aims to empower women leadership in high-level decision-making in transboundary waters in the Nile basin. The literature says that international agencies, as it could be SIWI in this particular case, invest in efforts to provide enhanced and systematic training to water professionals in order to prevent conflict. This network was launched in 2017 and it is expected to provide long term solutions. Given the fact that the GERD negotiations started earlier and the tensions are escalating instead of decreasing, do you think that is there any possible *short term* solution that could bring women at the top in these negotiations?
 - I would not call SIWI an international agency. It is an NGO. Again, this is outside my research knowledge. Short-term I do not see any significant steps towards including more women. Clearly, there is a chance to ask for more women inclusion through third-party actors.
4. What are the main obstacles that women face in their equal participation in water diplomacy/leadership positions in the water sector? What are the gender stereotypes, norms or institutional practices that need to be challenged in order to empower women to equally participate and use their full potential?
 - Again, this is outside my research knowledge. Strengthening the role of women in Arab states (as elsewhere) should be a priority in any development work, this is no different for the water sector. The biggest difference to some other sectors is that women are disproportionately worse affected by water scarcity or insufficient WASH conditions.
5. Can you think of examples where the inclusion or, conversely, the exclusion of women, in environmental diplomacy and decision making at the national or local level has positively or negatively affected outcomes?
 - Sorry, this is really on the periphery of my research.
6. Water diplomacy and diplomacy in general is not only a very masculinised field but also Westernised. In our project we are trying to write a manifesto rooted in a decolonial thought. Which could be some ways to approach water diplomacy with a decolonial lense?
 - I think you could look a bit into Women Peace and Security initiatives a bit. Unfortunately, many of the international structures and diplomatic channels follow established institutions. So, it is more difficult to get fully away from this. There should certainly be more emphasis on regional solutions with local

actors having a higher influence on the negotiation processes. (To be a bit challenging, maybe the manifesto should thus originate not from Europe but from the region)

7. In which ways could intersectionality play a substantial role in the field of water diplomacy?
 - I think it can play a very large role enabling parties to take different positions depending on what is at stake.
8. Much of the existing policy tools on water diplomacy are dedicated to the interstate level. How can water diplomacy be more inclusive, in particular, to those levels of the society that are excluded from the negotiations but are directly involved in water issues (groups and communities)? How could we create a more inclusive water diplomacy covering multiple scales of water governance?
 - Ideally Water diplomacy must involve bottom up, local solutions, including civil society organizations. I think could be (to some extent is) demanded by the donor community. However, there is just a lot of realpolitik that prevails in negotiations.
9. Why is it important to address the water, food and energy nexus within water diplomacy?
 - As the name suggest, these issues are extremely interconnected and we need to take a holistic, sustainable view when we think about policy interventions.
10. Sometimes external financial and technical assistance is needed for inter-state water diplomacy in the so called countries of the Global South, as they “lack” the sufficient resources or technical expertise. At the same time, the inherent insecurity of post-colonial state in Africa and the Middle East creates an apprehension in these countries that international agencies may insert so-called “outside” or “Western” agendas that are not in the best interest of their nation, such as by putting global environmental concerns above domestic economic development. Which should be the best ways to craft a decolonial water diplomacy?
 - Start with locals, but still consider the insights from established (often Western) science.

9. Véra Noon

1. According to your knowledge and experience, why do you think that the GERD negotiations are not being fruitful? Why a common decision hasn't been agreed yet, taking into account the socioeconomic and environmental circumstances that the region is facing and the “negative effects” of a possible unilateral decision by Ethiopia in filling the GERD?
 - According to some general readings, and discussions with experts from both sides of the dispute, I believe the issue can be summed up in the following points:
 - Historic conflicts (going back to colonial era) and Egypt's unilateral claim of “historic rights” which is not considered legit by other parties of the conflict.
 - Power dynamics and shifts in the region (Particularly following the increased tensions and economic decline of Ethiopia during the past few years, which might have given room for interventions)
 - Previous agreements and bilateral treaties (1929 Nile waters agreement UK-Egypt; 1959 Agreement Egypt-Sudan; 1993 Cairo cooperation framework), other initiatives (Nile basin initiative 1999; the Nile basin initiative Framework 2009) but the lack of a tripartite/riparian legal water basin management and water allocation framework.
 - Communication: I believe there is a discrepancy in points of views, and a lack of genuine communication. Both parties of the dispute (mainly Ethiopia-Egypt) are making claims in their favor, and odds are that both may be right! The issue is being closed to communication, and to listening to the others' point of views. Both parties need to be flexible, and recognize the other country's needs.
 - International intervention (Ethiopia is calling for a mediation from the African Union, whereas Other countries are requesting international intervention from EU, USA, China, Canada etc.)
2. As of our knowledge, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile aims to empower women leadership in high-level decision-making in transboundary waters in the Nile basin. The literature says that international agencies, as it could be SIWI in this particular case, invest in efforts to provide enhanced and systematic training to water professionals in order to prevent conflict. This network was launched in 2017 and it is

expected to provide long term solutions. Given the fact that the GERD negotiations started earlier and the tensions are escalating instead of decreasing, do you think that there any possible *short term* solution that could bring women at the top in these negotiations?

- To be honest, not so much. Such short term solutions can only come from a political decision.
 - A political decision can either result from internal pressure/societal change (itself the fruit of the systematic training mentioned in the question, for example), which is often a long term process; or it can result from foreign powers exerting pressure, which in my opinion is not a priority at this stage.
3. Water diplomacy and diplomacy in general is not only a very masculinised field but also Westernised. In our project we are trying to write a manifesto rooted in a decolonial thought. Which could be some ways to approach water diplomacy with a decolonial lense?
- History, history and history. Any modern conflict goes back to decades and centuries of events, tensions and disputes. It's important to trace back these issues to understand both parties' concerns and claims, which is the first step of any attempt to true diplomacy.
 - Change the classic "hero" portrayal of the Western powers and acknowledge the impacts of colonial era on the current situation (both the positive AND the negative). Find the balance between offering technical/scientific support, and influencing/controlling.
 - Talk to the people, tell the stories of both parties from a community perspective. Understand the deep rooted social aspects of the conflict. You'd be impressed by how much you learn (even if the stories can be biased, "brainwashed" or false sometimes).
 - Let the focus be on science based and technical information, coming from both ends of the conflict. Research, numbers, data, statistics, forecasting, modeling etc... These only can help refute false claims, and support honest ones.
4. How are third actors (mostly Western) in water diplomacy negotiations perceived by non-Western countries (Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia)?
- As mentioned earlier, Ethiopia is not welcoming international mediations with the argument that this is an African resource, and the issue should be solved among

African countries without external interventions. It is hence supporting African Union led negotiations over the West.

- On the other hand, Egypt is seeking support from US, EU and other states, still using its “historical rights” over the Nile river mentioned in the colonial era Nile waters agreement with the UK). Sudan is somewhat stranded in the middle, with its own interests caught amidst the dispute.
5. In which ways could intersectionality play a substantial role in the field of water diplomacy?
- Intersectionality at this stage may not directly affect regional water diplomacy talks as the narrative is revolving around nations and governments rather than races and ethnicities. It is currently more of a political dispute than a racial/ethnic one.
 - That being said, in the African context where civil wars are still occurring, where ethnic tensions are often on the rise, namely in Ethiopia and Sudan, I believe that intersectionality can help resolve some inner state conflicts, which in return may render each individual nation stronger, its institutions more functional, and its narrative more focused on diplomacy rather than establishing internal security.
 - Additionally, it may contribute to resolving some of the issues between Ethiopia and Sudan, namely the Fashaga border dispute. This dispute may contribute to Sudan’s inclination to favour’ Ethiopia during negotiations.
6. Why is it important to address the water, food and energy nexus within water diplomacy?
- Because they are simply too connected. Especially in each nation’s individual claims during negotiations. The river is not only offering water to drink, it can provide electricity to millions of people upstream, and irrigation water to feed millions of people downstream. The dam is not raising one issue, but three. And during negotiations, each state needs to consider its neighbor’s needs as resources know no boundaries: Food/water security issues were raised in Egypt, and Energy security issues were raised in Ethiopia. Upstream nations have responsibilities towards downstream nations, which is often conceived as both a threat and leverage point. Hence the fears that were sparked once the dam was filled.

10. Elizabeth Yaaari, Kanika Thakar, Martina Klimes and Nasr Hamid

These last experts on Water Diplomacy were interviewed through a *semi-structured interview*, in which we had a conversation via meets. The transcriptions of the interviews haven't been recorded as they asked for privacy.