The Contribution of Interreligious Dialogue to Sustainable Peace

How can interreligious dialogue contribute to the United Nations' policy for sustainable peace?

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Abstract

The overall aim of this thesis was to investigate how interreligious dialogue can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and thereby contribute to the United Nation's policy for sustainable peace. Using discourse and policy analysis, I looked at what was said during various interreligious dialogues, specifically about SDG 5 Gender Equality and SDG 13 Climate Action. I then deepened the observations and recommendations from the primary data in the discussion using case studies. The case studies showed that there are several FBOs and religious communities that are committed to achieving the SDGs, but also showed that interreligious dialogue can have a negative impact on achieving the SDGs. Therefore, the conclusion of this thesis is that by integrating the right key-stakeholders and taking into account different contexts and perspectives, interreligious dialogue can contribute to sustainable peace.

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1. Introduction

Today's world is filled with unrest and violence. Recently, rising tensions between Gaza and Israel have escalated into war, Europe is still the stage for the war between Russia and Ukraine and conflicts continue to arise in Nigeria and Ethiopia, partly due to climate change. In the face of this unrest, peacebuilding seems almost impossible and the end of a conflict is no guarantee of peace in the future. A bold promise on the road to peace is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from the United Nations which commits, among other things, to end poverty in all its forms, address climate change, and promote peaceful and inclusive societies (Roesch, Doebbel & Rahmaty, 2017).

The Agenda for Sustainable Developments consists of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which have been adopted by the 193 member states of the UN. The aim of the SDGs is to provide a better and more sustainable future for everyone, thus achieving the goals contributes to sustainable peace. There are many different factors that influence the SDGs and the creation of sustainable peace. An important factor here can be religion, because religion is an important cultural, social, political and economic factor in many countries. Yet according to the report Keeping Faith in 2030: Religions and the Sustainable Development Goals, religious actors are not systematic or significantly implemented in the SDGs (Haustein & Tomalin, 2019). This while the UN with the Freedom of Religion or Belief advocates equal treatment of everyone regardless of their religion or belief. To understand which religious dynamics and faith actors can play a role in achieving the SDGs, this thesis looks at the role of religious actors in achieving 2 of the 17 SDGs, namely SDG 5 Gender Equality and SDG 13 Climate Action.

Because there are many different religious dynamics and actors, this thesis specifically examines the role of interreligious dialogues. Interreligious dialogue refers to processes for achieving a better understanding between religions. Driven by globalizing trends and global risks, interreligious dialogue aims to promote tolerance, pluralism and social cohesion (Giordan, Michilli & Zrinščak, 2019). In the context of peacebuilding, interreligious dialogue increases awareness about how to improve human interaction on different levels by recognizing the importance of integrating religious identities into the dialogue. Based on the claim that conflicts often arise from mutual ignorance and the absence of interaction between parties, interreligious dialogue attempts to clear up misconceptions and provide opportunities for constructive contact between different parties (Kadayifci-Orellana, 2013).

Although it appears that interreligious dialogue can have a positive contribution to, for example, achieving the SDGs, there are also scholars, such as Swamy, who argue that interreligious dialogue has several limitations. For example because the dialogue is mainly conducted by the elite and is not in line with the experiences of grassroots people (Swamy, 2016). Precisely because of this division about interreligious dialogue, I want to investigate what role interreligious dialogue plays in the SDGs and whether interreligious dialogue can be used to achieve the goals. Therefore, the research question of this thesis is as follows:

"How can interreligious dialogue contribute to the United Nations' policy for sustainable peace?"

To answer the research question, I use the qualitative research methods discourse analysis and policy analysis. In the analytical chapters I will explore the role of interreligious dialogue by specifically looking at SDG 5 Gender Equality and SDG 13 Climate Action. For each chapter I collect data from important or major interreligious dialogues as primary sources, then I will discuss this data by applying it to various case studies.

The structure of the thesis is as follows: after the introduction I will provide an overview of the literature on sustainable peace and interreligious dialogue, as well as the relationship of these themes within United Nations policy. Chapter 3 describes the theoretical and conceptual framework of this thesis. The research methods used are further explained in Chapter 4. Next come the analytical chapters, with Chapter 5 focusing on SDG 5 Gender Equality and Chapter 6 focusing on SDG 13 Climate Action. Finally, Chapter 7 presents the conclusions of this thesis.

2. Literature review - Interreligious dialogue in the field of sustainable peace

2.1 Peacebuilding and Sustainable Peace

In current times there are many conflicts worldwide, which raises questions about how to deal with these conflicts. There are many different theories in scholarly debates that aim to work from conflict towards peace. There are theories aimed at conflict resolution (Boulding, 1963), conflict transformation (Lederach, 2003 & Galtung, 1996) and peacebuilding (Lederach & Sampson, 2000). Conflict resolution focuses most on the current problems within a conflict, emphasizing immediate solutions. Conflict transformation looks beyond the conflict alone and focuses on the content of a conflict and the context in which the mutual relationships are located. While these different theories have different focus points, they also contain similarities and some scholars combine different aspects of different theories. For example, Boulding describes different types of procedural conflict resolutions, describing reconciliation as a way to understand, control and manage the process of conflict (Oliveira & Sousa, 2021).

  In working towards peace, Lederach distinguishes between peacebuilding, peacemaking and peacekeeping. Although all three are interrelated, Lederach favors peacebuilding as it looks at transforming the underlying social conditions that lead to conflict and violence. He distinguishes this from peacemaking, where violence is fought with violence, and peacekeeping, where an attempt is made to prevent an outbreak of violence (Emkic, 2018). Today, peacebuilding interventions often use multifaceted approaches, considering different actors and their different needs (Kubota, 2022). This is a changing trend compared to earlier forms of peacebuilding, which often acted normatively towards parties, such as the imposition of liberal ideas of democracy, human rights and the rule of law (Richmond, 2020). This versatile approach is an important part of working towards sustainable peace. Sustainable peace emerges from peacebuilding focused on complex long-term commitments, supported by multi-level political handwork. This involves a transformation of society, in which all complex variables are included and considered from different frameworks. Only through this multifaceted approach is it possible to tackle difficult topics such as democratization and implementation of human rights and to see how peace can be maintained (Kawaguchi & Ikeda, 2020). In addition to building political and economic domains in society, it is important to build social structure. Transforming conflicts so that lasting peace can be

built means working with the emotions of people who have just come out of war. Changing these negative feelings and attitudes is not easy, but it is essential for a sustainable peace (Emkic, 2018).

In addition to peacebuilding and transforming a conflict, an important element for sustainable peacebuilding is the inclusion of all stakeholders at any level (Emkic, 2018). Lederach divides this inclusion of all stakeholders into three levels of approach: top leaders (political/ religious leaders), middle class leaders (academics/ humanitarian leaders/ NGOs) and grassroots leaders (local leaders) (Lederach 1997). According to Lederach, it is important that all levels work together, both top-down and bottom-up. This approach leads to the creation of a solid foundation for sustainable peace in society, thus resonating with Galtung's definition of 'positive peace' (Emkic, 2018). Galtung distinguishes between negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace precedes the absence of violence, while positive peace looks also beyond the presence of violence and deals with the transformation of structural and cultural violence. According to Galtung, it is necessary in peacebuilding that the structure that produces violence is identified and replaced by an alternative structure of positive peace. In this way a more comprehensive, lasting, emancipatory and inclusive peace can be made, sustainable peace (Oliveira & Sousa, 2021).

2.1.1 United Nations and sustainable peace

By some the term sustaining peace is seen as a counterpoint to the term peacebuilding (International Peace Institute, 2017). For a long time, peacebuilding was seen as postconflict peacebuilding, ensuring peace after the outbreak of conflict. This changed from the 2000s, when peacebuilding was redefined as trying to prevent the outbreak of a conflict. This definition was reaffirmed by the General Assembly of the UN in the introduction to the 2016 resolutions A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (United Nations Peacebuilding Contact Group, 2017). These resolutions state that sustainable peace is aimed at 'preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict' (United Nations, 2016). The UN also states that sustaining peace should not be seen separately from peacebuilding, because both are intended to reduce the risk of relapse into violent conflicts (United Nations Peacebuilding Contact Group, 2017).

An important part on the road to sustainable peace is the Agenda for Sustainable Development from the United Nations which commits, among other things, to end poverty in all its forms, address climate change, and promote peaceful and inclusive

societies (Roesch, Doebbel & Rahmaty, 2017). The Agenda for Sustainable Developments consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that have been adopted by the 193 member states of the UN. The goals that have been set apply to all people in all countries (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2017).

The specific goals are:

1. No Poverty;
2. Zero Hunger;
3. Good Health and Well-being;
4. Quality Education;
5. Gender Equality;
6. Clean Water and Sanitation;
7. Affordable and Clean Energy;
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry Innovation and Infrastructure;
10. Reduced Inequalities;
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities;
12. Responsible Consumption and Production;
13. Climate Action;
14. Life Below Water;
15. Life on Land;
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions;
17. Partnerships for the Goals.

By adopting the 17 SDGs, an unprecedentedly ambitious and innovative agreement has been made for prosperity and peace for all people and the planet (Tansum, 2019). Although the agenda consists of 17 specific goals, the achievement of one goal is strongly linked to the achievement of other goals. Ending hunger (SDG 2) requires peace and lowering disaster risk. In addition, climate-related disasters, for example, have an impact on the increase in violent conflicts. Peace plays an important role in achieving all SDGs and is also a central point of SDG 16, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (Peters & Peters, 2021). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development articulated the gravity of peace: "There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development" (United Nations, 2015, p. 2). With this, peace is

considered fundamental to achieving all SDGs and working on the SDGs will help create sustainable peace.

2.1.2 The sustainable development goals

The SDGs are a start to providing a better and more sustainable future for everyone, but how will these goals be achieved and why is this important? The book Principles of Sustainable Business Frameworks for Corporate Action on the SDGs describes the SDGs as a new paradigm for progress. The adoption of the SDGs in 2015 resulted from the expiry of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs were initiated in the year 2000 and focused on eight priorities, including basic education and promoting women's rights. The MDGs have been criticized for not being ambitious enough to make effective progress and for lacking solid analytical rationale for choosing these specific targets. Furthermore, the targets were vague and there were no specific indicators for domestic problems such as income differences (Van Tulder & Van Mil, 2023).

What makes the SDGs different, according to Van Tulder, is the positive change that the goals pursue instead of continuing to name the problems and the negative obligations that people and companies can feel. Furthermore, the goals are presented as universal challenges based on joint investment of energy and finance, instead of subsidies or philanthropy (Van Tulder, 2018). The new paradigm that the SDGs thus establish is described by Van Tulder on the basis of the 'why not' question, which is the reverse of the 'why' question that often looks at predictions and possible scenarios. The 'why not' question first looks at what wants to be achieved, in this case the 17 SDGs. On the basis of this, they look retroactively at when and then at how. The 'why not' question can be asked for all goals, such as why wouldn't someone eradicate extreme poverty (SDG 1.1)? This approach to the SDGs reflects the possible broad support of the goals, making them a good starting point for initiating change (Van Tulder & Van Mil, 2023).

Although the goals can be a good starting point, it is complex how these goals can actually be achieved. Taysum therefore argues that there is no roadmap for achieving a paradigm shift to achieve the SDGs. Taysum offers this roadmap using A Blueprint for Character Development for Evolution (ABCDE). The five stages of the ABCDE consist of:

(A) asks questions to get a sense of the problem/professional challenge;

(B) explores different, even conflicting beliefs about the professional challenge;

(C) provides methods to collect trustworthy data across sectors, nations, regions and globally;

(D) tests hypotheses regarding (1) redistributing wealth or (2) creating opportunities and incentivising the socialisation of risks, investment and rewards for the means of production.

(E) arrives at universal principles that inform theories of change for mobilising top-down state policy (Taysum, 2019, p. 265).

According to Taysum, the ABCDE starts with SDG 4, Quality Education. Ensuring inclusive and equitable education for all gives people the thinking tools and skills to tackle problems and professional challenges, such as achieving the SDGs (Taysum, 2019).

A criticism of the SDGs is the measurability of achieving the goals. Each of the 17 SDGs is assessed against agreed targets and indicators. In total there are 169 objectives with 232 indicators. Each goal presents a challenge to collect and analyze relevant data and produce the metrics needed to measure progress. Countries themselves, with the support of international organizations such as the UN Statistics Division, are responsible for collecting and processing the data. This data should generate statistics for measuring the indicators. The measured indicators should form a guideline for policy development and country strategies. Jerven has noted that countries with fewer resources are often unable to properly collect data. In addition, they often lack the expertise needed to implement policies and accountability structures based on these statistics. Failure to properly measure progress can therefore lead to incorrect policies or incorrect laws being adopted. This makes it more difficult to plan and realize development. Failure to properly measure the indicators and targets can therefore give a distorted and unrealistic picture of the progress of the SDGs (Thurston, 2020).

2.1.3 Religion and the SDGs

There are many different factors that influence the SDGs and the creation of sustainable peace. One factor that is important in this thesis is religion. Religion is an important cultural, social, political and economic factor in many countries, which is why gaining insight into religious dynamics and faith communities is important for achieving the SDGs. Various belief factors have been involved in shaping development and sustainability policies. The UN Task Force on Engaging Faith-Based Actors has played a leading role both during the consultation process and in the implementation phase. This is by inviting the actors to annual meetings on sustainable development and initiatives to collect relevant data to measure the progress of the SDGs. Yet religious actors are not systematically or significantly implemented in the SDGs according to the report Keeping

Faith in 2030: Religions and the Sustainable Development Goals (Haustein & Tomalin, 2019). This while religious actors can also play a role as partners for achieving the SDGs. They can, for example, play an important role in encouraging behavioral change, they are service providers who stay when others leave, they have bonds of trust, reach and relationships that governments and NGOs do not have, and they can respond to people's psychological and spiritual needs. On the other hand collaborating with religious actors to achieve the SDGs also poses challenges, because they need to raise awareness and willingness to collaborate, recognize female religious contributions, and look beyond traditional religions (Dickson & Petito, 2022).

However the International Bill of Human Rights represents the Freedom of religion or belief (FoRB), and the prohibition of discrimination based on religion or belief. This right is aimed at protecting individual people and not at protecting a religion or belief. This means that every individual has the right to believe whatever he or she wants, regardless of whether this is, for example, a religion such as Christianity or Islam or a secular belief such as atheism or humanism. In addition, it means that no one may be discriminated against on the basis of his or her faith or belief (United Nations, 2023a). This means that governments have to: "officially recognize religious or belief identities, which may include indigenous, non-religious beliefs and others, and the spate of individual and collective human rights violations that flow from non-recognition" (Ghanea, 2023, paragraph 6).

Yet this is often not the case and there are many contexts in which a religion or belief is criminalized, for example by attaching punishment. But even in countries where it is not directly criminalized, the law is not always able to properly enforce FoRB. That is why Nazila Ghanea, the UN Special Rapporteur on FoRB, also states that it can only be effectively addressed through engagement with FoRB as established under international human rights law. This can be done, for example, by promoting dialogue, education at all levels and involving different stakeholders, such as civil society, the business community and religious leaders.

In addition to criminalization, there are other forms of violence that can take place in the name of religion or belief, such as gender-based violence, denial of sexual and reproductive rights and seeking to justify violence and discrimination against minorities. Ghanea therefore states: As we consider the ongoing challenges to the realization of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, States must be clear-eyed about the obstacle that marginalization based on religion or belief represents. As we look towards the final seven years of the Agenda, and indeed beyond it, it is of fundamental

importance that this marginalization be recognized, its dimensions measured and its reality addressed across all relevant Goals" (Ghanea, 2023, paragraph 10).

One of the things that Ghanea describes to promote freedom of religion is to initiate dialogues and involve religious leaders. An example of how this can be combined and contribute to the SDGs is interreligious dialogue. Important for interreligious dialogue is an open attitude and the recognition of other religions and beliefs. Facilitating dialogues between different religions can be a way to work on the SDGs and thus contribute to the creation of sustainable peace.

2.2 Interreligious dialogue

Interreligious dialogue is the process for achieving a better understanding between religions. It is also the umbrella term for analyzing communication between religious groups and social and political actors in society. The core function of Interreligious dialogue is to maintain peace and ensure understanding and cooperation between religious communities, organizations and individuals. This makes the study of interreligious dialogue an interdisciplinary discipline that can be analyzed from different studies, including comparative theology, religious studies, international politics and nationalistic and cultural studies (Giordan & Lynch, 2019). Interreligious dialogue's analysis reflects the growing diversity in contemporary society. The concept therefore received renewed attention in the twentieth century due to the globalizing trends and global risks that this entailed. Interreligious dialogue was seen as a way to promote tolerance, pluralism and social cohesion (Giordan, Michilli & Zrinščak, 2019). It is therefore of crucial importance for policy development in a time of increasing religious diversity (Giordan & Lynch, 2019).

According to Cornille, dialogue between different religions has been used more and more since the mid twentieth century. She argues that in general religions have a more conciliatory and constructive attitude towards one another when it comes to competing over territories, converts or claims. They do this by working together in social projects and exchanging thoughts on religious questions. The conversations that take place in centers for interreligious dialogue can be about different topics, such as peaceful coexistence, social change and mutual understanding. An important part of interreligious dialogue is mutual respect and being open to learn from others. Although the word dialogue suggests a calm exchange of ideas, it often consists of arguments and fierce debate. Believers are often true to their faith, which is why the dialogue can also include a difference of opinion (Cornille, 2013).

Although according to Cornille a difference of opinion does not have to be a problem for interreligious dialogue, the difference of opinion from a theological background is criticized by scholars. These scholars say that the nature of religion presupposes an obligation to other religious doctrines and the denial of other religions. The three approaches often used towards the religious other are exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. These approaches each contain a specific theological interpretation of the religious other. There is an important connection between interreligious dialogue and how the religious other is interpreted. The more the religious other is accepted and recognized, the more likely it is that interreligious dialogue can take place (Moghri, Sadeghnia & Salehi, 2015).That is why conducting interreligious dialogue with exclusivist movements is difficult.

With exclusivism there is only one religion where salvation can be found, in contrast to inclusivism and pluralism, where paths to salvation can be found in multiple religions or even in all religions. Not recognizing other religions, like exclusivism, therefore creates difficulties for equal dialogue. It is too easy to just leave this movement out of dialogues, because although exclusivism does not have the position of the main movement within Christianity, according to Nes-Visscher it is an incorrect statement that exclusivism is a marginal Christian phenomenon. She does state that in certain forms it is possible for exclusivists to enter into a dialogue, but this does limit the dialogue that is held. It is possible during the dialogue that different parties express their identity and beliefs, but they do not always agree on certain substantive matters. If these substantive matters are not important for the purpose of the dialogue, a dialogue with exclusivist movements would be possible (Van Nes-Visscher, n.d.). Much of the literature describes that it is important for interreligious dialogue that the religious other is accepted, that is why conducting a representative dialogue can be hard and can have limitations. Excluding certain groups is also the opposite of what often wants to be achieved, the importance of accepting the religious other in interreligious dialogue is then not achieved.

Besides the fact that tolerance would drive interreligious dialogue towards a more real dialogue, it could contribute to the formation of a more dynamic and pluralistic religious identity (Moghri, Sadeghnia & Salehi, 2015). This is in line with the basic principles that Mitias mentions for conducting an interreligious dialogue: mutual understanding, equality, empathy. For a mutual understanding he argues that a rejection of hard exclusivism is necessary. It is important that the different actors see each other's religion as equals in the sense that no one's revealed truth is more or less important than another. This is also the basis of respect and tolerance towards other faiths. The third

basic principle of Mitias empathy revolves around the cognitive sense, according to which we can understand what someone means. This means that we actively try to think in the mind of the other (Mitias, 2021).

2.2.1 Interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding

Interreligious dialogue takes different forms and can take place in different contexts. Based on the intention which encourages followers of different religions to talk with each other, Melnik classifies four major types of Interreligious dialogue: polemical, cognitive, peacemaking and partnership. He has drawn up these four types on the basis of questions: who is right, who are you, how can they live together peacefully and how can they improve the world together (Melnik, 2020). According to Kadayifci-Orellana, interreligious dialogue has an important role in the context of peacemaking and peacebuilding. In the beginning the field of conflict resolution did not pay sufficient attention to religious traditions as sources for resolving conflicts, while conflicts often consist of groups defined by ethno-religious characteristics. Religion often divides conflicts, where it is used and abused to justify violence and war. This has led many people today to associate religion with terrorism and violence (Kadayifci-Orellana, 2013). Yet, according to Schneier, religion is rarely the cause of the conflict. He argues that economic or political competition over resources or the missing of basic human needs such as security, identity, and food tend to be the beginning of many conflicts (Schneier, 2002). In addition, virtually all religions contain values and principles that found peace and justice and there are several religious actors that have played a crucial role in conflict resolution. Through conversation, human interaction can be improved on several levels, for example by recognizing the importance of integrating religious identities into dialogue. Based on the claim that conflict often stems from mutual ignorance and the lack of interaction between parties, interreligious dialogue can help clear up misconceptions and provide an opportunity for constructive contact between different parties (Kadayifci-Orellana, 2013).

Interreligious dialogue is a growing area of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The International Center on Religion and Diplomacy states that there are certain conditions for a faith-based intervention to have a greater chance of success. When there is a religious element to the conflict or, for example, the presence of religious leaders on both sides, religious dialogue can be a catalyst for ending the conflict (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2014).

Despite the possible positive influence of interreligious dialogue in conflicts, there are also scholars who have a different view on the role of interreligious dialogue in peacebuilding. Interreligious dialogue is described in various literature as a good thing for society and a necessity for our time, but Swamy argues that the basis of Interreligious dialogue appears to be dubious. In his book he points out three limitations. As first, Swamy describes the problem of the perception of plurality of religions. According to him, this implies that it is assumed that there are fixed religious identities. He states that Western constructions of religion are often used during interreligious dialogues, which pit religion against the secular. These religious identities are often influenced by European colonialism and identified from Western ideas. Secondly, he states that 'religious conflicts' are often not an unequivocal religious conflict, but a conflict that arises from multiple factors, such as poverty. By describing a conflict as a religious conflict or conflict in the name of a religion, religion has become a useful peg on which to base violence. Finally, he criticizes the elitist nature of interreligious dialogue. He states that grassroots people are passive listeners who must receive the knowledge that the elites pass on to them, for example high religious leaders. It is often the elite who speak during these dialogues, but they ignore the actual living relationships among ordinary people. These people often do not have a fixed identity, but live with different religious and communal identities. This raises the question of whether elite leaders and theologians present religion, as how people at the grassroots experience it, during interreligious dialogue. Swamy states that the elite do not realize: "how power and domination function even through interreligious dialogue where the relationships among the non-participants of dialogue – mostly people at the grassroots – are neglected as deemed inadequate or absent" (Swamy, 2016, pp. 207).

2.2.2 Interreligious dialogue and de SDG's

At the UN General Assembly on September 23, 2010 King Abdullah II of Jordan proposed The World Interfaith Harmony Week. This annual week provides a platform for all interfaith groups to demonstrate the strength of their movement. The hope is that this initiative can be a focus point from which people of good will can count on the common values they espouse to outweigh their differences. With The World Interfaith Harmony Week, the General Assembly recalls, among other things, its resolutions on the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, the resolution on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief, and the resolution on the

promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace. This annual week thus confirms that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue are important components for building a culture of peace (The World Interfaith Harmony Week, n.d.).

In addition to The World Interfaith Harmony Week, religion is also included in the wider UN policy. A report by the General Assembly of the UN states that the UN promotes interreligious dialogue, among other things. The 2019 report 'Promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace' states, that the dialogue between civilizations and the strengthening of interreligious and intercultural understanding and respect between peoples can contribute to combating, for example, terrorism and extreme violence. The document therefore makes the link that interreligious dialogue can contribute to achieving the SDGs, for example SDG 16, which is about peace, justice and strong institutions. By discussing and teaching each other about the principle of justice and building accountable and inclusive institutions, interreligious dialogue can contribute to SDG 4 and SDG 16 (United Nations, 2019).

The World Interfaith Harmony Week of 2023 also specifically addressed the role of interreligious dialogue and achieving the SDGs. During the second session, Professor Dr. Ille Gebeshuber points out that religious organizations have the opportunity to promote and raise awareness for the SDGs in their communities. In addition, it can be a way to bring people together to work on projects aimed at combating poverty and improving health and education. Interreligious dialogue is important, because it is key to create understanding for achieving the SDGs (Haider, 2023).

3. Theoretical and conceptual framework

The UN policy for sustainable peace consists largely of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Religion is not specifically described within these goals, but affects many different indicators in both a direct and indirect way. An explanation for not explicitly naming religions could be FoRB. FoRB states that no one should be discriminated against on the basis of their beliefs, but this also means that someone with a secular worldview may not be discriminated against by religion. In addition, there are various forms of violence that take place in the name of religion, such as gender-based violence (Ghanea, 2023). This form of violence is one of the problems encountered in SDG 5 Gender Equality. Religion is therefore a sensitive subject within certain SDGs and can also lead to polarization, especially when groups justify their behavior under the heading of FoRB.

Yet I think it isn't an option to not involve religious actors in policy making, because FoRB also states that governments must officially recognize religious or belief identities (Ghanea, 2023). One way to integrate religious actors into policy and give them a voice is by having conversations with and between different religions, for example about the targets of the SDGs. The UN promotes interreligious dialogue and tries to incorporate this into its policy in various ways, for example by recalling various resolutions in the field of culture and religion in The World Faith Harmony Week. Although there is increasing attention for interreligious dialogue, questions remain about how much influence interreligious dialogue should have on issues broader than religion. In this thesis I therefore look at how and whether religious dialogue can contribute to achieving the SDGs. I do this to see whether religious organizations and actors should/could have a greater share in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this way, we can see how interreligious dialogue can contribute to sustainable peace.

3.1 Research question and structure

This thesis will be structured around the following research question:

"How can interreligious dialogue contribute to the United Nations' policy for sustainable peace?"

To answer the main question, I have divided my analytical chapters into 2 SDGs. The first is SDG 5 Gender Equality and the second SDG 13 Climate Action. For each SDG I look at:

1. What is said about the SDG during interreligious dialogues?
2. How has interreligious dialogue contributed to achieving the SDG?
3. What negative impact can interreligious dialogue have on achieving the SDG?

I will use the same structure for the chapters. I do this so that I can easily compare the role of interreligious dialogue in the various SDGs, because the role of interreligious dialogue may differ per SDG or may contribute in a different way to achieving the SDG.

Each chapter consists of two parts, the primary data and the discussion. In the primary data, I first look at the specific SDG. I do this by looking at which targets are associated with the SDG and how the progress towards achieving the SDG is going. I then look at what has been said about the SDG in various religious dialogues, for example which recommendations are made. The last part of the primary data consists of primary sources that are also important for the discussion, for example because they are of great value within religious communities or have had influence in interreligious dialogues.

In the discussion part, I discuss the conclusions and recommendations that emerged from the primary data. I do this on the basis of two case studies. These case studies primarily show how interreligious dialogue can have a positive impact on religious communities, and therefore how it can contribute to achieving the SDGs. In the last part of the discussion I discuss the negative impact of interreligious dialogues for achieving the SDGs, so that in addition to the possible contribution I also highlight the limitations of how interreligious dialogue can contribute. By addressing the three subquestion for each SDG, I try to answer the main question of this thesis.

3.2 Concepts

In addition to the structure of the chapters, it is important to have a clear understanding of the meaning of the concepts within this research. The three main concepts of this research are Interreligious dialogue, Sustainable peace and the Sustainable Development Goals. I will now delve deeper into these concepts and explain how I will use the concepts, so that it is clear what I mean when I use these concepts.

3.2.1 Interreligious dialogue

Giordan and Lynch state interreligious dialogue as the process for achieving a better understanding between religions. Thus, the core function of interreligious dialogue is to maintain peace and create understanding and cooperation between religious

communities, organizations and individuals (2019). In this thesis, interreligious dialogue is referred to as the umbrella term for analyzing communication between religious groups and social and political actors in society. For the analysis of interreligious dialogue I want to analyze both images and documents. Examples of organizations that facilitate interreligious dialogue are the G20 Interfaith Forum, the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue and the United Nations. From the websites and other media of these organizations I can obtain a large part of my primary sources.

The G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20) (https://www.g20interfaith.org) provides an annual platform where a network of religiously affiliated institutions and initiatives engage in global issues, with a particular focus on the SDGs. Summaries of the annual meetings, policy briefs on various themes and blogs from various viewpoints can be found on their websites. The forum summaries include summaries of the various themes covered on the days and recommendations based on policy briefs. These documents and other materials from the annual meetings are good resources for my research, as different religious groups and actors discuss issues aligned with the SDGs.

Another important organization for interreligious dialogue is the United Nations. Every year they organize the World Interfaith Harmony Week, with which they strive for harmony between all people, regardless of their faith. The World Interfaith Harmony Week website (https://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com) includes annual event reports and video messages from people of different religious backgrounds. In addition, the UN has an Audiovisual Library where recordings of various conferences and panel discussions can be viewed (UN / Intercultural Interreligious Dialogue, 2023). In addition, branches of the United Nations such as the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) also promote the use of interreligious dialogue. The project 'Empowering Dialogue and Interfaith Networks' aims to provide young religious leaders, representatives of faith-based organizations and young media makers with a learning space to prevent sectarian violence and counter-terrorism. A series of capacity-building activities enhance participants' competencies that help debunk hateful discourse and promote interfaith understanding as a key to social cohesion (United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, n.d.).

Although many of the larger interreligious dialogues feature leaders with different religious affiliations, there are limitations to these interreligious dialogues. For example, a large part of the interreligious dialogues are conducted from a Western perspective and the SDGs are accepted as truth towards a more sustainable future. By this I mean, for example, that certain forms of equality that are seen as normal in Western countries are

not seen as the norm everywhere. By only looking from the Western perspective, for example by setting the strict condition that everyone is equal, I wonder whether justice is always done to the culture and perspective of non-Western countries. Sometimes different norms and values apply in these countries. By entering into a dialogue with Western norms and values, certain groups may feel unrecognized or excluded, which may result in more polarization. In addition, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether religious actors present at major interreligious dialogues are a good representation of the communities they represent. The danger is that, as Swamy states, these elite actors do not properly represent what the people at the grassroots experience, for example how these people view a problem and how this influences their lives (Swamy, 2016).

In addition to interreligious dialogue specifically about the SDGs, other recordings of meetings and interreligious documentation can also contribute to this research. Sometimes religious documents deal with themes that have interfaces with the SDGs. For example, the Vatican has an archive of Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, which also contains the documentation of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, n.d.). I want to analyze these examples of interreligious dialogue that are both specific and non-specific to the SDGs, so that I can link and compare them with the United Nations' policy for sustainable peace.

3.2.2 Sustainable peace

Sustaining peace can be understood as a goal and a process with activities aimed at preventing conflicts (UN Women, n.d.). Sustainable peace is therefore the goal and the process of building a common vision in a society, taking into account the needs of all parts of the population as much as possible. This vision includes activities aimed at preventing conflict, but also addressing root causes, working towards reconstruction and development. A comprehensive approach is important for a sustainable peace. This means that efforts must be made to prevent conflicts, for example by tackling root causes. This can be about strengthening the rule of law at international and national level, but also about sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction and the protection of human rights (Wählisch, 2020).

On April 27, 2016, the General Assembly and the Security Council passed two resolutions identical in content for peacebuilding. Resolutions A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/ 2282 concluded the review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture in 2015. The review provides a new ambitious peacebuilding agenda and approach, demonstrating the commitment of member states to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and

recurrence of conflicts (United Nations Peacebuilding Contact Group, 2017). An important part of sustainable peace is sustainable development. In her speech on February 23, 2023, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed said that inclusive sustainable development is the only way durable peace can be achieved. According to her, a lack of sustainable development fuels injustice and inequality, so peace, human rights and sustainable development go hand in hand (United Nations, 2023c).

The link between sustainable peace and sustainable development is an important and essential part of this thesis. In this thesis, the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are the leading actors for working towards sustainable peace. By achieving the goals, poverty and inequality are being combated, among other things, and strong institutions are being built. Achieving the goals can mean that causes for conflict decrease and underlying problems can be solved. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which works on a stable basis for people, animals and the planet, is therefore an important step for sustainable peace.

3.2.3 The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, the UN adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a universal call to action. The 17 specific SDGs are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Developments. They are not isolated goals, for the goals recognize that action on one goal will affect results on another goal. It is therefore important that the goals find a balance between social, economic and environmental sustainability. Focusing on a specific SDG as a country defeats the purpose of the Agenda for Sustainable Developments as a whole, which is why countries have committed to prioritizing those goals that are furthest behind (UNDP, n.d.).

The concepts of Sustainable peace and the SDGs are complementary and reinforce each other. The concepts overlap on various topics, for example, they both state that each country has primary responsibility for these concepts and that people are central. In addition, they both emphasize the importance of preventing violent conflict. In order to prevent this, different drivers of conflict must be looked at, which can be found in both socio-economic and environmental aspects. Finally, inclusive, transparent, effective and accountable institutions are needed to prevent conflict and to work together as a collective to both create sustainable peace and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Developments (United Nations Peacebuilding Contact Group, 2017).

Despite the well-intentioned objectives of the SDGs, there are several criticisms of the goals. For example, it is said that the goals are non-binding, because governments do

not take responsibility for implementing the SDGs in public policy processes. In addition, the SDGs consist of many different goals and targets, making it difficult for countries and policymakers to create effective policies for all SDGs. At last, the goals are not immune to politics, allowing a country to determine for itself which goal it believes has more priority (Pecquet, 2023). This prioritization may mean that achieving one SDG is at the expense of progress on another.

In my thesis I will not focus on all SDGs, this would produce too large a study to conduct. That is why I want to focus in the analytical chapters on 2 SDGs, namely SDG 5 Gender equality and SDG 13 Climate action. I want to look at the policies of the United Nations on these SDGs and what is being done to achieve these goals. In doing so, I specifically want to look at the role of religion and how interreligious dialogue might or might not contribute to achieving the goal. I do this because it is important for achieving the SDGs that as many people as possible work together. That is why we need to have a clear idea of how certain communities, such as religious communities, can contribute or hinder the achievement of the SDGs.

4. Methodology

This research is qualitative research, in which I make use of discourse analysis and policy analysis. In this chapter I will further explain these methods, by describing both the possibilities and limitations of the methods.

4.1 Discourse analysis

One of the main research methods of this thesis is discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is also described as the study of language and its effects, which means that within discourse analysis, communication through language is examined. This term is defined more broadly by some, such as Blommaert (2005), who in discourse analysis looks at meaningful symbolic behavior in any form. This underscores the idea that discourse analysis does not only focus on language as an abstract system, but takes into account multiple communicative elements. In addition to language, other media such as photography, music and architecture can be part of the communication, which is why it is important in discourse analysis to think about the connections between language and other forms of meaning (Johnstone, 2018).

Brown and Yule distinguish linguists from discourse analysts by different focus points. They argue that some linguists focus on the formal properties of a language, while a discourse analyst examines what that language is used for. An important part of this is the context in which the communication takes place. It is therefore necessary to know at least who the speaker and hearer are and where and when it took place. It is also important in the analysis to look at the relationship between the speaker and what he says, for example, the occasion where the speaker is speaking and the position of the speaker are an important part of the context (Brown & Yule, 1983).

One of the critiques of discourse analysis comes from Schegloff. His criticism stemmed from a concern that analysts would bring their own interests to talk about data and they would be free to interpret it. Schegloff's critique challenges the free interpretation of data, as many speakers differ from each other in several respects. These differences include age, sexuality, nationality, occupation, religion and education. Due to the large number of different categories, it can be difficult to determine whether something is relevant and constitutes evidence for the study of a specific category. It is therefore important in discourse analysis to be aware of the different possibilities and the different views that may exist (Taylor, 2013).

For my research I want to look at various interreligious dialogues that deal with topics that touch on the SDGs. In these dialogues it is important to look at what is literally being said, but also how and in what setting. Some of the interreligious dialogues I use are videotaped. For video recordings it may be necessary to transcribe the dialogues. Nowadays a lot of Youtube videos also have a transcription that you can run along with the video, in that case it is not necessary to transcribe the video. For the dialogues that are not captured on video, I will use written documents. It is therefore important to also obtain information about the overall setting and context of the dialogues, in order to understand the meaning of the language spoken during these dialogues.

4.2 Policy analysis

Policy analysis emerged around the 1960s to facilitate greater understanding of the policy-making process and generate reliable and valid knowledge. Policy analysis focuses on formal, written policies, such as those of government agencies, which are defined as public policies (Einbinder, 2010). Policy analysis can be understood in two ways, namely the analysis before a new policy or program is adopted and the analysis of policies that have already been adopted. In the case of policy that has already been adopted, policy analysis looks at the effectiveness of the policy. What happens to a policy idea when it has been adopted and how is this reflected in legislation and regulations, for example? The importance of continuing to analyze adopted policy documents is apparent from the results of program evaluations. These evaluations show that policy does not always produce the intended result and sometimes has actually had negative consequences (Mintrom & Williams, 2013).

The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy describes traditional policy analysis as focusing on choosing the best means to achieve a well-defined goal. The criticism is given that this policy says little about conflicting goals. Conflicting goals can provide alternative policy options, making it difficult to have a fully thought-out policy that has the best outcome for everyone (Winship, 2009). Thacher and Rein described this as: "When a policy actor encounters a new situation in which its goals conflict, it may find that its preferences are simply unfinished. Existing models of policy rationality have great difficulty accommodating such situations." (Thacher & Rein, 2004, p. 458). That is why Winship believes that policy analysis needs a method of analysis that can deal with conflicting policy goals, in addition to instrumental rationality. He explains this using puzzling. By simply moving the puzzle pieces around randomly, people can begin to

recognize new possibilities in terms of what pieces might fit together. Sometimes patience is needed to find new solutions or several things have to be tried to form policy (Winship, 2009).

An important insight about policy analysis can be drawn from Foucault's idea of biopolitics. Foucault distinguishes between three forms of power, namely sovereign power, disciplinary power, and governmentality. Sovereign power is like the power of a king, it is the central power and will not be challenged. Disciplinary power exercises power by disciplinary means, people are expected to behave as the authority expects of them (Means, 2022). Governmentality places the power in the hands of the population, by conducting the conduct of the people. This means that, according to Foucault, the Western liberal state controls its citizens through a series of empowering techniques such as autonomy, self-realization, and self-esteem (Madson, 2014). Governmentality thus brings together the domination of others and that of the self. This means that the nation coordinates and exercises various forms of power to direct the behavior of individuals. From this, scholars such as Ball conclude that the policy discourse produces what is said and thought, which places limitations on the interpretation of policy documents (Han, 2023). These power dynamics are a direct critique of policy making. When policy is analyzed, it is therefore good to take into account that there can be various biases when policy was made.

In this thesis, the policy analysis will focus on policy documents that have already been worked out and are therefore already being tried to implement. For example policies of the UN on the various SDGs or policies in the field of interreligious dialogue. For my thesis I will look at what is written in the policies and how this is worked out in practice. On the basis of this analysis, I want to see what can be found about religion and interreligious dialogue in the policy of the UN SDGs. By linking this to the discourse analysis, I want to see whether interreligious dialogue can add value to this policy and to achieving the SDGs.

5. Analytical chapter - SDG 5 Gender Equality

In this chapter, I investigate how interreligious dialogue can contribute to the United Nations' policy for sustainable peace. I do this by specifically looking at SDG 5 Gender Equality. The chapter consists of two parts, the primary data and the discussion. In the primary data I will look at what the targets of SDG 5 are and what the progress is towards achieving SDG 5. After that I will look at three different organizations that organize interreligious dialogues, namely the G20 Interfaith Forum, the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. I specifically look at what was said on gender equality during the dialogues and what recommendations are made during the dialogues and in resolutions.

After examining the primary data, I will further explore the problems and recommendations I found in the primary data in the discussion. I do this on the basis of two case studies. The case studies of the South African Faith and Family Institute and the Women's Interfaith Council in Northern Nigeria, show how interreligious dialogue can contribute to achieving SDG 5. In the final part of the discussion, I use the situation in Kenya to illustrate that interreligious dialogue can also be used against achieving SDG 5.

5.1 Primary data: What is said during interreligious dialogue on Gender Equality

5.1.1 UN report on SDG 5 Gender Equality

Every year, the United Nations publishes a report on the progress of the SDGs. The reports provide a global overview of the situation regarding the SDGs at that time, based on the latest available data on the indicators used to measure progress on an SDG. The first annual report from 2016 lists all SDGs and the indicators used for each SDG. SDG 5 is about achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls and is broken down into various indicators, such as discrimination against women, violence against women, child marriage, genital mutilation/cutting and the number of women in parliament. Based on the known figures from 2016 and the goals set for 2030, it can be assessed each year whether we are making progress per goal and whether this is happening fast enough (United Nations, 2016a).

The UN's 2023 annual report on the SDGs contains the progress of all individual indicators of the various SDGs. This report also discusses concerns about progress on SDG 5:

With only seven years remaining, a mere 15.4 per cent of Goal 5 indicators with data are "on track", 61.5 per cent are at a moderate distance and 23.1 per cent are far or very far off track from 2030 targets. (United Nations, 2023b, pp. 22).

For the individual indicators, this means, for example, that currently only 56 percent of married women between the ages of 15 and 49 are able to make decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and rights. There is progress in the field of arranged marriages, so today one in five young women (19 percent) are married before their 18th birthday, compared with one in four (25 percent) 25 years ago. This progress is mainly due to the progress that countries such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Maldives and Rwanda have made. In contrast, there has been very little progress in sub-Saharan Africa and stagnation in Latin America and the Caribbean. This means that in 2030 more than 9 million girls will still be married in the year 2030. An important factor for delaying SDG 5, but also for achieving other SDGs, is the COVID-19 pandemic.

To get closer to the target, the UN says political leadership, investments and comprehensive policy reforms are needed to remove systemic barriers. They argue that gender equality is an important cross-cutting objective, which means it should be a key focus of national policies, budgets and institutions (United Nations, 2023b). This shows that achieving SDG 5 is an important goal for the UN. The UN sets gender equality as a norm, whereby all women and girls must be empowered. As mentioned earlier when discussing governmentality, we cannot ignore the human factor in policy documents. Policies aimed at gender equality are made and implemented by people, where people are influenced by culture. Having a progressive attitude towards gender equality, as is more common in the West, therefore gives a bias towards the gender norms of more traditional cultures. This can therefore be seen as criticism towards the SDGs, because according to some, these goals are based too much on Western models and ideas (Ziai, 2024). By viewing Western models as truth, the perspective of non-Western countries is not sufficiently incorporated. It is therefore important to discuss policies from different cultural perspectives, for example through interreligious dialogue.

5.1.2 The G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20)

To find out how interreligious dialogue can contribute, we need to investigate how gender is discussed in interreligious dialogues. An example of a forum where interreligious dialogue takes place is the G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20). IF20 provides an annual platform

for religious institutions and initiatives to engage on global themes, such as the SDGs. This stems from the crucial role that religious institutions and beliefs play in the world, with IF20 seeking to reflect the rich diversity of institutions, ideas and values. IF20 therefore brings together interfaith and intercultural organizations, religious leaders, scientists, development and humanitarian organizations, and business and civil society actors with the aim of promoting global solutions. Various topics are discussed based on the priorities of the G20. The IF20 organizes this through various working groups that focus on recurring relevance to G20 policy priorities. This is mainly done through research, analysis and forum activities related to the UN SDGs. One of ten working groups is Gender Equality, which also looks at equal pay issues and trafficking/slavery (G20 Interfaith Forum, n.d.).

In the highlights document of IF20 2021, a section is devoted to the affirmations of women. In this document, the Interfaith Forum calls on G20 leaders and Member States to:

1. Fully engage faith actors in the strategies affirmed in the brief, supporting women's roles across social and economic sectors.

2. Engage with existing dialogical platforms where policymakers and faith actors explore ways to optimize faith engagement in gender equality and encourage the creation of similar dialogical platforms in states where such platforms do not yet exist.

3. Strengthen the evidence base on faith influence – both negative and positive – on social norms relating to gender equality, engaging faith leaders throughout the process, to improve understanding of the roles of faith actors.

4. Document, elevate, and support people, institutions, and initiatives leading change at the intersection of faith, gender equality, and women's leadership.

5. Advance faith literacy as it pertains to gender equality within all G20 Member States' institutions.

6. Improve data collection and harmonization among G20 member states and enhance cooperation in eradicating damaging stereotypes and creating public policies to protect women through the recovery period of COVID-19.
(G20 Interfaith Forum, 2021a)

They make this call because half of the world's population consists of women and female agents are committed to transformation. A good balance of power between men and

women will help benefit governments, societies and economies, and help solve problems in the world (G20 Interfaith Forum, 2021a).

In May 2022, the G20 Interfaith Forum held a Regional Conference in Baku called Multicultural Perspectives on the Forefront of Global Issues. In the second panel of the conference, entitled Tolerance and Multiculturalism: Regional and Religious Perspectives, one of the speakers was Audrey Kitagawa. Kitagawa is, among other things, chair of the IF20 Anti-Racism Initiative and co-chair of the IF20 Gender Equality Working Group (Wadsworth, 2022). As the fourth speaker, Kitagawa talks about a shrinking world, because technology is bringing people closer together and she talks about the important role women have in tolerance and multiculturalism. Specifically, Kitagawa identifies two ways in which cultural diversity, tolerance, and gender equality affect global issues. She first mentioned peace and human security. Kitagawa argues that women must be integrated into all peace and security efforts. She states that:

> Women must be included in the peace processes because it has been demonstrated that countries that include women in the peace process are more successful and sustainable. And societies that empower women are more peaceful than those that do not. Women are known to be significant and influential drivers of the peace process worldwide, partly because of their innate understanding and concern about the care of others. Women also bring their commitment to peace tables and their experience including their activities in civil society. (G20 Interfaith, 2022, 39:05-39:48).

Secondly, she discusses gender equality in more detail. Gender equality adds to the complex challenge of communities adapting to rapidly changing demographics, but women's rights must be taken into account in all efforts to increase tolerance. In countries known for their multiculturalism, Kitagawa says:

> It is not just the progressive laws or policies that make the difference It is also the traditional culture and values of the people which are the basis of the respect and understanding shown to people of other faiths and ethnicities. (G20 Interfaith, 2022, 42:52-43:10).

This quote shows a nuance about the way gender equality as a concept could be interpreted to achieve gender equality. In doing so, Kitagawa takes into account the

human factor of culture, which was not immediately apparent in the previously discussed UN policy document. Therefore, policy development must encourage tolerance, diversity and the important role of women. According to Kitagawa, Peace and sustainable development cannot happen without true equality, so discrimination must end and women must be able to fully participate in leadership and decision-making. In a multicultural context, this can be done by encouraging tolerance and celebrating diversity in policy, where women's engagement in multicultural communities serves as a positive example of the important role of women (G20 Interfaith, 2022).

The summary of the G20 Interfaith Forum of New Delhi from May 2023 discusses the various topics of the breakout sessions that took place. On the first day, various topics related to gender equality were discussed. The session Vulnerable Communions: Leaving No One Behind discusses the LGBTQ+ community that is not involved in many things because they are seen by religious groups as people who choose the wrong thing on their own. In order not to leave these and other groups behind, concrete efforts are needed from religious leaders, the government and the media. According to the summary: "Religious groups have a crucial role to play in challenging stigmatization and promoting inclusion towards these groups. One practice found effective was to focus first on empowering women—then women bring others who are left behind" (G20 Interfaith Forum, 2023b, pp. 18).

Another breakout session that took place on the same day, called Women's Empowerment, tied in well with this. The session recognizes that religion and women's empowerment have not always gone well together, which is why work on this theme must continue. This can be done, for example, by creating meeting platforms and bringing religious women together, but common threads must also be sought between the secular and the religious. Other important points in the field of women empowerment were:
- The importance of education for women empowerment.
- The importance of women's input in government mechanisms. Women, young girls and women from specific regions are often missing from these mechanisms, such as within the UN mechanisms that deal with women.
- Women's voices must be heard in finding solutions to conflict.
- Within religious contexts specifically, care must be taken to avoid falling back into gender ideals, whereby the voice of women fades into the background.
- The distinction between public and private spaces. Private spaces are prone to violence and gender inequality (G20 Interfaith Forum, 2023b)

5.1.3 The Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID)

The Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID) is an institute in Qatar focused on interfaith dialogue and intercultural collaborations. The DICID website states that Qatar is a country that stands for religious, cultural and ethnic diversity. In 2003, the first interfaith conference was held in Doha. Since then there has been an annual conference involving followers of Islam, Christianity and Judaism. As of 2007, DICID has a Qatari board of directors and an international advisory board that includes scholars from the three aforementioned religions (Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue, n.d.).

The theme of religion and human rights was central at the Thirteenth Doha International Conference for Interfaith Dialogue in 2018. One of the speakers during the third plenary session of the conference was Sotiris Roussos. Roussos was at that time Professor at the Department of Political Science and International Relations of the University of Peloponnese and Head of the Center for Mediterranean, Middle East and Islamic Studies. During this session he spoke for fifteen minutes about the role of religious minorities in the Middle East. He argued that the situation of religious minorities could be seen as a barometer that provides the world with an accurate measurement of the political, social and economic atmosphere in this region. He speaks, among other things, about various historical turning points that are linked to religious minorities. In the third part, he specifically discusses women's empowerment in religious minorities in the Middle East. He says that in the Middle East the situation of women is sidelined as state law is based on Sharia law. This can ensure that women in this situation are double discriminated against, because they are part of a minority that often has a conservative ideology to secure the preservation of their culture and religion. During violence and conflict, these same women are targets for rape and sexual assault. According to Roussos, there is little research into women within these minority groups, they also have no legitimate place to speak out and their opinions are not heard by policymaking centers. The policy often focuses on men and in this specific region it is often assumed that women are Muslim. Roussos proposes to adapt a set of principles for promoting religious coexistence tolerance and pluralism, particularly concerning women (Dicid_qa, 2018, 54:18-1:09:20).

5.1.4 The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

The last organization I want to discuss in the primary data is the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). IPU is the global organization of national parliaments, consisting of 179 members and 14 associate members. They want to promote peace through dialogue and

parliamentary diplomacy (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2023a). In June 2023, the IPU organized the Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Morocco. During this conference there was also a panel discussing on religious actors and parliamentarians as allies for promoting gender equality. The description of this panel describes that both parliamentarians and religious actors have a common interest in building a resilient society, in which all members feel included. Yet there is still a shortcoming in promoting gender equality. In parliaments this is due to the underrepresentation of women worldwide as parliamentarians, in religions this is often a traditional attitude. According to the panel:

> Religions have varying understandings of gender equality. In most faiths, leadership positions have been traditionally reserved for men, and women have less opportunity to participate in a formal manner. Regulations relating to gender roles also provide a barrier to gender equality (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2023b, pp. 4).

The discussion further emphasized the need for more and better education, describing education as one of the most important instruments of empowerment. To deliver strong education, both FBOs and politicians must be engaged and committed to establish educational frameworks. This must be done on a lasting scale, because "participation by women and youth should not just be a passing trend but should lead to their active participation in decision-making" (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2023c, pp. 18).

5.2 Discussion: How interreligious dialogue has contributed to achieve Gender Equality

The primary data shows us that many of the indicators of SDG 5 are not yet close enough to achieve the goal in 2030. Various problems that hinder gender equality are mentioned in the interreligious dialogues. In his speech at the DICID conference, Rousos speaks of the situation in the Middle East, where state law is based on Sharia law. This ensures that women are doubly discriminated against, because the women are part of a minority where a conservative ideology prevails. Women who belong to these more conservative minorities are targets for rape and sexual assault in violence and conflict (Dicid_qa, 2018). That interreligious dialogue can contribute to address violence against these women will be reflected in the first case study of the South African Faith and Family Institute. This case also reflects some of the recommendations that are made at the IF20. Where,

among other things, it is recommended that faith actors must fully engage in strategies. In addition, it is said that there should be cooperation with dialogical platforms where policymakers and faith actors explore ways to engage religion and gender equality. If these platforms do not yet exist, it is important that these platforms are created so that women, among others, can make their voices heard.

Another recommendation was made by Kitagawa at the IF20. She states that women's rights must be taken into account in all efforts to increase tolerance. That is why she believes that policy development must encourage tolerance, diversity and the important role of women. She says about this: "Women must be included in the peace processes because it has been demonstrated that countries that include women in the peace process are more successful and sustainable" (G20 Interfaith, 2022, 39:05-39:48). In the first case study I discuss an organization that tries to give women an active role in peacebuilding, the Women's Interfaith Council in Northern Nigeria. This organization often works within traditional boundaries.

During the IPU interreligious dialogue it was stated that in traditional religions inequality is caused by regulations surrounding gender roles. A rhetoric that then emerges is that women and men are equal, but have different roles to play (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2023b). Although it seems at first glance that gender roles can contribute to inequality, the second case study in Nigeria will give another view, in which gender roles can also be used to strengthen the position of women.

5.2.1 Case study 1: The South African Faith and Family Institute
The South African Faith and Family Institute (SAFFI) is an initiative founded in 2008 that calls on religious leaders to challenge patriarchal traditions, specifically traditions towards women and children. They do this, among other things, by challenging patriarchal traditions of abuse and violence from a theological perspective, promoting scriptural and theological teachings that encourage relationships where people live their full potential and by being a source for religious leaders and institutions (South African Faith and Family Institute, n.d.).

In South Africa, violence against women is a common problem, mainly due to the unequal power relationship between men and women. To combat this violence, several laws have been introduced, such as the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 and the Criminal law Amendment Act 32 of 2007. Although laws and policies are important in the fight against violence, these laws have not proven to be very effective in South Africa (Chirongoma, 2022). An explanation for this may be that the communities place their

religious rules above the law. This is in line with the situation in the Middle East that Rousos described in his speech at DICID. He stated that the position of women who are part of traditional religion must be further strengthened, because they are part of a group where conservative ideology prevails. Under this ideology, women are extra vulnerable to discrimination and violence occurs more often (Dicid_qa, 2018).

Because the power relationship in South Africa between men and women is partly determined by traditional religious ideas, the founder of SAFFI wants to address violence towards women from a religious perspective. They try to do this by mobilizing the religious leaders of African Traditional Religion, Bahai Faith, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism against violence against women by using resources within their religions. SAFFI does this by providing training to faith leaders. During these trainings, the aim is to create awareness about violence against women and to highlight the responsibilities of religious leaders in helping individuals affected by violence. In addition, there is room for religious leaders to share their experiences with violence and receive support from other religious leaders. By providing these trainings, SAFFI hopes that religious leaders will transform their thinking and knowledge about hierarchical power relations. Religious leaders have authority in their communities, which means their message is likely to be respected in society. This gives them a certain kind of power to influence the beliefs and behavior of their community. Based on their preaching and teaching, the relationship between men and women in society can change. In addition to training religious leaders, SAFFI also provides training on violence against women in various religious communities, starts campaigns to create awareness about the subject and tries to involve men in addressing violence against women (Chirongoma, 2022).

With the training, SAFFI has already reached more than 1,500 religious leaders. The training managed to change the patriarchal perceptions of some religious people. Some examples of this can be found on the SAFFI website, here a pastor writes that he believed that women had no say and that everything had to come from the man. The image of the pastor has changed after the training. He now preaches about domestic violence, and people come to him for help. Furthermore, it can be seen from the testimonials that there is more understanding around the subject and that religious leaders are starting the conversation on violence in their communities (South African Faith and Family Institute, n.d.). This shows that SAFFI can make a difference within religious communities, but the question remains how this contributes to sustainable peace and the SDGs, specifically SDG 5 gender equality.

SAFFI's work contributes to the SDGs in various ways. First, less violence against women contributes to economic development, because it decreases the demand on health and legal issues. In a report on the costs of gender-based violence in South Africa, the costs are estimated at 4 billion (Khumalo, Msimang & Bollbach, 2014). Although it is an estimated amount, it does provide an indication of the costs that gender-based violence can entail. By reducing violence, the money can be used for development in other areas, for example by focusing on economic growth. Furthermore, SAFFI's mission is aligned with SDG 5 Gender Equality and SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities. Specifically, by addressing violence against women, SAFFI contributes to SDG 5 target 2 which aims to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls. In a country like South Africa where 90% of the population adheres to a religion, SAFFI, by engaging with religious people, provides a way to develop strategies against gender-based violence. In addition to SDG 5, SAFFI also contributes to achieving SDG 10. SDG 10 target 2 is about reducing inequalities and promoting equal treatment of all irrespective of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion and economic status. In the case of SAFFI, this is aimed at women, but they do contribute to reducing inequality in general (Chirongoma, 2022). SAFFI's goal to reduce violence against women clearly shows how strongly linked the various SDGs are, as described by Peters and Peters (2021). By committing themselves to violence against women, they contribute to achieving both SDG 5 and SDG 10.

5.2.2 Case study 2: The Women's Interfaith Council in Northern Nigeria

Northern Nigeria is a region in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which consists of three geopolitical zones. Muslims and Christians have lived peacefully side by side in the region for centuries, but in recent decades, there has been problematic relations between Muslims and Christians in the area. This has escalated due to the unstable socio-political situation in the country. Many women in the region are impoverished and religious arguments are used to discriminate against women. These developments are a threat to achieving SDG 5 and SDG 10 (McGarvey, 2022). One of the things that came back from the G20 Interfaith Forum in New Delhi was that women's voices must be heard in finding solutions to conflict. This is also what the Women's Interfaith Council (WIC) aims to achieve. The WIC is an initiative started in 2010 by Kathleen McGarvey. She tries together with female religious leaders to give women a voice in dialogue and peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria.

Progress for women in politics is slowly increasing in Nigeria, but women make up less than 10 percent of executive and judiciary power at all levels. In addition, there is a tendency in Nigeria to have men as leaders, especially at the religious and traditional level. It is assumed that these men can speak for the entire community, including women. When it comes to peacekeeping, women are often depicted as victims and not seen as potential peacemakers. In her speech at the G20 Interfaith Forum, Kitagawa spoke about the importance of integrating women into the peacebuilding process, because she believes this ensures a more successful and sustainable peace. In Northern Nigeria, the WIC tries to do this by allowing men and women to work together in a participatory way. This involves subtly and diplomatically trying to avoid situations where one gender dominates and claims to know more about the interests of the other gender (McGarvey, 2022).

In a panel discussions during an IPU interreligious dialogues it was stated that:

Religions have varying understandings of gender equality. In most faiths, leadership positions have been traditionally reserved for men, and women have less opportunity to participate in a formal manner. Regulations relating to gender roles also provide a barrier to gender equality (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2023b, pp. 4).

From a Western perspective, these gender-based roles are seen as negative for achieving gender equality. From this perspective, traditional gender roles give women the dual responsibility between work and family. In this way, it is difficult for many women to work full-time, especially when they have become mothers (Fluchtmann & Patrini, 2023). From a Western perspective, the traditional role of motherhood has a negative effect on gender equality. In non-Western countries this perspective is sometimes different, precisely because the culture or religion strongly adheres to traditional gender roles. When women step outside this traditional role, this can have negative consequences for their position within society. That is why in these countries it is sometimes better to let women actively participate in peacebuilding, for example, by coming up with solutions within the existing gender roles. In this way, local trends are taken into account and inherent biases of policy are challenged. Like the biases described in the primary data on the UN SDG 5 reports.

In Nigeria, for example, it is accepted by people of all religions and ethnic groups that specific gender roles are true to human nature. Most women's groups strive to work within traditional boundaries. In Nigeria, this is done by insisting on a woman's primary responsibility, motherhood. The mother role has been recognized by religious communities, and the WIC uses this role as the most important way to allow women to play a role in promoting peace and development. In 2017, the WIC organized a Mothers School for Prevention of Violent Extremism, which was a three-day training to train female leaders of faith groups. These women were then able to pass on their training to members of their groups. Topics covered in the training included the role of women in community development, building security infrastructure in society and understanding political violence and radicalization.

The WIC's training will not increase the percentage of women in politics in Nigeria in the short term, but it will strengthen their position and influence in society. Like one of the recommendations that were made during the IF20, the WIC gives women a platform to speak and strengthens their voice by letting them speak as one. The executive council is made up of leaders from every major female faith group in the region. By strengthening the position of women within society, they work together towards a deeper analysis and transformation of cultural, social and political dynamics. When these dynamics change the dominant religious discourse will also change. In this way, these women contribute to achieving SDG 5 and SDG 10, because they promote women's power and thus tackle inequality (McGarvey, 2022).

5.2.3 Negative impact of interreligious dialogue on Gender Equality

The examples from Northern Nigeria and South Africa have shown that interreligious dialogue can contribute to achieving the SDGs. Yet interreligious dialogue can also have the opposite effect. This means that, for example, religious leaders will stand together to hold on to their conservative traditions and thus go against some targets of the SDGs that are not in line with their faith. For example, in 2021, leaders of major churches in Ghana united in denouncing homosexuality as a 'perversion', endorsing legislation that could become one of the toughest anti-LGBTQ policies in Africa at that time. The same article also speaks to a prominent gay activist in Uganda, who states that church leaders are the main drivers of homophobia in Africa. According to the activist, this is also an attempt not to lose followers to Pentecostal Churches that pursue an aggressive anti-LGBTQ policy (Muhumuza, Magome, Asiedu & Asadu, 2021). These ideas from the church about the

LGBTQ community are also reflected in a study about how Kenyan religious leaders view same-sex sexuality.

In Kenya, religion plays an important role in shaping public discourse on sexuality because religion is fully present in the social life. The way religious leaders speak about people from the LGBTQ community will influence the way these individuals are treated. It is important to know the perspective of the religious leaders, because without the support of the religious leaders, it seems unlikely that the lives of LGBTQ people will improve in Kenya. To see what the perspective of these religious leaders is, a quantitative study was conducted. For this study, 212 Catholic, Muslim and Protestant leaders from both the city and the countryside completed a questionnaire. This questionnaire is about the perspective of the religious leaders on same-sex sexuality and gender nonconformity seen from their religion, and the questionnaire also addresses their perspective of the legal system in Kenya. The religious leaders were asked what their religious institutions' view on same-sex sexuality was. The majority said that their religion had official teachings on human sexuality and that this was described in holy scriptures. 98.9% agreed when asked whether their religion only allowed a man to have sex with a woman. 96.3% agreed that their religion did not allow same-sex marriage. Religious leaders' own attitudes toward same-sex sexuality seem somewhat less negative than the doctrine of their faith. This conclusion was reached after 47.1% of participants said their overall opinion of gay men is mostly positive. Under the participant the most common conception on same-sex sexuality was that it was a person's choice to be gay, for example.

In the research, some of the participants indicated that their religious view is separate from the law. Sam-sex marriage is illegal under Kenyan law, but accepting same-sex marriage in Kenya requires more than just changing the law. 87.0% of participants indicated that it would be against their religion if same-sex sexuality was decriminalized. In addition, half of the participants indicated that the values of their religion do not match what is written in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This states that all people are equal in dignity and rights, and this is the basis for equality and nondiscrimination. These results show that not everyone fully supports human rights. In addition, Freedom of religion is included in the constitution of Kenya. Religious leaders mainly interpret this as freedom for their own religious beliefs, while FoRB also gives other religions and churches the freedom to embrace and bring together LGBTQ people. In addition, religious regulations cannot be imposed on people who are not followers of the religion, but this is just not reflected in the beliefs of the religious leaders. A clear example of this is the endorsement of violence in preserving social values by a minority. Some

religious leaders also state that the constitution does not apply to the LGBTQ community (Mbote, Sandfort, Waweru & Zapfel, 2018).

The religious leaders who use FoRB as an argument against accepting LGBTQ people are a good example of how groups mishandled FoRB to undermine other human rights. One problem is that: "Cultural wars involving religious issues typically rest upon the assumption that there is an inherent contradiction between the human right to FoRB and other human rights norms, like the elimination of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity", but this is not reality and how FoRB is intended (Bielefeldt, Pinto & Peterson, 2022, pp. 4). FoRB is a human right for everyone, therefore no group of women should be forced to choose between FoRB and other human rights, such as body integrity, equality and sexual autonomy (Bielefeldt, Pinto & Peterson, 2022).

> In the face of widespread misperceptions, one has to emphasize again and again that FoRB does not uphold dogmatic truth claims, shield the integrity of traditions, or defend the reputation of religions. Instead, FoRB protects human beings in their freedom to find their ways in the vast area of religious or non-religious convictions and concomitant individual and communitarian practices. It is this consistent systematic focus on human beings as rights holders that further connects FoRB with other human rights (Bielefeldt, Pinto & Peterson, 2022, pp. 7).

The attitude of religious leaders who participated in the survey does not indicate a positive outlook for making progress on SDG 5 in Kenya. The hope lies in the views of religious leaders that do not always coincide with formal doctrines, perhaps they can serve as an instrument for promoting social acceptance. Furthermore, it is necessary to provide information about the constitution to, for example, religious leaders. What this research also shows is that interreligious dialogue can also have the opposite effect on achieving the SDGs. By standing together behind their traditional beliefs, it is difficult to initiate change. A more general criticism from James Patton aimed at more conservative religious communities is that ultraconservative religious actors can be marginalized in interfaith relations. This can result in isolation which contributes to more extremist ideologies (Patten, 2018).

This is partly reflected in the primary sources that I examined. In the interreligious dialogues I examined, I missed the arguments and fierce debates that Cornille mentioned (Cornille, 2013). I got the feeling that the ultraconservative movements or more extreme voices were not always represented. This partly makes sense if you look at Mitias'

argument. Mitias argued that the three basic principles for conducting an interreligious dialogue are mutual understanding, equality and empathy. He also states that a rejection of hard exclusivism is necessary (Mitias, 2021). Patten agrees with this by saying that it is too easy to simply let more extreme voices become part of a dialogue. It must be carefully examined what factors shape group dynamics, which factors drive behavior and what the social power hierarchy is, so that positive change can be initiated and promoted. It is precisely the communities that have more violent actors where violent conflicts should be discussed. But the difficulty remains that these groups are often difficult to reach and that they are less open to encounters with people who think differently (Patten, 2018).

5.2.4 Conclusion

The various examples from this chapter show that interreligious dialogue can have both a positive and a negative contribution to achieving SDG 5. However, in the African context it can be seen that religion has an important role in society. Since countries in Africa are only making small progress in achieving SDG 5, it is interesting to see whether religious leaders and religious communities can contribute, so that more progress can be made. Like McGarvey pointed out that religion may not be the answer to development, an understanding of religion in people's social life can contribute to development.

6. Analytical chapter - SDG 13 Climate Action

To answer the research question of how interreligious dialogue can contribute to the United Nations' policy for sustainable peace, I would look specifically in this chapter at interreligious dialogue and SDG 13 Climate Action. I do this by first looking at the primary data in which I l first look at the progress and the individual targets of SDG 13. Next, I want to look at interreligious dialogue at the United Nations Environment Program and what findings and recommendations are being made at the G20 Interfaith Forum about environmental issues. As a final primary source, I use two encyclical letters from Pope Francis, because these letters have a great global influence in both the Catholic communities and beyond.

After examining the primary data, I would like to further explore the problems and recommendations I found in these sources in the discussion. I do this by using two case studies. The first case study is the Church of South India, where I look at the church and its religious leaders and how they can serve as an example for their community. The second case study is about the Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa and how they integrate key stakeholders. After that I want to look at possible limitations and criticisms. Based on these two case studies and the limitations, I want to show both the possibilities of interreligious dialogue and the caveats for achieving SDG 13.

6.1 Primary data: What is said during interreligious dialogue on Climate Action

6.1.1 UN reports on SDG 13 Climate Action

Although some people seem to be affected more than others, climate change is a threat that affects the entire world. Some catastrophic consequences are already visible and that is why SDG 13 states that we must take action now to combat climate change and its impacts. SDG 13 consists of five targets that include strengthening adaptive capacity to climate-related disasters, integrating climate change measures into policy, building knowledge about climate change, implementing the UN framework convention and promoting mechanisms for planning and management. The last target is also partly linked to SDG 5, because increasing the capacity for effective planning and management of climate change focuses on the least developed countries. The emphasis hereby is, among other things, on women, young people and marginalized communities. Through

education, innovation and fulfillment of obligations, the UN states that necessary changes can be implemented. These changes also provide opportunities in other areas, such as modernizing infrastructure and creating new jobs. This can promote global prosperity and protect the planet (The Global Goals, 2023).

The 2023 UN annual report describes the progress on SDG 13. This description does not bode well for the future and states that the pace and scale of current plans are not enough to effectively tackle climate change. The report therefore calls for transformative action with more ambition towards climate-resilient development and achieving net-zero emissions. The fact that achieving these goals is not yet on the right track is reflected in the latest report of the IPCC. This report states that human activities, such as fossil fuel burning and unsustainable consumption, have caused global warming of 1.1°C above pre-industrial levels. This makes it appear that the critical 1.5°C tipping point will already be achieved in 2035. Currently, this increase means that vulnerable communities are hit hard by extreme climate events, despite the fact that these communities have often contributed the least to climate change. This resulted in these communities having a fifteen times higher mortality rate between 2010 and 2020, due to, for example, drought and floods. Rising sea levels further exacerbate these problems, as approximately 900 million people live in low-altitude coastal areas. If sea levels continue to rise, these people will no longer be able to live in the low coastal areas, which will probably trigger a huge migration flow.

It costs a lot of money to help developing countries combat climate change, but the promise to mobilize $100 billion in climate finance annually has not been fulfilled. In 2020, a total of $83.3 billion was provided to developing countries. A good step in improving financial support is the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund. This fund provides grants to countries most affected by climate change. As long as the earth continues to warm, problems will increase and the effectiveness of adaptation measures will decrease, which is why it is important for SDG 13 to act as quickly as possible (United Nations, 2023b).

6.1.2 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

One place where the UN itself brings together FBOs and religion to discuss environmental issues is the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). UNEP is a UN program that is a global authority in the field of environment. UNEP's mission is to inspire and inform countries and peoples to improve people's quality of life and protect future generations. To do this, they work together with governments, civil society, private individuals and UN

entities. Some issues that UNEP focuses on are the recovery of the ozone layer, protecting the world's oceans and promoting a green inclusive economy. To stimulate change, UNEP tackles the root causes of climate change, loss of nature and biodiversity and pollution (UNEP, n.d.). In doing so, they contribute to achieving various SDGs, including SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 14 Life Below Water, SDG 15 Life On Land and the SDG that is central to this chapter, SDG 13 Climate Action.

In 2019, UNEP held its Faith for Earth Dialogue, in which 135 faith leaders participated. During this event there were several speakers and organizations presenting their views and experiences on various topics. What emerged is that a move towards sustainable solutions cannot occur without integrating key stakeholders, such as FBOs, religious leaders, youth, indigenous communities and women. The Faith for Earth Dialogue included several FBOs committed to a more sustainable world, such as the Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa, which provides knowledge-sharing workshops and waste management training, and the Multi-faith Collaboration for Rainforest Protection in Indonesia, they merge contextual meanings of religious teachings with aspects of rainforest protection.

The recommendations of the 2019 Faith for Earth Dialogue are primarily aimed at disseminating, informing and educating the environmental information produced by the UN. For example, it is stated that partners of the initiative should continue to disseminate information using normative language and the initiative should be shared through personal and digital interaction. It is important that partners stay in close contact with other members of the initiative to continue building on dialogue. These interreligious dialogues are taken to a practical level with the establishment of working groups in the field of energy and education. Finally, partners will work with the UN Environment's Civil Society Unit to establish a subgroup in which FBOs are clearly recognized during, among others, UN Environment Assembly meetings (UNEP, 2019). The recommendations are clearly aimed at increasing the initiative by engaging more partners and strengthening the position of FBOs.

In 2022 there was a new Faith for Earth Dialogue initiative organized by UNEP. During one of the dialogues, discussions were held about what is changing the future and what is expected of FBOs. A discussion that arose here is the relationship between faith and science and the importance that FBOs speak about environmental issues and are included in the discussions about this. It was stated that it is important to have dialogue between faith and science:

Because from scientific partners say we can describe but we don't have the real driving forces to change and I think that from the faith communities we have the driving forces, we have the ethics, we have the narratives where we want to go and that should be a part of what our contribution should be to this (Abumoghli, 2022, 1:16:01-1:16:20).

The progress that UNEP has made between 2019 and 2022 is reflected in the 2022 interfaith statement. When we compare this with the 2019 recommendations, we see that more and more partners have joined UNEP's initiative. In addition, fifty-six FBOs have now been accredited and participate in the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders program, this accreditation recognizes the importance of FBOs in environmental discussions. In addition, key religious actors have agreed on a statement on plastic pollution in rivers, oceans and on land. This declaration had already been signed by 45 religious leaders and faith representatives before the UNEP event in 2022 (UNEP, 2022). The growing number of partners of the UNEP initiative and the idea that religious communities have the driving forces to contribute on a larger scale, is a positive prospect for greater support to tackle climate problems.

6.1.3 G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20)

As in the analytical chapter on SDG 5 Gender Equality, we use the interreligious dialogues of the G20 Interfaith Forum as part of the primary sources. The G20 Interfaith Forum focuses on insight and recommendations that respond to and help shape the G20. This makes IF20 an important player in the field of interreligious dialogue, because it helps shape global policy agendas, such as the G20. In addition to the previously appointed Gender Equality working group, IF20 also has a working group focused on the environment, called Religion and the Environment. This working group includes several relevant SDGs, such as SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 14 Life Below Water, SDG 15 Life on land and SDG 13 Climate Actions (G20 Interfaith Forum, n.d.).

In 2020, IF20 released a policy brief on interfaith action for rainforest protection. Tropical rainforests play a crucial role in mitigating climate change and preserving biodiversity. In addition, the rainforest supports the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of peoples. Protecting the rainforest is therefore an important topic for climate action. The report discusses various responses from religious leaders and FBOs. For example, interfaith coalitions are said to be actively involved in preserving intact rainforests and advocating against deforestation. In addition, the important role of religious leaders is

emphasized: "With moral authority and ability to shape community values, religious leaders and institutions are well positioned to influence local, national, and global action on" (G20 Interfaith Forum, 2020, pp. 4-5). The reports recommendations also specifically mention protecting the rights of indigenous people. The way indigenous people view nature is fundamentally different, because indigenous people do not separate themselves from nature and environment. They see themselves as part of nature, most indigenous languages also have no word for nature (Andersson, 2021). With this view of nature, indigenous communities for centuries have argued that they have their own climate sciences that are in line with what is proposed by mainstream science.

> The lack of attention given to the critical contribution of indigenous climate knowledge and spiritualities continues to promote a one-dimensional narrative where the indigenous/native communities have often been seen through the lens of a "victims narrative" unable to help themselves (G20 Interfaith Forum, 2023, pp. 1).

It is therefore important that indigenous knowledge and spiritualities are given central recognition to inform national and global climate strategies and policies. The report argues that recognizing and defending indigenous people's claims to ancestral lands can help combat the encroaching industry in those same areas. That is why it is important that G20 leaders and religious leaders speak out against illegal seizures of indigenous land. By returning the land to the indigenous peoples, they can use traditional agricultural practices that mitigate the impact of climate change. Furthermore, the report recommends that the contributions of religious leaders should continue to be recognized so that faith communities can work together on future initiatives (G20 Interfaith Forum, 2020).

At the G20 Interfaith Forum 2021 the Faith Action to Address Climate Change was discussed. It was stated that religious leaders and communities can and must play an active role in policy responses to climate change and mobilizing support from citizens. The reasons given for this include the large share of the world population that is affiliated with a religious community, substantial material assets of religious communities where direct action is possible for the benefit of the climate, and the numerous religious and interfaith initiatives that focus on climate issues. The magnitude of climate change requires active and great participation, which is why it is very important that different sectors, such as governments, companies and FBOs, work together. Furthermore, religious leaders and faith communities can contribute, for example, by serving as an

example within their community and specifically combating climate change. In addition, religious communities can contribute practically by, for example, applying an emission baseline on buildings or land owned by the community (G20 Interfaith Forum, 2021b).

Besides discussing the role that religious actors can and should play, the Faith Action to Address Climate Change report provides recommendations for policymakers. In the document they recommend that:

- Faith communities with G20 support should implement an 'SDGs Road Map' to clarify and define their contributions to the achievement of the Agenda 2030. A supported, ambitious, momentum building framework would ensure that faith groups – and the wider world – understand what their contribution is and help draw in the necessary partners and technical skills.
- The G20 should support faith-linked education systems, thus faith-related schools, universities and institutions, to inform new generations about climate sensitive practices and solutions.
- Multireligious initiatives on climate deserve direct, explicit G20 support
- The G20 should support faith community implementation of science-based targets to curb their emissions from their massive assets. This would offer faith groups and institutions a comprehensive, transparent framework – from commitment through action to certification – to guide their work implementing emission reduction targets.
- The G20 should support investment schemes for faith organizations to implement energy refurbishment of buildings to lower their emissions, and develop sustainable land-use plans (G20 Interfaith Forum, 2021b, pp. 2).

6.1.4 Encyclicals Laudato Si' and Laudate Deum

The encyclical Laudato Si' is an important document that Pope Francis promulgated in 2015. In the document he talks about environmental and climate problems and the consequences for the poorest and vulnerable animals and nature. He provides solutions and calls for an ecological conversion. This turnaround is drastic, and the economy, politics, society and the church must focus on preserving the created, improving the living conditions of the weakest and on the well-being of future generations (Pope Francis, 2015). The encyclical Laudato Si is not an example of religious dialogue, yet it is an important primary source for this study. The encyclical was written by Pope Francis, the head of the Roman Catholic Church and someone with worldwide prestige. There has

been a lot of response to the letter worldwide from both the Catholic community and other faith communities. In addition, the Pope also refers to other religious traditions in the letter, saying "We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions and also in the Bible" (Pope Francis, 2015, paragraph 222). Although the letter is not directly an interreligious dialogue, it is discussed in various religious dialogues (Kruse, 2017).

On October 4, 2023, Pope Francis promulgated Laudate Deum. This letter is a follow-up to Laudato Si' from 2015, but this time the Pope states that the situation is even more dire. He says that the global temperature has continued to rise and it can no longer be denied that the origin of this lies with humans. That is why the Pope calls in this letter to rethink our use of power and reconfigure multilateralism. In this letter, the Pope also calls on believers of other religions to take action.

> I cannot fail in this regard to remind the Catholic faithful of the motivations born of their faith. I encourage my brothers and sisters of other religions to do the same, since we know that authentic faith not only gives strength to the human heart, but also transforms life, transfigures our goals and sheds light on our relationship to others and with creation as a whole (Pope Francis, 2023, paragraph 61).

Pope Francis states that humanity is intimately connected with the rest of God's creation and this applies not only to the Catholic faith, but also to other faiths. There is once again a lot of attention worldwide for the Pope's letter. The letter is praises both by Catholic and environmental leaders and is a critical reminder of the important role leaders have (Payne, 2023).

6.2 Discussion: How interreligious dialogue has contributed to achieve Climate Action

The primary data shows us that the targets of SDG 13 Climate Action will not be achieved if we continue like this. I will now delve deeper into the findings of the interreligious dialogues from the primary sources, by using two case studies. The first case study is the case of the Church of South India. This initiative uses religious leaders as an example for reaching their large communities, like it was addressed in the G20 Interfaith Forum. IF20 also stated that the church community can serve as an example by applying an emission

baseline on buildings or land owned by the community. The Church of South India also tries to do this in several ways.

At the IF20 it was stated that integrating key stakeholders is important, because tackling climate problems requires major participation. Religious communities can contribute to this, because a large part of the world's population adheres to a religion and religious communities have substantial material assets. The second case study will delve deeper in integration key-stakeholders by the example of the Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa. Another main area of this initiative is education and creating awareness, which is in line with both the recommendations made in UNEP and IF20 on disseminating, informing and educating climate issues. Being a Catholic initiative, it is also interesting to reflect the encyclical letter of Pope Francis in this case study.

6.2.1 Case study 1: The Church of South India

One of the things that came back in the interreligious dialogues is that religious leaders and religious institutions can serve as examples for their communities. This can be done by starting a conversation in their community, but also by taking practical steps themselves. The IF20 gave as an example of a practical step that religious communities will apply emission baselines on the buildings and land owned by the community (G20 Interfaith Forum, 2021b). An example where this is already being done is the Church of South India (CSI). CSI is a united Protestant Church located in India. The church was created from a merger of parts of the Anglican Church of India, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. The church has continued to expand and in the early 21st century CSI had approximately 3.8 million members, with approximately 14,000 congregations. (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2013).

The special thing about the CSI is that the church mentions ecological concerns in their constitution. The church therefore states: "Our objective is to define the Eco-Church fellowship and to play an active role in the spiritual-environmental revolution and to encourage an eco-friendly life style" (CSI Madhya Kerala, n.d., Mission Statement). They argue that Christians are partly responsible for the current environmental crisis, mainly because of their misunderstanding of the scriptures. God's words about loving your neighbors must include all creation. According to the church, Christ is in every part of creation, which is why they strive for a fundamental spiritual relationship of humanity with God, the Earth and all its creatures. They call on other parishes to include ecological issues in their worship, and encourage active participation of fellow Christians through prayer, partnership and involvement (CSI Madhya Kerala, n.d.). That the interpretation of

scriptures also can have a other impact on people's views on climate problems will be further reflected in the limitations part of this chapter.

By including ecological concerns in their constitution and to encourage active participation, the CSI sets a good example in mobilizing their community, as recommended during the 2021 Interfaith Forum. This role of encouraging behavioral change from religious actors is very important, because religious actors have a wide reach, have relationships that governments and NGOs do not have and they can respond to people's spiritual needs (Dickson & Petito, 2022). In addition to the mobilizing role, the CSI as a church also takes practical steps to serve as an example in their community, for example by implementing the Green Protocol. With the Green Protocol they try to spread a normative lifestyle change for a sustainable life. The Green Protocol is a document that has been approved by the CSI Synod and requests parishes to follow climate action-based guidelines. The document encourages, among other things, saving water and energy, avoiding plastic and dealing with waste responsibly. An example of these guidelines is significantly reducing plastic material during church services and receptions. This is done, for example, by serving drinks in glasses, while previously this was done in plastic cups. In addition, packets of vegetable seeds are distributed to encourage people to grow vegetables at home and young trees are planted during the wedding ceremony (UNEP, 2019).

With the Green Protocol, CSI responds to several recommendations made during the interreligious dialogue of the Interfaith Forum in 2021. The recommendations they respond to are:

- Faith communities with G20 support should implement an 'SDGs Road Map' to clarify and define their contributions to the achievement of the Agenda 2030.
- The G20 should support faith community implementation of science-based targets to curb their emissions from their massive assets.
- The G20 should support investment schemes for faith organizations to implement energy refurbishment of buildings to lower their emissions, and develop sustainable land-use plans (G20 Interfaith Forum, 2021b, pp. 2).

In this way, the CSI serves as a good example of how FBOs can work on these recommendations. The G20 could therefore use CSI as an example for schemes and SDG Road maps for other FBOs.

6.2.2 Case study 2: The Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa

The literature showed that an important part of sustainable peacebuilding is the inclusion of all stakeholders at any level (Emkic, 2018). This was also reflected in the primary data as an important element for climate action. In their program UNEP mentioned different key stakeholders like FBOs, religious leaders, youth, indigenous communities and women. By integrating these stakeholders, greater and more inclusive participation is possible. One initiative that focuses on integrating key stakeholders is the Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA).

CYNESA is a platform for young Catholics in Africa that promotes responsible stewardship of the environment. The initiative is inspired by the message of Pope John Paul II, who in 1990 called for the need to increase ecological awareness and express this through concrete programs and initiatives. In the Encyclical Laudato Si, Pope Francis refers several times to Pope John Paul II. Pope John Paul II warned that people often seem to see no meaning for their natural environment other than its immediate use and consumption, that is why he is calling for a global ecological conversion. In Laudato Si it is stated that: "The destruction of the human environment is extremely serious, not only because God has entrusted the world to us men and women, but because human life is itself a gift which must be defended from various forms of debasement " (Pope Francis, 2015, paragraph 5). The reference to John Paul, but also to other popes and Catholic saints in Laudato Si shows that Catholicism has long been concerned with the environment. It is therefore not surprising that there are Catholic initiatives that focus on the environment, such as CYNESA.

Since its founding in 2012, CYNESA has attracted more than 1,000 young Catholic leaders from 10 African countries. Together they have as mission:

> To help young Catholics in sub-Saharan Africa – their movements and communities, individually and with their colleagues – to respond to the twin challenges of environmental degradation and climate change in an effective, coordinated and evangelical manner, culturally sensitive and spiritually grounded (CYNESA, n.d.-b, first paragraph).

The activities that CYNESA organizes to achieve their mission are focused on three main areas: education and awareness, network and advocacy training and supporting concrete

action plans at local level. They are specifically aimed at young people, for example training young Catholics in advocacy on environmental sustainability. In addition, they seek to encourage young people to take action in their communities and schools by developing appropriate sustainable practices (CYNESA, n.d.-a). At CYNESA, this focus on young people as key stakeholders stems from the belief that youth are the primary stakeholders in climate action. Therefore, it is necessary to think about ways in which young people can be involved in projects in a meaningful way (UNEP, 2019).

The idea that young people are key stakeholders against climate change is also reflected in the Handbook of Climate Change Communication. In this book, young people are recognised as the leaders of tomorrow, especially in times where climate is an urgent issue. It is therefore stated that: "The youth has a great potential as change agent in climate change management and preventive actions. Further benefits would arise by engaging the youth in the climate change policy- and decision-making processes, and in the high-impact climate actions" (Bassar, Import, Yanindraputri, 2018, pp. 69). In order for young people to be part of climate action, they must be recognized as key stakeholders. Dozsa therefore concluded that:

> The general legal framework for children's environmental rights needs to be strengthened by safeguarding principles that ensure children's rights to public participation in environmental matters, including the principle of meaningful participation that requires the fulfilment of the other two pillars: access to information and access to justice (Dozsa, 2023, pp. 217).

This can be done by recognizing youth as important stakeholders in the field of climate change and to provide them with institutionalized spaces of public participation in international climate change governance (Dozsa, 2023).

CYNESA has several projects in addition to projects for young people. They also have projects aimed at other stakeholders in the field of climate action, for example women. The Multi-Faith Women Leaders' Advocacy Training is a project aimed at female religious leaders from different faith communities. In 2017, the project held training courses on clean waste management. Approximately forty female leaders from different religious backgrounds were present at this training, including Christians, Muslims and Brahma Kumaris (CYNESA, n.d.-c). During these training Doll Osman Abdi, a young Muslim girl from Mombasa, talks about her experiences with CYNESA. She said:

I can now proudly share with my community the skills I have learnt and I can come up with a viable advocacy campaign that will educate and enlighten on individual and collective social action on proper waste management with a long term, sustainable objective. I am a staunch believer of the adage, "Education Has No Curfew." Since it is a learning world, we should all try to learn a thing or two each passing day (Abdi, n.d., fifth paragraph)

The importance and power of education that Doll Osman Abdi mentioned here is also evident in the primary data. One of the recommendations of IF20 was that the G20 should support faith-linked education systems to inform new generations about climate sensitive practices and solutions. In Laudato Si is a specific chapter on Ecological Education and Spirituality. Pope Francis says in this chapter:

There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions, and it is wonderful how education can bring about real changes in lifestyle. Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us (Pope Francis, 2015, paragraph 211).

According to Pope Francis, this education can take place in a variety of settings, including the church. He states that:

All Christian communities have an important role to play in ecological education. It is my hope that our seminaries and houses of formation will provide an education in responsible simplicity of life, in grateful contemplation of God's world, and in concern for the needs of the poor and the protection of the environment (Pope Francis, 2015, paragraph 213).

In this way, CYNESA's mission and activities fit in well with Pope Francis' call in Laudato Si. Through their activities they inform and educate important key stakeholders, such as young people and women, about the things they can do to contribute. In this way, CYNESA is an example of how FBOs and religious communities can make an important contribution to achieving SDG 13 through education.

6.2.3 Negative impact of interreligious dialogue on Climate Action

In the first case study, CSI refers to the scriptures, which state that Christ is in every part of creation. In doing so, they argue that Christians should be committed to the environment, because God is part of this. Although CSI uses the scriptures to activate their community for climate action, there are also many Christians who do not think that climate change is a big problem or that humans are causing it. This conclusion can be drawn on the basis of a survey by the Pew Research Center in which they juxtaposes Americans' thoughts on climate with their religious beliefs. Some interesting findings in this study are about the relationship between the cause of climate change and religious movements. When asked how serious the problem of global climate change is, 70% of people who were not religious said they considered it a very serious problem. When asked the same question, only 34% of Evangelicals said they considered it a very serious problem. This striking difference is also reflected in the question about the cause of global warming. Only 32% of the Evangelicals say that human activity is the cause, as opposed to 66% of people who are not affiliated with a religious movement (Alper, 2023).

A large part of the Christians interviewed agree that God has given man the duty to protect the planet and that the Bible contains lessons about the environment. According to the report, it appears that views on climate are determined more by political views. The report states that:

> Highly religious Americans are more inclined than others to identify with or lean toward the Republican Party, and Republicans tend to be much less likely than Democrats to believe that human activity (such as burning fossil fuels) is warming the Earth or to consider climate change a serious problem (Alper, 2023, pp. 6).

The report gives another possible cause for the striking fact that Christians see climate change less as a problem despite the duty to protect the planet, apocalyptic thinking. Apocalyptic thinking refers to people who think that the world is going to end. Apocalyptic thinking occurs in various worldviews and movements, also in Christianity. In Christianity, apocalyptic thinking is about the end of times, the end of the world as we know it. This is based on various apocalyptic passages from the Bible. For example, Revelation states that according to John's visions, a global catastrophe is coming, and history, time, and the world as we know it are all coming to an end (Sutton, 2016). Contemporary disasters, such as floods and epidemics, are seen as harbingers of the

approaching end. This is seen as something positive, because it paves the way for the return of Christ.

Among Christians there are different views on apocalyptic events and the end times. 58% of Americans do not believe the world is nearing its end, while 76% of Historical Black Protestants and 63% of Evangelical congregations say the end is near (Alper, 23). There are examples of apocalyptic thinking not only in the Christian faith, for example in the Islamic tradition there is spoken about plagues and a final earthquake that will tear the earth apart. In Buddhism, time is cyclical, not linear, making apocalypse both an end and a beginning. When the apocalypse happens a new social and moral order starts (Dias, 2020). This apocalyptic thinking could be a problem in the fight against climate change, because the report also states that: "people who believe humanity is living in its last days may be less concerned about the dangers of climate change than those who do not think the world is soon coming to an end" (Alper, 2023, pp. 23). Although the interreligious dialogues from the primary data attempt to combat climate change, the opposite could also happen. If different religious movements jointly recognize that climate change is part of the end times, this could induce a passive attitude towards climate protection. This does not promote the achievement of SDG 13.

The report from the Pew Research Center also included other movements and religions, including Catholicism. When asked whether global climate change is a serious problem, 57% of Catholics indicated that they consider it a very serious problem. This is still lower than people who have no religious affiliation, but is considerably more than Evangelicals. One might speculate that the encyclical Laudato Si' by Pope Francis, the head of the Catholic Church, may have contributed to this. 54% of Catholics indicated that the earth is warming the most due to human activity (Alper, 2023). This figure may increase in the future, as Pope Francis promulgated the encyclical Laudate Deum this year. In it he states that it can no longer be denied that the origin of the climate problem lies with humans (Pope Francis, 2023). It remains to be seen what the real influence of the encyclical Laudate Deum will be on the climate problem and how it influences the view of Catholics on the problem. The hope for achieving SDG 13 is that Laudate Deum will inspire change in the Catholic community.

6.2.4 Conclusion

This chapter started with the question of how interreligious dialogue can contribute to achieving SDG 13 Climate Action. The case studies show that the observations made during interreligious dialogues can have an impact on religious communities. The strength

here lies largely in the exemplary position that religious leaders and organizations have within their communities. By serving as examples within their communities, they can help create widespread global participation against climate change. In addition, it emerged that it is important to integrate key stakeholders in climate action. This means that religious leaders and organizations must be given a voice in policy-making, but also that other important stakeholders, such as youth and women, are involved at all levels.

Although the recommendations in interreligious dialogues can be of great value, there can be made a caveat about what exactly the speakers represent. The example of apocalyptic thinking showed us that it is too easy to say that a pastor represents the opinion of all Christians or that an imam represents all Muslims. Within many religions there are different movements and even within movements, for example, texts are interpreted differently. However, I do believe that this should not be an excuse to leave religious actors out of dialogues and policy developments aimed at climate action. It is naive and a missed opportunity not to recognize and use their influence and exemplary role within their communities to achieve SDG 13 Climate Action.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to see how interreligious dialogue could contribute to achieving the SDGS and thereby contribute to the United Nation's policy for sustainable peace. The report Keeping Faith in 2030 stated that religious actors are systematic or significantly implemented in the SDGs (Haustein & Tomalin, 2019). This thesis has shown that religious actors can be important partners for achieving the SDGs. In the field of gender equality, this can be done, for example, by training female leaders of faith groups and by strengthening the position of women in communities. Strengthening the position of women can create space for transforming cultural and social dynamics. For climate action, religious leaders and religious institutions can be important partners by serving as an example in their communities and providing education about environmental issues.

The analytical chapters have shown that there are already various initiatives from FBOs and religious communities that contribute to achieving the SDGs. These chapters also showed that interreligious dialogue and FBOs can have a negative impact on achieving the SDGs. In the context of Kenya, this happened because conservative movements invoked FoRB, stating that it is their right to exclude LGBTQ people based on their faith. The CSI case study showed that scriptures from the same religion can produce different interpretations. The apocalyptic thinking that is inspired by the end times from the scriptures therefore creates a passive attitude towards climate change. This attitude is not conducive to achieving SDG 13, which could endanger the habitat of many people in the future.

Nevertheless, I think that interreligious dialogue is important for achieving the SDGs, partly due to the large number of believers worldwide. To achieve the SDG, it is therefore interesting to also look at how interreligious dialogue can include these more conservative and extreme movements in the dialogue or how constructive dialogue for these movements can be organized. This is important, because these are often the groups where there's still a lot to be achieved, because, for example, there is more inequality for women here. This requires a new design of interreligious dialogue, because in the current design it seems difficult or impossible to have a constructive dialogue when these movements are taken into account. Future research could focus on investigating how more conservative and extreme thoughts can be part of a constructive interreligious dialogue.

What is certain is that religion plays a major role in many people's lives and influences their choices and lifestyles. It is therefore impossible and naive to disregard religion when we look at policies on sustainable peace. Interreligious dialogue can be a good way to integrate religion, but it is important that interreligious dialogue is integrated in the right way. This means that the right key stakeholders have their say during the dialogues, where the grassroots people are also represented. Furthermore, the context from which choices are made must be carefully considered. So we need to look further than just a Western perspective and inherent biases in policies. It is precisely when different contexts and perspectives are taken into account that real change is possible. In this way, interreligious dialogue can contribute to United Nations policy for sustainable peace.

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