FEMALE INTERFAITH INITIATIVES: EMPOWERING WOMEN, FACILITATING PEACE?

Exploring female interfaith initiatives' untapped potential for creating a 'culture of peace'

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Abstract

This thesis explores female interfaith initiatives' as agents of change for achieving a more inclusive and sustainable peace. It argues that female interfaith initiatives carry an untapped, transformational potential in terms of facilitating inclusive and sustainable peace. Building on the nexus between religion, women, interfaith dialogue and peace this work investigates "How female interfaith initiatives actively work towards a 'culture of peace' by advocating for gender equality?". To explore this research question, the focus is on the Global Women of Faith Network (GWFN) and seven complementary female interfaith initiatives working at various levels in different countries. Through qualitative methods a mapping exercise of the respective female interfaith initiatives was performed. Identifying a mutual influence between the initiatives on the global level with female interfaith initiatives operating at the local level, Israel is chosen as a case study. Interviews with female interfaith initiatives allow an analysis of their commitment to a "culture of peace" and inform on the extent they address several dimensions of the unequal status of women. Empirical evidence suggests that female interfaith initiatives use interfaith dialogue and religion as tools to build peace and bridges between faith communities, thus reaching out to an untapped potential of peace efforts.

Table of Abbreviations

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

FBO - Faith-Based Organisations

GA - General Assembly

GWFN (RfP) - Global Women of Faith Network (Religions for peace)

GPIW - The Global Peace Initiative of Women

HDR - Human Development Report

OECD - Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PWTF - Parliament's Women's Task Force

PACS – Peace and Conflict Studies

SARAH - Spiritual and Religious Alliance for Hope

SHIN - the Israeli Movement for Equal Representation of Women

SIGI - Social Institutions and Gender Index

TRUST WIN - Trust Women's Interfaith Network

UN – United Nations

UNGA - United Nations General Assembly

UNIFEM - United Nations Development Fund for Women

UNSC - United Nations Security Council

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF – United Nations Children´s Fund

URI - United Religious Initiative

WIC – Women's Interfaith Council (Interfaith Forum of Muslim& Christian Women's Association)

WIE - Women's Interfaith Encounter

WIN - Women's Interfaith Network

WPH – Women and Peace Hypothesis

WTB - Women Transcending Boundaries

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1. Introduction

1.1.   Background and Rationale

The estimated number of religiously affiliated people worldwide is 6,119.620,000 out of the total world population of 7,600.438.500 (Pew Research Centre 2012:18). This fact raises the following question: "Does the inclusion of people of faith have untapped potential in terms of facilitating peace?" This work focuses on how female interfaith initiatives actively work towards a "culture of peace" by advocating for gender equality.

Aside from the reality-shaping character of religion, it is also important to consider its potential for shaping violence and peace: Religion is discussed by many scientists as a war escalator that creates a 'holy war culture', which is characterised by a 'male warrior' construct, the exercise of power, structures of patriarchy and oppression of women (Boulding 1986, 501-518:503; Boulding 1986, 501-518:502; Sisk 2011:3; Nussbaum 1999:82). In contrast, others have emphasised the peacebuilding character of religions and perceive religion as war de − escalators that embody the potential for a 'culture of peace' (Martens 2015, 162-164:1; Sisk 2011:1-2; Sampson 2007, 273-323:174).

Considering the influential role of religion in human society, the number of people affiliated with religion, and religions potential for peace and conflict, this thesis explores initiatives that do include religious people in peace processes (Hill Fletcher 2017, 11-26:23). Besides reconciliation, which is often marked as having its source in religious traditions (Sampson 2007, 273-323:276; Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149-167:152), interfaith dialogue has emerged as a special tool for religious and faith-based peacebuilding efforts (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149-167:151; Boulding 1998, 06.06.2019-445-446). The 'peaceableness' of interfaith peace efforts, as defined by Boulding (Boulding 2000:262; Boulding 1998, 445-446), can be traced back to its proved potential to foster understanding and to establish trust (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149-167:153).

The peacebuilding character of interfaith dialogue, as showcased in 12 of the United Nations General Assembly (hereafter referred to as UNGA) resolutions on the promotion of "interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace" (UN 2019). The GA resolutions refer to the potential of interreligious dialogue, to improve understanding,

tolerance and respect amongst people from different cultural and religious backgrounds to build a 'culture of peace' (UN 2014:2; UN 2013:1; UN 2017:2). Recognising the beneficial contribution of interfaith collaborations to inter-group and inter-community relations (Haynes 2015:188,187), the UN allows several Faith-Based Organisations (hereafter referred to as FBO) to take part in its discussions and the implementation of human rights (Haynes 2015:188,192).

The need to include religion in peacebuilding can best be illustrated using the statement of Stolov, the director of the Women Interfaith Encounter (hereafter referred to as WIE) in Israel: "Often peacebuilding approaches put the emphasis on secular values and they often see religion as an obstacle. They try to avoid or go around it, but religion doesn't go away if you ignore it. If you use religion as a positive force it will not function as a negative Force" (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019). The influence of religion on people's life, goes far beyond the individual level. Indeed, it seems that religion also governs the institutional level, culture, and politics (Furseth and Repstad 2017:65). Religion, as a set of beliefs, feelings, emotions, actions, relationships and organisations, is an important social construct, that plays a substantial role in shaping reality (Beckford 2003:15,18). Consequently, religion also co-regulates gender structures (Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015, 5-25). Nussbaum, for example identified how religion negatively impacts the gender dimension of eleven specific 'central human functional capabilities': the equal dignity for women in their right to life and health, the right to bodily integrity, reproductive rights, mobility and assembly rights, rights of political participation and speech, education rights, employment rights, rights of property and civil capacity, nationality, family law and the right of free religious exercise (Nussbaum 1999:82). Opponents of assumptions such as Nussbaum's, on the other hand, highlight, that religion does not necessarily have to go hand in hand with gender inequality (Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015, 5-25:7), but that religion can also offer a platform on which women can resist and seek empowerment (Winter 2006, 381-393:381).

Sociological research has shown that women have higher attendance of religious ceremonies and more positive attitudes towards religion (Furseth and Repstad 2017:190). In fact, 83.4 % of women worldwide are affiliated with religion, in contrast to 79.9% of men (Hackett, Murphy, and Mc Clendon 2016:5). Due to the high number of religious affiliated women, it could be assumed that women and men would be equally represented in religious leadership roles as well as in interfaith-based work. However, several scholars have examined the marginalisation of women in terms of their representation in interfaith work (Hayward 2012:7, Fletcher 2017, 11-

26:12) as well as the lack of women in religious leadership roles (Hackett, Murphy, and Mc Clendon 2016:6). Evidence for this argument can be found in several scholarly works included in online scientific databases such as the Web of Science, Scopus and others. None of them yielded any results regarding the search term "women and interfaith and peacebuilding" (Web of Science 2019) in contrast to 31 results for "women and interfaith" and 82 entries concerning "interfaith dialogue" (Web of Science, 2019). Nevertheless, women of faith have -, as individuals or in interfaith networks contributed to peace processes, such as the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace movement (Press 2010, 23-29:23-29). Despite the fact, that women participating in interfaith initiatives do play a role in shaping peace, they are not mentioned in global commitments promoting the inclusion of women in peacebuilding and conflict transformation (UN, Fourth World Conference on Women 2000; UN, Women 2015:303; UN Security Council 2000). The above-mentioned facts highlight the innovative character of the thesis topic. This work is rooted in the exploration of the potentially untapped capacity of such initiatives in facilitating peace. Thus, currently active female interfaith initiatives will be explored in this study.

Following the argument, that women of faith are facing intersecting categories of oppression (Egnell 2003, 113-120:117) and that discrimination based on several levels of identification is a root cause of human rights violations (UN, Women 2015:362), it becomes essential to include women of faith and female interfaith initiatives in peacebuilding. This idea has been highlighted in General Recommendation 30, in which the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (hereafter referred to as CEDAW) suggests that women which are subject to multiple levels of discrimination, should be addressed within the scope of United Nations Security Council (hereafter referred to as UNSC) Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security' (UN, CEDAW 2013:15). Researchers have often highlighted that women appear to have an inherently 'peaceable' character (Boulding 2000:60-61; Boulding 2001, 55-59; Boulding 1998, 445-446), that makes them more pacifist then men (Tessler and Warriner 1997, 250-281). The viewpoint, that women are more oriented towards peace and are more cooperative in negotiations than men, is discussed within the debate on the Women and Peace Hypothesis (hereafter referred to as WPH) (Maoz 2012, Caprioli and Boyer 2001, Brounéus 2014, 125-151:128). This hypothesis has been criticized regarding its limited empirical verification and the inherent binary system of gender perpetuated by the WPH (Brounéus 2014, 125-151:125; Aharoni 2017, 311–326:311,312). These finding raises the question of what the special 'peaceable' character of women of faith and female interfaith initiatives is.

As "sustainable and just peace is a holistic endeavour that includes multiple actors, activities, and institutions at multiple levels" (Reimer and others 2015:foreword), we can recognise, that women´s inclusion in peace processes has been an important focus of international attention and is clearly addressed by global, regional and national human rights bodies. The Beijing Platform for Action, the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women, and UNSC Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security', both have the goal of increasing the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels (UN, Fourth World Conference on Women 2000). Nevertheless, analyses of women's activism in conflict settings, including Israel and Liberia, have revealed that women's activism tends to take place on the community - or grassroots level (Kaufman and Williams 2010:67:80/89; Aharoni 2017, 311-326; Sharoni 2012, 113-128:133). Research has demonstrated that community strengthening is decisive for transformation (Reimer and others 2015:58). However, statistical findings exploring the contribution of women in peace building processes have indicated that women's participation in peace negotiations is crucial to the outcome and thus to sustainable peace (UN, Women 2015:7-9; Kaufman and Williams 2010:107). As inclusiveness enhances the sustainability of peace efforts, the inclusion of women of faith and female interfaith initiatives in peace processes, could enhance the chances of sustainable peace.

1.2. Research Questions and Objectives

Considering that female interfaith dialogues and their potential in terms of peace processes remain a topic that received little to no attention in scientific research, this work has been conducted with the purpose of exploring the extent to which local and causally sequential global female interfaith initiatives engage actively for peace in a sense of trying to strengthen the role of women. To support this research aim, this work is based upon two specific questions. The first question was formulated as follows: "**How does the Global Women of Faith Network, as well as seven complementary female interfaith initiatives, actively work towards a 'culture of peace' by advocating for gender equality?**". This question will be evaluated in a theoretically and empirically informed mapping exercise. The second question narrows the focus of this research as it constitutes a country case study: "**How do two female interfaith initiatives in Israel perform on four success factors, as defined by Boulding, that should ultimately lead to a "culture of peace' in the sense of increased gender equality**?" The question emerged as a result of the discovery of a mutual influence of global female interfaith initiatives and female interfaith initiatives in Israel. Considering that female interfaith initiatives

in Israel operate in a conflict setting, the inquiry will especially explore the initiatives involvement in the peace process. These main research questions will be investigated in the light of existing theories of peace, that imply gender equality. Hereby special focus will be directed on the concept of a 'culture of peace', as understood by Boulding and Galtung (explained in chapter 3).

Reviewing the literature on female interfaith initiatives, two clusters of focus are attracting: "religion, society, women and peace", as well as "interfaith dialogue, women and peace". Within those domains, there are additional areas of interest that deserve our attention: secularisation theory (i.e. individualised religiosity and new religious movements), religion as social unity versus religion as social conflict, the relation between religion and gender (i.e. the role of women within religious structures; discussions on religion, gender and secularization (individual women's rights versus religious group rights)), the relation between women and peace (including the WPH; conflict and violence against women), interfaith dialogue (including related terminology, motives, forms - and levels of interfaith dialogue), women and interfaith dialogue (the exclusive character of interfaith dialogue, and women's contribution to interfaith dialogue), interfaith dialogue and religion as peacebuilding tools and interfaith dialogue from the perspective of Peace and Conflict Studies (hereafter referred to as PACS). The relation between these categories are examined (in chapter 2), from a perspective that illuminates the peacebuilding character of all in dependence on each other.

After identifying the complexity and innovative character of this topic, other questions have been developed which are addressed throughout this work. These questions cover the following areas: The first question sheds light on the influence of, not only 'globalisation', but also 'glocalisation' on female interfaith initiatives and thus asks: "How do female interfaith initiatives on a global level cause a ripple effect on a local level and vice versa?". The relationship between women interfaith initiatives on the global and local levels is analysed by applying Robertson's theory of 'glocalisation' and Appadurai's concept of 'scapes' (explained in chapter 3). The second objective aims at identifying factors that enable the emergence of female interfaith initiatives in Israel. Thus, Nussbaum's 'capabilities approach' will be used to evaluate existing 'capabilities' of Israeli women to join interfaith initiatives.

To explore the transformative character of female interfaith initiatives from a theory of change the following question has been formulated: "To what extend do female interfaith initiatives

contribute to personal, relational, and structural change by negotiating attitudinal values?". The theory of change helps to identify important preconditions for female interfaith initiatives to effectively contribute to peace.

1.3.   Methodology

Methodologically speaking, this study combines literature review (online and library) with qualitative research. The choice of qualitative research methods was based on the fact that the female interfaith initiatives explored in this study rarely appear in the literature and on the Internet. Moreover, the choice builds on the author's academic background in anthropology, where mostly qualitative ethnographic methods are used.

Female interfaith initiatives, used for comparison and analysis in this work, were identified through the following databases of institutions: the Pluralism Project of Harvard University, which lists about 35 further databases and faith-based peace organisations (Harvard 2019), United Nations Children's Fund (hereafter referred to as UNICEF) (UNICEF 2019), the directory of the Parliament of the World's Religions (Parliament of the World's Religions 2019), the Interfaith Voices for Peace and Justice network's list of 758 organisations (URI 2019), the database of the United Religious Initiative (hereafter referred to as URI) (URI 2019), and the Interfaith Observer, a digital publication. Furthermore, data on female interfaith initiatives were found in academic texts; organisations' papers, and reports from interfaith gatherings.

To efficiently search for suitable samples of female interfaith initiatives, parameters were set. Initiatives composed of women from at least two different religious, spiritual, or faith backgrounds were sought. Moreover, the focus for the selection was on interfaith initiatives targeting grown women, as opposed to youth groups. Regarding the geographical location, no limit was set, as the goal was to identify interfaith initiatives working on different continents. Another criterion for the selection was that the initiatives had to have a permanent establishment; therefore the term 'initiative' is used in this paper instead of 'movement'. Moreover, the search focussed on female interfaith initiatives not exclusively focussing on one group (e.g., monastics, female theologians, clerics, or religious leaders) but including diverse participants. Another decisive parameter for the selection was the interfaith initiatives' engagement in either cognitive (dialogue of theology) or collaborative dialogue (socially engaged dialogue) (explained in more detail in chapter 2.2.1.). Moreover, the samples chosen

include interfaith initiatives active during the research period (2019). The same criteria were also used for the selection of female interfaith initiatives in the case study, Israel. To adapt to the specific location, two additional categories were added: In the context of Israel's female interfaith initiatives, should be composed of women from at least two different religious or faith backgrounds, including women from the two different religions represented by the two conflicting parties, Israel (Jewish) and Palestine (Muslim). And the location of the initiatives should be in either Israel or Palestine. It should be noted here that the reason for mentioning mostly Israeli (not Israeli and Palestinian) initiatives in this text is that only initiatives placed in Israel were found.

Methodology for delineating and comparing female interfaith initiatives

On the basis of the above-mentioned criteria, eight female interfaith initiatives were selected as samples for a comparison. To effectively analyse female interfaith initiatives, a questionnaire-based study was conducted. The questionnaire was formulated based on parameters developed by gaining background knowledge about female interfaith initiatives. The empirical data collected by means of these questionnaires and substantiated by the theoretical and analytical framework set for this work, serve the basis for a comparison and mapping of the initiatives on selected parameters, which are mentioned in chapter 5. To draw conclusions from the comparison, the mapping was intertwined with research findings in the existing literature, which are partly mentioned in chapter 2. Moreover, a table was created to provide a clearer overview of the initiatives explored.

Only one of the selected initiatives was found to be active on a global-, national - and regional scale. Therefore, the global character of the Global Women of Faith Network (hereafter referred to as GWFN), its engagement in gender equality programmes, its promotion of peace, and its actual engagement in conflict situations make it a case study on its own, as these characteristics comply with the set criteria of the study object within this research. Thus, within the different components that contribute to a 'culture of peace', the category of gender equality was chosen to analyse the work of the GWFN and the other samples to construct a comparative framework towards a 'culture of peace'. To evaluate how they include their focus on the empowerment of women in their active engagement, the GWFN's advocacy for the 'elimination of violence against women' is taken as a unit of analysis. Complementary to the data gained from the questionnaires, a literature review and Internet research were used for this analysis.

<u>Methods for investigating female interfaith initiatives at the local level</u>

The empirical data clearly demonstrated a mutual influence and connection between initiatives explored in the investigation of the first research question with those initiatives operating on the national Israeli level. Based on Nussbaum's 'capabilities approach' Israel's gender and human rights performance (chapter 8) was evaluated by using the following statistical data and indices: the Religious Diversity Index, the report of the special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief from 2009, concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the Global Gender Gap Report 2018 of the World Economic Forum, the Human Development Report (hereafter referred to as HDR), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (hereafter referred to as OECD) international development statistics about gender, institutions and development, the Social Institutions and Gender Index (hereafter referred to as SIGI) of the OECD, the Happiness Index, the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom, and the Women's Participation in Peace Processes Index. Moreover, additional data were gathered from the literature.

Secondly, within the country case study, two initiatives (selected according to the procedure explained at the beginning of this chapter) serve as samples to analyse how female interfaith initiatives actively engage in peace processes and thereby try to strengthen the role of women. From the theoretical concept of a 'culture of peace', which implies gender equality, female interfaith initiatives present in Israel were compared regarding their performance on three success factors, that consequently lead to a 'culture of peace' (explained in more detail in chapter 3).

Thirdly, two qualitative interviews with representatives of the explored female interfaith initiatives in Israel were conducted, to gain empirical data for the comparison and analysis. Both interviewees gave their permission to record the conversation and to use their names for citing their arguments in this work. The transcripts were encoded and put together in text passages with complementary or similar codes. To use the transcriptions transparently, the citation marks include page numbers. Within the text, only the initials of the respondents are stated. A list of interviews, including the names and the positions of the interviewees, is provided in chapter 12.

1.4.   Main Theories

From a theoretical point of view, this study focusses on feminist, sociological, anthropological, and PACS perspectives. Analysing the topic of this research from a feminist theoretical point of view, allows reflections about gender in relation to religion and peacebuilding (Cook and Fonow 1986:2-29). In respect of feminist theories, this work concentrates on Nussbaum's set of 'capabilities', which provides a framework to achieve and elaborate on social justice, including 'full justice for women' (Nussbaum 2011:33).

Sociology was chosen as an approach because it ensures a meaningful discussion on the interconnectedness of the main topics of interest in relation to female interfaith initiatives (Furseth and Repstad 2017:98-99). This thesis concentrates on two sociological theories: The concept of 'glocalisation' developed by Robertson, and Boulding's concept of a 'culture of peace'. Applying Robertson's theoretical approach allows to explore several aspects of the mutual influence of female interfaith initiatives in Israel–Palestine with interfaith initiatives on the global level. The gained understanding of the influence of 'globalisation' on female interfaith initiatives through the application of Robertson's concept will be further expanded by applying the anthropological concept of 'scapes', developed from Appadurai. Both concepts will be systematically connected to the analysis of the empirical data. Bouding's defined 'peaceable' attitudes and values that consequently lead to a 'culture of peace' (Reber-Rider 2008 73–88:81), will be utilized to explore the 'peaceableness' of female interfaith initiatives. As Boulding was one of the founding members of PACS, her concepts can be seen as being influenced by sociology and PACS (Reber-Rider 2008 73–88: 81). PACS is chosen as a theoretical lens to inspect how the theory of change is applied. Hereby the focus lies on the theory of change, as applied by Neufeld, to assess how interfaith dialogue can "achieve its potential to build peace" (Neufeldt, 2011, 344–372:344).

The confrontation with the main theoretical approaches to the research topic was primarily based on the study of books, monographs, academic journal articles, reports by non-governmental organisations, and the websites of international organisations. Each chapter has the aim of elaborating the rehashed theoretical and analytical framework with the resulting data.

1.5.   Object of Study

This research centres around female interfaith initiatives with a focus on interfaith dialogue, in contrast to interreligious and ecumenical dialogue (Pedersen 2004:3). Moreover, this research builds on Kadayifci-Orellana's concept of collaborative and cognitive dialogue (Kadayifci-

Orellana 2013, 149-167:155; Knitter 2013, 117-132:134) (the concepts of dialogue are described in more detail in chapter 2.2.1.). Cognitive dialogue can be seen as a precondition to engage in collaborative dialogue as it generates "interest in the relevance of dialogue for issues of social, environmental, economic, and gender justice" (Ingram 2013: 376-393:377).

Drawing from several sources that highlighted interfaith dialogue as a "spiritual search for a new society" (Egnell 2003, 113-120:119), as constructive engagement (Cornille 2013: Introduction), and as a way for people to collaborate to meet human needs through social services (Fletcher 2017, 11-26:19), this thesis focusses on female interfaith initiatives working together for the common concern of peace. This research, furthermore, concentrates on initiatives in contrast to movements, as the former manifests institutionalised actors. This decision is based on definitions of both terms in the Oxford Dictionary. More precisely, this preliminary study focusses on eight initiatives active regionally or globally on various levels in diverse countries - and two country specific (Israeli) - institutionalised female interfaith initiatives. From the 18 questionnaires sent, this work concentrates on information gained from eight questionnaires returned from regionally and globally active female interfaith initiatives: Parliament's Women's Task Force, Women's Interfaith Network, The Global Peace Initiative of Women, Women's Interfaith Council (Interfaith Forum of Muslim& Christian Women's Association), Global Women of Faith Network (Religions for peace), Spiritual and Religious Alliance for Hope, Women Transcending Boundaries, Nisa-Nashim (hereafter referred to as: PWTF, WIN, GPIW, WIC, GWFN (RfP), SARAH, WTB, Nisa-Nashim). The remaining initiatives did not match with the set parameters (mentioned in the methodology part of this thesis). Within the country case study, the local engagement of female interfaith initiatives towards a 'culture of peace' will be analysed by evaluating interviews conducted with two female interfaith initiatives in Israel: Anuar and Women's Interfaith Encounter. The directors of both initiatives have been interviewed.

1.6.   Limitations

This thesis is subject to common research limitations, including methodological ones. Firstly, regarding common research limitations, this study faced constraints in time and scope as how to answer the original research question. Secondly, methodological limitations were faced in the process of selecting suitable samples of female interfaith initiatives on a global scale, as well as for the country case study. In both cases, limitations in the selection of samples can be traced back to a lack of relevant literature and systematic evaluations of female interfaith

initiatives, as well as limited access to data. Thirdly, in matters of organising and conducting interviews, there was limited access to respondents, lack of contact information and language barriers.

Constraints in time and scope

During this research, several limitations were faced concerning the original research aim, which was to explore female interfaith initiatives' contributions to equality of women in peacebuilding processes. Moreover, it was attempted to answer the question of how female interfaith networks on a global level cause a ripple effect on a regional and societal level with an emphasis on the increase of peace in mainstream society. The measurement of the causal relationship between female interfaith initiatives and their contribution to gender equality on a mainstream society level, which was the initial idea, would require an empirical field analysis. Thus, methodologically speaking, it is not possible in the scope of this master thesis to research upon this question. To overcome this hindrance, the research question was narrowed down, and instead of measuring the contribution of female interfaith initiatives on equality, categories have been chosen to analyse the initiatives on existing theoretical concepts.

Limitations in the selection of samples

The original plan was to do a global mapping of female interfaith initiatives. In this regard the study faced hindrances in the selection of samples on a global scale. Due to the lack of research studies, archiving and collection of data concerning globally active female interfaith initiatives, the ability to gain access to the geographical scope of initiatives faced limitations. To overcome this issue, the only selected sample that was found to be globally active (Global Women of Faith Network), was chosen as a case study. Thus, the GWFN functions as a sample to investigate, how female interfaith initiatives on a global level work towards a 'culture of peace'.

Identification constraints and Constraints in conducting interviews

Another hindrance faced during this research, was the difficulty to define the faith-based character of female initiatives in Israel. Initiatives found, were often composed of women of faith but identified as intercommunal or feminist groups. At the same time, initiatives based on the idea of interfaith often did not include this characteristic in their self-description on homepages. Moreover, the limited internet presence of potential interview partners as well as a lack of language knowledge (Arab or Hebrew) complicated the process of gaining empirical data.

1.7. Structure and Description of Chapters

This thesis is divided into ten chapters. Chapter 1 consist of six subchapters devoted to introduce the background and rational, the research question, the methodology, the main theories, the object of the study, the limitations that this thesis faced and a description of the chapters. Chapter 2 provides a literature-based contextualisation of topics of interest in relation to the exploration of female interfaith initiatives. The first main subchapter explores the nexus between 'Religion, Society, Women and Peace', from a sociological, feminist and PACS perspective. The second main subchapter sheds light on the intersection between 'interfaith dialogue, women and peace' from an interdisciplinary perspective. The theoretical and analytical framework in chapter 3, lays down four specific theories and analytical tools for the investigation of the research questions. It defines Boulding's understanding of a 'culture of peace', Nussbaum's 'capability approach', Robertson's concept of 'glocalisation', Appadurai's concept of 'scapes', the theory of change and Nussbaum's 'capability approach' as specific lenses, that will be further used in this work. Chapter 4 is devoted to investigations in the origins of the collaboration between the UN and Faith Based Organizations and the UN's efforts to promote. Chapter 5 is constituting a mapping exercise, dedicated to the identification and analysis of key features of eight female interfaith initiatives. Based on the data gained from questionnaires, this chapter aims at exploring main patterns of the initiatives´ emergence and their geographical location. The last part of this chapter will include an analysis of female interfaith initiatives by applying the theory of change. Chapter 6 will enlarge the analysis of the eight selected samples of female interfaith initiatives by identifying patterns of common areas of their engagement. Hereby it concentrates on common themes of interest in relation to gender equality and the analysis of how the GWFNs implement the advocacy for the 'elimination of violence against women' in their actions. Chapter 7 will be subdivided into three subchapters each of which will be dedicated to the exploration of the mutual influences between female interfaith initiatives operating in various countries and female interfaith initiatives operating on the Israeli level, by applying Robertson's concept of 'glocalisation' and Appadurai's concept of 'scapes'. In chapter 8, evidence from Israel, which is serving as an illustrating country case study, will be analysed regarding its realization of the 'human capabilities' for women. While the first section of this chapter provides background information regarding the political situation in Israel, the second section analyses Israel's performance on eight specific 'capabilities', by using statistical data and indices. Chapter 9 of this work constitutes a country case study, which allows to analyse the engagement of two female interfaith initiatives in Israel towards a 'culture

of peace' on the basis of data gained from interviews. More specifically, it strives to evaluate two female interfaith initiatives regarding their performance on four success factors, as defined by Boulding, that should ultimately lead to a 'culture of peace'. This chapter will be followed by the conclusions in chapter ten. Each chapter links empirical findings to the theoretical framework with existing literature to conduct a proper analysis and draw conclusions.

2. The Complex Matrix of 'Religion, Society, Women' and 'Peace and Interfaith Dialogue, Women, and Peace'

This chapter illuminates several aspects of special interest in relation to the exploration of female interfaith initiatives and their engagement for peace. The basic purpose of this chapter is to provide a form of literature-based contextualisation of the phenomenon studied in this research. Beyond that, this research will help to demonstrate the importance and the innovative character of female interfaith initiatives as a research object.

Studying the relationship between the following areas may sharpen the understanding of the thesis´ topic: 'religion, society, women, and peace', as well as 'interfaith dialogue, women, and peace'. Within these domains, the following sub theoretical aspects and empirical topics deserve to receive our attention: secularisation theory; the role of women within religious structures; religion, gender and secularisation; religion, peace, and conflict; the role of women in peace and conflict; terminology and motives for interfaith dialogue; interfaith dialogue, women, and peace; interfaith dialogue and religious peacebuilding; and interfaith dialogue from the perspective of PACS.

Discussing different areas of interest connected with the intersection of the chosen categories, opened possible layers of investigation and pathways for inquiry. Consequently, each discussed topic in the following sections provides links to and informs on female interfaith initiatives. Furthermore, the subchapters mention how the discussed topic relates to female interfaith initiatives. Furthermore, it may explain different aspects connected with the phenomenon studied, raise questions for further evaluation, and provide tools for the analysis of the empirical data discussed in the following chapters.

2.1.   Religion, Society, Women, and Peace

The study of religion as a social construct is an interdisciplinary field (Beckford 2003:15, 18). However, the social constructivist approach to religion has mainly been used by social scientists (Beckford 2003, 12). Different disciplines and scholarly work demonstrate divergent views of the intersection of religion, society, and women. Different disciplines provide useful insights and perspectives on the same theories. This section focuses on sociological and feminist perspectives on topics related to the intersection of religion, society, women, and peace.

To sharpen our understanding, the following topics are addressed in the next section. Firstly, increasing or decreasing influence of religion in society is discussed under the broader debate regarding the secularisation thesis. Then, the role of women in religious structures is investigated. Thirdly, the pacifist and warlike characteristics of religion are outlined. Finally, this section provides details about the role of women in peace and conflict.

2.1.1.   Religion and Society

Secularisation Thesis

This section describes the key arguments in relation to the secularisation thesis and looks at two related phenomena: individual religiosity and new religious movements. It is important to consider the discussion related to secularisation when studying female interfaith initiatives. Examining controversial opinions towards the role of religion in the public sphere might provide answers to the question of why interfaith initiatives emerge. In the light of the secularisation debate, the emergence of female interfaith initiatives could be either traced back to an increasing secularisation or explained as a response to 'deprivatisation'.

Discussions concerning the secularisation thesis in the sociological discipline are situated within the broader research on the influence of religion in the public sphere (Furseth and Repstad 2017:97; Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015, 5–25:6). Generally, this debate is characterised by two positions: secularisation, religious differentiation, and privatisation versus 'deprivatisation' and dedifferentiation (Furseth and Repstad 2017:97; Alexander, Thompson, and Edles 2016:479). Scholars arguing in favour of the privatisation of religion view religion as withdrawing from the public sphere and thus separated from science and politics (Furseth and Repstad 2017:98/99). Proponents of this viewpoint contend, that religion is exclusively influencing people's private lives (Furseth and Repstad 2017:97). On the contrary, sociologists

such as Casanova argue for a public character of religion and that religion assumes a new influential role in the public sphere (Casanova 2009: 1). This work focusses on the scholarly view of religion as the product of structures, which is put forth by sociologists such as Habermas (Furseth and Repstad 2017:72), who asserted that religion will continue to play a role in society (Furseth and Repstad 2017:52,99; Calhoun 2011:118). Several social scientists have supported this line of argument, assessing the division of religion and the secular as social construction, ignoring that, in reality, religion and politics have always coexisted and are mutually constitutive (Marsden 2018:4; Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015, 5–25:6). As sociologists have predominantly turned away from the secularisation thesis, the theoretical concept of a 'post-secular' international society, in which faith-based diplomacy is possible, has been developed (Marsden 2018:4; Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015, 5–25:12).

In relation to the general interest of sociology in human society, the discipline studies new religious movements, as they constitute a microcosm of the society (Beckford 2003 180, 181). The emergence of new religious movements is either seen as an answer to the increasing secularisation or explained as a result of 'deprivatisation' (Furseth and Repstad 2017:149; Wanless 2017, 11–24:2, 13). Besides examining power structures and studying change within new religious movements (Furseth and Repstad 2017:133), sociology also asks why people seek religious movements (Furseth and Repstad 2017:143). In relation to the study of new religious movements, sociologists have invested in the examination of alternative women-centred religions, also referred to as women's spirituality movements. According to research, these movements aim to empower women and deconstruct traditional religious rituals, which are associated with patriarchy (Beckford 2003:182). Additionally, these women's spirituality movements are characterized as aiming at redefining power, authority, sexuality, and social relations (Furseth and Repstad 2017:179,184,185; Beckford 2003:182; Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015, 5-25:10).

Another topic of interest for sociology is individual religiosity, which is seen as a product of secularisation (Wanless 2017, 11–24:12, 13). The literature describes religious individualism as criticising religious authority by searching for 'truth and spirituality' outside institutionalised religion (Furseth and Repstad 2017:122). The phenomenon of individualised religiosity is seen as deriving from the freedom to choose and the desire for self-realisation (Furseth and Repstad 2017:122).

2.1.2.   Religion and Gender

The discussion around religion, gender, and secularisation sheds light on different positions towards the oppressive or empowering factors of religion. Thus, it helps to evaluate, mixed with empirical data, if female interfaith dialogue arises in response to the oppression of women within religious structures or rather if it is a manifestation of a former process of emancipation. The following section raises the question of whether or not secular feminists and religious women can both identify with feminism and stand up for gender equality, as well as if female interfaith initiatives composed by women of faith do identify with feminist principles and stand up for women's rights. Additionally, this section explains how religion forms gender norms.

Women Within Religion

The relation between gender and religion is commonly studied from an interdisciplinary perspective (Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015, 5–25:6). Yet, feminist social scientists have criticised the marginalised dimension of gender in the sociological research on religion (Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015, 5–25:5). In particular, critics have pointed out the contribution that this perspective could bring to the study of religion (Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015, 5–25:5), such as the recognition that gender and religion are mutually constitutive social categories (Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015, 5–25:5) and that religious collectives reproduce gendered identities (Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015, 5–25:13). Disregarding that issue, sociological researchers have mainly focussed on the reasons for the higher attendance of religious ceremonies by women compared to men (Furseth and Repstad 2017:190), as well as the exploration of the role and experience of women within different religious communities (Furseth and Repstad 2017:179; Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015, 5–25:8). Consequently, the following two paragraphs mainly focus on feminist perspectives on the relation between gender and religion. The first paragraph sheds more light on contradictory or contradicting opinions towards religious influence on gender equality. Furthermore, the section investigates the assumed boundary between secular feminists and religious, non-feminist women, as well as the connection between religious group rights and individual women's human rights.

Religion, Gender, and Secularisation

In ongoing discussions about religion, secularism, and gender equality, scholars often view feminism as contrary to religion (Furseth and Repstad 2017:192). This viewpoint also differs

between secular feminists (in the West) versus religious non – feminist women (Nyhagen 2019:1). Furthermore, this argumentation line associates religion with gender inequality, and religion is seen as contrary to gender equality. Several scholars believe that this binary distinction tends to come primarily from anti-religious feminist scholars (Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015, 5-25:7; Nyhagen 2019:2; Furseth and Repstad 2017:193). Opponents of such arguments critically question the binary distinction between feminism and religion. From their point of view, both religious and secular women can identify as feminists, and both religion and secularism have the capacity to support gender inequality and equality (Nyhagen 2019: 2, 3). In contrast to the perception of religion as exclusively victimising religious women (Furseth and Repstad 2017:193), several scholars, such as Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo, have argued that religion can become an empowering factor for women (Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015, 5–25:9). Feminist theologians such as Reuther even assume that religious women can function as a main force behind the transformation of religious organisations (Johnstone 2007:268).

Another discussion relating to religion and gender revolves around the assumed boundary between individual versus group rights. The main argument in this discussion is that religious (group) rights stand in opposition to individual women's human rights (Winter 2006, 381–393:381). Following this argumentation line, women in non-secular states are seen as having limited individual rights (Winter 2006, 381–393:381, 384). They might be even seen as victims of human rights violations (Winter 2006, 381–393:382). However, inherent in this viewpoint is the universalist pre-assumption that human rights and thus individual women's rights are universal (Winter 2006, 381–393:381). As opposed to universalists, cultural relativists view UN human rights treaties as ethnocentric, as the treaties do not consider cultural and religious particularities (Winter 2006, 381–393:385). Accordingly, they argue, women living in different contexts might also have different needs and wishes concerning women's rights (Winter 2006, 381–393:390). Above the standpoint that views religion as depriving women of their rights, cultural relativists also perceive religion as providing women a platform on which they can resist oppression and seek empowerment (Winter 2006, 381–393:381).

2.1.3.   Religion, Peace, and Conflict

Considering the aim of this research, to explore how female interfaith initiatives engage actively in peace processes, it is essential to evaluate whether or not religious values help the explored initiatives in their work. Consequently, it helps to understand the pacifist character of religion.

In the context of integration theories, sociologists such as Ernst Haas have shown how social cohesion is secured through family, religion, and other forms of unity (Furseth and Repstad 2017:109). On the other hand, scholars have argued that religion legitimises violence and triggers social conflicts, and 'when the distinction between us and them becomes exceptionally strong, the result may be abuse or holy war' (Furseth and Repstad 2017:163). Nevertheless, several academics have attempted to define the source of religious peace practices. Common studies view the fundamental values stated in religious texts as the source of religious engagement for peace (Martens 2015, 162–164:162).

2.1.4.   Interfaith Dialogue From the Perspective of PACS

Analysing the location of interfaith dialogue within theories and concepts of PACS helps us to improve the understanding of where interfaith dialogue and faith-based peacebuilders are situated within ongoing peace processes. Moreover, this analysis may shed light on the actors' interactive and cooperative conflict resolution characteristics. This work aims at validating or falsifying these theoretical implications on the basis of the female interfaith initiatives explored.

Several scholars belonging to the interdisciplinary filed of PACS have found different ways to locate the phenomenon of religious peacebuilding and interfaith peacebuilding within theories of conflict resolution (among others, Sampson and Fisher). Interest in interfaith dialogue in the field of conflict resolution and transformation surged during the 1990s (Neufeldt, 2011, 344–372:347). Religious peace efforts embody the approach of peace through cooperation in contrast to peace through strength (Fisher 1997:10). Peace through cooperation favours conflict resolution methods such as building trust, promoting cooperative security, and reducing tension (Fisher 1997:10). Furthermore, while official diplomatic peace efforts involving government-to-government interactions are called 'track-one diplomacy', religious peace efforts, if included in a peace process, mostly take place in the frame of 'unofficial diplomacy', 'track-two diplomacy', or 'multi-track diplomacy' (Fisher 1997:118). As religious peace efforts often try to tackle relationship issues, PACS situated religious peace efforts within the evolving field of interactive conflict resolution, (misperceptions, basic needs, and so on) and thus apply a socio-psychological approach. Moreover, interactive conflict resolution affords effective face-to-face intercommunal interaction to achieve an individual attitude changes (Fisher 1997:7,8).

2.1.5.   Role of Women in Peace and Conflict

Looking at the role of women in peace and conflict in the following section ought to give raise to three major questions in relation to female interfaith initiatives. The first paragraph provides insights into scholarly discussions about the 'special' and 'peaceable' character of woman, as well as background knowledge to analyse how women interfaith initiatives perform in their work towards a 'culture of peace'. The second paragraph, which discusses of the importance of including women in peace negotiations, may help to evaluate the role that female interfaith initiatives play within the peace process in Israel, as well as the factors that either allow or deny these organisations to actively take part in the peace process. The last paragraph illustrates scholarly findings, that war, besides having a victimising effect on women, can also improve the status of women. This analysis might help us to draw conclusions regarding the effect of war on the emergence of women interfaith initiatives in Israel.

<u>'Women Wage Peace'</u>

The argument that women are more pacifist is discussed within debates on the WPH (Tessler and Warriner 1997, 250–281). Although empirical testing of this hypothesis has yielded mixed evidence, many legal documents include the WPH (Aharoni 2017, 311–326:311). Scholars supporting the hypothesis have argued that gender equality has a clear calming effect on human rights abuses (Brounéus 2014, 125–151:128) and that women are more oriented towards peace, engage in a more cooperative way in negotiations, and have stronger commitments to ending violence (Brounéus 2014, 125–151:128).

Several feminist scholars have claimed that, without women's participation on the negotiation table, it is unlikely to change existing gendered power structures and thus reach sustainable peace (Kaufman and Williams 2010:107). Several studies evaluating the role of women in peace negotiations indicate that women are excluded (Kaufman and Williams 2010:2). Moreover, several researchers have looked at the structural, attitudinal, political, cultural, educational, and practical circumstances that allow or prohibit women to be actively involved in peace processes, specifically in 'track-one diplomacy' (official government to government interaction, such as formal peace negotiations) (Kaufman and Williams 2010:144). It has been found that the major obstacles that keep women from entering policy levels is the deep-rooted inequality within the political systems (Kaufman and Williams 2010:2, 89, 113), which reflects the biases and limitations of a whole system of power.

Despite the exclusion of women from peace negotiations, other studies have analysed how women empowered by war engage as peace activists (Kaufman and Williams 2010: 81; Afshar and Eade 2004:2). Many researchers have explored women's activism in conflict settings in the Balkans, in Israel and Palestine (Aharoni 2017, 311–326; Kaufman and Williams 2010:66–68; Sharoni 2012, 113–128:133–128), in Northern Ireland, and in Liberia (Kaufman and Williams 2010:67). Analyses of these different engagements in conflict settings indicate that women's activism mainly takes place on the grassroots level and through community-based activism (Kaufman and Williams 2010:67: 80,89; Sharoni 2012, 113–128:133).

Conflict and Violence Against Women

Contrary to the idea that war represents an empowering factor for women, most researchers have focussed on women as victims of war. Many scholars have looked at armed conflict from a gendered perspective and identified rape and sexual violence as strategic instruments of war that mostly target women (Kaufman and Williams 2010:2; Caprioli and Douglass 2008,45–65:49). The violence committed on women during war is seen as an indicator of structural inequality (Caprioli and Douglass 2008, 45–65:49).

2.2. Interfaith Dialogue, Women, and Peace

Interfaith dialogue is discussed from many perspectives: philosophical (Leirvik 2011, 16–24), theological (Pedersen 2004; Knitter 2013, 117–132), language and communication science, political (Marsden 2018, 61–75), human rights (Sazonova 2004), international relations (Sisk 2011), feminist, and PACS (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149–167). Moreover, the phenomenon of interfaith dialogue has been examined from a psychological point of view (Amir 1969) and an educational science approach (Banks, C. A. M. 2005). The relationship between women, interfaith dialogue, and peace has also been studied from an interdisciplinary perspective, combining philosophy (Hayward 2012, 2015, 307–332), theology (Fletcher 2017, 11–26), and PACS (Marshall, Abu-Nimer). Moreover, the following institutions have conducted research on interfaith dialogue in relation to peace: the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, the University of Notre Dame Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, the Pluralism Project of Harvard University, the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, and several other universities. Consequently, the following section sheds light on the intersection of 'interfaith dialogue, women, and peace' from various disciplinary perspectives. More specifically, the first section illuminates important aspects related to the type and form of interfaith dialogue. The second section serves to draw attention to women's potential contributions and the exclusion of interfaith dialogue. The third section describes different

aspects of faith-based peacebuilding. The last section of this subchapter locates interfaith dialogue in existing theories of PACS.

2.2.1.   What Do We Know About Interfaith Dialogue?

This section provides background information related to the phenomenon studied in this research, such as the evolution of terms used for interfaith dialogue and the explanation of different defined forms and levels of dialogue. In this regard, the section provides tools to identify, in the empirical part of this thesis, the form of dialogue the different female interfaith initiatives studied engage in their work. Moreover, the explanation of different levels of interfaith dialogue and different scholarly assumptions on the motives of interfaith dialogue may also help us to draw conclusions from the analysis of the explored women interfaith initiatives.

Terminology and Motives for Interfaith Dialogue

The terminology used to describe interfaith relations has changed due to increasing awareness about existing hierarchies. Thus, the term 'ecumenical'—mainly referring to relations among Christian churches—has been changed to 'interreligious dialogue', which focusses more on bringing together religious representatives. Today, the term 'interfaith' is broadly used to describe relations between two or more religions (Pedersen 2004:3). Moreover, the literature contains discussions of several reasons and motives behind why interfaith work: 1) living together harmoniously, 2) mitigating tension and resolving conflict, 3) engaging in a common task, and 4) searching for truth and understanding in the context of religious plurality (Pedersen 2004:2). Scholars have identified the events of 9/11 as another a major reason for the emergence of interfaith dialogue (Swidler 2013, 1–19; Cornille 2013:3; Jakobsh 2006, 183–199:186; Pedersen 2004:2; Hayward 2012:2).

Form and Level of Dialogue

The illustration of different forms of interfaith dialogue may help to identify the form of dialogue in which the female interfaith initiatives under investigation engage in. Furthermore, it might be possible to identify if women interfaith initiatives on a global level use a different form of dialogue compared to the form of dialogue local initiatives engage in

Various scholars have identified different ways of distinguishing between the three forms of dialogue. The first approach differentiates between cognitive, collaborative, and affective dialogues (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149–167:155). The second way of defining the three

different forms of dialogue distinguishes between dialogue of theology, dialogue of action, and dialogue of spirituality (Knitter 2013, 117–132:134). A third way of categorises interfaith dialogue into three forms: the conceptual, the socially engaged, and the interior dialogues (Ingram 2013: 376–393:377).

Considering all three approaches of distinguishing between the three forms of dialogue, the following paragraph may help to shed light on the main characteristics of each form. It has been found that the characteristics of the first form of the dialogue coincide in all three forms of defining interfaith dialogue. Thus, the first form of dialogue (cognitive, theological, or conceptual dialogues) is described as being based on the study of the doctrines, sacred texts, and teachings of other beliefs (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149–167: 155; Knitter 2013, 117–132:134; Ingram 2013:376–393:377). Its goal is to understand other religious communities and worldviews (Ingram 2013: 376–393:377). The first form of dialogue can be seen as a precondition to engage in the second from of dialogue (collaborative dialogues, dialogues of action, and socially engaged dialogues), as it generates 'interest in the relevance of dialogue for issues of social, environmental, economic, and gender justice' (Ingram 2013:376–393: 377). Thus, the second form of dialogue can be seen as a constructive engagement (Cornille 2013: 'Introduction') to address concerns and issues of common interest together (Knitter 2013, 117–132:134). Consequently, this form of dialogue works together to meet human needs through social services (Fletcher 2017, 11–26:19) and aims at bringing about social change by addressing the needs of those who suffer (Knitter 2013, 117–132). Paul Knitters argued that a special feature of dialogue of action is that this type of collaboration between religions includes those who are suffering (Knitter 2013, 117–132:143). Characteristics added to the third form of dialogue (affective dialogues, dialogues of spirituality, or interior dialogues) are also identical in all three ways of distinguishing between the three forms of dialogue. Consequently, the third form of dialogue is described as embracing the idea of opening hearts and connecting on an emotional level (Knitter 2013, 117–132:134; Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149–167:155). Moreover, the last form of dialogue is also called monastic dialogue or contemplative dialogue, and it consequently concentrates on meditation and prayer (Ingram 2013: 376–393: 386). Dialogues of theology and contemplative dialogues can also be identified as preconditions for the third form of dialogue (collaborative dialogues) in which participants engage socially.

According to the form of dialogue (and consequently the participants taking part in the dialogue), interfaith dialogue can be seen as taking place on three different levels: high, middle,

and grassroots (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149–167:155), or formal initiatives (top-level), middle-range initiatives (infrastructure building), and grassroots projects (Lederach 1997:92). According to Lederach, middle-range initiatives have an increased potential to bring about sustainable peace (Lederach 1997:92). While high-level interfaith work takes place at high leadership levels and includes exclusively religious authorities (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149–167:155), mid-level inter-religious dialogues consist of meetings between religious practitioners and involve clergy, scholars, professionals, business people, artists, and laypeople (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149–167:156). Grassroots level interfaith dialogue is described as including cross-community dialogues to tackle perceptions of the 'other' (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149–167:156). The knowledge and information revealed in the previous sections allow one to link the level of the dialogue with the form of the dialogue and the participants. The knowledge gained in this subchapter helps to identify in which type of interfaith dialogue the female interfaith initiatives under investigation in this thesis engage in and the level on which they operate.

2.2.2.   Interfaith Dialogue, Women, and Peace: The Importance of Gender in Interfaith Dialogue

By exploring the relation between women and interfaith dialogue, this section draws attention to layers of exclusion within interfaith dialogue. Following the discovery of the lack of women's presentation in interfaith dialogue, assumptions are made regarding what women might contribute to interfaith dialogue. These assumptions will raise the question of whether or not women (women interfaith initiatives) offer a special contribution to interfaith dialogue by addressing layers of exclusion, a possibility evaluated later in this work.

Exclusive Character of Interfaith Dialogue

Researchers have also examined interfaith dialogue from a critical point of view and determined that interfaith dialogue often has an exclusive character, as it tends to focus on the Abrahamic traditions, (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and thus has neglected indigenous and non-Abrahamic religions (Pedersen 2004:16, 17; Hayward 2012:7). Moreover, the role of Christians is assumed to garner the most attention in scholarship on interfaith work, as most comparative scholarship on religion has taken place in the West (Pedersen 2004:16). Furthermore, several female and male scholars have drawn attention to the lack of women's representation in interfaith work (Hayward 2012:7). In addition, several attempts have been made to investigate in the reasons behind the marginalisation of women in interfaith dialogue (Fletcher 2017, 11–26:12; Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149–167:163).

What Do Women Contribute to Interfaith Dialogue?

Due to the traditional exclusion of women from interfaith dialogue, the inclusion of women in interfaith dialogue might result in the criticism of religious structures and be characterised as an attempt to reform traditional religion from within (Jakobsh 2006, 183–199:187). While this could pose a threat for some, feminist theologians such as Egnell have argued that women's inclusion in interfaith dialogue would bring many advantages, such as the awareness of social hierarchies (Egnell 2003, 113–120:113). In relation to their experienced exclusion, feminist theological scholars and women interfaith groups, like the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians have brought attention to the several layers of discrimination that women of faith are facing due to their gender, religious affiliation, class, race, sexual orientation, age and disability (Egnell 2003, 113-120:119; Ammah 2014, 193). Scholars have argued, that women of faith, by unveiling the mentioned intersecting categories of discrimination could potentially contribute to reach a more inclusive interfaith dialogue (Egnell 2003, 113–120:117). From a feminist theological viewpoint, interfaith dialogue would not be about religious teachings but about solving common concerns that all women have (Egnell 2003, 113–120:199).

2.2.3. Interfaith Dialogue and Religious Peacebuilding

The first paragraph in this section contains a discussion of different types of methods used by religious and faith-based peace actors, both male and female. This background knowledge provides support for the remainder of the paper because it helps us to analyse the methods used by the female interfaith initiatives examined in this work. The briefly mentioned discussion of the role of religious leaders within interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding may shed light on the importance of collaborating with them. The short outline of the role that faith-based actors within the broad conflict resolution arena play may help us to analyse the women interfaith initiatives' work related to this aspect.

In relation to religious peacebuilding and interfaith dialogue, the literature thematises the following peace methods as merely used by religious peacebuilders: advocacy, non-violent activism, mediation, education, grassroots democracy, reconciliation, and transitional justice (Fletcher 2017, 11–26:18; Bouta et al. 2005:ix). Interfaith peace actors often engage in reconciliation efforts. Sampson even contended that the peacebuilding tool of reconciliation has its source in religious traditions (Sampson 2007, 273–323:276; Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149–167:152). The philosopher Charles Taylor even mentions the 'Truth and Reconciliation

Commission in South Africa as based on the religious idea of forgiveness (Butler and Taylor et al. 2011, 109–17:122). Besides the methods used, scholars have also tried to define the role that faith-based actors play within the broad conflict resolution arena. Scholars have characterised various roles that faith-based actors embody in peace processes. Religiously motivated actors intervene in conflicts as advocates, mediators, observers, and educators (Sampson 2007, 273–323:277; Hayward 2015, 307–332:315; Bouta et al. 2005: ix; Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149–167:150). Moreover, the roles of religious leaders who set good examples and act as models of tolerance and inclusivity are also widely described in the interfaith literature (Carter and Smith 2004, 279–301:295).

Another area of discussion is the assumed exclusion of religious peacebuilding within mainstream peacebuilding (Abu-Nimer 2015, 13–29:17/18). Different factors for the marginalisation of faith-based peace actors have been identified. Reasons vary from the lack of evaluation and findings (Abu-Nimer 2015, 13–29:17, 18, 20), the lack of media coverage (Abu-Nimer 2015, 13–29:23), and the lack of training for the initiatives or individuals on strategies to combat conflict (Abu-Nimer 2015, 13–29:25).

2.3. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has provided a broad and clear understanding of the interconnectedness of religion, society, women, and peace and interfaith dialogue, women, and peace. The first part of the chapter demonstrated sociological and feminist perspectives on the intersection of religion, society, women, and Peace. The second part of the chapter presented an investigation of the relation between interfaith dialogue, women, and peace from an interdisciplinary perspective. Looking at these two clusters of interest helped us to identify important issues for investigation in relation to female interfaith initiatives. The questions and issues raised are referred to in the analysis of the empirical data in the following chapters.

The process of reviewing the literature concerning the core issues identified related to women interfaith dialogue have made clear that the phenomenon of female interfaith dialogue studied in this paper has not been directly discussed in feminist theory, sociology, or PACS. The reason for the limited amount of literature on women interfaith initiatives may be due to the previously discussed lack of female representation in interfaith dialogue. Thus, the missing academic narrative about the female interfaith initiatives highlights the significance of researching this social phenomenon.

3.   Theoretical and Analytical Framework

This chapter is dedicated to identifying concepts, theories, and analytical tools to further investigate the research question of this thesis. Four specific lenses are defined to guide the rest of this work and narrow the focus of the research. The first concept examined in terms of its applicability in this work is the widely used concept of a 'culture of peace'. A 'culture of peace' is described as "dealing creatively and non-violently with difference" and characterised by "conflict, tolerance and gender - and racial equality" (Boulding 2001, 55-59:56; Reber-Rider 2008 73-88:76; Boulding 1998, 445-446; Boulding 2000:38). After describing the origins of and the characteristics of a 'culture of peace', its implications for peace in a sense of gender equality are examined. Then, Boulding's concept of 'peaceableness', is employed to explain the 'peaceableness' of women and interfaith dialogue. This concept is further used to identify the potential of women interfaith initiatives to create a 'culture of peace'. In addition, three proposals about how women can contribute to a 'culture of peace' are presented. These suggestions of Boulding's are examined in terms of their applicability in the analysis of the female interfaith initiatives explored in this work. The second section in this chapter explains the applicability of the theory of change to analyse the transformative character of interfaith dialogue. The third section of this chapter illustrates how the mutual influences of women interfaith initiatives on the global and local levels can be analysed by applying Robertson's theory of 'glocalisation' and Appadurai's concept of 'scapes'. The last section in this chapter contains an explanation of how Nussbaum's 'capability approach', as elaborated in her writings on sex and social justice, is applied in this work.

3.1.   Understanding Peace as Gender Equality and the 'Peaceableness' of Female Interfaith Initiatives

The concept of a 'culture of peace' was developed in the 1980s by scientists who wanted to support the 'International Year of Peace' declared by the UN in 1986. In 1995, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (hereafter referred to as UNESCO) formally integrated the idea of the 'culture of peace' in their programme. UNGA adopted the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace in 1999 in preparation for the International Year of the Culture of Peace in 2000 and the International Decade of Peace and Non-Violence for Children of the World (Reber-Rider 2008 73–88:74).

Moreover, the concept of a 'culture of peace', which stands in contrast to a 'culture of violence', is highly discussed within in the discipline of PACS (e.g. by scholars such as Galtung and Boulding). Boulding described a 'culture of peace' as dealing creatively and non-violently with difference and conflict; it is also a 'listening culture' characterised by tolerance and gender and racial equality (Boulding 2001, 55–59:5; Reber-Rider 2008 73–88:76; Boulding 1998, 445–446; Boulding 2000:38). For religious contexts, she used the categories of 'holy war culture' and 'peaceable garden culture' (Boulding 1986, 501–518:501). A holy war culture is characterised by a 'male warrior' construct, the exercise of power, structures of patriarchy, and the oppression of women (Boulding 1986, 501–518:503). In a 'peaceable garden culture', on the other hand, according to Boulding, love is the highest priority of behavioural achievements, and it is characterised by equality between men and women, as well as non-violence (Boulding 1986, 501–518:507). Embodied in the concept of a 'culture of peace' are, according to Galtung, 'cultural positive peace', 'structural positive peace', and 'direct positive peace' (Reber-Rider 2008 73–88:74; Galtung 1996:32). Galtung further explained that a culture of violence is composed of natural, cultural, structural, direct, time, and gender violence (Reber-Rider 2008 73–88:75; Galtung 1996:31). Both scholars, Boulding and Galtung contributed to an understanding of peace that implies structural peace, including the absence of gender violence (Galtung 1996:9) and equality for women (Boulding 2000:38). This is important to highlight as this work is based on the notion that there is no just peace without gender equality.

In addition, Boulding described different 'peaceable' methods how different groups (e.g. secular, faith-based, environmental, alternative-development, and women's groups) can increase the potential for peace and thus create a 'culture of peace' (Boulding 1998, 445–446; Reber-Rider 2008 73–88:76, 77). The following quotation points to Boulding's assumption that interfaith peace efforts committed to a holy peace culture are increasing the potential for a 'culture of peace': "Interfaith efforts […] bring an end to all forms of violence, including war" (Boulding 1998, 445–446). In her opinion, these actors embody a utopian longing for peace ('ability to imagine a better way of life'), are committed to non-violence peace efforts, and develop the spiritual awareness of humankind as one family (Boulding 1998, 445–446). Consequently, drawing from Boulding's definition of women and interfaith-based actors as 'peaceable', women interfaith initiatives can be seen as having an inherently 'peaceable' character, which increases the potential for peace and thus for the creation of a 'culture of peace'.

The previous paragraphs include a discussion of the concept of a 'culture of peace', which according to Galtung and Boulding, implies structural peace, including the absence of gender violence (Galtung 1996:9) and equality for women (Boulding 1998, 445–446). Moreover, Boulding's definition of women and interfaith-based actors as 'peaceable' has been explained. Based this discussion of female interfaith initiatives, the 'peaceable' character of women and interfaith actors can be seen as increasing the potential for peace and thus for the creation of a 'culture of peace' through more gender equality.

Within the realm of the UN International Decade of Peace and non-violence, Boulding suggests three actions how women, as having a 'peaceable' character inherent, can contribution to a 'culture of peace': Firstly, she recommended that women increase the visibility of what they are doing for peace, as participants, experts, and leader in policy making (Boulding 2001, 55-59:56; Boulding 2000:1504). Secondly, women should mobilize a public peace process to change the existing perceptions of one another (Boulding 2001, 55-59:56,57). Thirdly, Boulding suggests, that all forms of peace-making programs and peace education should be intensified (Boulding 2001, 55-59:56). In relation to that, Israel's women interfaith initiatives will be analysed regarding their performance on the mentioned success factors developed by Boulding.

Building on many evaluations of peace processes and the findings of the Global Study on the Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 (UN, Women 2015), it is known that it is essential to ensure the effective participation of women in peace processes. Several scholars have found that, without women's participation on the negotiation table, it is unlikely to change existing gendered power structures and thus reach a 'culture of peace'(Kaufman and Williams 2010:107). Hence, the major challenge that women face in effectively contributing to the creation of a 'culture of peace' is their refusal or denial to enter negotiations. The fact that women's inclusion in peace processes is an essential success factor for achieving a 'culture of peace' extends Boulding's understanding of what success factors lead to a 'culture of peace'. Thus, women's inclusion and participation in peace processes are added as a fourth category to analyse the engagement of Israel's female interfaith initiatives towards a 'culture of peace'. The four success factors presented for working towards a 'culture of peace' are applied to analyse women interfaith initiatives in chapter 9.

3.2. Theory of Change and Interfaith Dialogue

The theory of change can describe how interfaith dialogue can contribute to personal, relational, and structural change (Neufeldt, 2011, 344–372:344). On the one hand, through increasing the understanding of the 'other' and developing relationships, interfaith dialogue can lead to personal and relational change when new patterns of relationship are established (Neufeldt, 2011, 344–372:351). On the other hand, interfaith dialogue may achieve socio-political change by reaching social coexistence through addressing a wide range of people, as well as involving grassroots actors and high-level influential leaders (multi-level engagement) (Neufeldt, 2011, 344–372:345,360). The theory of change is used to examine how the female interfaith initiatives investigated in this work contribute to personal, relational, and structural change in chapter 5.

3.3. Understanding Mutual Influence Between Female Interfaith Initiatives on a Global and Local Level

Two theoretical approaches help to answer the questions posed in the introduction: 'How do female interfaith initiatives on a global level cause a ripple effect on a local level and vice versa?' The mutual influences of female interfaith initiatives on the global and local levels were analysed by applying Robertson's theory of 'glocalisation' and Appadurai's concept of 'scapes'. The former concept derives from Robertson's analysis of 'globalisation' as a dynamic process (Bloch 2008, 612–627:620), explains how the global and the local levels are overlapping (Bloch 2008, 612–627:613), as well as how localised and globalised consciousness are mutually linked (Bloch 2008, 612–627:619). The concept reflects Robertson's perception of the 'universalisation of the particular' and the 'particularisation of the universal'. This viewpoint allowed us to look at the relationship between female interfaith initiatives in Israel–Palestine with interfaith initiatives on the global level. In light of Robertson's 'glocalisation' concept, the overlappings between the global and local levels between female interfaith initiatives are explored in chapter 7.1. and 7.2.

To further broaden the understanding of reciprocal exchange between global and local female interfaith initiatives, the concept of 'scapes', conceptualised by Appadurai (as elaborated in his writings on 'Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy'), was used to explore the emergence of global religious values. Appadurai's concept describes further dimensions of the reciprocity between the local and global levels (Appadurai 1990, 295–310:296). Appadurai has developed five dimensions (called 'scapes') in order to explore current 'disjunctures' that he witnessed between economy, culture, and politics: 1) 'ethnoscapes', 2) 'mediascapes', 3) 'technoscapes', 4) 'finanscape', and 5) 'ideoscapes' (Appadurai 1990, 295–310:296). The

concept of an 'ideoscape' explains the current global flow of ideas, ideologies, worldviews, terms, narratives, and images (Appadurai 1990, 295–310:299-301). As explained by Appadurai, these ideas formed in a specific context and may be adopted in deterritorialised contexts (Appadurai 1990, 295–310:301). Based on these concepts, we can assume that ideas, values, and ideologies are displaced from one context to another (Appadurai 1990, 295–310: 303, 304); chapter 7.3. consists of an investigation of how the current flow of ideas, ideologies, and worldviews in the cause of 'globalisation' leads to the development of common faith-based values.

3.4. Identifying 'Capabilities' That Enable the Emergence of Female Interfaith Initiatives

In connection to Amartya Sen's 'capability approach', Nussbaum developed a list of 'central human functional capabilities' (Nussbaum 2011:40): 'life, bodily health and integrity, bodily integrity, senses, imagination and thought, emotions, practical reason, affiliation, other species, play, and control over one's environment' (Nussbaum 1999:41,42).

Both Nussbaum and Sen perceived 'capabilities' as being closely related to human rights because they cover civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights (Nussbaum 2011:36). However, Nussbaum defined the 'capability approach' as 'superior' to the human rights approach, as it considers more precisely issues regarding sex differences (Nussbaum 2011:36). In fact, Nussbaum's list of 'capabilities' can be seen as a response to feminist critiques of the male-centredness of the human rights approach (Nussbaum 2011:36,37). Nussbaum's list of 'capabilities' helps to comparatively asses the quality of life in a nation (Nussbaum 2011:40) and to provide guidance to nations striving for justice (Nussbaum 2011:47) by providing a set of basic constitutional principles (Nussbaum 2011:36). More specifically, the set of 'capabilities' provides a framework to achieve and elaborate on social justice, including 'full justice for women' (Nussbaum 2011:33). Consequently, the list of 'capabilities' can be seen as "fundamental entitlements that are to some extent independent of the preferences that people happen to have, preferences shaped, often, by unjust background conditions" (Nussbaum 2011:34).

As Israel was chosen as a country case study, chapter 8 includes an evaluation of the performance of Israel in providing equal opportunities and 'capabilities' to its citizens. The

evaluation of which factors in Israel empower the unification of women of different faith backgrounds, functions as a way to contextualise this study and provide background for an analysis of two interfaith initiatives in Israel in chapter 9. The 'capabilities approach' was applied to assess 'capabilities' of Israeli women to join interfaith initiatives in light of Israel's legal and political structure. As there is no separation between the legal, political, and religious dimensions in Israel, religion can be assumed to influence the unequal distribution of 'capabilities' (Halperin-Kaddari and Yadgar, 2010:3,4). Thus, six specific 'capabilities', which Nussbaum perceived as potentially under threat for women in religious structures, were used to elaborate the ability of women in Israel to perform their 'central human functional capabilities'.

4.   FBOs at the UN

4.1.   Interfaith Initiatives at the UN

One can trace back the beginning of increased involvement of FBOs at the UN to the early 1970s. At that time, the UN was eager to hold inclusive relations with diverse actors (Haynes 2015:187,192). This trend came along with a turn towards interfaith-based organizations, which can be traced back to the UN's recognition of the beneficial effect of religious values upon people's lives and thus inter-group and inter-community relations (Haynes 2015:188,187). Following that, Brodeur states, that the "United Nations […] can hardly address effectively the multiple demands coming from the numerous separate religious communities" (Brodeur 2005, 42,53). Another mentioned argument regarding the UN's focus on interfaith-based work is the influence of the events of 9/11 on the shift (Brodeur 2005, 42,53).

The UN took several efforts to promote interfaith dialogue: While the Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations, proclaimed by the UN in 2001, did not directly promote interfaith dialogue but intercultural dialogue, the UN International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), clearly addressed interfaith efforts for a 'culture of peace', especially those of the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UN 2009:2). Following that, the UNESCO International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022) builds on intercultural and interreligious dialogue as a tool to "fight against new forms of racism, discrimination, intolerance, extremism and radicalization" (UNESCO 2014:2). The decade seeks to "enhance interreligious and intercultural dialogue and promote tolerance and mutual understanding" as well as "respect for human rights and cultural diversity" (UNESCO

2014:1,2). Starting in 2007, the UNGA from its 61ST until its 73RD sessions (in 2018), issued each year a resolution on the promotion of "interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace" (UN 2019). Comparing the content of resolution 67/104, 69/140, and 71/249, all of them acknowledge the contribution of interreligious dialogue to an "improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind", to "mutual understanding, tolerance and respect" and to "the promotion of a 'culture of peace' and an improvement of overall relations among people from different cultural and religious backgrounds" (UN 2014:2; UN 2013:1; UN 2017:2). Resolution 69/140 also mentions the ability of interreligious dialogue in promoting social cohesion – and stability and its potential to realize the Millennium Development Goals (UN 2014:3). Above that, the resolution encourages Member States to promote interreligious dialogue (UN 2014:4) to network with faith leaders in matters of reconciliation to help to ensure durable peace "by encouraging forgiveness and compassion among individuals" (2017:5). Moreover, several resolutions highlight, that successful experiences with and knowledge gained from interfaith work should be made available to others (UN 2013:3). Additionally, to the mentioned resolutions, the UNGA issued two resolutions, on the "promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, and cooperation between the United Nations (hereafter referred to as UN) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)" (UN 2016).

The initiation of the increasing interaction between the UN and FBOs was witness able in 1972, when the UN founded a Committee of Religious NGOs (Haynes 2013:190). The Committee of Religious NGOs currently has 37-member organizations which are meeting monthly to discuss UN – topics with regards to their religious aspects (WordPress 2019). This event was followed by the UN's establishment of the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns in 2004 (Haynes 2013:190). In 2013, 7%-10% of NGO'S having a consultative status at the UN, are based on religion (UK Research and Innovation 2019).

4.2.   UNs Interfaith Initiatives for Human Rights

A precondition set by the UN for FBOs, was their adoption of the fundamental values of the UN (Haynes 2015:188,192). This made the FBOs extend their focus from theological issues to human rights, conflict resolution and problems of international development (Haynes 2015, 186-195:189). Consequently, representatives of FBOs were actively involved in a series of international UN conferences, on: human rights (Vienna, 1992), the natural environment (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), population growth (Cairo, 1994), human development (Copenhagen, 1995),

women and gender (Beijing, 1995), and social development (Geneva, 2000) (Haynes 2013:4). Efforts regarding the implementation of human rights from the side of FBOs on UN level involve public policy debates, 'fact-finding' initiatives (Haynes 2015, 186-195:188), monitoring, educational programs (Sazonova 2010, 170-181:171), advocacy and lobbying mostly on behalf of disadvantaged groups (UK Research and Innovation 2019).

FBOs may positively influence the implementation of the right "to freedom of thought, conscience and religion" (Article 1 of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief), even though there is no internationally enforceable instrument to safeguard this right (Sazonova 2004, 170-181:174; UN, UNGA 1981). However, their involvement also leads to tensions regarding topics such as women's sexual and reproductive health rights (Haynes 2015, 186-195:191) This became apparent in a meeting in Istanbul in 2018, which brought together several religious leaders and representatives from FBOs and UN agencies to discuss successful ways to empower partnerships with UNFPA (United Nations Fund for Population Activities, now called the UN Population Fund) in areas like reproductive health rights, gender equality issues (Haynes 2013:15). Nevertheless, FBOs at the UN level express a strong wish of promoting the 5th Millennium Development Goal, the promoting gender equality and empower women' (Haynes 2013:18).

5. Mapping Female Interfaith Initiatives

This chapter will describe the key features of eight female interfaith initiatives as a result of a mapping exercise, which is the very first one of its kind. Theoretically and empirically informed, the mapping exercise resulted in eight female interfaith initiatives compared on the basis of specific parameters, and data collected from publicly available data, the questionnaires and interviews. Main patterns regarding the initiatives´ emergence, correlations among the initiatives´ geographical location, and the transformative character of the female interfaith initiatives form the foundation of the analysis and identify the main characteristics and commonalities of women interfaith initiatives.

The table below presents the following initiatives: Parliament's Women's Task Force, Women's Interfaith Network, The Global Peace Initiative of Women, Women's Interfaith Council (Interfaith Forum of Muslim& Christian Women's Association), Global Women of Faith

Network (Religions for Peace), Spiritual and Religious Alliance for Hope, Women Transcending Boundaries, Nisa-Nashim. Moreover, the table provides an overview of aspects that will be further used as parameters for the comparison of these initiatives.

Table 1: presentation of female interfaith initiatives

Initiative / Categories	PWTF	WIN	GPIW	WIC	GWFN (RfP)	SARAH	WTB	Nisa-Nashim
Geographical location and Field of operation	US	UK	Head-quarters in US; Global subsi-diaries: Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia	Nigeria	Head-quarters in US; (70 Women of Faith Networks in four continents and over 30 nations of the world)	US	US	UK
Level of operation	GLOBALLY	REGIO-NALLY (London and across the South East of the UK)	GLOBALLY	REGIO-NALLY (Kaduna State)	GLOBALLY	REGIO-NALLY (Southern California)	REGIO-NALLY (New York; Syracuse area)	REGIONALLY (Haringey, Harrow, Leeds, South Manchester, North West London, West London, Southgate, Edgware, Wessex, Marylebone, Peterborough, West Midlands, Hertsmere, Newcastle)
year of emergence	2015	2003	2000	2010	2001	2001	2001	2015
religious affiliation	All faiths	All faiths	Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Sufi, Christian	Christian, Muslim	All faiths	All faiths	All faiths	Jewish, Muslim
engaging for gender equality	✔	✘	✘	✔	✔	✔	✘	✔
Working in conflict settings	✘	✘	✘	✔	✔	✘	✘	✘
Addressing global risks (Climate Change, Poverty)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✘	✔	✘
Aim at strengthening relationships on the community level	✘	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

5.1. Evidence from Female Interfaith Initiatives

The mapping exercise is key in terms of providing a structured set of informations, and a framework for comparisons that will sharpen our understanding of this interesting but neglected research area. It sheds light on the driving forces behind their emergence, their geographical location, their transformative character, as well as the main characteristics and commonalities of female interfaith initiatives.

5.1.1. Driving Forces for the Emergence of the Initiatives

The year of the respective initiative´s emergence provides hints regarding the reason for their creation. Looking at the table (Tab.1), the third column illustrates, that none of the eight initiatives was created before the year 2000. It can be highlighted, that three out of eight initiatives were created in 2001, two emerged in 2015, one in 2000, one in 2003 and another one in 2010. The questionnaire clearly demonstrates common patterns for the emergence of the female interfaith initiatives which are in question. The most frequently mentioned reason for the emergence of the initiative are the attacks of 9/11. The second most mentioned reason for the emergence of initiatives is the lack of women's representation in interfaith-based work. Another possible driving force for the creation of female interfaith initiatives, is the UN's call for interfaith based work starting from 2001 (including the UN International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) and the UNESCO International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022).

United States Post 9/11 Women's Interfaith Initiatives'
The questionnaires identified that three out of eight initiatives emerged due to the events of 9/11: Realizing the strength of their friendship due to their common wish to bring together women from all faith backgrounds "to build bridges and establish friendships", one Muslim and one Jewish woman created the Women's Interfaith Network in response to the 9/11 bombings in 2003 in London (WIN 2019). The formation of SARAH has its source in an interfaith dialogue series organized by a Californian NGO to encourage tolerance and understanding among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim men and women after the events of September 11, 2001. As the dialogue was so productive, three women decided to meet regularly (SARAH 2019). WTB started in New York after September 11, 2001, when women of diverse faiths realized that their common concerns and values by far outweigh their differences (WTB 2019).

These three organizations (WIN, SARAH, WTB) share another commonality: all of them operate in - and are situated in English native speaking countries (US and UK) (Questionnaire 2019 (g,h,b)). This corresponds with the findings of many scholarly writings, that highlight the events of 9/11 as a crucial factor for the development of different forms of interfaith dialogue (Swidler 2013, 1-19; Cornille 2013:3; Jakobsh 2006, 183-199:186; Pedersen 2004:2; Hayward 2012:27; Takim 2004, 343:344,345). More specifically, it refers to studies done on United States Post 9/11 women's interfaith initiatives (Eck 2007). The Pluralism Project has found, that a number of interfaith initiatives in the United States that were created in response to 9/11, were formed by and for women (Women Transcending Boundaries, Sacred Circles Conferences at the Washington National Cathedral, Women of Spirit Conference, Gather the Women) or have grown out of other initiatives (JAM Women's Group, Spiritual and Religious Alliance for Hope, Woman to Woman Project of the Interfaith Association of Snohomish County). The nine initiatives that the research project explored, were mainly active on the local, grassroots level and engaged in common social activities and projects. The research project found, that these female interfaith initiatives were mostly a compound of representatives from Women of Reform Judaism, the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance, United Methodist Women, the North American Council for Muslim Women, the Muslim Women's League, Manavi, the Sikh Mediawatch and Resource Task Force (now the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund) (Eck 2007). The Harvard research project found a unique fact about these post 9/11 US women interfaith initiatives. The investigated initiatives replaced a traditionally formal interfaith dialogue with storytelling in the form of reflecting and telling personal testimonies (Eck 2007; Harvard 2006). Another scholar, who explored the effects of 9/11 on the relations between religious communities in the US, identified the increased stereotypes and hate crimes primarily against Muslims and Sikhs, in the aftermath of 9/11, as the underlying reason for the emergence of interfaith networks (Takim 2004, 343:344,345). Living in a pluralistic state, religious communities in the US felt the need to reach out and the wish to "speak with, rather than about the other" (Takim 2004, 343:344,345).

Marginalisation of Women in Interfaith Initiatives'

Based on the questionnaires' data, women's marginalization within interfaith based work can be identified as another major reason for the creation of female interfaith initiatives. Two out of eight initiatives (GPIW, GWFN (Religions for Peace)) explicitly refer to the lack of women's representation in interfaith dialogue as a driving factor for their emergence: The Global Peace Initiative of Women was formed in 2000 by women who attended the UN Millennium World

Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders. As there were only a few women present, they complained, and Kofi Annan offered a meeting at UN Geneva for female religious leaders in 2002 (Questionnaire 2019c; WCRL 2019; Hayward 2015, 307-332). Similarly, the Global Women of Faith Network was created to "strengthen awareness regarding the critical role of women of faith in multi-religious cooperation" (RfP 2009:3). Moreover, the motive of the Global Women of Faith Network was to promote the role of religious women and to "mainstream women of faith into all Religions for Peace programs and activities and to ensure, that women's concerns and perspectives are incorporated into the overall planning, implementation and evaluation" (Oliver, Kararm, Levy 2004:12). Besides the two named initiatives, the Parliament's Women's Task Force also refers to the wish to diminish the lack of women in interfaith relations as a decisive motive for their creation (Questionnaire 2019e). This finding coincides with the findings of several authors, who explored the deficiency of women's representation in interfaith work and identified the field of interreligious dialogue as male dominated (Hayward 2012:7; Fletcher 2017, 11-26:12).

alternative explanations

Possible alternative explanations for the emergence of female interfaith initiatives can be found in forces like secularisation and 'deprivatisation' or in the UN's strong promotion of interfaith based work. Starting in 2001, a year in which three of the organizations in question emerged, the UN began to strongly support interfaith based work by putting the aim of improving interfaith dialogue on its agenda for the following years. It can be assumed that the UN's increasing attention on the importance of interfaith dialogue also influenced the emergence of the explored women interfaith initiatives. The UN's efforts to strengthen interfaith dialogue included several resolutions and decades for the promotion thereof (as highlighted in chapter 4). The increased focus of the UN towards interfaith based work coincides with the timeframe in which the female interfaith initiatives under investigation, emerged (2000 – now).

When discussing the forces which condition the emergence of female interfaith initiatives, it is also important to consider the influence of phenomena like secularisation or 'deprivatisation'. Within the secularisation debate two contradictory argumentations exist: Scholars agreeing with an increasing secularisation would argue that the launch of female interfaith initiatives can be seen as a product of secularisation (Furseth and Repstad 2017:97). This argumentation would explain, how the diminishing role of religion in the public sphere leads to a shift towards alternative religious movements and the individualisation of religion (Furseth and Repstad

2017:122,149; Wanless 2017, 11-24:12,13). On the contrary, arguing from a post – secular perspective, as many authors do, the emergence of female interfaith initiatives can be seen as a result of 'deprivatisation', which represents the view that religion plays a continuous role in public (Furseth and Repstad 2017:72-97). Moreover, it can be assumed, that the events of 9/11 also influenced the UN's promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue to "fight against new forms of racism" (UNESCO 2014:2) such as hate crimes against Muslims. Consequently, 9/11 and the UN's related call for the promotion of interfaith collaboration, can be seen as most influential for the creation of female interfaith initiatives. and the fact that several initiatives were identified as coming into life as a response to 9/11.

5.1.2. Locating the "need" for Interfaith

Looking at the different geographical areas in which initiatives are situated, the following locations can be identified: US, UK and Nigeria. The questionnaire presents, that three out of eight initiatives are situated in the US, two have their headquarters in the US, two are located in the UK and one in Nigeria. The dominant geographical locations of the investigated initiatives are in the western world (US and UK). Consequently, the samples of initiatives under investigation are not representative for initiatives active on a global scale. The following section explores the Global Women of Faith Network. The GWFN is the only initiative that is globally active, as it has subnetworks present on all continents. This finding allows to raise the following question: "What is the reason for the location of female interfaith initiatives in western countries?" Considering this question, two explanations will be provided. The first explanation connects the location of women interfaith initiatives in western countries with the general trend towards alternative religious movements in the course of securitization. The second explanation assumes the satisfaction of basic needs in western societies, according to Maslow, to be an explanation for the location of female interfaith initiatives in western countries.

One literature-based explanation of why the initiatives are predominantly situated in western countries can be found within discussions around the emergence of new religious movements and individualized religiosity. In relation to the secularisation thesis, the location of the initiatives can be seen as a result of secularisation (Wanless 2017, 11-24:12,13) or a product of 'deprivatisation' (Furseth and Repstad 2017:122). Some scholars (Lyon, Dobbelaere, Max Weber) view both trends as predominantly taking place in western societies due to the assumed decline of individual participation in organised religious activities, especially in Europe (Furseth and Repstad 2017:132). Following this assumption, scholars argue, that the modern

individual has more freedom to choose and to search for truth and spirituality outside organised religions (Furseth and Repstad 2017:122).

Another explanation, which shows similarities to the previous one, is represented by Freud, Maslow and Marx, who assume a spiritual and religious "need" in people living in the west (Bouzenita and Boulanouar 2016:72). Following this argumentation line, Weber argues, that: "the religious needs of a group are affected by the nature of their interest situation and their position in the social structure" (Furseth and Repstad 2017:125). This correlates with Maslow's pyramid model, which describes humans as seeking achievement and self-actualisation after having satisfied all physiological needs, such as food, shelter and religion (Bouzenita and Boulanouar 2016:62). Maslow's model would explain the creation of female interfaith initiatives in the west as resulting from the satisfaction of basic needs in western societies and the accompanied ability to search for self-realisation. However, the underlying ethno-centricity and the empirical validity of Maslow's model of the hierarchy of needs is highly criticized (Bouzenita and Boulanouar 2016: Abstract). Amongst other things, it has been criticized regarding its reliance on the idea of western individualism, an accusation that relates to Maslow's use of the observations of his immediate surroundings (Bouzenita and Boulanouar 2016:64). Considering the phenomenon of the perceived secularisation and 'deprivatisation' in the west as well as Maslow's model as possible explanations why the investigated female interfaith initiatives are located in the west, this thesis favours another explanation: A plausible alternative explanation could be a lack of literature and systematic evaluation of female interfaith initiatives in non-western countries. The difficulty, which was faced in the selection process of female interfaith initiatives on a global scale and especially in non-western countries, appear as supportive argument for this explanation. Moreover, the predominant western location of the female interfaith initiatives under investigation, may also be traced back to their institutionalised character. Female interfaith initiatives in other parts of the world may work in informal associations that do not show any media presence. In addition, language limitations may complicate the identification of female interfaith initiatives located in different places around the world.

5.1.3. Examining the Initiatives from a Theory of Change

Social transformation and in particular positive social changes seem to be a driving force. Four (GPIW, Nisa-Nashim, WIN, PWTF) out of eight initiatives, in their questionnaires' responses, stress their wish and potential to achieve transformation and positive social change on various

levels. Like the PWTF, which aims at "building coalitions for change" (Questionnaire 2019e), Nisa-Nashim highlights the "ability of women to build cohesion and positive change" (Questionnaire 2019a). Additionally, Nisa-Nashim aims at "changing the tone of the conversation" by bringing Jewish and Muslim women together to inspire and lead social change (Questionnaire 2019a). The GPIW states in its questionnaire answers, that the "Feminine wisdom and the power of love can serve as the fulcrum for this inner and outer transformation" (Questionnaire 2019c). Similarly, WIN highlights the role of interfaith women's gatherings in enabling change (Questionnaire 2019g). To state it more precisely, WIN strives for a "deep – seated change in the way people relate to other religions" (Questionnaire 2019g).

The identified emphasis on change and transformation of the female interfaith initiatives, refers to the transformative character of interfaith dialogue which has been identified from the perspective of the theory of change. The transformative character of interfaith dialogue, analysed by the theory of change describes, how interfaith dialogue contributes to personal, relational, and structural change (Neufeldt, 2011, 344-372:347).

The theory of change helps identifying necessary preconditions for interfaith initiatives to achieve personal and relational change. Personal – and relational change, as evaluated by the theory of change, is accompanied by an increase of trust, empathy and the transformation of attitudes (Neufeldt, 2011, 344-372:351). Furthermore, personal – and relational change is characterised by the building of relationships between participants (Neufeldt, 2011, 344-372:351). As one of the main goals of the analysed initiatives is to alter attitudes and perceptions of the ''other'', their work, can be seen as contributing to personal - and relational change among the participants.

Looking at how interfaith dialogue can achieve socio-political change, the theory of change sets the precondition to: "addressing a wide range of people" (multi – level engagement) and to expand their focus and reach (Neufeldt, 2011, 344-372:345,360). To evaluate the potential of initiatives to achieve structural change, this paragraph examines their performance in guaranteeing a multi – level engagement. Two initiatives can be identified as bi - religious organizations: Nisa-Nashim includes Jewish and Muslim women and the Women's Interfaith Council has Muslim, Christian participants. The remaining initiatives, according to the questionnaire, can be identified as interdenominational bodies working with women from multiple faith and spiritual backgrounds (Questionnaire 2019a-h). Additionally, two initiatives

try to further include clergy, educators, mothers, community builders (SARAH (Questionnaire 2019h)) and "people of all faiths and all parts of society; women from all walks of life from different ethnic, religious and non-religious backgrounds" (WIN (Questionnaire 2019g)). Furthermore, comparing the organizational structures of the initiatives (target audience and composition), it can be concluded, that all of them are composed by multifaith lay people and female religious leaders. Five out of eight initiatives state that they welcome people from all faiths. They do not mention which exact religious traditions are represented in their initiative. The other initiatives focus merely on Abrahamic traditions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). The predominant focus of interfaith initiatives on Abrahamic religions and the exclusion of Indigenous and Non-Abrahamic religions is often subject to critique (Pedersen 2004:16,17; Hayward 2012:7). The fact, that three out of eight initiatives are working and collaborating with male and female faith leaders or are composed of such (WIC, GPIW, PWTF), can be seen, according to the assumptions of the theory of change, as leading to socio-political change (Neufeldt, 2011, 344-372:345). Comparing the initiatives in their engagement for change, the GPIW can be identified as having the highest intention among all to cooperate with faith leaders. This cooperation includes the mutual consultation between faith leaders and the GPIW in regard to topics of concern, common projects and unifying their "wisdom" to find solutions for challenges of the "human community" (Questionnaire 2019c).

Following the analysis on the set preconditions and characterisation by the theory of change, the female interfaith initiatives in our sample can be interpreted as being capable to achieve personal, relational and structural change.

5.2.   Concluding Remarks

By mixing data gained from the questionnaires with existing literature, this chapter compared female interfaith initiatives on the driving forces for their emergence, their geographical location and their transformative character. The first subchapter identified and explored 9/11, the marginalisation of women in interfaith initiatives and the UN's call for interfaith based work as the major factors for the emergence of the initiatives. Regarding the geographical location, the second subchapter found, that the majority of initiatives explored, emerged in western countries. Following the three attempts that have been made to explain this phenomenon, it has been chosen as the most suitable explanation that the female interfaith initiatives situated in the west have a higher visibility. The third subchapter explored the transformative character of the initiatives by applying the theory of change. It was highly informative on the preconditions for

change and on how female interfaith initiatives are able to achieve personal, relational, and structural change.

6. Interfaith for a 'Culture of Peace'

This chapter explores themes of interest and areas of engagement of the eight female interfaith initiatives stated in the table above (chapter 5). The first chapter seeks to explore how female interfaith initiatives are working towards a 'culture of peace', by identifying topics of concern for female interfaith initiatives in relation to equality for women. In a next step, the Global Women of Faith Network serves as an example to illustrate the female interfaith initiatives' active engagement in trying to eliminate violence against women.

The second section of this chapter explores two further areas that female interfaith initiatives operate in. First, common areas of interest regarding global issues and conflict transformation will be identified. This is followed by an elaboration and comparison of common topics of interest to the initiatives, regarding the promotion of community and the elimination of bigotry.

6.1. Faith For Equality of Women

Within the different components that contribute to a 'culture of peace', the category of gender equality is chosen to analyse the work of the GWFN and complementary the seven regional women interfaith initiatives, towards a 'culture of peace'. This section aims to comprehend, "how the GWFN actively works towards a 'culture of peace', by advocating for gender equality?" To evaluate how the initiatives, implement their focus on the empowerment of women in their active engagement, the GWFN's advocacy for the 'elimination of violence against women' is taken as a unit of analysis. The reason for choosing the GWFN as a case study, is, that it has been identified as the only initiative, that is active on a global-, national -, regional scale (table in the beginning of chapter 5). The GWFN works in Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, Southeast Europe and South and South East Asia (Oliver, Kararm, Levy 2004:12).

6.1.1. Common Engagement for Equality of Women

The questionnaires unveiled, that five out of eight initiatives address the inequality of women within and outside the faith community as a principle that sat their actions in motion (GWFN (RfP), PWTF, WIC, Nisa – Nashim, SARAH). Within the broad area of topics related to the

unequal status of women, the initiatives concentrate on the improvement of women's and general human rights, the prevention of violence against women and girls (GWFN (RfP), PWTF, WIC) and the promotion of women's leadership in general and within religious traditions (GWFN (RfP); Nisa – Nashim, SARAH, PWTF). Included in the topics mentioned by the initiatives in relation to improving women's human's rights are health rights (including HIV – WIC), educational rights and legal and financial rights (PWTF, WIC). The wish to improve the health of women, led two initiatives to support women suffering from HIV/AIDS in different parts of the world (WIC, WTB). The fact that women of faith fight for universal women's rights, proves, that women can be religious and at the same time stand up for gender inequality and equality. In discussions on individual women's rights versus religious group rights, the advocacy for gender equality from women of faith is sometimes questioned and the fight for gender equality perceived as coming predominantly from the side of secular feminist women (Nyhagen, L. 2019:2,3).

Looking at the PWTF and the GWFN in more detail, we can recognize that the PWTF in all its six foundational themes and the GWFN in three of its main objectives, focus on the empowerment of the role of women. The interest of the PWTF is directed towards the empowerment of the role of women within religious traditions, the increase of women as spiritual leaders, the expansion of women's rituals and artistic spiritual expression and the recognition of the sacred feminine (Questionnaire 2019e). The GWFN specifically focuses on the promotion of women's empowerment in multi-religious collaboration for peace (Religions for Peace 2009).

These identified topics of interest for female interfaith initiatives are comparable with those identified within sociological investigations of alternative women – centred religions. One highly discussed feminist religious movement is Wicca, based on religious feminist witchcraft. Wicca emphasise the importance of women's rights, the environment, and gay and lesbian rights. This and other similar movements are seen as aiming at redefining power, authority, sexuality, and social relations (Furseth and Repstad 2017:179,184,185). Moreover, they are often discussed as being oriented towards empowerment of women and the deconstruction of traditional rituals which are related to patriarchy (Furseth and Repstad 2017:179,184,185). Women's spirituality movements like Wicca are often discussed in relation to the secularization theory (Furseth and Repstad 2017:179,184,185) (discussed in more detail in chapter 2).

6.1.2. GWFN Combating Violence Against Women?

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (hereafter referred to as UNIFEM) encouraged "communities of faith around the world to lead efforts to end violence against women" (Religions for Peace 2008:4). Following this public call, this section utilises the category of the 'elimination of violence against women' as a unit of analysis. More specifically it is utilised to analyse how the GWFN works towards a 'culture of peace' by implementing the dimension of the 'elimination of violence against women' within their actions. Two reasons determined why the dimension of the 'elimination of violence against women' was chosen as a parameter for analysis: The first reason is the GWFN's declared focus on the 'elimination of violence against women', which has been identified in the previous section. The second reason is the high priority to eliminate the causes of violence, which led to the enormous percentage of women worldwide (35 %) who experience violence (UN 2018). Regarding the latter argument, the following investigation should be understood in the light of the CEDAW's finding that the unequal status of women in society is the main root cause for violence against women (UN, Women 2012:12).

The 'elimination of violence against women' has been addressed several times by a different national, regional and the Global Women of Faith Network (Religions for Peace 2006; Religions for Peace 2009; Religions for Peace 2008). The underlying aim of the GWFN concerning the 'elimination of violence against women', derives from the "universal religious principles" which all emphasise the importance of non-violence and thus also non – violence against women, according to the self-description of the GWFN (Religions for Peace 2009:15). The GWFN mentions, that these principles oblige any person identifying itself as being religious to defend the dignity of every person, including women's inherent dignity (Religions for Peace 2009:6).

As a first step to realise their aim, the GWFN established two partnerships with the UN (with the UN campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" of 2008 (Religions for Peace 2008:2) and the UNIFEM (Religions for Peace 2008:4)). To provide tools for its subnetworks, religious leaders and communities to bring an end to violence against women, the GWFN developed a "multi-religious toolkit to address violence against women": this document offers tools to help (Religions for Peace 2009:5). The tools promoted and explained in the toolkit are: Education, Awareness, Prevention, Advocacy, Inter-Religious Retreat, Support and Care,

Addressing, partnering with the Media, Monitoring and Evaluation (Religions for Peace 2009: 5).

In contrast to the other three regional networks, the African Regional Women of Faith Network seems to be the most active in this respect. The Regional network uses advocacy and joint projects to confront violence against women and girls (Religions for Peace 2006:9). Moreover, it has trained "approximately 4500 women of faith, male religious leaders and youth" on ending violence against women and girls (Religions for Peace 2009:11). Besides the regional network, also national networks of different countries in Africa integrate the dimension on 'elimination of violence against women' in their actions. Addressing the widespread violence against women functioned as the foundational reason for the creation of the Religions for Peace Democratic Republic of Congo Women of Faith Network. In relation to that, the female interfaith network in Congo carried out a "sensitisation workshop on violence against women and skills training for female leaders, attended by 30 participants from different faith traditions" (Religions for Peace 2009:23).

6.1.3. Assessing Interfaith Initiatives' Engagement for Equality of Women

Exploring how female interfaith initiatives are working towards a 'culture of peace', first section of this subchapter identified the following three main common topics of concern to interfaith initiatives in relation to equality for women: Three out of eight initiatives concentrate on women's and general human rights and the prevention of violence against women and girls (GWFN (RfP), PWTF, WIC). Four initiatives could be identified as promoting women's leadership in general and within religious traditions (GWFN (RfP); Nisa – Nashim, SARAH, PWTF).

Taking the Global Women of Faith Network as an example to illustrate the active engagement of women interfaith initiatives for the 'elimination of violence against women', it has been identified, that the GWFN declared its focus on the 'elimination of violence against women' in several conference papers and public statements. Despite their public commitment, limited evidence on the implementation of this dimension within the actual engagement of the GWFN and its 70 subdivisions, "in the field", could be found.

6.2. Further Common Spheres of Action

The questionnaire showed further communalities within the alignment and spheres of action of the female interfaith initiatives under investigation. Besides conflict transformation and peacebuilding, global issues seem to be widely addressed areas of concern for the initiatives in question. Moreover, the second section of this subchapter, will investigate in communalities between the interests of the interfaith initiatives' regarding the promotion of community and the fight against bigotry.

6.2.1.   Interfaith For Conflict Transformation and For Solutions to Global Issues

Three out of eight initiatives stress the importance of conflict transformation and peacebuilding (WIC, GWFN, WTB). While the Women Interfaith Council and the Global Women of Faith Network are actively engaged in conflict settings (Questionnaire 2019g,d), the WTB is actively combating issues related to conflict, like the appeal for a decrease of gun violence.

The Women Interfaith Council and the Global Women of Faith Network are both aiming at strengthening the role of women of faith to build peace (Questionnaire 2019g,d). The Global Women of Faith Network wants to increase the visibility of women of faith as agents of peace and supports them actively within peace processes, like in West Africa (Liberia) and Southeast Europe (Bosnia-Herzegovina) (Oliver, Kararm, Levy 2004:8). The Women Interfaith Council trains faith leaders in advocating against hate speech, carries out peace education trainings for women of faith and issues statements in on crisis in Kaduna State (Questionnaire 2019f; WIC 2019). Two initiatives could be identified that advocate for disarmament: The Global Women of Faith Networks provides trainings to women of faith in disarmament and non-proliferation and promotes awareness on the impact, arms have on women and girls (GWFN 2019). In the context of advocating for disarmament, Women Transcending Boundaries engaged in two activities. Firstly, they joined "Mothers Against Gun Violence", a community organisation which support grieving families and friends of people who were shot and killed. Additionally, they held an interfaith blood drive with women from various faiths traditions in which they offered 29 pints of blood to save lives and thereby showing how much blood has been spilled between religious groups (WTB 2019).

Additionally, the initiatives under investigation try to tackle a variety of other issues too. Five out of eight initiatives address issues connected to the environment, like climate change (GPIW, WIC, WIN, WTB, PWTF). The evaluation of the questionnaires identified that the initiatives

predominantly try to find solutions to eliminate the causes of these issues on women. Consequently, two initiatives are acting towards the reduction of poverty for women, as in their point of view "women's empowerment is a pre-condition to ending poverty and inequality" (GWFN (RfP); WIC) (GWFN 2019). Two other initiatives strive for economic empowerment for women (WIC, GWFN (RfP)).

6.2.2. Interfaith Promoting Community And Combating Bigotry

The evaluation of the questionnaires shows, that except the Parliament's Women's Task Force, the remaining initiatives strongly focus on strengthening relationships on community level. Statements given by SARAH, Nisha- Nashim and WIN can serve as an illustration of the initiatives focus on community work: "Interfaith community building in the form of community dialogue and service" (SARAH 2019). Nisa-Nashim states, that it wants to engage with the local community, to "deepen inter-community integration and seeding meaningful connections between the diverse communities of Jews, Muslims and others" (Nisa-Nashim 2016). Additionally, the Women's Interfaith Network is aiming at building more inclusive communities by connecting them (Nisa-Nashim 2016). This relates to previous studies exploring women's activism as described in chapter 2.

The results of the questionnaires demonstrate that five out of eight initiatives promote dialogue between different faith groups (Nisa – Nashim, SARAH, WIN, WIC, WTB). The underlying aim for leading dialogue includes a wide range of reasons, including combating bigotry, connecting communities, changing views, building bridges and understanding, embracing difference, challenging misconceptions and tackling cultural and religious intolerance (WIN 2019), by means of nurturing mutual respect and understanding by sharing information about diverse beliefs (WTB). Further reasons vary from the understanding of one another's belief systems (SARAH), to the creation of friendships, cooperation and trust between communities (Nisa – Nashim). WIC names the reduction of prejudice and mistrust, while creating the space for integration, understanding and collaboration as reasons (WIC). The mentioned underlying objectives of interfaith dialogue coincide with evidence of previous studies, which found, that interfaith activities are defined as working as a bridge-building tool in divided societies (Hayward 2012:6).

6.2.3. Assessing Interfaith's Engagement in Further Common Spheres of Action

This section found, that three initiatives are active within the area of conflict transformation and peacebuilding. Female interfaith initiatives under investigation mostly referred to peace building in relation to women's role as peace builders. Furthermore, this section found further issues which are of concern to the female interfaith initiatives under investigation. These issues are situated within the broad area of global issues like climate change, poverty and the economic crisis.

The second section of the second subchapter identified the promotion of community as another topic of interest to women interfaith initiatives. Furthermore, the results of the questionnaire demonstrate that five out of eight initiatives promote dialogue between different faith groups to achieve a variety of goals connected to: the fight against bigotry, to build bridges, to challenge misconceptions and tackle cultural and religious intolerance.

6.3. Evaluation

This chapter explored the main areas of concern for female interfaith initiatives, regarding gender equality, the 'elimination of violence against women', conflict transformation and peacebuilding, global issues, promotion of community and the promotion of dialogue. The identified main themes of interest of the investigated initiatives here comply with what has been discussed in literature (Pedersen 2004, Halafoff 2015, 2965-2982; Knitter 2013, 117-132:141). In his research, Pedersen found the following three areas of concern to interfaith initiatives: 1. living together harmoniously; 2. engaging in a common task to resolve conflict and 3. searching for truth and understanding (Pedersen 2004:2). These three motives are comparable with the defined motives from other scholars. Halafoff lists, besides three motives that coincide with Pedersens list, the formation of peacebuilding networks as a fourth area of interest to interfaith initiatives (Halafoff 2015, 2965-2982:2966). Another scholar describes the intention of interfaith work, as a response to the (human) suffering around the world (Knitter 2013, 117-132:141). The predominant focus on "addressing global risks and injustices" by interfaith initiatives (Halafoff 2015, 2965-2982:2966) corresponds with the concept of netpeace, which explains how multireligious networks counter global risks (Halafoff 2015, 2965-2982:2973, 2974), by engaging in practical actions, which replace dialogue to solve global issues, such as climate change, the global financial crisis and gender equality (Halafoff 2015, 2965-2982:2974,

2975). Based on literature - and empirical findings, it can be concluded, that the investigated female interfaith initiatives are primarily in dialogue of action or rather collaborative dialogue (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149-167:155; Knitter 2013, 117-132:134).

Contextualising the results of this chapter with existing theories, two other conclusions can be drawn. Drawing from the scholarly (PACS) classification of interfaith work in three levels (high, mid and grass-roots level (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149-167:155), or top-level, middle-range, and grassroots projects (Lederach 1997:92), it can be concluded, that the explored female interfaith initiatives are mostly working on grassroots or mid - level. Indicators thereof are the facts that the compared initiatives are merely composed by lays and clerics and that they focus on the community level. This finding in turn, indicates, that the work of the investigated initiatives takes the form of a 'bottom-up' approach (Richmond 2005:127). Scholars characterised the 'bottom-up' approach of interfaith initiatives as involving non-state actors and civil society who engage in constructing peace that takes the needs of local communities into account (Richmond 2005:130). Literature shows contrasting opinions if either a 'bottom-up' or a 'top-down' approach is more effective. On the one hand, grassroots-level interfaith work is seen as in need of guidance of so-called experts (Knitter 2013, 117-132:146). On the other hand, scholars argue, that interfaith work needs to be on the ground of local communities to effectively take roots (Knitter 2013, 117-132:146). However, several attempts have been made to combine 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' approaches to peacebuilding, practically and theoretically, in different contexts. One identified strategy to link both approaches is to strive for a hybrid form of peace, as suggested by scholars from PACS (Ginty 2010:391). Hybrid peace can be reached through the interplay of local actors and 'liberal peace agents' as well as a balanced exercise of power by both actors (Ginty 2010:392).

6.4.   Concluding Remarks

The evaluation of how the GWFN actively work towards a 'culture of peace' by advocating gender equality, showed that the GWFN highly addresses the 'elimination of violence against women'. Moreover, it has been found that the actual steps that have been taken by GWFN-bodies towards the 'elimination of violence against women', is rather limited. Moreover, this chapter has identified other areas of interest for the eight analysed interfaith initiatives in the broader area of global issues like peace, environment, poverty, as well as in areas concerning community work and the elimination of stereotypes.

7. Interfaith Global and Local Reciprocity

This chapter explores the influence of 'globalisation' on women interfaith initiatives. The first two sections of this chapter will investigate in two aspects which are subject to the mutual influences of female interfaith initiatives on the global and the local level, which take place in the course of 'globalisation'. The analysis of the first two subchapters is based on Robertson's concept of 'glocalisation'. The first subchapter uses Robertson's further developed concept to draw conclusions concerning the 'universalisation' of particular events which influenced the emergence of female interfaith initiatives on the global level and vice versa. Thus, it explores the emergence of female interfaith initiatives as being influenced by events happening on a global as well as on a local level. The second subchapter explores the mutual influence of actors from the local on the global level and vice versa. Moreover, it will be possible to draw conclusions in relation to Robertson's idea of the 'universalisation of the particular' and the 'particularisation of the universal'. Moreover, Robertson's concept of 'glocalisation', shows the global nature of female interfaith initiatives. The third subchapter in this chapter investigates, how the current flow of ideas, ideologies and world views in the cause of 'globalisation' leads to the development of common faith-based values. This subchapter uses Appadurai's concept of 'ideoscapes' to explain the spread of religious values.

This chapter focuses on the eight female interfaith initiatives explored in chapter 5 and 6, the two samples used for the country case study in chapter 9 as well as on additional initiatives found. Proceeding from the empirical findings mixed with literature findings, theoretically based conclusions can be drawn in the concluding remarks of this chapter.

7.1. Global – Local: Mutual Influence of Events

As it has already been found in the comparison of the eight female interfaith initiatives (chapter 5 and 6) as well as it will be pointed out in the country case study (chapter 9): the emergence of female interfaith initiatives is at the same time influenced by local - and global events. In the Israeli context two specific events, have been found out as having influenced the emergence of its initiatives. While one event is global, the other one is local by its nature. The table in chapter 9 demonstrates WIE's and Anuar's creation as influence by the second Intifada. Besides WIE and Anuar, which have been chosen as samples for the Israelis case study, also one further initiative listed in the table in chapter 9 refers to the second Intifada as influential in their creation. Complementary to the influence of the local influential event, global events like 9/11

also played a role in the creation of female interfaith initiatives in Israel, as stated by both respondents. The influence of global events like 9/11 on the local level gives evidence to Robertson's theory of the 'particularisation of the universal'.

Why did initiatives arise in response to the second Intifada? Hertzog, representing Anuar explained the influence of the second Intifada on the creation of Anuar as follows: "we wanted to show each other that we can work together despite this difficult time of hatred and hostility and suspicion" (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:8). This phenomenon has been observed by several authors who explained similar organisations: Powers, who studies the peace work of four Palestinian and Israeli women's organisations concluded, that the outbreak of the second Intifada "encouraged opportunities for dialogue groups, women's peace conferences, collaborative projects, and solidarity initiatives" (Powers 2003, 25-31:25).

The finding of the influence of this event on the emergence of female interfaith initiatives in Israel and Palestine, the second Intifada might have probably had an empowering factor on women to join together and form interfaith initiatives. Following scholars that have identified war as not merely having a subordinating effect on women but also enhancing the status of women and promoting women to engage as activists for transformation (Afshar and Eade 2004:2; Kaufman and Williams 2010), it can be assumed, that in this case, war (the second Intifada) had an empowering side - effect on women.

At the same time, the Israel – Palestine conflict also influenced the alignment of interfaith initiatives working on a global level. Especially female interfaith initiatives present in the Israeli-Palestinian diaspora like the US and Great Britain base their work on Muslim – Jewish, Israeli – Palestinian; Middle – east relations. Two female interfaith initiatives (Nisa – Nashim and Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom) can serve as examples of how events on the local level (in this case, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) have given rise and influenced women interfaith initiatives in the UK and the US. Nisa – Nashim, one of the female interfaith initiatives analysed above, states on its website, that it focuses on the relationships between Jewish and Muslim British women. Recognising that the situation in the "Middle East" presents a deep concern for both groups of women, the initiative tries to discuss this sensitive topic in later stages of dialogue, when relations between the women's participants have been established (Nisa Nashim 2016). Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom is another interfaith network that focuses on building trust between Muslim and Jewish women of faith (SOSS 2019). Operating in the US, England and

Canada, Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom addresses topics related to the Israel/Palestine conflict regularly on its annual conferences and in its local groups (SOSS 2019). Regarding Robertson's theory, an 'universalisation of the particular' can be observed here: The "universalisation" of Israeli's female interfaith initiatives can be seen in the adaption of the Israel-Palestine conflict by women interfaith initiatives in America and Great Britain in their alignment.

7.2.   Global – Local: Actors Exchange

Besides the dependent co-arising of events taking place on the global and local level, a mutual influence of actors from the local on the global level and vice versa can be observed. Several women of faith have been identified, as being active at the same time in female interfaith initiatives on the local level and in similar initiatives on the global level. While looking for possible interview partners, three women who established women interfaith initiatives in Israel were found who are also part of global female interfaith initiatives. It is noticeable, that two of these women were former board members of the Parliament's Women's Task Force (PWTF), explored in chapter 5 and 6. Moreover, the founder of two women interfaith initiatives (TRUST WIN and the Women's Interfaith Network of the Middle East and North Africa) on the Israeli level, has been identified as the coordinator of the united religious initiative, which is a global grassroots interfaith network active in 80 countries. Following Robertson's explanation of the 'universalisation of the particular' and the 'particularisation of the universal', it can be said, that the engagement of local actors in global initiatives is a process of the 'universalisation of the particular'.

The other way around, several international actors have been identified as actively involved in the Israeli interfaith scene. Evidence ca be drawn from literature, that also global actors are active in the local setting. For example, Abu-Nimer found in her exploration of the potential constructive role of religious peacebuilders in Palestinian-Israeli, that most interfaith-based organisations in Israel-Palestine are founded by Jewish Americans (Abu-Nimer 2004, 491-511:508). The activities of American actors in the Israeli interfaith scene are also highlighted in other works. Examining the reasons for the American influence on Israel's interfaith scene, the strong historical relation between America and Israel since the aftermath of the Second World War seems to be the most realistic explanation. Another explanation perceives Israel's interfaith initiatives as attractive for American faith-based organisations (like the American evangelical community) as they emerged in response to the Israel-Palestine conflict (Khan

2010, 51-55:54). The influence of international, predominantly American actors on the local level, referring to theory, can be explained as a process of the 'particularisation of the universal'.

7.3.   Global – Local: Exchange of Ideas and Values

Appadurai's concept of 'ideoscapes' (explained in the chapter 3.3) is useful to describe the spread and development of common, universal religious values, which have been identified in the comparison of eight selected female interfaith initiatives (chapter 5 and 6). The stated values, which form the foundation of the initiatives, vary from "love, compassion, selflessness, inner truthfulness" (GWFN (RfP)), "trust, inclusivity, celebrating diversity" (WIN), "mutual respect and understanding" (WTB), "healing, feminine wisdom, power of love and a sacred relationship with the earth (GPIW), "ability of women to build cohesion and positive change, hate free world" (Nisa – Nashim), to "peaceful coexistence and development and respect of women's rights as Mothers of a 'culture of peace' (WIC), "human rights of women of all faiths, human dignity and well-being" (PWTF) (Questionnaire 2019 d,g,b,c,a,f). Many initiatives highlight, that their actions are built upon the "highest and deepest values of all of our faith traditions" (SARAH) (Questionnaire 2019h). This finding corresponds with other research done on interfaith movements, that found that interfaith based work is globally connected by common values and ethics (Pedersen 2004:4; Knitter 2013, 117-132:137; Carter and Smith 2004, 279-301:781,279). Thus, Robertson's idea of humanisation may as well be applied to explain the creation of common shared values, as it refers to the process of the internationalization of global norms in terms of human rights and thus the establishment of a global consciousness towards peace (Bloch 2008, 612-627:619,620,626).

7.4.   Concluding Remarks

In relation to the mutual influences of global and local events on the emergence of women interfaith initiatives, the second Intifada has been identified as the major local influence on the creation of female interfaith initiatives in Israel. Moreover, it was found, that the Israel-Palestine conflict at the same time influences the alignment of women interfaith initiatives on a global level (US and UK). The second subsection found, that actors from female interfaith initiatives on the local Israeli level are at the same time active in women interfaith initiatives on a global level and vice versa. Regarding Robertson's theory, the first two sections clearly demonstrated that an 'universalisation of the particular' and the 'particularisation of the universal' takes place for interfaith initiatives on the local and the global level. Consequently, theoretically speaking, female interfaith initiatives in Israel are not only subject to 'globalisation',

but also to "glocalisation". Following that, women interfaith initiatives in Israel can be seen as having a 'glocal' character. The third subsection found that the current flow of ideas in the cause of 'globalisation' leads to the development of universal religious values.

8. "Capabilities" Enabling the Emergence of Female Interfaith Initiatives in Israel

As Israel is chosen for a country case study, this chapter will evaluate the human rights – and gender performance of Israel. This chapter serves the purpose of a contextualisation for a following analysis of two interfaith initiatives in Israel in chapter 9. The first section of this chapter provides background information regarding the political situation in Israel. Moreover, it sheds light on the potential influence of the conflict situation and religion on the status of women in Israel. The second part of this chapter applies Nussbaum's 'capability approach' to evaluate Israel's public policy in meeting human, especially women's 'capabilities'. Thus, it illustrates potential factors that empower the emergence of female interfaith initiatives in Israel. In light of the influence of religion on Israel's legal and political structure, the following 'capabilities' will be analysed by using statistical data and indices: 'bodily health, and integrity' ('right to life and health'); 'bodily integrity'; 'control over one's environment' ('right to political participation'); 'senses, imagination, thought' ('free religious exercise and educational right'); 'family law' and 'play'.

8.1.   Background

8.1.1.   Israel, Conflict and Women

Jews increasingly immigrated to Palestine in the aftermath of the Second World War (Elath and Stone 2019). The state of Israel's was establishment in May 1948 with the capital city of Jerusalem. However, the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital city is received controversially on the international level (Elath and Stone 2019). During the Six Days War in June 1967, Israel occupied several parts of Palestine (Halperin-Kaddari and Yadgar, 2010:10), to which this work will be refer to as the 'occupied territories'. In its basic law Israel defines itself as a Jewish democratic state established for Jewish people (Halperin-Kaddari and Yadgar, 2010:3). Despite efforts to find a solution to the conflict, also from sides of the UN, the conflict between Israel and Palestine is on-going (Halperin-Kaddari and Yadgar, 2010:45; Elath and Stone 2019). To

contribute to a better understanding for the following chapters it is important to be familiar with the term of the second Intifada, as the female interfaith initiatives in Israel often refer to this event. The second Intifada, also referred to as the second Palestinian uprising, started in 2000 and lasted until 2005. It was characterized by intensive violence between Israelis and Palestinians (Brym and Araj 2019).

Considering conflict as another factor that impacts the status of women in a society, it is also important to look at the status of women within the peace process in Israel. Even through Israel has recognised the SCR 1325 in 2000, it has not yet adopted a national action plan to implement the SC Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security' (Women's International League of Peace and Freedom 019). When looking at the Women's Participation in Peace Processes index, it becomes transparent, that 25% of negotiators and 25% of mediators were women within the official roles of women in the peace talks in 2013 (Council on Foreign Relations 2019).

8.1.2. Israel and Religion and Women

The UN Research Institute for Social Development found, that Israel, even though it self-identifies as secular, is a non-secular state regarding its judicial and political system (Halperin-Kaddari and Yadgar, 2010:3,4). Israel scores in the religious diversity with 4.5 (Pew Research Centre 2019). According to the score level (which ranges from 0 (low) to 9.5 (very high)), Israel has a "moderate" religious diversity. In a global comparison Israel belongs to 20% of the world's countries with a moderate religious diversity (a country with moderate religious diversity is characterized by 70-85% of the population belonging to the dominant religion). More specifically, 75.6% out of the total population is Jewish affiliated, 18,6% Muslim, 2% are Christian and only 3,1% are unaffiliated (Pew Research Centre 2019). Currently, Armenian Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Baha'i, Chaldaic (Catholic), Druze, Evangelical Episcopal (Anglican), Jewish, Maronite, Muslim, Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Latin (Roman Catholic), Syrian Catholic and Syrian Orthodox, are officially recognized as religions by Israel and are granted the jurisdiction over personal status of people belonging to their communities (UN, Human Rights Council 2009:4). The influence of religion on Israel's society can be illustrated with the following statement of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion: "the State of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory are home to a rich diversity of religions or beliefs […] this very diversity, which should have been a blessing, tragically has polarised people on the lines of religion" (UN, Human Rights Council 2009).

Additionally, UN Women found, that religion also influences (hinders) the implementation of articles stated in the CEDAW Convention, which Israel ratified in 1991 (Women's International League of Peace and Freedom 2019; UN, CEDAW 2011). This may proof the scholarly argument, that women living under religious laws have limited individual rights (Winter 2006, 381-393:384). Evidence for this argumentation line can also be found in Nussbaum's research finding. Nussbaum, who explored the influence of religion on women's 'capabilities' in Israel and five other countries, identified that religion limits women's 'central human functional capabilities' (Nussbaum 1999:84). She identified women's right to life, health, bodily integrity, employment, mobility, assembly, political participation and speech, free religious exercise, property, civil capacity, nationality, family law, education rights and women's reproductive rights as to some extend limited for women in religious contexts (Nussbaum 1999:82). In contrast to Nussbaum's findings, other scholars argue that religion and culture are not just oppressing women but also giving them a platform on which they can resist and seek empowerment to achieve personal and relational change (Winter 2006, 381-393:381). The finding (chapter 5.1.1.), that the women's marginalisation within and outside religious structures functioned as the driving force for the creation of two female interfaith initiatives proves both argumentations right.

8.2.   Case Study Israel: Performance on "Human Capabilities"

8.2.1.   "Bodily Health, and Integrity" or the "Right to Life and Health"

Firstly, looking at the 'bodily health, and integrity capability' (Nussbaum 1999:41), Nussbaum states, that in a religious context, women's rights to life and health are sometimes threatened. For example, women suffer unequally from hunger and malnutrition and from unequal access to basic health care (Nussbaum 1999:88). Moreover, the 'capability' of "bodily health, and integrity" also refers to reproductive rights, which women are often deprived of in religious systems, according to Nussbaum (Nussbaum 1999:101,102). Regarding the 'right to life and health' the CEDAW – Committee notes, that women living in the 'occupied territories' and "Palestinian female prisoners, including pregnant prisoners", are often restricted of their right to health (UN, CEDAW 2011) due to the restricted liberty of movement, through the existing system of permits, visas, checkpoints and the barrier (UN, Human Rights Council 2009).

8.2.2.   "Bodily Integrity"

The right to bodily integrity consists of: moving free from place to place (Nussbaum 1999:41), domestic violence, sexual abuse, genital mutilation (Nussbaum 1999:90), "having opportunities for sexual satisfaction" (Nussbaum 1999:41). The CEDAW committee identifies women belonging to the minority communities as the main object of domestic violence and suggests a training in this matter for all governmental figures (UN, CEDAW 2011).

8.2.3.   "Control over one's Environment" or the "Right to Political Participation"

The 'capability' of "control over one's environment", implies not only political control, but also material control (Nussbaum 1999:41). According to that 'central human functional capability', every human being should be able to participate effectively in political choices, to speak freely and associate (Nussbaum 1999:41). By discussing different nations that are governed by religious laws, Nussbaum seeks out, that these rights are curtailed for women and that they often suppress women's speech about women's issues in a discriminatory way (Nussbaum 1999:95).

Regarding the "gap between men and women at the highest level of political decision-making", the Global Gender Gap Report 2018 ranks Israel at number 48 out of 149 examined countries (World Economic Forum 2018:4,133). Looking at the OECD International Development Statistics about Gender, Institutions and Development and thereby focusing on the component of women in politics, we can notice, that the percentage of women parliamentarians in Israel in 2017 was 27.5 % and the percentage of women ministers was 19 % (OECD 2019). The same index points to Israel's lack of laws that guarantee women's political participation (OECD 2019).

Material control refers to: being able to hold property and having the right to seek employment (Nussbaum 1999:41), to non-discrimination in hiring, and to equal pay for work of equal value. According to the HDR, 59.3% of the female population older than 15 years in 2017 in Israel is participating in labour force (UN, Development Programme 2017). Compared to that only 15.4 % of Palestinian -, 34.9 % of Ashkenazi- and 29.8 % of Mizrahim - women are listed as having full-time employment (Cockburn 2014, 430-447:434). Moreover, the average income of women is listed as 63 % of the average income of men across the country (UN, CEDAW 2011).

This statistical data correlates with Nussbaum's finding, that "Women's efforts to seek and retain employment outside the home" are often limited in religious contexts (Nussbaum 1999:93).

8.2.4.   'Senses, Imagination, Thought' or 'Free Religious Exercise and Educational Right'

The 'central human functional capability' of 'senses, imagination, thought' often fails to be fully realised in religious contexts in two ways (Nussbaum 1999:41): the right to free religious exercise, like conversion or the choice to be non-religious (Nussbaum 1999:96) as well as educational rights are partly immitted for women due to religious discourse (Nussbaum 1999:100). The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief notes, that the conflict and the resulting division between the religious communities in Israel has a negative impact on the right of individuals and communities to worship freely and to attend religious services at their respective holy places (UN, Human Rights Council 2009). The intersection of the violation on the freedom of religion with the violation of women's rights, is visible when looking at the Government's refusal to appoint female judges to religious courts and religious laws on personal status matters (UN, Human Rights Council 2009). In matters of "educational attainment", the Global Gender Gap report ranks Israel at number one out of 149 countries (World Economic Forum 2018:133). Means that, according to the Global Gender Gap report 2018, Israel has the biggest "gap between women's and men's currents access to education" (World Economic Forum 2018:4). In contrast to the United Nations Development Programme, HDR shows, that in Israel 87.8 % of the female population with 25 years and older have at least some secondary education (UN, Development Programme 2017). The CEDAW committee states that one of the reasons for the low number of women attaining education, is, as stated above, the restriction of the freedom of movement (UN, CEDAW 2011).

8.2.5.   Family Law

To further assess the quality of life for women in Israel, which, as a Jewish state is governed by Orthodox Jewish law (Blanch 2012, 30-59:1), the equal status of women before the law concerning property rights, right to enter into contracts, marriage, divorce and their treatment before the court and tribunals has to be taken into account (Nussbaum 1999:97). The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) of the OECD covers five dimensions of discriminatory social institutions. It evaluates the "discriminatory family code" by looking at the percentage

of women married between 15 and 19 years, the parental authority after divorce and the legal age of marriage. The index ranks Israel's performance in 2014 with a score of 0.12. According to the coding manual a score between 0 and 0.24 indicates that the legal framework does not discriminate against women's rights (OECD 2014). This is opposed to real facts, as more than 250,000 Israeli citizens and residents who do not belong to any of the recognized religions, are currently blocked from marrying in Israel and declared as unmarriageable according to Jewish law (UN, Human Rights Council 2009:7). Furthermore, communities governed by different religious courts (Blanch 2012, 30-59), face discrimination in their right to family reunification and intergroup marriage (Cockburn 2014, 430-447:434). This correlates with Nussbaum's finding, that religious norms and laws have a direct influence on women's inequality in their family law (Nussbaum 1999:98).

8.2.6. "Play"

Adding Nussbaum's 'capability' 'play', to evaluate how Israel's policy guarantees its citizens to be "able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities" (Nussbaum 1999:42), data from the Happiness Index was used. Concerning the general ranking of happiness between 2016-2018, Israel reached number 13 within 156 countries. Within the several pillars of the Happiness Index, the positive affect, which measures happiness, laughter, and enjoyment ranks Israel at number 104. Data counting freedom to make life choices scores Israel 93 (Helliwell, Layard & Sachs 2019). The latter dimension can be seen as referring to the 'central human functional capability' of 'practical reasoning', which entails the liberty of conscience (Nussbaum 1999:41).

8.2.7. Evaluation

The previous paragraphs provide index-based data on how Israel warrants women their equal right to health, security concerning domestic violence, political participation and their right to education and work. Furthermore, it has shown data on how Israel guarantees women their freedom of movement and religion or belief, their "status before the law regarding nationality and family law" and how Israel fulfils women's rights concerning their 'freedom of conscience'. Originally it was envisaged to include the 'central human functional capability' of 'affiliation' in the evaluation of Israel's performance, which includes assembly rights (Nussbaum 1999:94,95). This would have allowed to evaluate to which extent women, in this case female interfaith initiatives are granted their right to assemble. However, reviewing

indices, statistics and CEDAW reports, nothing was found regarding women's freedom to assemble and associate in Israel. Moreover, the indices and statistics lacked an evaluation of the status of Israeli women regarding reproductive rights and their right to nationality, which in the case of this work would be extremely interesting.

Analysing Israel's performance with regards to gender equality, demonstrated, that women in Israel are exceedingly affected by several layers of inequality based on their nationality, ethnicity and religious affiliation. Besides Bedouin women's disadvantaged position regarding basic human needs like access to water, health, housing and education (UN, CEDAW 2011), the CEDAW Committee also mentions other disadvantaged groups of women including "Palestinian female prisoners, female migrant workers, asylum-seeking women, refugee women, internally displaced women, stateless women and older women" (UN, CEDAW 2011).

Moreover, the interconnectedness of human rights, or 'human capabilities', described by Nussbaum, gets visible when looking at the influence of the restriction of movement form women in Israel on their 'right to work', 'right to education' and 'right to health'. Nussbaum describes this correlative and interactive character of human rights and "human capabilities" as constituting a total system of liberties and opportunities (Nussbaum 1999:103).

8.3.   Concluding Remarks - What does the Gathered Data imply for the Emergence of Female Interfaith Initiatives?

The restricted liberty of movement was found to deprive women from enjoying their 'capability' of 'bodily health, and integrity' as well as their educational rights. This may pose a challenge for women to join interfaith initiatives, as they would need to cross checkpoints to attend the initiatives' gatherings. On the other hand, it may be an empowering factor for interfaith initiatives to overcome these barriers and to strive for unification across borders.

Evaluating, how Israel guarantees women their 'capability' of 'control over one's environment', illustrated a relatively high gender pay gap as well as a high unemployment rate for women. This finding confirms the importance that women interfaith initiatives (like Anuar and Women Reborn – see table 2 in chapter 9) are trying to improve the economic independence (Women Reborn), and the equal treatment in the workplace (Anuar) especially for women from the 'occupied territories'.

It has been identified that Israel's policy does not properly guarantee the 'capability' of 'senses, imagination, thought'. The finding, that people are deprived of their right to free religious exercise and the freedom to attend religious services in Israel, shows the importance of creating interfaith initiatives as a compensation for the deprivation.

Moreover, the fact that people with different religious backgrounds face obstacles in family reunification and intergroup marriage (as each group is governed by their own courts), increases the importance to establish interfaith – based collaboration.

Regarding the 'capability' 'play', it has been found, that Israel guarantees a high liberty of conscience, in a sense of freedom to make life choices. This definitely increases the ability of women to join interfaith initiatives.

9. Is Israel Heading Towards a 'Culture of Interfaith Peace'?

This chapter will first outline the process of searching for female interfaith initiatives working for peace in Israel-Palestine. After the section which analyses the results, a table is stated which lists main characteristics of five identified women interfaith initiatives working in Israel. The subchapter following the table focuses on the analysis of Anuar and the Women's Interfaith Encounter (WIE). These two initiatives are serving as samples for an analysis based on four factors that ultimately lead to a 'culture of peace'. In relation to that, Israel's female interfaith initiatives will be analysed regarding their visibility, their involvement in a public peace process, their engagement in peace education and their inclusion in the official peace process (Boulding 2001, 55-59:56; Boulding 2000). The comparison is based on data gained through qualitative interviews with both initiatives.

9.1. Sketching Israel's Women's Interfaith Scene - Selecting Samples

The process of searching for women interfaith initiatives in Israel demonstrated the remarkably high presence of interfaith organisations in Israel and Palestine working for peace. In total, 21

interfaith initiatives working for peace in Israel and Palestine could be identified. Sixteen out of 21 initiatives turned out to be either mixed sex, predominantly composed by men, directed towards the youth or focused on activities not specifically dedicated to peace (the lists of identified interfaith initiatives working for peace in Israel and Palestine are available here: Alliance for Middle East Peace 2016; UNICEF 2019).

For the selection of samples for the case study, the same database and websites have been used, as for the selection of samples of female interfaith initiatives active in different geographical areas (described in the methodological part of this work). Using the categories: Interfaith – Women – Israel – Peace the database of the Pluralism Project of the Harvard University, the UNICEF database, the Directory of the Parliament of the World's Religions and the Interfaith Voices for Peace & Justice network did not list any results. The database of the United Religious Initiative lists five - and the Alliance for Middle East Peace (Alliance for Middle East Peace 2016) two women interfaith initiatives. Additional search brought forth two further female interfaith initiatives. Within ten identified female interfaith initiatives, the following five women interfaith initiatives coincided with the set criteria: Women's Interfaith Encounter (WIE), Women Reborn, MADA (Horizon), Trust Women Interfaith Network (Trust WIN) and Anuar.

The next section focuses on the analysis of Anuar and the Women's Interfaith Encounter. The other three initiatives are serving the purpose of giving a more holistic viewpoint of the main characteristic of female interfaith initiatives in Israel in Table 2.

Table 2: Presentation of female interfaith initiatives in Israel

Name / Categories	WIE	Women Reborn	MADA (Horizon)	TRUST WIN	Anuar
Geographical location	Jerusalem, Israel	Fureidis, Israel	Daliat Ha Carmel, Israel	Jerusalem, Israel	Michmoret, Israel
Year of arousal	2002	2008	2010	2007	2002
Reason for creation	Second Intifada, 9/11	Second Intifada			Second Intifada
Level of operation	1. National (has 101 groups) 2. International	National	National	1. National 2. Regional (MENA) 3. International	National (Israel in different places, such as Shefayim, Kalansua, Ar'ara Pki'in, Herzliya, Nazareth,
Religious affiliation	Muslim, Christian, Druze and Jewish	Muslim, Christian, Spiritual, Jewish, Druze	Christian, Muslim, Spiritual, Druze, Jewish	Muslim, Spiritual, Jewish, Christian, Druze, Sufi	Jewish - and Muslim - women
Approximate number of participants	2000 people participating every year	Approximately 1,500 women have joined the events in total	50	10	100 to 150 participants per event
Scope of objectives	1. To discuss important topics for women from different the viewpoint of different religions 2. To empower women	1. To assist women to get economically independent 2. To work as a network which supports Palestinian women 3. To empower and women to become leaders who could expand the Women Reborn to further places	1. To cultivate harmony between religious groups 2. To strengthen connections between women	1. To educate, lead dialogue, and activities that promote non-violence, re-conciliation, healing, and love.	1. To socially engage for equality for women (with focus on equality in family, workplace and politics) 2. To build a framework for the creation of friendships 3. To increase awareness about current socio-political issues, (especially concerning the disproportional suffering of Israeli-Arab women) 4. To encourage women to stand up gender equality.

9.2. The 'Peaceableness' of Israel's Female Interfaith Initiatives

This chapter will analyse women interfaith initiatives in Israel regarding the following four categories (explained in detail in chapter 3.1): Their involvement in a public peace process, their visibility, their engagement in peace education (Boulding 2001, 55-59:56,57; Boulding 2000) and their inclusion in the official peace process. The analysed organisations are: Anuar and the Women's Interfaith Encounter. WIE is a branch of the Interfaith Encounter Association which has in total established 101 groups throughout Israel and the 'occupied territories'. Anuar, is a sub initiative of the Israeli Movement for Equal Representation of Women (SHIN) which also established Women Reborn. The information of both initiatives is based on data gained through qualitative interviews.

9.2.1. Public Peace Process

According to the UNGA's and Boulding's definition, a 'culture of peace' is "a set of peaceful attitudes and values" (Zaragoza 2011:85). In order to achieve this set of values, old violent patterns have to be transformed, though mobilizing a public peace process to change existing perceptions of one another (Boulding 2001, 55-59:56). A public peace process, to transform people's attitudes, involves 'public conversations", such as intergroup dialogue (Boulding 2017:127) and the engagement in cooperative activities with one another (Boulding 2017:44, Zaragoza 2011:85; De Rivera 2008:234). By enabling participants to gain new understandings of each other's viewpoint, developing relationships and communication, a public peace process tackles one of the root causes of conflicts, namely wrong perceptions (De Rivera 2008:260). Based on the mentioned criteria for engaging in a public peace process, the following section will analyse the underlying aim of the initiatives concerning challenging stereotypes. Moreover, the activities that Anuar and WIE utilise to tackle existing perceptions will be explored.

Aiming at Tackling Existing Paradigms?

Both initiatives analysed here use interfaith dialogue as their strategy to engage in a public peace process. The Women's Interfaith Encounter concentrates on a specific "new" type of interfaith dialogue, which is, in contrast to the other one, directed towards building bridges between people (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:2). Anuar, according to the words of its facilitator, uses interfaith collaboration as their foundation for all activities (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:1,19). The initiative's underlying aim, which correlates with what

Boulding calls "changing existing perceptions", focuses on the establishment of personal relationships through interaction (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:68-69), the discussion of and the process of becoming aware of one's own stereotypes (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:3). WIE tries to tackle existing perceptions by creating encounters for people from different communities. In this process, states the director, participants can uproot their prejudice against each other through gaining new experiences (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:2,3). Moreover, the initiatives rely on the perception, that interfaith dialogue takes conversation to a level, where it exposes all similarities and enables the building of friendships (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:3). This section clearly demonstrated that the underlying aim of Anuar and WIE is to tackle existing stereotypes.

Interfaith Dialogue and other (Feminist) Activities

WIE's groups and communities are organising several different activities, including interfaith based dialogue, social activities (like collecting and delivering food to poor people) or panel discussions "to educate people" (these are also characteristic of collaborative interfaith dialogue) (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:9). Despite, WIE's focus remains on building and maintaining a community and establishing connections by using interfaith conversation (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:9). Women participating in Anuar celebrate holidays of their religions together, have weekend trips and undertake other social activities (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:2). Additionally, Anuar offers monthly forums with panel discussions on issues of public interest. The panels are always composed of Jewish and Arab women and set in both languages (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:1). The discussions address for example shared custody for children, racism, struggle against pornography in Israel and stereotypes (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:3,5). Furthermore, the respondent representing Anuar emphasized the feminist character of their work. Hertzog situates Anuar within the feminist movement, defines the issues discussed within the sessions as feminist issues and perceives their activities as feminist activities (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:4).

Based on the activities in which both initiatives are involved, it can be stated, that both are engaged in cognitive dialogue and collaborative dialogue. This conclusion can be drawn, as both initiatives want to understand each other's religious community' and worldviews, which is a characteristic of cognitive dialogue (Ingram 2013:376-393:377). The evidence for the initiatives engagement in collaborative dialogue is their involvement in social activities and their interest in improving social problems. Literature defines cognitive dialogue as a

precondition for collaborative dialogue. Following that, the initiatives discussions on common topics of concern can be seen as a preparation for their engagement in a collaborative dialogue.

Anuar's focus on feminism, as stated in the interview stands in contrast to the often-assumed binary distinction between feminism as secular and religion as oppressive, which can be found in discussions concerning "religion, secularism and gender equality" (Nyhagen, L. 2019:2; Furseth and Repstad 2017:180). Anuar's self-identification as interfaith and feminist at the same time, correlates with critical voices, that obtain the distinction between western – secular feminist versus religious non-feminist women. Their argument is, that both, religious - and secular women can identify as feminists and both, religion and secularism have the capacity to support gender inequality and equality (Nyhagen, L. 2019: 2,3). Thus, on the example of Anuar, it can be seen, that religion, feminisms and the fight for equality can be combined. Women Reborn, one of the five female interfaith initiative in Israel listed in the table above, "developed implicitly on a feminist model" (Blanch 2012, 30-59:5). According to research done on Women Reborn, the initiatives mostly reveals a secular status to the public. Exploring the reason, the study concluded, that, according to Women Reborn, the identification as "Western" and "secular," would lead to more success of the program, as many people hold anti – Islamic/religious positions (Blanch 2012, 30-59:5). By outlining the main activities of both initiatives, this section has highlighted that interfaith dialogue doesn't have to be separate from feminist associations, as often assumed.

The Challenging Environment

Hindrances that both initiatives face in the course of performing their activities, besides working in a conflict setting, are the lack of funds and the checkpoints, which are especially difficult to cross for Arab women (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:2,8). Another challenge, reported by Stolov, are moments when people start to talk about politics during the gatherings and thereby strongly disagree with each other. Nonetheless, the number of groups and encounters increased and became more regular (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:2,3). When asking the founder of WIE about their success factor, she answered: "persistence, persistence". In a self-evaluation, both respondents state, that their work successfully contributes to change existing stereotypes and attitudes (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:3).

Having evaluated the initiatives attempt to tackle stereotypes and their engagement in several "public conversations" it can be concluded, that Anuar and WIE are engaged in a public peace

process. The findings in the previous paragraphs provide evidence for the classification of interfaith-based peacebuilding within interactive conflict resolution efforts from the side of PACS. According to the scholarly definition, interactive – and interfaith - conflict resolution, is characterized by interactions striving to achieve individual attitude change (Fisher 1997:7,8) and clarify misunderstandings to create mutual understanding through listening and sharing (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149-167:152).

9.2.2.   Visibility

Boulding views women as having a remarkable hidden history in the private sphere (Boulding 2000:1852), she recommends women to demonstrate publicly what they are doing for peace (Boulding 2001, 55-59:56). This involves an increased visibility. Firstly, on the personal level, by creating informal networks and thus making women visible to one another, secondly on the national and thirdly on the international level (Boulding 2001, 55-59:57). Based on Boulding's recommendations, the following section will illustrate the amount of people that the initiatives reach and the personal motives of the participants to join the offered events of the initiatives'. The second paragraph analyses objectives and strategies of the initiatives to gain political and media visibility. Thereby the initiatives' hindrances in the process of achieving visibility will be outlined. The last paragraph of this section investigates in the visibility of the initiatives' on the national and international level by exploring national and international cooperation's.

In total, the Interfaith Encounter Association, which includes WIE, has around fourteen hundred people participating on a regular basis and 2000 people participating every year (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:3). In contrast to that, Anuar hosts 100 to 150 people per event (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:3). Until 2019 Anuar has organised 100 sessions (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:1). Both initiatives mention, that most people first attend the initiatives program out of curiosity of the topics discussed or with the wish to improve the situation (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:6; Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:3). Another decisive factor is the opportunity to meet someone of the other community, as this is, according to Stolov, normally not easy in a segregated society (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:6). Another commonality is, that people in both cases mostly get to know about the existence of the organisation via social media (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:4).

<u>Ensuring Visibility?</u>

The executive director of WIE notes, that the amount of new people attending their events depends on their media visibility. Regarding this, both initiatives report, that media is not interested in what they are doing (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:4). Anuar even reports, that media sometimes degraded and "belittled" their activities, especially when they targeted topics in their discussions related to the unequal status of women (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:5). On the other hand, the facilitator of Anuar mentions, that Arab news are very interested and publish their activities (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:4). As some participants, especially Palestinians, might be under the radar of "anti-normalization" people, WIE tries to adhere to data protection and thus does not publish names and photos in order to secure personal visibility of the individual interfaith participant (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:4,5).

According to Stolov, WIE, tries to avoid political topics and defies itself as apolitical (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:3) Despite the pretended apolitical character, the initiative invites people from all over the "political spectrum" (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:3) and took several attempts to engage in dialogue with politicians. The major challenge they faced when trying to get involved with politicians was, that: "in the Israeli parliament one Muslim parliament member opposed against the group work" (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:4). Anuar, on the other hand, does not deny the wish to get involved in the political sphere. The initiative regularly tries to publish their position on actual socio - political events (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:5). Even thought, WIE self - identify as apolitical, the following words illustrate that: "Whatever you say reverberates, whatever you don't say speaks for itself. So, either way you're talking politics." (Baranczak 2019).

Both initiatives are holding high aspirations: The Women's Interfaith Encounter wishes to reach change on a macro level and thus to include 5 to 10% of the total population of Israel in its groups (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:7). The facilitator of Anuar emphasises the wish to reach equality for women. She hopes: "that it will bring another way of thinking, another way of running things of doing things and so on" (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:9).

<u>National and international cooperations</u>

The table in the beginning of this chapter shows, that several interfaith initiatives are networked throughout the country with other faith-based-institutes or organisations (see table above).

However, trying to network nationally with women of the 'occupied territories' poses many challenges for Anuar. According to Hertzog, international cooperation's are easier to establish (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:9). Thus, both initiatives cooperate on an international level: The Women's Interfaith Encounter has established two subgroups in the US and one in Kenya (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:7). Anuar holds skype sessions with women's groups in Ohio, gets support from the US Embassy in Jerusalem (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:9) and funding's from a German foundation (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:3). The outstanding high cooperation of interfaith initiatives in Israel with the US has also been noticed by previous studies (Khan 2010, 51-55; Abu-Nimer 2004, 491-511).

Moreover, the director of WIE states that sometimes lessons at international interfaith conferences, can be drawn for the local level (Questionnaire 29.05.2019S:7). When it comes to the connections with the UN, both initiatives seem to negate the influence of the UN International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence and the UNESCO International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures, which both call for interfaith dialogue. However, when looking at their homepage it can be seen, that WIE, including the IEA was awarded by the UNESCO for its contribution to the 'culture of peace' (IEA 2019).

The last sectioned allowed the insight, that both initiatives target a large audience via social media. Moreover, it illustrated, that both initiatives achieve an increase of visibility on a inter-personal level, as women from different religious communities get to know one another. Regarding the media and political visibility of both initiatives, mixed findings have been made: Even though both initiatives receive low media attention, most participants were first attracted by their social media presence. Regarding their networking on a national and international level with other women's initiatives, which were further success factors as defined by Boulding, both initiatives have been found as having several connections on both levels.

9.2.3. Peace Education

Boulding suggests, that all forms of peace-making programs and peace education should be intensified (Boulding 2001, 55-59:56). According to her, this involves training and education in peer mediation, conflict resolution and other peacebuilding skills (Boulding 2001, 55-59:56). Taking this into consideration, the following section asks, "To what extend is the education and training of specific peacebuilding skills part of the organisational programme of Anuar and WIE?" The findings will be presented in the light of existing sociological and PACS theories.

Religion and Interfaith as a Tool for Building Peace

The scholarly discussion whether religion promotes social unity or becomes part of a societies fundamental conflict is characterised by two major contradicting positions (Furseth and Repstad 2017:109). On the one hand, sociologists like Ernst Haas argue that, religion secures social cohesion and that religion as an institution of integration functions as a unifying factor of different social classes and ethnic groups (Furseth and Repstad 2017:151,153). Scholars advocating for this position argue, that religion offers guidance for peace and harmony and can create neutral spaces for people from different religious backgrounds to share ideas (Furseth and Repstad 2017:164). This point of view correlates with the empirical finding, that Anuar and WIE view religion as unifying and harmonizing and thus as a tool to build peace. In contrast to that, one has to bear in mind, that religion is also utilised to legitimate violence and triggering social conflicts (Furseth and Repstad 2017:163).

On the other hand, neither WIE nor Anuar have mentioned whether they perceive a special peace character inherent in their initiatives due to the fact of being composed by women. The viewpoint, that women are more oriented towards peace and are more cooperative in negotiations than man, is discussed within the debate on the WPH (Maoz 2012, Caprioli and Boyer 2001, Brounéus 2014, 125-151:128). Voices from the sides of PACS argue, that most empirical testing's on the WPH are limited to individuals and their attitudes towards war on the interstate level in non-war regions (Brounéus 2014, 125-151:125; Aharoni 2017, 311-326:311). Regarding the lack of empirical validation on the WPH on groups and conflict zones, it is hypothetically speaking not possible to argue for a special peace character inherent in female interfaith initiatives.

Additionally, both initiatives view interfaith dialogue as peacebuilding tools. Both interviewees drew a line between the initiatives' (Anuar's and WIE's) approach to building peace and other conventional peacebuilding approaches. The executive director of WIE, perceives religion and interfaith dialogue as a peacebuilding tool and bridge builder, as it enables people from all parts of society to participate. The initiative sees its approach to peacebuilding as opposed to secular approaches, which ignore the influence of religion (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:7). Moreover, they declare, that their strategy is not to educate participants but to let them experience and learn how to build peace on their own (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019S:5).

In literature, several peacebuilding methods used by religious peacebuilders are discussed, like non-violent activism, mediation, education, grassroots democracy, reconciliation to combat conflicts (Fletcher 2017, 11-26:18). WIE, mentions religion and interfaith dialogue in itself as their peacebuilding tools (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:7). This correlates with previous research which found deficits in the adaption of peacebuilding tools of faith-based peacebuilding actors (Abu-Nimer 2015, 13-29:17). Nevertheless, from the perspective of PACS, the reduction of stereotypes and the establishment of connection between the communities as practiced by both Israeli initiatives can be seen as an act of reconciliation (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149-167:151). Interfaith dialogue as a tool for reconciliation, offers the building of trust through mutual understanding and the transformation of stereotypes and enemy images (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149-167:151). Literature based explanations on interfaith dialogue as peacebuilding tools, imply, that reconciliation has its source in religious traditions (Sampson 2007, 273-323:276), as religious rituals, values, principles and symbols offer healing and forgiveness (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149-167:152). As PACS situates interactive conflict resolution mechanisms (which encompasses interfaith peacebuilding) and reconciliation efforts within the domain of peacebuilding, it can be concluded that the two initiatives under investigation are operating within the domain of peacebuilding. In contrast to the other approaches to resolve conflict (peace-making and peacekeeping), peacebuilding aims at tackling the root causes of conflicts (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 149-167:151).

Referring to the question asked in the beginning of this subchapter, it was found that WIE and Anuar do not incorporate the education of conventional peacebuilding tools in their organisational programme but apply a different approach towards peacebuilding. The approach of both initiatives is rather learning by doing than educating. According to their notions, religion and interfaith dialogue themselves serve as tools for building peace.

9.2.4. 'Track-one Diplomacy': Official Peace Negotiations

Building on many evaluations of peace processes and the findings of the Global Study on the Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 (UN, Women 2015) it is known that it is essential to ensure effective participation of women in peace processes. Several scholars found, that without women's participation at the negotiation table, it is unlikely to change existing power structures of genders and thus reaching a 'culture of peace' (Kaufman and Williams 2010:107). Considering these scientific findings, the following subchapter explores to what extend Anuar and WIE are engaged in the official peace process regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Furthermore, it explores the objectives of the initiatives regarding their active participation in the peace process. In a next step, this subchapter will shed light on the main challenges the initiatives face to enter the official peace process. The last part of this section provides literature-based reasons for - and evidence of the marginalization of women and faith-based peace actors within peacebuilding processes.

‘One-Track Minded’ Versus ‘Multi-Track’ - Inclusive Peace Process

In the interviews, the representatives of Anuar and WIE, emphasised a difference between their own and the conventional definition of active involvement in a peace process. Following the perception of Stolov, WIE is actively taking part in Israel's peace process in the form of an intercommunal peace process. According to her, an intercommunal peace process functions as the precondition for achieving a "political peace process" (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:5). The major difference between the political - and the intercommunal peace process is, that an intercommunal peace process aims at establishing a "human infrastructure which offers a fundament for sustainable, long lasting peace" (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:5). The facilitator of Anuar views the main difference between the initiatives and the political peace efforts in the 'one-track mindedness' of the official peace process (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:6). Thus, she perceives most peace activists as being ignorant about social problems (like poverty or disadvantaged groups like single parents) (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:6). Anuar is doing its best to compensate for this blind spot (Interview with Hertzog 29.05.2019:6). Similar to Anuar, the executive director of WIE evaluates the governmental peace work and agreements, as leaving out different groups of society (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:5).

As stated above, findings have shown, that "sustainable and just peace is a holistic endeavour that includes multiple actors, activities and institutions at multiple levels working towards peaceful nonviolent transformation" (Reimer and others 2015:foreword). Thus, it can be recognised, that the strategy of the interfaith initiatives aims at creating a more inclusive peace process. This finding supports the academic categorization of interfaith dialogue within 'track-two diplomacy' or 'multi-track diplomacy' (Fisher 1997:118). Moreover, the finding indicates, that Anuar and WIE, like the initiatives explored in chapter 5 and 6 are applying a 'bottom-up' approach to build peace. The 'bottom-up' approach to peace building can be explained as peace building on the grassroots-level, which tackles the root causes of conflicts (Knitter 2013, 117-132:146).

Exclusive Peace Process

The Women's Interfaith Encounter wants to take part in the official negotiations to "give people the attention they deserve". However, the initiative faces two obstacles. The director of WIE perceives the lack of one unified opinion on issues, which are negotiated in the peace process, as the major challenge. This obstacle arises due to the fact that WIE is composed of people from all parts of society, including different religious and cultural backgrounds (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:6). Another crucial hindrance is the lack of connections to politicians, so Stolov, which could help WIE to get included in the peace negotiations (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019S:6). The strategy of WIE to overcome this challenge lies in enhancing popularity and showcasing the effectiveness of their work (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019:5).

Implications in literature show, that the peace negotiations in Israel remain secular, despite the fact, that religion influenced the Israel-Palestine conflict. Authors have highlighted the neglection and marginalization of faith-based peacebuilders within Israel's and Palestine's peace negotiations (Abu-Nimer 2004, 491-511:492; Hayward 2012, 1-10:8). This correlates with the discussion on the general exclusion of religious peacebuilding within mainstream peacebuilding (Abu-Nimer 2015, 13-29). One study, examining interreligious peacebuilding efforts in Israeli and Palestinian concluded, that the reason for their "isolation" is the lack of training of interfaith-based actors on skills and strategies to combat the Israel-Palestine conflict (Abu-Nimer 2015, 13-29:25). Further reasons for the marginalisation of faith-based actors are the lack of evaluation (Abu-Nimer 2015, 13-29:17,18) and the lack of media coverage (Abu-Nimer 2015, 13-29:23).

Interestingly, none of the initiatives mentioned their status as being a women's organisation as a driving factor for being excluded within the peace process. Given the scientifically often exposed exclusion of women in peace processes, it may seem obvious that being composed of women poses an additional obstacle for Anuar and WIE to participate in official negotiations.

Investigating in the initiatives' engagement in official peace processes made visible, that both initiatives' differ in their peace efforts from the peace efforts of the government. According to them, the official peace process ignores specific societal groups and several social problems. Regarding the aim of Anuar to fill the gaps, which the official peace process ignores, the second part of this chapter underlines that their approach strives for more inclusivity. In the third

section, the lack of connections and the lack of unified opinions have been identified as the main challenges for WIE to enter into official negotiations. The lack of training in peace building skills and the lack of evaluation and media coverage have been found as reasons for the exclusion of faith-based actors in diverse peace building processes.

9.2.5.   How 'Peaceable' are the Initiatives'?

In her works, Boulding described different 'peaceable' attitudes and values that consequently lead to 'culture of peace' (Reber-Rider 2008, 73-88:81). In relation to that, she also identified interfaith dialogue as having a 'peaceable' character which increases the potential for the creation of a 'culture of peace'. This chapter found empirical evidence for Boulding's characterization of interfaith dialogue as 'peaceable'. The 'peaceableness' of interfaith dialogue in Israel manifests itself especially in its potential to build bridges between communities divided by religion.

9.2.6.   Concluding Remarks

This chapter investigated how two female interfaith initiatives in Israel perform on four suggestions, defined by Boulding, that should ultimately lead to a 'culture of peace'. Besides the results of the analysis of the performance of the initiatives on the four given categories, additional conclusions were drawn throughout this chapter.

Based on the findings of the first subchapter, it can be stated, that Anuar and the Women's Interfaith Encounter fulfil the success factor of mobilizing a public peace process, as both initiatives want to achieve the reduction of stereotypes through their actions.

Regarding the second category of comparison (visibility), it has been found, that both initiatives are frequently present in social media (like Facebook), whereas they face challenges with achieving media attention. WIE was found to avoid talking about politics even though searching for cooperation with politicians, while Anuar is actively trying to get involved in socio-political discussions by publishing their positions on actual happenings. Despite the challenges that Anuar faces in reaching women in the 'occupied territories', both initiatives show several cooperations at the international level.

The investigation on the initiative's performance on the third success factor that leads to a 'culture of peace' (peace education) showed, that Anuar and WIE do not educate or train their participants in conventional peacebuilding tools, but rather engage in interfaith dialogue. Both initiatives were found to differentiate between religion and interfaith dialogue as peacebuilding tools in contrast to secular peacebuilding tools. Drawing from PACS theories it was further possible to identify the reconciliation effort of the initiatives under study.

The investigation on the fourth success factor, which is the involvement in the official peace process, made visible that both initiatives follow different approaches in their peace efforts compared to peace efforts by the government. According to them the official peace process ignores specific groups of society and several social problems. Regarding the aim of Anuar to fill the gaps which the official peace process leaves out, the second part of this chapter found that the initiatives approach strives for more inclusivity. The major challenge when it comes to effectively contributing to the creation of a 'culture of peace', is found in the denial of the initiatives of taking part in the official peace process, according to the evaluated empirical data.

10. Conclusions

This work aimed at exploring female interfaith initiatives as agents of change for achieving a more inclusive and sustainable peace, a topic that received little to no attention in scientific research. Given the number of people of faith worldwide and the number of failing peace agreements, understanding pathways to unleash an untapped potential presents manifold interest: scholarly, culturally, spiritually, and finally, politically.

To sharpen our understanding on the phenomenon, a mapping exercise was operated and shed light on a number of interesting aspects. In terms of the theoretical and analytical framework, the 'capabilities approach' by Nussbaum and the success factors for a 'culture of peace' developed by Boulding, proved to be adequate and interesting. Furthermore, Robertson´s 'glocalisation' and Appadurai´s 'scape' concepts offered extremely useful insights.

On the basis of qualitative data analysis, it can be concluded, that the importance of the inclusion of people of faith in facilitating peace lies, as analysed, in the very fact, that "if religion is not used as a positive force for building peace, it will function as a negative force" (Interview with Stolov 29.05.2019). This insight prompted the UN to confer a consultative

status to approximately 300 FBOs to pursue the demands of a global society which is composed of a large number of religiously affiliated people (80.52%) (Haynes 2015:187,192). In the light of the secularisation debate, the UN's inclusive approach, supports scholars arguing for the 'deprivatisation' and thus the increasing influential role of religion in the public sphere.

Bearing in mind, that religion is also utilised as a war escalator, the finding that the female interfaith initiatives base their engagement for social justice on 'universal values', which are according to them inherent to all religions, confirms the theoretical assumption that religion bears a potential for peace. The highlighted potential of interfaith dialogue to build peace, within PACS's literature, became apparent in the investigation of the initiatives: The explored female interfaith initiatives, were found to engage in cognitive and collaborative interfaith dialogue to build bridges between divided communities and to reduce stereotypes. In this regard, interfaith initiatives were found to predominantly work on the community level and thus apply a bottom-up approach to peacebuilding.

Considering the influence of religion in our case study country, Israel, on its legal and political structures, Israel's public policy was analysed on its performance in meeting human, especially women's 'capabilities'. The index-based analysis has provided evidence for the scholarly arguments, like Nussbaum's, that women living in religious contexts often face limitations of their rights. In the context of Israel, the societal divisions along religious lines, was identified as causing restrictions for women to profit equally from their right to attend religious services and to worship freely as well as their right to family reunification and intergroup marriage. Moreover, the found restrictions of 'capabilities' for women in religious structures, were identified as possible empowering factors for women of faith to create interfaith initiatives to overcome these barriers and to strive for unification across differences.

The mapping exercise of the Global Women of Faith Network (GWFN) and seven complementary female interfaith initiatives working at various levels in different countries, gave additional evidence, that the marginalisation of women in religious leadership roles as well as in mainstream interfaith collaborations and gatherings can also function as a driving force for women in diverse contexts to build female interfaith initiatives and to seek empowerment. The finding, that several explored initiatives were created in response to the events of 9/11 corresponds with findings of previous studies on post-9/11 interfaith initiatives in the US.

The collection and evaluation of questionnaires from eight female interfaith initiatives operating on different levels in diverse countries helped to answer the first research question: "**How does the Global Women of Faith Network, as well as seven complementary female interfaith initiatives, actively work towards a 'culture of peace', by advocating for gender equality?**". A mapping of the GWFN and seven complementary female interfaith networks demonstrated that they work towards a 'culture of peace', by addressing several dimensions regarding the unequal status of women, such as the improvement of women's and general human rights, the prevention of violence against women and girls, and the promotion of women's leadership. Taking the GWFN as a sample to illustrate the active engagement of female interfaith initiatives for the 'elimination of violence against women', showed that despite the organisation's public commitment to the elimination of violence against women, limited evidence on the implementation of this dimension within the actual engagement of the GWFN was found. The promotion of community, the elimination of stereotypes, and the search for solutions of global issues, were identified as further common topics of concern for initiatives. The analysis of the empirical data pinpointed conflict transformation and peacebuilding as further common areas of interest to the female interfaith initiatives at stake. As the discovered fields of operation of the female interfaith initiatives in our sample comply with these defined characteristics of a 'culture of peace', it can be concluded that the GWFN and four other complementary female interfaith initiatives, actively work towards a 'culture of peace', by advocating gender equality.

The second research question aimed to explore "**How do two female interfaith initiatives in Israel perform on four success factors, defined by Boulding, that should ultimately lead to a "culture of peace' in the sense of increased gender equality**?". The engagement of two Israeli female interfaith initiatives towards a 'culture of peace' was analysed by evaluating the parameters set out for this work deducted from the interviews conducted with two female interfaith initiatives in Israel. Based on the analysis of Anuar's and WIE's performance on the four defined success factors, it can be concluded, that both are able to positively contribute to the creation of a 'culture of peace'.

The results of the evaluation of the initiatives involvement in a public peace process, their visibility, their engagement in peace education and their inclusion in the official peace process, brought further findings, that deserve to be highlighted in the conclusion: Comparing the

initiatives on the first success factor, illuminated that both female interfaith initiatives in Israel conduct public peace processes by engaging in interfaith dialogue, public conversations, and social activities to tackle existing stereotypes. It remains unknown, to what extent their attempts to contribute to a shift of attitudes simultaneously, tackles perceptions concerning the role of women and the religious 'other'. Researching on the initiatives' visibility on a national and international level sheds light on Anuar's and WIE's achieved successes and faced challenges. While both initiatives were found to have successfully increased their visibility on an inter-personal level, they struggle to gain political and media attention on a national level. Mixed findings were sought out regarding their involvement in socio-political discussions, as the initiatives pursue different objectives in this matter.

Analysing, to what extend the initiatives include the education and training of specific peacebuilding skills in their organizational programme, it was found, that WIE and Anuar do not use conventional peacebuilding tools, but use religion and interfaith dialogue as tools for building peace. Evaluating the initiatives´ actual engagement within the Israel-Palestine peace process, found evidence for the theoretical categorisation of interfaith peace efforts as 'track two diplomacy' or 'multi track diplomacy' in contrast to 'track one diplomacy' (Fisher 1997: 118), as both female interfaith initiatives remain excluded from the official 'track-one' peace negotiations. However, both initiatives were found to perceive their peace efforts as more inclusive then the peace efforts on the governmental level, as they address social problems and societal groups that the government ignores. The performance of the initiatives in advocating gender equality demonstrated, that the two female interfaith initiatives in Israel address several topics of concern to women. However, the initiatives´ contribution to a 'culture of peace' in the sense of increased gender equality remains unclear and may be used as a subject for further investigation.

Robertson´s 'glocalisation' and Appadurai´s 'scape' concepts were utilised to analyse the mutual influences of female interfaith initiatives on the global and local Israeli level. These two theoretical approaches helped to answer the question: "How do female interfaith initiatives on a global level cause a ripple effect on a local level and vice versa?". Applying Robertson's theory of 'glocalisation' highlighted the reciprocal influence of global and local events on the emergence of female interfaith initiatives. In this respect the second Intifada and 9/11 were identified as influencing the emergence of female interfaith initiatives' on a global as well as on a local level. Additionally, a mutual influence of actors from the local level on the global

level and vice versa could be observed. Regarding Robertson's theory, the mutual influences in both aspects (events and actors) revealed that the 'universalisation of the particular' and the 'particularisation of the universal' takes place for interfaith initiatives on the local and global levels. Theoretically speaking, female interfaith initiatives in Israel were found to be not only subject to globalisation, but also subject to 'glocalisation'. Utilising Appadurai's theoretical assumption, that ideas, values are displaced from one context to another as a cause of globalization, gave evidence for the identified emergence of common religious values on which the initiatives base their work.

This work also attempted to illustrate how attitudinal values are negotiated and how multi-level engagement is conducted by female interfaith initiatives, which ultimately leads to personal, relational and structural change. Analysing the initiatives though a theoretical lens of the theory of change, allowed to understand, that the studied initiatives achieve personal- and relational change by increasing trust, empathy, as well as change of participants´ attitudes. As one of the main goals of the analysed initiatives is to address a wide range of people and to engage on multiple levels, their work potentially contributes to socio-political change.

Having explored the nexus between religion, women, interfaith dialogue, and peace from a perspective that illuminates the peacebuilding character of all in dependence of each other, this work highlights the importance of endeavouring to create holistic approach peace processes, that ultimately lead to inclusive and sustainable peace.

This mapping exercise of female interfaith initiatives for peace, sharpened our understanding on the potential and limitations, the challenges and opportunities they face or carry.

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