FICAC: WIDC

Women in Diplomacy: today’s issues in light of Covid 19, current affairs, and today’s leadership

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Topics

• Is gender an issue in Diplomacy - the diaper diplomacy
• Is gender equality an issue in diplomacy and do we want women in diplomacy
• Current representation of women in diplomacy
• Pros and cons -
  • Advantages of gender diversity within diplomacy
  • Apprehensions to be addressed
  • Diversity in types of diplomacy which interact with gender diversity
• The effect of language and terminology
• Post Covid-19 necessities according to leading diplomats
• FICAC as a key contributor
  • The masters series
  • Task force on gender diversity – subcommittees to formulate treaties, working papers and such to be presented before international organizations and governments
  • Possible collaboration with others
No word paradigm – Diaper diplomacy

https://youtu.be/Pxp3tujHoUs
The no words paradigm -2 the disparity

https://youtu.be/Mh4f9AYRCZY
Is gender an issue in diplomacy

• When faced with the amazing photos of the baby of the Prime Minister of New Zealand at the UN General Assembly our reactions tell the whole story:
• Reactions: awe, surprise, deviation from the social norm.
• happier with the second video of the typical gender roles:
  • male dressed in a suit, reporting on army fighting to the BBC, while the gender typical female scrambles to keep the next generation at bay.
• Nothing has really changed. Our surprise (even if positively) by the NZ PM’s acts exemplifies how fundamental stereotypical conceptualization of gender roles in our society and in diplomacy remain unchanged.
Do we want women in diplomacy?

• What is the current representation of women in diplomacy
• Pros and cons of gender equality in diplomacy
• Do we want to do something to change the situation
Current representation of women in diplomacy

• 22 out of 193 countries (11%) have a **female head of state or government**
• 13 out of 193 countries (6%) have at least **50 percent women in the national cabinet**
• 3 out of 193 countries (1.5%) have at least **50 percent women in the national legislature**

(Women’s power index, [https://www.cfr.org/article/womens-power-index](https://www.cfr.org/article/womens-power-index))

• Globally, women constitute only 15% of ambassadors and 9% of negotiators. (Minerva-Banjac, 2018)
Pros and cons – is it beneficial to work towards gender equality

• When **Madeleine Albright** was interviewed about her time as the first female US Secretary of State, one of the first points she made was: “societies are better off when women are politically and economically empowered”.

• According to UN statistics, when women participate in the peace-making processes, the resulting agreement is **35% more likely to last 15 years**.

• Women clearly play an essential role in maintaining stable and secure democracies.
Are there any cons to gender equality?

• The “men’s club” – by altering the makeup of gender roles in diplomacy, a possible shift in the discourse and “tete a tete” between masculine leaders.

• Introduction of new ideas and schools of thought into world peace keeping (uprooting conservative thinking or ways things were done)
Language and terminology

• **Gender equality vs. women’s rights.**
  - Broader. Open to diversity
  - None derogatory. Does not look down on women. Reject subordination
  - Broad basis - bottom-up approach

• **Glass Ceiling**: Insinuates there is a barrier to be broken in order to “be as” males. Not the target.

• **Representation vs. Substance** – Necessity for clarity of definition of gender equality. Gender equality to be achieved not only by women taking on masculine roles and acting according to patriarchal guidelines but openness to both men and women creating a new culture of diplomacy. (Hobes, Vebber)
Grammar

• Grammar: whilst the English language does not have gender specific nouns, Hebrew, for example not only has gender specific nouns (table-female, cannon-masculine) but pronouns (you, we, them) are gender specific. This is similar to French, Spanish, and German.

• In Hebrew, there is no general neutral word to address a group of people (you, vous). Hence, masculinity is predominant:

• A group of 50 women and one male will be addressed in the masculine form.

• Effect - studies show that in countries with genderial language there is:
  • Less equality in the work force
  • Less equality in credit awards
  • Less equality in education
  
Israel study

• A large scale study in Israel found: the language used to address school children directly influences the success of girls.
  • Addressing **females** with **masculine** language diminishes their efforts and success in math problems (stereotypically masculine)
  • Addressing **males** with **feminine** grammar – although their results were lower than when addressed with masculine grammar – the differences were less significant.
  • When addressing both genders in a **general group terminology** produced better results for females and did not alter results for males. (Krichly-Katz T., Regev T, 2015)
Welcome to Change

• Multi Genderial Language (schools, parliament, electric company)

• POST COVID: In the post Covid-19 world, where 767 million women and girls were impacted by school closures; 11 Million may never return to class; with recession pushing 47 million more women and girls into poverty, we need to listen to current brave women in diplomacy.

• In the post-covid world, the role of diplomacy and consular work will increase:

  • “the emphasis will remain on in-person diplomacy, especially when building all-important interpersonal relations or conductive sensitive negotiations”. (H.E. Stavros Labrinidis, Ambassador of the EU to the U.S.)

  • “Consular work gives an opportunity to interact with citizens and it is essential that they receive good services” (Bergdis Ellertsdottir, Ambassador if Iceland to the U.S.)
Gender equal leadership and diplomacy

• Audrey Azoulay, Director General of UNESCO and
• Katrin Jakobsdottir, Prime Minister of Iceland:

“what we need are leaders for gender equality – and we need them everywhere in our societal structures. Leaders of all ages, all gender identities and from all backgrounds.

These leaders are not just agents of change, but designers of change. They lead through their examples and engagement. They expose injustices and unequal opportunities. They know that gender inequalities stem from discrimination and exclusion and that it is only by lifting these barriers that real change can happen.”

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Goals

I suggest that we too, as Ficac, support women who dare to dream, create, push for new frontiers, not as women, and not by trying to act like men, but as themselves, bringing in their own ideas, aspirations, and attention to the cultural, economic, and global problems the world faces today.

FICAC as a key contributor

• The masters series
• Task force on gender diversity – subcommittees to formulate treaties, working papers and such to be presented before international organizations and governments
• Possible collaboration with others

As H.E. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, the former President of Croatia, has said, women should be proud to use their advantages in the boardroom to promote the causes not only of women but of all society to promote peace, prosperity and stability.
Thank you

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