

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION FOR JORDAN RIVER BASIN DISPUTE CONSIDERING COALITIONS AMONG RIPARIAN STATES**

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper aims to establish a practical conflict resolution mechanism and applies it to solve the strategic long-term dispute for Jordan River Basin. The paper starts with a brief history of the Jordan River Basin dispute. The paper then presents a game theoretic approach based on the Graph Model technique for conflict resolution, to investigate the Jordan River Basin dispute, considering the complex socio-political aspects involved. The proposed model of this paper first defines the courses of actions available to all the involved stakeholders along with their preferences among them. Accordingly, the model applies stability and sensitivity analyses to propose an optimum resolution to the conflict and to examine the sensitivity of such resolution to the uncertainty in stakeholders' preferences. In this study, three scenarios were investigated with different coalition possibilities among different countries, as follow: (i) Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan; (ii) Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine; and (iii) Jordan, Israel, and Palestine. The results of the model suggest that the best resolution for all parties is through combined water and peace treaties. The results also indicate that a peace treaty between Israel and Palestine is the best resolution to the conflicts. The application of the Graph model in this paper shows its practicality and ability to provide each decision maker with a simulation environment to examine the moves and countermoves which considered during the negotiation among the different parties.

**KEYWORDS:** Water Disputes, Conflict Resolution, Graph Model, Decision Support System, Multiple Criteria Decision Analysis, Jordan River Basin.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Many regions around the world face water shortages and conflicts over insufficient water supplies and disputes over shared water supplies. In regions where countries battle for water access, the political situation between the countries is likely to be not stable. In regions where water supply is limited, combat seems to be the way to resolve the problem. For instance, Jordan River Basin's water scarcity is severe in the Middle East. In this river basin water is very essential for agricultural and production.

The Jordan River originates in Lebanon and passes through Jordan, Syria, and Israel. The river highly contributes to the agriculture and economic development of these countries. For this conflict, the countries are considered as decision makers (DMs) and each can make choices unilaterally. All players (DM) collective choices establish a resolution state or a likely ending or outcome of the conflict. However, instead of unilaterally moving, the DMs may also choose to form coalitions or to cooperate. In such environment, Game theory methods such as the Graph Model for Conflict Resolution, offers a useful and precise language for representing and analysing such disputes.

In the water domain, many researchers have attempted to examine conflicts in a gametheoretic framework. Rogers (1969) studied a conflict over flooding rivers between India and Pakistan. Dufounaud (1982) used Metagame theory for the negotiations over the Columbia and lower Makong river basin. Becker and Easter (1995) developed a dominant strategy selection for conflict on Great Lakes water between Canada and USA. Obeidie et al. (2002) used the graph model on water exports from Canada. Raquel et al. (2007) developed cooperative solution concepts for weighing the economic benefits versus negative environmental impacts from agriculture production. Fisvold and Caswell (2000) implemented cooperative solution concepts for deriving policy lessons useful for US-Mexico water negotiations and institutions. Supalla et al. (2002) used second price sequential action method for determining water prices in the Platte River. Kucukmehmtoglu and Guldmen (2004) developed a cooperative solution concept for water allocations for different countries. Wu and Whittington (2006) developed a cooperative solution concept for setting up new baseline conditions for different water competing countries.

Madani and Hipel (2007) provided some knowledge about the Jordan River Basin conflict. Elimam et al. (2008) studied the non-cooperative behaviour of the decision makers involved in the Nile river conflict using the Graph model.

This paper aiming to introduce the graph model for Jordan River conflict resolution (Fang et al. 1993) and apply it to analyse the different possible coalitions among the countries involved in the Jordan River Basin. To facilitate the analysis, a decision support system, called "conGres" developed based on the early work of Kassab et al. (2009), has been used to implement the graph model approach for the Jordan River conflict. The model helps to select the optimum resolution, considering the uncertainty in decision makers' preferences.

### **Analyzing the Jordan River Basin Conflict**

The area of the Jordan River Basin originates in Lebanon and passes through Syria, Israel, Jordan, and the occupied West Bank (represented by Palestine), is primarily an arid region. The Jordan River basin has an area of 18,300 square kilometers (see Figure 1). The has total average flow of 1,200 million cubic meters per year and originates from Lebanon, and consists the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers. Water is valuable due to low precipitation in this region. Groundwater aquifers are only water supplies to the countries which depends on the River. The use of water varies throughout the region. Israel uses the greatest amount of water followed by Jordan. Palestine has the smallest share. Water use per capita per day in the Jordan River Basin is the lowest in the region and in the world (UN-ESCWA and BGR, 2013). Demand on water in the region exceeds water supply. The options of the DMs remains the same since the foundation of Israel and have not altered or changed. Few temporary ruling have been considered over a relatively long time period.

### **Decision Support System**

To analyse the Jordan River Conflict, a DSS, called "**conflict Game for dispute resolution, conGres**", developed based on the early work of Kassab et al. (2006b; 2009) has been adapted for this conflict. The DSS compromise three techniques (see Figure 2): (1) the elimination method (MacCrimmon 1973) as a multiple-criteria decision analysis technique used to shortlist and choose decision alternatives; (2) the graph model for conflict resolution (Fang et al. 1993) to simulate and replicate the moves and countermoves that take place during intervention; and (3) the information gap (info-gap) theory that deal with the uncertainty

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associated with the stakeholders' preferences (Hipel and Ben-Haim 1999, Ben-Haim 2006). The following steps demonstrate the execution of the DSS for Jordan River Basin case study aiming to find the best solution. Figure 3 shows the main interface of the conGres DSS.

### **Step 1: Define Stakeholder and their options**

Five stakeholders (DMs) are involved in this conflict: Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Jordan, and

Palestine. The mutually exclusive decision options available to each of the DMs are shown in Table 1. In addition to doing nothing, important options are: unilaterally increase own share of water extraction, holding a peace treaty, holding a water treaty, and doing a counteraction against another country that unilaterally increased its share. Considering a scenario with four key DM countries and their options (3 options Lebanon, 4 options for Jordan, 5 options for Israel, and two options for Palestine), the information was entered into the DSS (see Figure 4), thus a total of 120 possible decision states were generated ( $3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 2$ ). These 120 possible decision states stand for all possible combinations of the stakeholders' options.

### **Step 2: Shortlist feasible solutions**

After having 120 decision states, it is essential to concentrate on the most promising solutions and to eliminate the infeasible solutions. The elimination method is capable of eliminating some of the alternatives that do not meet up the acceptance level of stakeholder. Based on different studies as suggested by Haddadin (2014) and Madani and Hipel (2007), 113 decision states were eliminated (see Table 3). Only seven (7) feasible solutions were selected, therefore producing a short list of feasible alternatives (Figure 5).

### **Step 3: Understanding stakeholders' preferences**

Before executing the graph model for a conflict considering various coalition scenarios among the DMs, it is important to understand and model the stakeholders' preferences. The Preferences of DMs can be ordinal, where each DM positions the decision states relative to each other, but is not able to specify their exact payoff values. Alternatively, the preferences can be cardinal, where each DM is able to quantify the payoffs of the different states. For the Jordan River Basin conflict, the payoff values are not available and therefore, ordinal preferences have been used.

The preferences of each DM included in this conflict are discussed as follows:

**Lebanon:** Lebanon wants to increase its withdrawal if there is no opposition by other DMs.

Thus, any decision state in which an water share will be rejected by other parties. Because Lebanon has a good access to water, it does not like to sign any water treaty with downstream countries which limits there access of water from the Jordan River. Lebanon wants to sign a water treaty when the other DMs countries want to sign water treaties with Israel. This will bring peace to the region.

**Syria:** Syria wants to increase its water withdrawal if the other downstream DM do not counteract. Syria prefer to counteract if other DM increase its share, and prefer the other DM not to increase their withdrawal. Syria prefers to sign a water treaty when Israel and Jordan are involved. In addition, Syria prefers all parties to sign a water treaty to bring peace to the region.

**Jordan:** Jordan is mainly prefers to increase its withdrawal if there is no counteraction from the other DM. Jordan prefers to sign a water treaty with other DM, and does not want other DMs to increase their withdrawal. If a DM increase its withdrawal, Jordan prefer to complaint rather than using the military actions. Signing a water treaty with Israel is preferred for Jordan.

**Israel:** Israel is mainly want to enlarge its withdrawal if there is no rejection from the other DM. Israel does not want other DM to increase their share. If a party increase its withdrawal without signing a water treaty, Israel would counteract by military means. Israel has a peace treaty with Palestine.

**Palestine:** Palestine is mainly prefers to increase its withdrawal through the peace agreement with Israel.

#### **Step 4: Accounting for uncertain information**

Here, the uncertainties linked with vagueness in stakeholder preferences are well thought-out and its final result on the final decision of the conflict. The DSS uses the info-gap theory (Ben-Haim 2006) to consider such uncertainties. The info-gap method executes a systematic process for examining the strength of a decision with uncertainty of stakeholder preferences (Ben-Haim and Hipel 2002). Info-gap analysis is a complete approach to sensitivity analysis.

#### **Conflict Resolution Under Coalition Scenarios**

In this study, the graph model (Fang et al. 1993) has been applied to the conflict. This comprehensive decision analysis was performed to different conflicts (Hipel et al. 2001; Kassab et al., 2006). Stakeholders (DMs) interaction with each other in terms of negotiation moves and countermoves, based on their preferences, is well illustrated by the Graph model. After specifying the stakeholders' preferences, the process examines the stability of the shortlisted solutions with respect to four main stability concepts: Nash (R); General Metarationality (GMR); Symmetric Metarationality (SMR); and Sequential Stability (SEQ), as described in Table 2. For mathematical definitions of the stability concepts, all information can be found in Fang et al. (1993) and Kassab et al. (2006a). Each of the four stability concepts tests a solution from a different perspective. For instance, a decision state is considered Nash stable for one DM if the DM cannot find a more preferred state to move to. The equilibrium solution or state is reached when a solution "decision state" is stable for all decision makers would agreed by all stakeholders. In this study, the conflict resolution process has been applied under three scenarios with different coalition possibilities among the DMs: (1) coalition among Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine; (2) coalition among Jordan, Israel, and Palestine; and (3) coalition among Syria, Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon. The graph model process was applied to these scenarios separately aiming to obtain the robust and stable solution according to stakeholders' preferences.

#### **Scenario one: Coalition between Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and Palestine**

In this scenario, coalition among four stakeholders are considered, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine. The first stakeholder (Lebanon) has four mutually exclusive decisions: Increase share, counteraction, water treaty, and do nothing. The second stakeholder (Jordan) has the same mutually exclusive decisions. The third stakeholder (Israel) has five mutually exclusive decisions: Increase share, counteraction, water treaty, peace treaty, and do nothing. The fourth stakeholder (Palestine) has two mutually exclusive decisions: peace treaty and do thing. All of these mutually exclusive decisions are explained in details in Table 1.

Specifying the stakeholders of four countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine) and their options results in a total of 120 possible "decision states" ( $3 \times 2 \times 4 \times 5$ ). The 120 possible solutions or decision states represent all possible combinations of the stakeholder options. Based on different studies which are suggested by Madani and Hipel (2007) and Haddadin (2014), 113 decision states were eliminated. Only seven (7) feasible solutions were selected, therefore producing a short list of feasible alternatives (Figure 4). The shortlisted solution will be further examined. In this study, various stakeholder preferences on scale (0-100%) were considered, as shown in Table 4.

The shortlisted solutions obtained by the elimination method were further examined. The stakeholder preferences, based on Haddadin (2014), among the various decision states are as follow (decision preference set 1): Lebanon has 50% preference in a Water Treaty; Jordan has 50% preference in a Water Treaty; Israel has 30% preference in a Water treaty; and Palestine has a 100% preference in a Peace Treaty (see Figure 5).

The results indicated that among the seven feasible solutions for the first stakeholder preferences, solution one (1) is the best solution with 18300 payoff (see Table 3 and Figure 6). The model find all stability concepts (R, SEQ, GMR, and SMR) are in equilibrium status for the best solution. This imply that the peace treaty between Israel and Palestine and a Water treaty between Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon are the robust and stable solution.

Alternatively, the stakeholder preferences were changed among the various decision states are as follow (decision preference 2): Lebanon has 50% preference in a Water Treaty; Jordan has 100% preference in a Water Treaty; Israel has 100% preference in a Water treaty; and

Palestine has a 100% preference in a Peace Treaty (see Figure 7). Results indicated that solution

(1) still the robust solution with payoff of 19500 (see Figure 8).

Furthermore, when reducing the 120 solution to 20 solutions instead of 7 solutions and considering more solutions which includes increasing shares and counteraction, result still suggests the first options (water treaty, peace treaty) as the best solution (Figure 9). The results suggest that the status quo scenario (Do nothing) has received the lowest payoff score and is not Nash (R) stable. However, the solution still less risky than increasing withdrawal by the upstream parties (Figure 10).

The results are not stable (Equilibrium) when the parties increased share. All results are stable when decision makers choose the water and peace treaties. The option of do nothing is the least preferred with the lowest payoff among other options. However, the results suggest that the do nothing option is less risky than if one country wants to increase its withdrawal. Therefore, it preferred that parties could find the best and stable solution and to have several attempts to reach the desirable equilibrium solution.

Because DM are having doubt about their preferences, as the Jordan may not trust the Syria and Israel for this problem. Therefore, uncertainty analysis associated with stakeholder preferences was performed. Table 3 shows the percentages of uncertainty for each stockholder's preference values. The stakeholders are assigned a value of +10% uncertainty to their preferences. When uncertainty level is considered, the DSS then carry outs 100 experiments.

The results is shown in the form of a histogram (see Figure 6).

### **Scenario two: Coalition between Jordan, Israel and Palestine**

Specifying the stakeholders of four countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine) and their options results in a total of 40 possible "decision states" ( $2 \times 4 \times 5$ ). These 40 possible solutions stand for all possible combinations of the stakeholder options. They were shortlisted to 7 options as described in Figure but excluding Lebanon. Alternatively, the solutions were also reduced to 20 options to consider increasing share for different stakeholders. Interestingly, in both cases, the results suggest that solution one (1) is the best solution after considering the two different stakeholder preferences (0-100%). The best solution is stable with all stability concepts R, GMR, SMR, and SEQ. The results also shows that the do nothing or status quo solution received the lowest payoff values, but is more preferred than increasing withdrawal of water from one party.

### **Scenario three: Coalition between Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel**

Specifying the stakeholders of four countries (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel) and their options ends up with a 240 possible solutions ( $5 \times 4 \times 4 \times 3$ ). The 240 possible solutions or decision states represent all possible combinations of the stakeholder options. They were shortlisted to 7 solutions and allow consider increasing share and counteractions among stakeholders. The results still suggest that signing water treaty among parties is the best and stable solution . The best solution has achieved equilibrium four stability concepts of R, GMR, SMR, and SEQ. It is also concluded that do nothing solution is not a Nash stable solution, but still better than increase withdrawal and counteraction .

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This study introduced the graph model for the water dispute in Jordan River Basin problem. This study clearly proved that the Graph Model for conflict resolution can be used to solve socio-political conflict appropriately. Further, the model can be flexible and simplified all process and consider stability and sensitivity analysis. That is, it eventually find the optimum solution based on stakeholders preferences. Using graph model make it possible to shortlist various decision makers and infeasible solutions. In Jordan River Basin problem, the 120 and 240 solutions were reduced to only 7 feasible solutions. In addition, using conflict resolution with info-gap theory led to solution one (1) as the best solution. After testing three different scenario with different coalition and preferences among parties, results found water treaty between Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel produce the robust and stable solutions. It is also established that the current situation is the least desirable solution but is more preferred and stable than increasing the abstraction of water from the upstream parties.

Jordan river is a clear interstate conflict where upstream and downstream parties who have disagreement on withdrawal water from a common pool aquifer or a river. It was established that the upstream parties would not increase their withdrawal of water from the Jordan River, to avoid any possible counter act from the downstream parties. The state where no increasing share of water is the easiest option non-cooperative equilibrium for this type of conflict. After agreeing among parties for cooperation, parties can sign water treaties agreements that each

part receives a certain amount of water. Such water treaty agreements will be more favourable than counter acting and colluding among parties, and will secure parties right and reduce their concerns.

The simplification of modeling make imperfect. This study examined the Jordan River basin generic conflict on water as from the socio-political aspect. It ignores other issues such as religious, regional, and environmental factors that may indirectly affect this conflict. This paper is also did not focus on the source of water whether it is a groundwater as a common pool or surface water of the Jordan River. It is only examined the used of the graph model for resolving water in general for this river basin.

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**APPENDIX****Table 1. Decision makers and their Options (Madani and Hipel, 2007).**

| Decision Makers<br>(DMs) | Options  |
|--------------------------|--|
| □<br>Syria □             | Increasing withdrawal from Jordan River System (Share Increasing)<br>Counteraction against a country that increased its withdrawal   |
|                          | Signing Water Treaty with other countries (Water Treaty)   |
|                          | Nothing  |
| □<br>Lebanon □           | Increasing withdrawal from Jordan River System (Share Increasing)<br>Signing Water Treaty with other countries (Water Treaty)  |
|                          | Nothing  |
|                          | Increasing withdrawal from Jordan River System (Share Increasing)<br>Counteraction against a country that increased its withdrawal   |
| □<br>Jordan □            | Signing Water Treaty with other countries (Water Treaty)   |
|                          | Nothing  |
|                          | □ Increasing withdrawal from Jordan River System (Share Increasing)<br>□ Counteraction against a country that increased its withdrawal<br>Signing Water Treaty with other countries (Water Treaty) |
| □<br>Israel □            | Signing a water treaty with the Palestinian Authority (Peace Treaty)   |
|                          | Nothing  |
|                          | □ Signing a water treaty with the Palestinian Authority (Peace Treaty)   |
| □<br>Palestine           | Nothing  |

**Table 2. Solution concept for conflict resolution.**

| Solution concept                | Description   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Nash stability (R)              | No other decisions bring a better payoff.   |
| General metarationality (GMR)   | If a better option is decided, opponent's counter-actions are safe.                             |
| Symmetric metarationality (SMR) | If a better option is decided, opponent's counter-actions are safe and not harmful to opponent. |
| Sequential stability (SEQ)      | If a better option is decided, opponent's beneficial counteractions are safe.                   |

**Table 3. Preferences and best solution for coalition scenario 1, with decision preference set 1.**

| Option | Lebanon Payoff   | Jordan Payoff     | Israel Payoff     | Palestine Payoff   | Scores | Best Equilibria Solution          |
|--------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|
| 1      | W.treaty<br>(50) | W. treaty<br>(50) | W. treaty<br>(30) | P. treaty<br>(100) | 18300  | 1st<br>(best) R, GMR, SMR,<br>SEQ |
| 4      | W.treaty<br>(0)  | W. treaty<br>(50) | W. treaty<br>(30) | P. treaty<br>(100) | 17800  | 2nd R, GMR, SMR,<br>SEQ           |
| 5      | W.treaty<br>(50) | W. treaty<br>(50) | W. treaty<br>(30) | P. treaty<br>(0)   | 17300  | 3rd R, GMR, SMR,<br>SEQ           |
| 2      | W.treaty<br>(0)  | W. treaty<br>(50) | W. treaty<br>(30) | P. treaty<br>(100) | 16800  | 4th GMR, SMR,<br>SEQ              |
| 3      | W.treaty<br>(0)  | W. treaty<br>(50) | W. treaty<br>(30) | P. treaty<br>(0)   | 15800  | 5th GMR, SMR,<br>SEQ              |

**Table 4. Preferences and best solution for coalition scenario 1, with decision preference set 2.**

| Option | Lebanon Payoff   | Jordan Payoff      | Israel Payoff      | Palestine Payoff   | Scores | Best Solution                     | Equilibria |
|--------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 1      | W.treaty<br>(50) | W. treaty<br>(100) | W. treaty<br>(100) | P. treaty<br>(100) | 19500  | 1st<br>(best) R, GMR, SMR,<br>SEQ |            |
| 5      | W.treaty<br>(50) | W. treaty<br>(100) | W. treaty<br>(100) | P. treaty<br>(0)   | 18500  | 2nd R, GMR, SMR,<br>SEQ           |            |
| 4      | W.treaty<br>(0)  | W. treaty<br>(0)   | W. treaty<br>(100) | P. treaty<br>(100) | 18000  | 3rd R, GMR, SMR,<br>SEQ           |            |
| 3      | W.treaty<br>(0)  | W. treaty<br>(100) | W. treaty<br>(100) | P. treaty<br>(0)   | 17000  | 4th GMR, SMR,<br>SEQ              |            |
| 6      | W.treaty<br>(0)  | W. treaty<br>(100) | W. treaty<br>(100) | P. treaty<br>(0)   | 16000  | 5th GMR, SMR,<br>SEQ              |            |

**Table 5. Uncertainty and stakeholder preferences with 100 experiments.**

| Stakeholder preferences | Variability range (0-100%) |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Lebanon                 | ±10                        |
| Jordan                  | ±10                        |
| Israel                  | ±10                        |
| Palestine               | ±10                        |

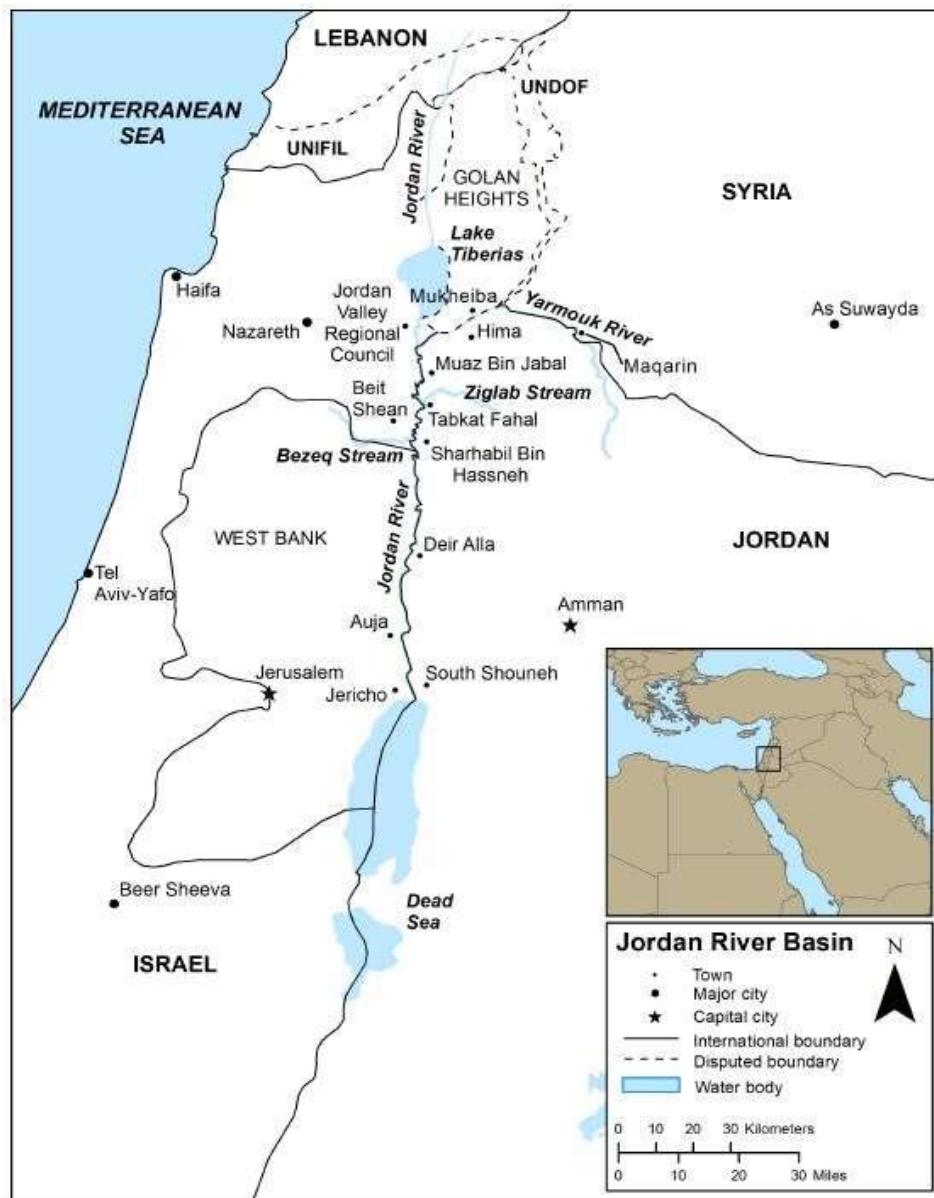
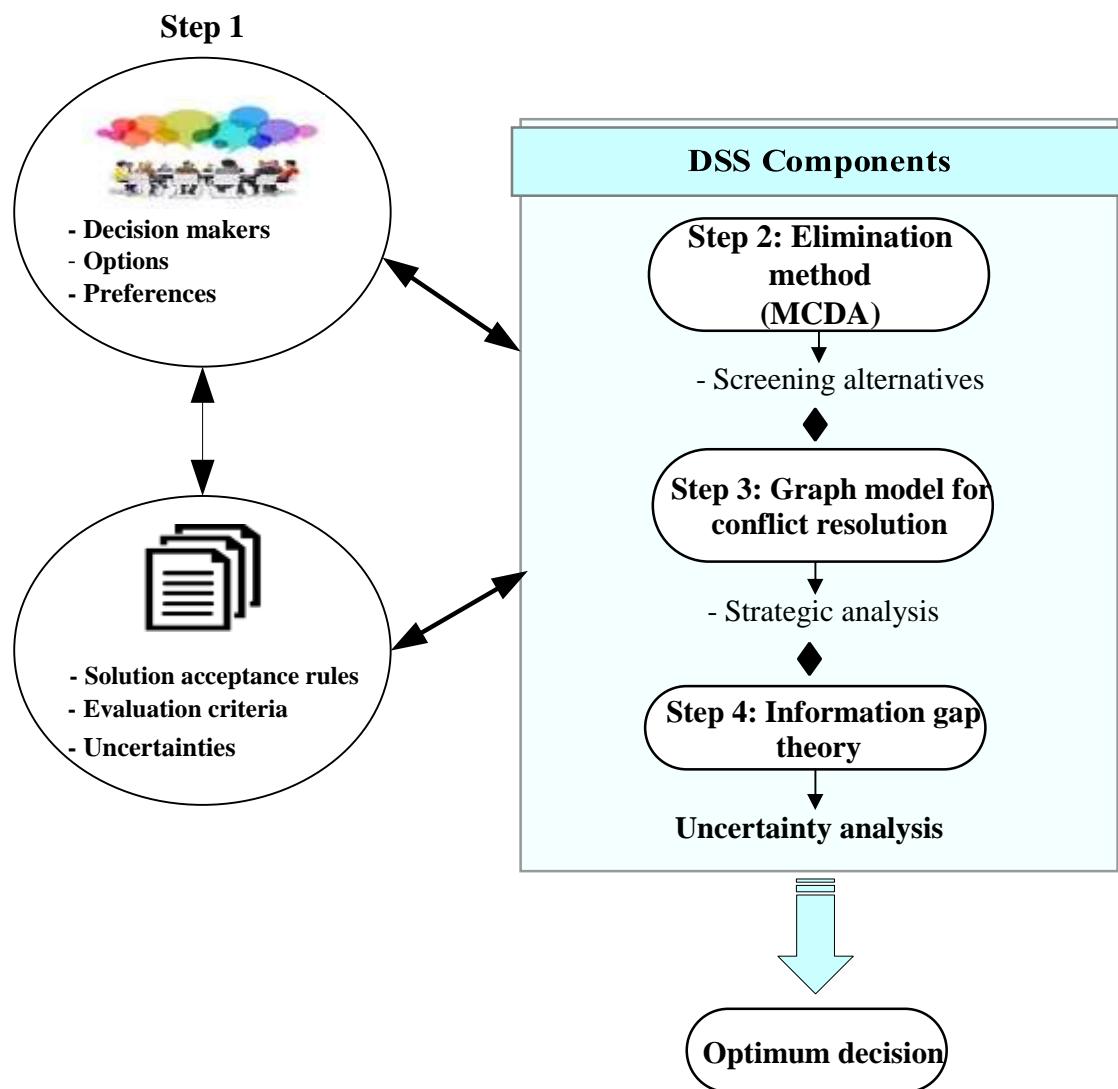


Figure 1. Jordan River Basin.



**Figure 2. Components of the decision support system (DDS) for water dispute problem.**

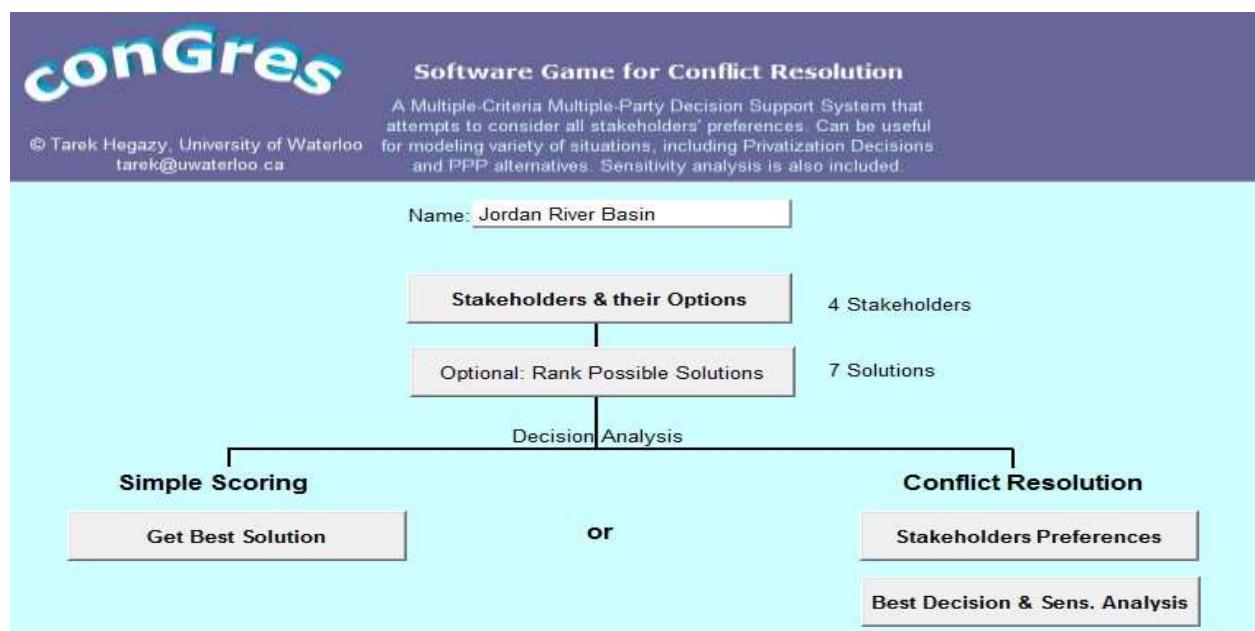


Figure 3. Main interface for the decision support system.

Main Menu StakeHolders and their Options

**StakeHolders:**

Add Del Use the Add / Del buttons to specify StakeHolders, then enter their **Mutually Exclusive** decision options.

| Stakeholder | No. of Decision Options | Option 1 Desc. | Option 2 Desc. | Option 3 Desc. | Option 4 Desc. | Option 5 Desc. |
|-------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Lebanon     | 3                       | Inc share      | W Treaty       | None           |                |                |
| Palestine   | 2                       | P Treaty       | None           |                |                |                |
| Jordan      | 4                       | Inc share      | Counter act    | W Treaty       | None           |                |
| Israel      | 5                       | Inc share      | Counter act    | W Treaty       | P Treaty       | None           |

Figure 4. Stakeholders and their options.

Main Menu Alternative Solutions

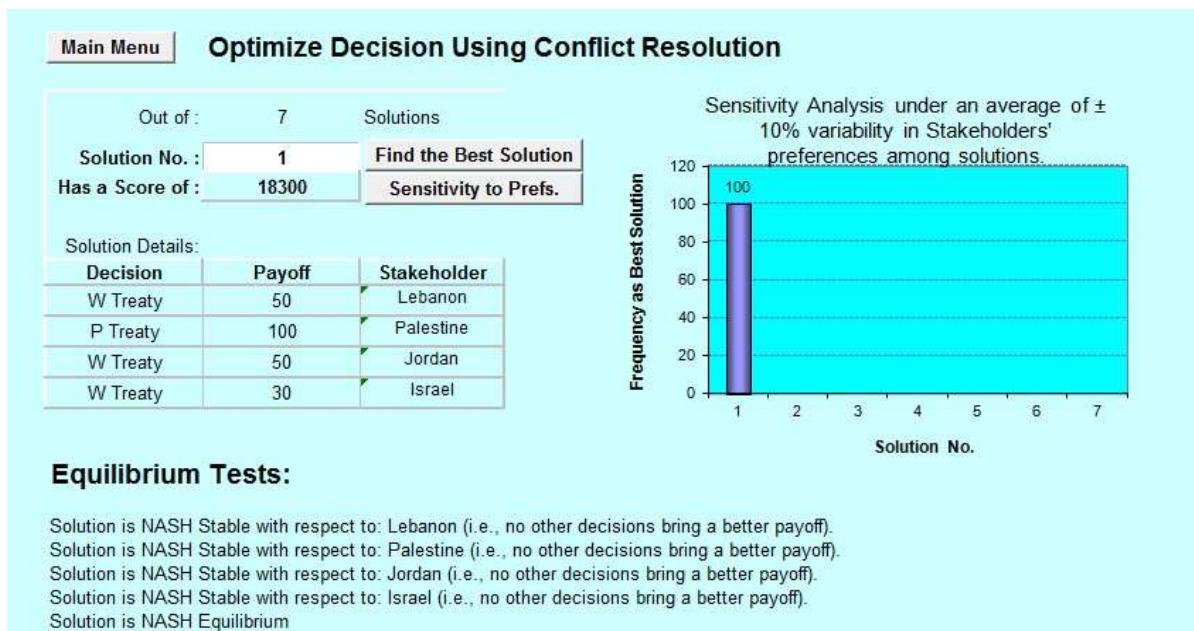
Total Solutions= 7

|           | Soln 1   | Soln 2   | Soln 3   | Soln 4   | Soln 5   | Soln 6   | Soln 7 |
|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------|
| Lebanon   | W Treaty | None     | None     | None     | W Treaty | None     | None   |
| Palestine | P Treaty | P Treaty | None     | P Treaty | None     | None     | None   |
| Jordan    | W Treaty | None   |
| Israel    | W Treaty | W Treaty | W Treaty | P Treaty | P Treaty | P Treaty | None   |

**Preferences** Enter the stakeholders' preferences in the above solutions (0-100 scale).

|           | Lebanon | Palestine | Jordan | Israel |
|-----------|---------|-----------|--------|--------|
| Lebanon   | 50      | 0         | 0      | 0      |
| Palestine | 100     | 100       | 0      | 100    |
| Jordan    | 50      | 50        | 50     | 50     |
| Israel    | 30      | 30        | 30     | 30     |

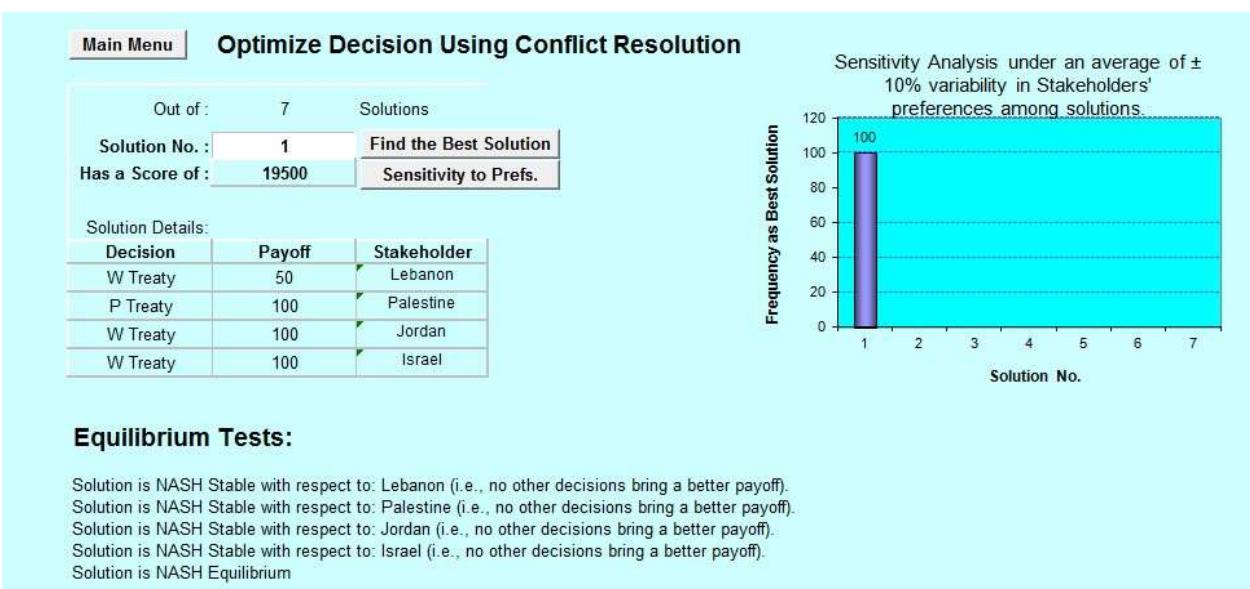
**Figure 5. Shortlisted solutions after elimination for coalition scenario 1, with stakeholders' preferences set 1.**



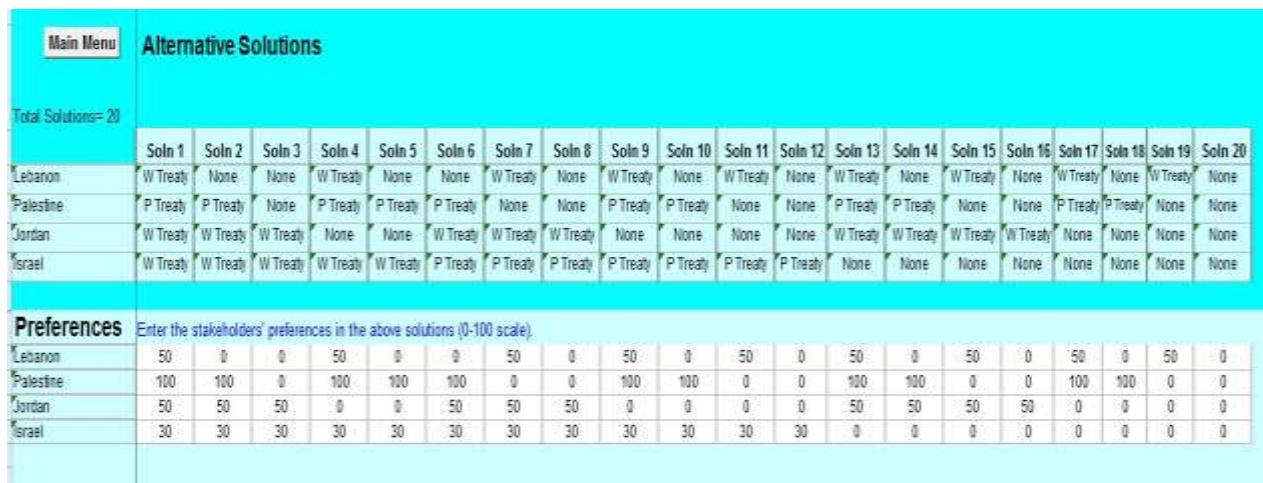
**Figure 6. Decision optimisation using conflict resolution.**



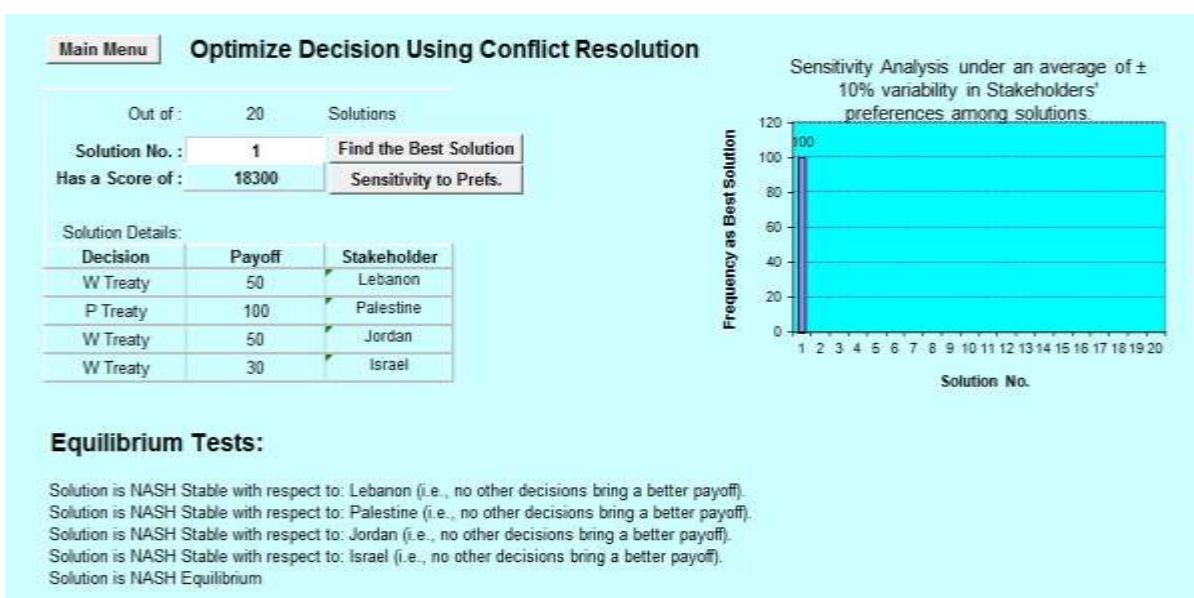
**Figure 7. Shortlisted solutions after elimination for coalition scenario 1, with stakeholders' preferences set 2.**



**Figure 8. Decision optimisation using conflict resolution with stakeholder preferences of 100% stakeholders preferences are assigned for Israel, Jordan, and Palestine.**



**Figure 9. Twenty shortlisted solution after elimination of the non-feasible ones, with different stakeholder preferences.**



**Figure 10. Decision optimisation using conflict resolution for the twenty shortlisted solution when different stakeholders preferences are assigned.**