Women and Religion: Partners in Peacebuilding?

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Peacebuilding today is increasingly guided by the inclusivity norm, which has resulted in a call for participation of a diversity of actors. While religious actors’ and women’s efforts are sought in peacebuilding, the bridging group of actors—women active in peacebuilding on religious basis—has largely remained invisible. The aim of this thesis is to explore if and how women and religion are recognized and described in recent research on the role of religion in peacebuilding and the role of women in peacebuilding respectively. A second aim is to try to understand why women active in peacebuilding on religious basis remain invisible, especially with the recognized need for diversity in the peacebuilding field.

In this thesis, quantitative and qualitative analyses are carried out on two sets of literature sources regarding the role of religion in peacebuilding and the role of women in peacebuilding respectively. The literature sets included primary sources such as official United Nations documents and secondary sources with a broad, global research focus. The quantitative analysis indicates that the literature on religious peacebuilding more frequently delved into topics related to women and gender than the literature on women’s peacebuilding does on matters of faith and religion. The qualitative analysis reveals several, at times contradictory perspectives on women and religion. In literature on women’s peacebuilding, religion is portrayed as a hindrance to women’s rights, as a resource for peacebuilding, as extremism and as a reason for conflict. The literature on religious peacebuilding portrays women as suppressed by religion, as empowered by religion, as victims of violence, as religious peacebuilders and as equal to men.

The qualitative analysis reveals that identity and agency are important questions when looking at intersections of women, religion and peacebuilding. Both literature sets tend to juxtapose religious identity and gender identity in attempting to determine which one is or should be of greater importance. Both fields could benefit from carrying out an intersectional analysis, creating new possibilities for action in different contexts. Regarding agency, especially the field of women’s peacebuilding could benefit from a broadened view of agency, where it would not only be equated with women resisting religious traditions and leadership. The field of religious peacebuilding, on the other hand, could benefit from broadening the view of women to include the role of agents and not just passive victims. Future research should address the different forms of agency exhibited by religious women engaged in peacebuilding and how religious and/or gender identity can enhance or hinder peacebuilding.

Keywords
Women, Religion, Peacebuilding, Identity, Agency

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1. Introduction

Although the world saw a decrease in the number of armed conflicts in the post-Cold War era, the last years have brought a rise in both the number and severity of conflicts in the world. While a large number of conflicts in the mid-1900’s were colonial or between states, conflicts today are predominantly intra-state.¹ The communications revolution has resulted in an increase in information flow within and between different states, and transnational conflicts with involvement of local, regional and global are increasingly emerging.²

As the nature of conflict has changed, so has also the nature of intervention. Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall have introduced the term *cosmopolitan conflict resolution* to describe the agenda aimed at meeting the challenges of today’s transnational conflicts. Cosmopolitan conflict resolution attempts to resolve and proactively prevent conflict by addressing the range of conflict drivers on the levels they emerge, be it global, regional, state, identity-group or individual/elite level. This approach recognizes that the detrimental effect of transnational conflict occurs at the local level, but also that in order to alleviate the conflict, the whole spectrum of global to local needs to be addressed. For this to be possible, there is a need for new political spaces that can both engage existing political structures and remain open for structural reformation that allows for diversity of participation.³ This means that “only full engagement with emerging non-western and non-northern practices and norms can deliver what is needed”.⁴ In practice, this could mean engaging with religious as well as feminist perspectives. The aim of this thesis is to explore if and how women and religion are recognized and described in recent research on the role of religion in peacebuilding and the role of women in peacebuilding respectively. The hypothesis is that neither field will have much to say about the other topic, which in extension means that religious women peacebuilders are quite invisible in the literature. If that holds true, a second aim of this thesis is to try to understand why that is, especially with the recognized need for diversity in the peacebuilding field. Perhaps even the absence of information can provide an understanding of the reasons for the lack of connection between the two fields.

One way of ensuring that differing voices are heard in peacebuilding is by way of inclusivity. Donais and McCandless argue that “inclusivity has, in recent years, become the concept choice for those seeking to reshape, both normatively and procedurally, what peacebuilding is and how it should

³ Ibid, p. 313-316
⁴ Ibid, p. 316
be practiced”. According to them, one major influence that has elevated the importance of inclusivity within international peacebuilding has been the policy agreement *The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States*, which aims to change aid delivery mechanisms in fragile countries. The agreement was signed at the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011 and consists of five Peacebuilding and Statebuilding goals, of which one is focused on fostering inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution. Donais and McCandless suggest that the New Deal has made key actors recognize that peacebuilding requires participatory processes and has strengthened the normative status of inclusivity – particularly inclusivity regarding civil society actors. Paffenholz, who has extensively studied inclusivity in peace processes, agrees that *The New Deal for Engagement of Fragile States* has been successful in adding inclusivity to the international peacebuilding agenda, yet sees that more technical and financial support as well as a broadening of the type of actors that are included are needed to improve meaningful inclusion.

Statistical studies have found support for the hypothesis that inclusivity of civil society actors in peace agreements has a positive effect on the durability of agreements reached. Nilsson performed a statistical analysis on 83 peace agreements during the years 1989-2004 and found that when civil society were included, peace was statistically significantly more likely to be durable. She concludes that “the results here demonstrate that civil society actors such as trade unions, women’s organizations, and religious actors preferably should be given a role in peace settlements”. Similarly, Wanis-St. John and Kew investigated civil society involvement in 25 peace negotiation processes during the years 1992-2006. They found that in the processes where civil society involvement was high, peace was sustainable, whilst in most of the processes with low civil society involvement there was continuation of warfare. They suggest that “widely representative civil society groups, such as trade unions, business associations, some ethnic organizations, and women’s advocacy groups, are the most critical participants”.

The development of the inclusivity norm has led to an increase in the call for participation of religious actors and women in peacebuilding efforts, a trend which became prominent around the turn

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7 Donais and McCandless, p. 304
of the millennium. The development of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, starting with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 passed in the year 2000, placed women’s role in conflicts on the global agenda.\textsuperscript{11} According to Hertog: "the academic studies in religious peacebuilding all started being published almost simultaneously around the year 2000".\textsuperscript{12} Hertog also mentions additional signs that religious peacebuilding gained international importance at the time, for example, the UN Millennium World Peace Summit in 2000 that resulted in the creation of the World Council of Religious Leaders.\textsuperscript{13} Later, UN has recognized religious actors’ potential to contribute to conflict resolution and acknowledged the need for further exploring this potential.\textsuperscript{14} There have been suggestions that religion should be mainstreamed into diplomacy, so that religion would be recognized as a being relevant for a variety of policy issues and not only limited to questions such as religious freedom.\textsuperscript{15} In Finland, there has been a focus on increasing Finland’s mediation capacity in order to prevent and resolve conflicts and in this way contribute to international peacebuilding efforts.\textsuperscript{16} The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland’s focus areas regarding conflict resolution are “local ownership and skills, women’s participation in peace processes, civil society’s role in peace work and dialogue between religions.”\textsuperscript{17} The aim to include women and religious representatives is thus clearly seen.


\textsuperscript{12} K. Hertog, \textit{The complex reality of religious peacebuilding: Conceptual contributions and critical analysis}. Lanham, Md., Lexington Books, 2010, p. 18

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, p. 3


\textsuperscript{15} P. Mandaville and S. Silvestri, “Integrating Religious Engagement into Diplomacy: Challenges and Opportunities”, \textit{Issues in Governance Studies}, no. 67, 2015, p. 9-10

\textsuperscript{16} Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, "Action Plan for Mediation", 2011

2. Sources, Definitions, Theory and Method

This chapter will firstly describe the literature sources utilized in this study. Secondly, the chapter will provide definitions for some of the central concepts of the study as well as a theoretical background that summarizes previous research on women, religion and peacebuilding. Finally, the chapter contains a description of the method used in this study.

2.1 Sources

Two sets of literature sources will be utilized in this study; one consisting of research regarding the role of religion in peacebuilding and another consisting of research regarding the role of women in peacebuilding (see Table 1 and 2 on page 7 and 8 for complete sets). For each literature set, the primary literature selected are United Nations publications and other official documents that establish or evaluate implementation of the global agenda for the inclusion of either women or religion in peacebuilding. In the case of women in peacebuilding, the primary literature consists of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, a UN publication on how to implement this resolution and a UN commissioned global evaluation of the implementation of the resolution (see Table 1, p. 7). Regarding the role of religion in peacebuilding, there are less UN guidelines for engagement than for the role of women in peacebuilding. The primary sources in this study consist of the Millennium Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders statement on Commitment to Global Peace, a chapter on peaceful societies in a UNFPA report that focuses on the role of religion in development, and finally, a UN Plan of Action for religious leaders for preventing incitement to violence (see Table 2, p. 8).

The secondary literature, that is research on the role of women or religion in peacebuilding, was selected through a literature search done in the Helsinki University library’s collections on the 14th of December 2017. The search words for the first data set was done using search words “religion” in combination with the words “peace”, “peacebuilding”, “peacemaking” or “security”. For the second set, the search combination was “women” and “peace”, “peacebuilding”, “peacemaking” or “security”. The secondary literature was selected based on the following criteria:

- The literature needed to have a broad, global focus; for this reason, sources that focused only on a specific country case, a specific religious community, or a specific aspect of peacebuilding (such as reconciliation or peacekeeping) were excluded.
- The literature had to specifically focus on the role of religion or women in peacebuilding. Sources tackling the topic from a certain topical angle (for example the role of media or the implications for conflict studies) were excluded. Many sources explore the violence women experience in conflicts; these were excluded as the aim of this thesis was to look at the potential for peacebuilding. Likewise, much has been written on the relationship
between religion and violence or conflict, and this literature was also excluded. However, if the literature focused on violence and conflict contained sections devoted to peacebuilding aspects of religion, these chapters were included.

- Although much research has been done on interfaith dialogue, the focus of this thesis was not limited to the peacebuilding between religions but also included the peacebuilding of religion within society at large. As such, literature focused solely on interfaith peacebuilding was excluded.

- Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall use the concept cosmopolitan conflict resolution to describe the approach used within conflict resolution today; an approach which acknowledges the need for a multi-level and inclusive approach with diversity of participation in order to resolve conflict.\textsuperscript{18} I would argue that the inclusion of women and religious actors in peacebuilding is one aspect of the diversity of participation that is a feature of cosmopolitan conflict resolution. Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall place the era of cosmopolitan conflict resolution as having begun in 2005 and continuing until today.\textsuperscript{19} For this reason, only literature published in 2005 or later has been included.

\textsuperscript{18} Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, p. 313-316
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, p. 500
### Table 1: List of Literature Sources on Women and Peacebuilding

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<th><strong>Primary sources</strong></th>
<th><strong>Secondary sources</strong></th>
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Table 2: List of Literature Sources on Religion and Peacebuilding

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<th>Primary sources</th>
<th>Secondary sources</th>
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2.2 Definitions

In approaching the current theoretical framework on the role of religious women in peacebuilding, certain concepts related to peacebuilding, religion and women need to be clarified.

Peacebuilding

The term peacebuilding is, as Lisa Schirch points out, used in many different ways by different actors, often as an umbrella term for a range of other terms related to conflict and peace.20 Darweish and Rank describe how the peacebuilding field has evolved through three schools of thought: the United Nations understanding of peacebuilding, peace research and sustainable development theory. Naturally, the United Nations’ focus is on interventions, in that “peacebuilding requires a range of military, security, political, humanitarian, social and economic capabilities and skills”.21 The sustainable development field, in turn, contributes with highlighting the connections between development and conflict.22 The definition of peacebuilding I have chosen for this thesis, however, comes from the peace research field:

Lederach (1997) described peacebuilding as all the efforts employed to transform the underlying structural, cultural and relational roots of violent conflict. Therefore, peacebuilding is a comprehensive, continuing process that is bottom-up but also addresses society at all levels, from the grassroots to the middle-level actors and at the national and international levels.23

This definition of peacebuilding is relational in its focus. While acknowledging that peacebuilding processes can take place on national and international levels, this definition does not exclude the efforts of the grassroots level. In the sources used for this thesis, the terms peacebuilding and peacemaking are both used. Whether or not these two terms are significantly different is beyond the scope of the research question for this thesis, and I will therefore assume that they are and can be used interchangeably. Newman argues that peacebuilding has become a part of the security agenda; he sees that peacebuilding is being utilized to manage conflict from a security rationale.24 Thus, literature that explores women’s and religious actors’ role in security are assumed to also address peacebuilding, and for this reason security was used as a search word in the literature search.

22 Ibid., p. 3
Religion and religious actors

Appleby defines religion as “the human response to a reality perceived as sacred”, and further elaborates that this typically includes “a creed, a cult, a code of conduct, and a confessional community”. Appleby recognizes the difficulties one faces when trying to define religious experience, particularly considering the differences in understanding the concept that may exist between individual members as well as between members and institutions. He chooses to define religious actors as “people who have been formed by a religious community and who are acting with the intent to uphold, extend, or defend its values and precepts”. This is the definition I will use when referring to religious actors in peacebuilding.

Women and gender

Why it is necessary to specifically look at the role of women in peacebuilding? Susan McKay argues that “girls and women experience human insecurity differently from men and are subject to gender hierarchies and power inequities that exacerbate their insecurity”. Due to the inequality they are subject to, women are faced with both direct physical violence and structural indirect violence. McKay argues that efforts must be steered towards including gender as a main component of human security discourses. This includes applying gender analyses that “take into account perspectives and behaviors of women and men, boys and girls, and are corrective to gender-bias in either direction.”

In the field of security, this could mean looking at how the experiences of men and women differ when facing loss of security. Whilst a gender analysis focuses on the experiences of men and women, a feminist analysis focuses specifically on the experiences of women and girls and attempts to affect policies regarding women. In addition to analyzing security from a gender and feminist perspective, McKay sees that women’s peacebuilding is vital to reinforcing the security of women and girls. According to her, the peacebuilding work of women “is centrally concerned with the presence and prevention of direct and indirect violence in girls’ and women’s lives”.

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26 Ibid, p. 9
28 Ibid, p. 158-160
29 Ibid, p. 153
30 Ibid, p. 153
31 Ibid, p. 153
32 Ibid, p. 155
33 Ibid, p. 152
34 Ibid, p. 168
2.3 Theoretical Framework: Women, Religion and Peacebuilding

Despite the growing awareness of the importance of both women and religious communities in peacebuilding, surprisingly little has been written on the combination: the role of religious women in peacebuilding. There have been some individual case studies, for example regarding the peacebuilding work of religious women in Kenya\(^35\) and in Fiji\(^36\), but so far only few concerted effort to understand the peacebuilding work of religious women have been done. In 2010, The Berkley Center, World Faiths Development Dialogue and the United States Institute of Peace initiated a project that would examine the relationship between women, religion and peace. Since then, the project has organized symposia, conducted interviews and released publications on the topic. The most comprehensive publication to date, “Women, Religion and Peacebuilding: Illuminating the Unseen” was published in 2015.\(^37\) Since little else has been written about religious women in peacebuilding, I will rely heavily on this publication for the theory part. The editors Susan Hayward and Katherine Marshall point out that there are “many women – across the world and religious traditions – whose work for peace is motivated and shaped by their religious faith and beliefs.”\(^38\) They recognize that the work of these women often goes unnoticed, leading to challenges such as lack of funding and networks. However, the invisibility of the work of religious women building peace can also have positive effects, for example by opening up opportunities not easily recognized by more formal initiatives. Working from the margins allows women to engage informally and rapidly in a way that may not have been possible through the official channels. Operating away from the power structures enables the women to be closer to the grassroots, and the invisibility of the work also grants a certain measure of safety.\(^39\)

Hayward and Marshall suggest that “religious beliefs and institutions create undeniable barriers to women’s peacebuilding, as gender norms marginalizing women in political, economic and social life are often grounded in particular religious teachings and understandings”.\(^40\) However, they also see that religion can be the motivating factor for women’s engagement in peacebuilding. The religious community can provide opportunities for leadership development, religious resources, access to

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\(^{39}\) Ibid, p. 2

\(^{40}\) Ibid, p. 14-16
networks and material support. Through their engagement with the religious community, women can gain skills and capacities that can strengthen their peacebuilding work. Although the patriarchal structures of religious communities in many ways hinder women’s engagement in peacebuilding, “women-of-faith peacebuilders frequently draw from theological and textual sources within their religious traditions to negotiate and defend their peace-building agency”. In this way, they shape the peacebuilding work, the norms existing in their own religious communities and the secular voices that argue religion inherently oppresses women’s agency.

There may be difficulties for religious women to engage in peace work institutionally, considering that religious leaders often are male. In high-level peacebuilding initiatives, there is a tendency to only involve religious leader, meaning that often religious communities are only represented by men. Women have little opportunity to influence the agenda of these initiatives, and even if they take part they may not be regarded as equal to their male counterparts. This results in a situation whereby “predominant forms of religious peacebuilding have tended to reinforce patriarchy and obstruct the inclusion of women”. Hayward and Marshall note that as a result of this, several organizations active in the field of religious peacebuilding have initiated distinct activities specifically for the concerns of women. Although this recognizes the importance of religious women’s perspective on questions of peace, it may also have some negative effects. The field of religious peacebuilding is already struggling due to lack of funding, and dividing the field into such distinct areas may have negative impact on funding and achieving tangible results. Furthermore, categorizing women’s concerns as a separate part of religious peacebuilding may lead to isolation rather than mainstreaming of these questions.

According to Hayward and Marshall, there are certain assets that religious women contribute with to peacebuilding. One of these are values, for example regarding inclusivity, justice, dignity, and democratic processes. The experience of being a woman in a patriarchal society may have influenced the formation of these values and shaped the women’s ability to recognize power dynamics that stifle their fulfilment. Secondly, religious women demonstrate the capacity to reach across boundaries, whether religious, political or ethnic. They can create relationships and alliances with a variety of actors through their interpersonal relationships, often by way of recognizing shared suffering. Thirdly, religious women bring special attention to psychosocial and spiritual support and set these issues on the agenda. Fourthly, they often function well as mediators of conflict as they have connections to

41 Hayward and Marshall, 2015, p. 13
42 Ibid, p. 18
43 Ibid, p. 18
44 Ibid, p. 14-15
45 Ibid, p. 15
46 Ibid, p. 15
many groups in society and yet are experienced as non-threatening. Fifthly, community development, including factors that have influenced the conflict, are often a priority area for religious women. Finally, religious women often have strong advocacy skills, due to their strong connections to different groups in society and ability to bring these groups together.\textsuperscript{47}

In her PhD thesis on the roles that religious women play in a conflict in south-western Kenya, Ogega concludes that the peacebuilding work of the religious women must be seen in the context of the “violence, exclusion and gender-based othering – the delegitimizing claims of women as insignificant others”\textsuperscript{48} that these women exist in. Ogega suggests that in such a context, religious faith can be used by women engaged in peacebuilding in different ways; it can act as an identity, a motivator, a form of empowerment and a resource.\textsuperscript{49} Ogega lays out the effect that women’s religious faith can have on the dynamics of the unequal system the women find themselves in and their own agency within this system:

> Women’s peacebuilding roles may be located within unequal social systems where they have to keep the rules and regulations emerging from institutional bargaining and unequal gender statuses and positioning. But faith can also offer women agency: the capacity to bargain and transform gendered barriers and find faith power and voice to promote peacebuilding.\textsuperscript{50}

While Ogega sees that women of faith are active agents in peacebuilding, she also echoes Hayward and Marshall in stating that this agency and the organizations it has conceived to a large part remains invisible.\textsuperscript{51} She notes that the empowerment women draw from their religious faith and utilize in peacebuilding could be used to inform the policy and practice in the field of peacebuilding, where it has received very little attention.\textsuperscript{52}

As religious women have and continue to impact peacebuilding, and considering the increasing importance of inclusivity in peacebuilding which calls for participation from both women and religious communities, it is necessary to ask if and why religious women remain invisible. In this thesis, current research on the role of women and religion in peacebuilding will be examined to explore if and how religion and women are mentioned in respective literature. The hypothesis is that neither topic will be mentioned much in the literature set exploring the other topic. The second aim, therefore, is to understand why these topics remain invisible.

\textsuperscript{47}Hayward and Marshall, 2015, p. 19-22

\textsuperscript{48} Ogega, 2014, p. 200

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, p. 201

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid, p. 208

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid, p. 209

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, p. 210
2.4 Method

This thesis aims firstly to explore if and how the peacebuilding work of religious women is recognized and described in recent research on the role of religion in peacebuilding and the role of women in peacemaking respectively. In order to do so, the primary and secondary literature for the two different fields – research on the role of religion in peacebuilding and research on the role of women in peacebuilding – will firstly be subjected to a quantitative analysis. The quantitative analysis will consist of counting the number of times the words “women” and “gender” appear in the literature concerning religion in peacebuilding and the number of times the words “religion”/”religious” or “faith” (in the sense of religious faith, e.g. faith-based groups) appear in the literature concerning women’s role in peacebuilding. For the primary literature, the entire documents will be searched for these words whilst the quantitative analysis of the secondary literature will focus on the number of index references containing the words. Conscious of the danger of becoming too descriptive by conducting only a qualitative literature analysis, the quantitative literature analysis will provide a brief overview of how often the concepts are mentioned. This is important as it will give an indication as to whether or not women or religion are visible in the literature.

The second stage of the analysis will be to conduct a qualitative literature analysis. Whilst the quantitative analysis will answer the question of whether women or religion are mentioned, the qualitative analysis will look at how they are mentioned. The theoretical framework suggests that the efforts of religious women in peacebuilding are invisible, and through exploring the different ways women or religion are described the aim is to understand why that might be. In the qualitative analysis, the sections of the primary and secondary literature that mention women/gender or religion/faith will be read and coded. According to Bazeley, coding is a process whereby data passages are given a code in accordance with the researcher’s understanding of what the data is trying to convey. Coding allows the researcher to sort the data and organize it in categories. The purpose of using coding in this thesis is to understand the different ways in which the role of women and religion are described in the literature and if there are any recurring themes. Following the initial coding of the literature, the codes will be refined and given labels.

3. The Role of Religion in Women’s Peacebuilding

This chapter will begin by a brief introduction into the current state of the field of women’s peacebuilding efforts. Following that, a quantitative and qualitative analysis will be applied to look at how religion and faith are mentioned in the primary and secondary literature on women’s peacebuilding efforts.

3.1 The International Framework on Women, Peace and Security

Although there are multiple ways in which women can and have been involved in peacebuilding, the most prominent and concerted way in which the peacebuilding work of women has been brought attention is through the international framework on Women, Peace and Security. In 2000, the Security Council of the United Nations passed resolution 1325, a resolution which recognized the impact that conflicts have on women and addressed the importance of women’s involvement in conflict prevention and resolution. The unanimously adopted resolution, which includes 18 points, called for actors including the United Nations itself to apply a gender perspective to a range of issues relating to peace and security; for example, in the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements and in peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, it emphasized the need to support peace initiatives of local women and to consult with women’s groups during Security Council missions. The resolution can be said to be divided into four pillars: prevention, participation, protection and peacebuilding and recovery.

Behind the Security Council’s decision to adopt resolution 1325 was a recognition that in order for peace to be durable, women need to take part in structuring the peace; as negotiators of peace agreements, in peace-keeping and as civilians. The passing of resolution 1325 was in many ways historic; previously there had not been a complete Security Council session solely focused on women’s experiences of conflict, and the resolutions was “the first international policy mechanism explicitly recognizing the gendered nature of war and peace processes”. Preceding the adoption of the resolution lay over a century of peace activism from civil society women’s movements. An important step in the process of civil society organizing for questions of women, peace and security was the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995. The conference organized by the

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57 A.K. Chowdhury “10 years on, the promises to women need to be kept” *NATO Review*, ed. 5, 2010
59 Chowdhury, 2010
60 Coomaraswamy, 2015, p. 29-30
United Nations gathered a large number of representatives of countries and non-governmental organizations, and resulted in the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action consisting of 12 strategic objectives of which Women and Armed Conflict was one.\textsuperscript{61} The NGO network that subsequently formed around this strategic objective did so with the aim of a Security Council resolution being adopted on the matter.\textsuperscript{62} It has been said that resolution 1325 “may well be the only Security Council resolution “for which the groundwork, the diplomacy and lobbying, the drafting and redrafting was almost entirely the work of civil society”\textsuperscript{63}

Following resolution 1325, the agenda of Women, Peace and Security has developed through seven additional UN Security Council resolutions.\textsuperscript{64} Four of these resolutions have focused on the protection of women in conflict situations, which includes protection from sexual violence,\textsuperscript{65} while two of them have addressed the leadership of women and necessity of including women in peace-making and conflict prevention.\textsuperscript{66} The latest resolution belonging to the Women, Peace and Security agenda relates to the implementation of the agenda itself, for example by calling for increased funding and collaboration with civil society.\textsuperscript{67} The implementation of resolution 1325 is partly accounted for by the United Nations whose capacity to do so has increased rapidly in the last years, not least through the creation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in 2010.\textsuperscript{68}

In addition to UN efforts, the President of the Security Council in 2004 urged member states of the United Nations to prepare national action plans (NAPs) to strengthen the collaboration with civil society.\textsuperscript{69} A total of 69 of the member states have produced NAPs while two member states have

\textsuperscript{61} United Nations, \textit{Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women}, 27 October 1995
\textsuperscript{62} Cohn, Kinsella and Gibbings, 2004, p. 131
\textsuperscript{67} UN Security Council, \textit{Security Council resolution 1960 (2010) [on women and peace and security]}, 16 December 2010
\textsuperscript{68} UN Security Council, \textit{Security Council resolution 2106 (2013) [on sexual violence in armed conflict]}, 24 June 2013
\textsuperscript{69} UN Security Council, \textit{Security Council resolution 1889 (2009) [on women and peace and security]}, 5 October 2009
\textsuperscript{70} UN Security Council, \textit{Security Council resolution 2122 (2013) [on women and peace and security]}, 18 October 2013
\textsuperscript{71} UN Security Council, \textit{Security Council resolution 2242 (2015) [on women and peace and security]}, 13 October 2015
\textsuperscript{72} Coomaraswamy, 2015, p. 31
\textsuperscript{73} UN Security Council, \textit{Statement by the President of the Security Council [made on behalf of the Security Council at the 5066th meeting, 28 Oct. 2004, in connection with the Council’s consideration of the item entitled “Women and peace and security”]}, 28 October 2004, p. 3
developed implementation frameworks which fill the same function as of September 2017. Additionally, there have been regional efforts to implement resolution 1325, for example through the regional action plans of the European Union and the African Union. While the national governments are responsible for the NAPs they often cooperate with NGO’s, and the NAP “can be a way of coordinating existing initiatives (local, national and international) and adding ones to deal with identified gaps (e.g. monitoring progress, encouraging outreach or training of peacekeepers)”.

In the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 that was published in 2015, it is noted that the normative framework of resolution 1325 has successfully been made known through the partnerships of international, regional and national actors. However, the report also mentions the regional differences in how the effectiveness of the implementation is viewed. Despite recognition that much work still needs to be done, western societies tended to see that the Women, Peace and Security agenda was moving forward. In Africa and Asia on the other hand, there was disappointment in the fact that the agenda had not managed to bring about any changes on the local level, and it was thus perceived as a failure.

Although one aim of resolution 1325 is to increase the level of participation of women in peace processes, it is unclear to what extent this has been successful. A UN Women report on the matter concludes that about a decade after the adoption of resolution 1325, “the striking absence of women from formal peace negotiations reveals a troubling gap between the aspirations of countless global and regional commitments and the reality of peace processes”. The report, which investigated 31 peace processes between the years 1992 and 2011, revealed low percentages of involvement of women as signatories to agreements (4%), chief mediators (2.4 %), witnesses (3.7%) and negotiators (9%). It was also noted that for the peace processes investigated, there was no notable difference in the level of participation before and after the adoption of resolution 1325.

One recognized challenge when it comes to the participation of women in peace negotiations is that there is a general lack of evidence-based practice in the field of conflict mediation. According to Paffenholz, this leads to a situation whereby “negotiations and peace processes are all too often designed on the basis of un-tested hypotheses or normative biases, instead of on solid evidence-based

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72 Coomaraswamy, 2015, p. 28
74 Ibid, p. 3
75 Ibid, p. 1
findings”. As a result, women’s participation in the negotiations is not seen as needed. Practitioners who would welcome the inclusion of women may lack insights into methods and process designs that could increase the participation rate. However, there are also practitioners who “remain resistant to including women due to a lack of evidence about the value that women’s participation can bring and fear that it may derail the process”. It thus seems that exclusion of women is not simply due to oversight or lack of appropriate methods, but also due to active resistance.

The absence of women in peace negotiations has implications for the way issues related to women’s situation and rights are addressed in negotiations. According to the UN Women report from 2012, it is reasonable to believe that the lack of representation and connection to state institutions by such a large part of the population will have a negative impact on the longevity of the peace agreement. However, due to low numbers of peace agreements in the sample mentioning gender-related issues, the study could not draw any solid conclusions regarding the effect of the inclusion of women in peace negotiations on the outcome of peace agreements.

Later studies have, however, been able to confirm that women participating in the negotiation process indeed can have significant impact on peace agreements reached. Paffenholz et al. studied the level of influence that women had in 40 official high-level political negotiations. A statistically strong positive correlation was found between women exerting a strong influence in the negotiating process and the likelihood of an agreement being reached. Moreover, implementation of the peace agreement had a much higher likelihood if women had a strong influence in the negotiations. Strong influence of women in the negotiations was also found to result in recurring actions or issues such as pressure to start and continue negotiations, pressure to sign peace agreements, increased inclusion of women in the peace process and provisions related to gender awareness in the agreements. In conclusion, it seems that the presence of women is not in itself enough to result in impact on the negotiations or provisions of the peace agreement; rather, it is the level of influence that the women are able to exert that is of significance.

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76 T. Paffenholz, ‘Results on Women and Gender’ Briefing Paper, Geneva, The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, 2015, p. 1
77 Ibid, p. 1
79 Ibid, p. 2
80 United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2012, p. 3-4
81 Ibid, p. 6
In addition to having an impact on the likelihood of reaching and implementing an agreement, the participation of women in peace processes also influences the duration of peace. Stone carried out regression analysis on peace talks between 1989 and 2011. She found that:

(…) in the short term, peace processes that included women as witnesses, signatories, mediators, and/or negotiators demonstrated a 20 percent increase in the probability of a peace agreement lasting two years. This percentage continues to increase over time, with a 35 percent increase in the probability of a peace agreement lasting 15 years.

This suggests that the inclusion of women in peace processes can have tangible effects on the longevity of peace agreements.

Although the Women, Peace and Security framework aims at strengthening the role of women in peace work, the framework has also been critiqued from feminist perspectives. Shepherd analyses the language used by the Security Council and argues that “activity, in the form of political participation, has become conflated with agency”. Although women may be present as participants in peace negotiations, it does not mean that they have an actual impact on the decisions made. Shepherd argues that the Security Council’s portrayal of women as agents for peace may prove to be an additional weight added on to women. Shepherd makes a reference to Kabeer (1999) who writes about the necessity of certain pre-conditions to be filled in order to be able to exercise agency; for example mobility, status and access to resources. Considering the numerous infra-structural disadvantages women face in post-conflict societies, women’s agency is not guaranteed simply because the Security Council’s recognizes women as actors.

Paffenholz et al. recognize that women have not been able to have a strong impact in past peace negotiations. They found two sets of factors that influence women’s meaningful participation in peace processes: process factors and context factors. Women’s influencing ability was strengthened by process factors such as ensuring that the selection criteria and procedures include women’s participation; that procedures of decision-making explicitly involve women; and the forming of women’s coalitions with common goals. Furthermore, transfer strategies such as creating a document with specific demands; mediators and conflict parties with positive attitude towards the inclusion of women and women’s participation in the early stages of the peace process also strengthened women’s

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84 Ibid, p. 34
86 Ibid, p. 511-512
88 Shepherd, 2011, p. 511-512
influencing ability. The final process factors found to strengthen women’s influence were creating support structure such as workshops and trainings; monitoring the implementation process of a peace agreement and funding to support women’s participation and training.\textsuperscript{89} Paffenholz et al. further found that context factors influencing women’s inclusion were the attitudes of the elite towards women’s participation; the level of public support towards the peace process; the involvement of regional or international actors; presence and organizational strength of women’s networks as well as support of regional and international women’s networks. Additionally, the presence of women with a wide range of identities in the peace process, the societal view of gender roles as well as already existing commitments to the inclusion of women positively influenced women’s participation in peace processes.\textsuperscript{90}

3.2 Quantitative Analysis of Literature on Women’s Peacebuilding

The quantitative analysis of the literature on women’s peacebuilding will consist of counting the number of times the words “religion”/“religious” or “faith” (in the sense of religious faith, e.g. faith-based groups) appear in the primary and secondary literature (see table 1, p. 7). The entire documents of the primary literature will be searched for these words whilst only index references containing these words will be counted for the secondary literature.

Primary Literature

Of the primary literature, resolution 1325 did not mention religion or faith a single time, and the UN publication on the implementation of the resolution on a national level mentioned the words 6 times. The final primary source was the global study on the implementation of the resolution 15 years after it was passed, and mentioned the words a total of 50 times. It is worth mentioning that the documents are different in length which could partly impact the number of mentions (4 pages, 111 pages and 418 pages respectively).

Secondary Literature

Out of the 8 sources used as secondary literature, one did not have an index. Of the remaining 7 sources, only one included Religion as an index topic with 11 entries, and one included Faith-based institutions as an index topic with two entries. While the overview of the indexes conveys that religion is not a frequent topic in women’s peacebuilding work, this does not mean that religion is not mentioned in the secondary literature. Reading through the secondary literature, every book contains some reference to religion – these will be looked at more closely in the qualitative analysis.

\textsuperscript{89} Paffenholz, et al., \textit{Making Women Count}, p. 38-49
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid, p. 50-54
3.3 Qualitative Analysis of Literature on Women’s Peacebuilding

The qualitative analysis of the literature on women’s peacebuilding will look at the different ways that the concepts religion and faith are mentioned in the primary and secondary literature. As can be seen in the quantitative analysis, religion and faith is not a frequently recurring topic in the literature. In reading the literature, it is obvious that when religion or faith is mentioned, it is very rarely in connection to the peacebuilding efforts of religious women. Due to this, the qualitative analysis below will focus on the different perspectives on the role of religion in relationship to women and peacebuilding that emerged through the coding.

3.3.1 Religion as a Hindrance to Women’s Rights

The portrayal recurring most frequently in the literature is that of religion being a hindrance to women’s rights. In the primary literature, religion is identified as one possible reason behind the inequality in men’s and women’s access to resources.91 In the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325, religious practices are given as an example of how religion can have a negative impact on women’s rights. Even though there may be statutory laws on land, property and housing that secure women’s rights, religious practices occurring in the same context as these may negatively influence how rights are realized.92 It is noted that in the context of conflict, informal justice systems are often utilized more often than the formal systems. The informal systems are often not equal in their treatment of women and men, and gender-based violence is for example rarely punished. Even though there may be constitutional principles in place regarding gender equality, the report suggests that traditional and religious law often systematically discriminate against women, regardless of whether this practice of traditional and religious law is exempted from or mandated by the constitution.93

While not specifically mentioning religion, traditional values and practices in Asia and Africa are in the primary literature described as clashing with new ways of life and as a result “women’s rights, women’s personal lives and their bodies have become sites of the contestation”.94 Malala is used as an example of the new ways of life as a young girl promoting the value of education.95 Overall, the primary literature suggests in several ways that religious groups and their rights are viewed as more important than women’s rights. For example, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which focuses on the rights of women is referred to as a

92 Coomaraswamy, 2015, p. 81-82
93 Coomaraswamy, 2015, p. 120
94 Ibid, p. 226-227
95 Ibid, p. 226
central accountability tool within the field of Women, Peace and Security. Although it has been signed by almost every country in the world, some countries still have reservations. The second largest category of reservations consists of 22 countries that cite their reservation as being due to CEDAW’s “Compatibility with religious, customary or traditional laws and practices”.96 This is one way in which religion is framed as trumping women’s rights.

Further examples are given of how religious rights are seen as more important that women’s rights; in political dialogues, external actors strive to include groups necessary for a successful dialogue, even if all groups may not be welcomed by the dominant parties. While religious groups may be included, women’s groups often remain excluded: “Sometimes, this is out of a lack of effort to do otherwise, and sometimes it is out of an exaggerated respect for what are perceived to be local mores.”97 Finally, in the case of refugees, the international definition does not include gender as a basis for fear of persecution, but does include religion.98 Although the last two examples do not place religion and women’s rights as opposing factors, it is still portrays that religious groups carry certain privileges that women do not.

In the secondary literature, numerous other illustrations are given of the ways in which religion suppresses the rights of women. One example is how women’s rights are suppressed as the importance of religion in a society increases during conflict:

War and post-war trauma strengthen ethnic and religious identities, revitalizing long-forgotten ethnic and religious traditions and institutions and evoking neo-traditional beliefs in a purported “golden age” of patriarchal social rule, which tend to enhance archaic forms of gender discrimination.99

A concrete example of how strengthened religious identities result in gender discrimination is given through the case of Tajikistan, where the resurgence of religious orthodoxy during the civil war meant worsening conditions for women; “revival of polygamy; marriage of young girls; restrictions on education for girls and women; limitations on women’s behavior and freedom of movement (…)”.100 Religion is portrayed as strongly tied to patriarchy, and in a conservative fanatic form is seen as suppressing the emancipation of women.101 It is noted that the “phenomenon of a conservative gender roll-back in society is of course not restricted only to Muslim post-conflict

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96 Coomaraswamy, 2015, p.357
97 Ibid, p. 57
98 Ibid, p. 82-83
101 A. Schnabel and A. Tabyshalieva, “Forgone opportunities: The marginalization of women’s contributions to post conflict peacebuilding” in Schnabel and Tabyschalieva, 2012, p. 17
societies, but also occurs in other religious contexts." Marx Ferree agrees that suppression of women’s rights is not restricted to one religious group:

For example, Buss and Herman (2003) outline how an international coalition of religious fundamentalists draws on patriarchal versions of gender expressed within specific Christian, Jewish, and Islamic traditions to frame conventional gender arrangements as “family values” and fight feminist initiatives for gender equality as endangering women and their families.

She further mentions that religious groups can use women’s need for security to further their own interests. While patriarchy might be seen as the main obstacle to women’s empowerment, religious communities help in upholding it. An example is the case of Lebanon, where Lebanese women’s political participation is described as negatively affected by “the patriarchal ideology shared by all the country’s religious communities”.

The secondary literature similarly to the primary literature mentions ways in which religion is viewed as more important than women’s rights. Sjoberg writes of the Copenhagen School of critical Security Studies conveying the view that “as members of nations, religions, and races under threat, women are subsumed: they do not compose a group in and of themselves”. This suggests that religion is a stronger identity marker than gender, which weakens women’s possibilities to defend their rights. Other authors mention that women themselves may act in favor of their religious identity rather than their gender identity and as a result express intolerance and prejudice towards other women. Religion is described as a hinder to bringing attention to women’s leadership. In Palestine, religious conservatism has meant that community based organizations do not wish to be seen as promoters of women’s leadership:

Ironically, they remain the most deeply embedded in their communities and focus on a client base which represents the poorest and most marginalized women in Jerusalem. By contrast, while general, feminist and specialized NGOs and service providers offer sophisticated insights into women’s vulnerabilities, they are unable to engage their immediate communities with the same effectiveness as CBOs.

102 A. Schnabel and A. Tabyshalieva, “Forgone opportunities: The marginalization of women’s contributions to post conflict peacebuilding” in Schnabel and Tabyshalieva, 2012, p. 44
104 Ibid, p. 290
Additionally, as in the primary literature, it is noted that “while peacebuilding is careful to ensure equal treatment of people from different ethnic and religious groups, gender equality is often ignored.” This quote conveys that the rights of women are not given as much importance as the rights of religious groups.

### 3.3.2 Religion as a Resource for Peacebuilding

Although the literature on women’s peacebuilding gives several examples of how religion can be a hindrance to women’s rights, it also mentions numerous ways in which religion can be a resource for peacebuilding. While religion is not mentioned directly in resolution 1325, the resolution still calls for “measures that support local women’s peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution”. This could be interpreted as to include the initiatives of religious women. The UN publication on national-level implementation of the resolution is more direct and suggests that religious groups are appropriate partners both in drafting and as stakeholders in the formulation of national action plans. The global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 contains many examples of how religion could play a role in peacebuilding. For example, religious leaders can sensitize on women’s rights in humanitarian settings, they can defend and inform on women’s rights within their own religious framework and it is even mentioned that they should be involved in security sector reform. Although it is mentioned already at the beginning of the report that women are religious leaders, it is not specified in the above example whether the leaders referred to are women or men. The report also mentions that religious teaching can be used to work against discrimination towards women, such as in the Libyan Noor campaign where women’s rights were addressed from an Islamic perspective. In addition to seeing religious leaders and teachings as resources, the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 recognizes some contributions of religious women. For example in Morocco, a project in which women were given certifications as preachers was seen as a success – the women involved worked for tolerance and against extremism. The report concludes that women religious leaders should be trained to work as mentors in their own context as a way of countering violent extremism.

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109 L. Schirch, “Frameworks for understanding women as victims and peacebuilders” in Schnabel and Tabyshalaeva, 2012, p. 72
111 Popovic, Barr, and Lyytikäinen, 2010, p. 32, 38
112 Coomaraswamy, 2015, p. 70
113 Ibid, p.120
114 Ibid, p. 184
115 Ibid, p. 34
116 Ibid, p. 291
117 Ibid, p. 230-231
In the secondary literature, it is seen that religion can contribute to peacebuilding and it is recommended “to use deep-rooted religious beliefs and value systems to provide solace to suffering women”.118 The secondary literature also suggests that religious leaders can contribute to peacebuilding. According to one source, both faith-based organizations and religious leaders can advance peacebuilding efforts, and should receive training on resolution 1325 in order to be able to utilize it.119 Implementation of resolution 1325 has involved training men from religious institutions in Fiji120 and religious leaders in Sri Lanka121, suggesting that religious communities can be seen as important partners in advancing women’s rights. One source gives an example from Timor-Leste:

One way to address the need for women’s rights to be accepted as part of human rights is to open dialogue between religious leaders and representatives of civil society and the state. Catholic human right activists from the diaspora, particularly Australia, can play a key role in opening Timorese religious leaders to the idea that patriarchy is wrong and that women’s rights are human rights and consistent with a strong faith.122

The quote not only suggests that religion can play a part in strengthening women’s rights, it also shows that the international religious community can influence a local one.

In addition to working with religious leaders and institutions, the secondary literature also mentions how religious women can contribute to peacebuilding. One source suggests that in order for empowerment projects for women to be successful, it is important to ensure that local culture is respected. In a project in Tajikistan, this meant working together with religious leaders and initiating courses for women on the role of gender in Islam.123 Another source refers to female *otins* (religious teachers) in Uzbekistan who “are the leaders of social change through Islamic education that foster critical thinking and reflexivity”.124 The *otins* can lead *gaps*, local savings groups and social networks of women, which “allow women to heal, share, brainstorm, and develop action plans to solve conflict”.125 This is an example of how religious women contribute to peacebuilding at grassroots level. Another example of this comes from Laos, where women have an active role in the traditional *soukhoan* conflict resolution ritual, a ritual which is “a perfect example of Buddhist and Animist

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118 K. Kumar, “Mass crimes and resilience of women: A cross-national perspective” in Schnabel and Tabyshalieva, 2012, p. 91
121 Ibid, p. 242
122 Ibid, p. 191
125 Ibid, p. 82
amalgamation”. The author suggests women have a vital role in this ritual, and that the ritual functions “as a mechanism to repair harm done in conflict, to restore relationships, and to build support networks necessary for peace-building.”

The secondary literature also makes references to the interfaith cooperation of women. For example, Porter and Mundkur state that peacebuilding requires inclusive and plural solutions that are based in the local context and that including people from different religious groups in the peacebuilding process is one way to find these solutions. A groups of Liberian women are identified as having created connections between Christian and Muslim women. In Kashmir, a project has been realized where Muslim, Hindu and Sikh women were brought together for dialogue, resulting in concrete activities and opportunities for empowerment. Snyder also writes about interfaith dialogue but in the context of Sudan. There, an organization called the Sudanese Women’s Voices for Peace worked with bringing together Muslim and Christian women in search for common identities, as “they saw that they face the same problems of displacement, poverty and lack of education”.

### 3.3.3 Religion as Extremism

In the primary literature, the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 has a chapter focused on violent extremism and it is noted that “the growth in extremist violence is not limited to one religion.” Furthermore, the report states that “across religions and regions, a common thread shared by extremist groups is that in each and every instance, their advance has been coupled with attacks on the rights of women and girls.” The report lists ways women have been targeted, for example through abductions, sexual and gender based violence and restrictions on dress and movement. Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Buddhist and Hindu groups are mentioned as examples; in fact, this is the chapter of the report that most frequently mentions religion and includes the greatest diversity of religious groups. Clearly, there are very strong connections drawn between religion and extremism.

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126 S.P. Stobbe, “The Soukhouan Ritual: The Legacy of Lao Women in Conflict Resolution” in Snyder and Stobbe (Eds.), 2011, p. 56
127 Ibid, p. 70
128 Porter and Mundkur, 2012, p. 3
129 A.C. Snyder and S.P. Stobbe, ”Introduction” in Snyder and Stobbe (Eds.), 2011, p. 1-2
130 Porter and Mundkur, 2012, p. 165-166
131 A.C. Snyder, “A gendered analysis of refugee transnational peacebuilding capacity” in Snyder and Stobbe (Eds.), 2011, p. 31
132 Coomaraswamy, 2015, p. 222
133 Ibid, p. 223
134 Ibid, p. 223-225
The global study notes that women are both victims and active participants in violent extremism. According to the study extremist groups may in certain cases be the only outlet for women’s agency. This can be true in contexts where civil society has become militarized, but may also be the case in contexts where women feel isolated from society; for example, some European women have stated that the alienation they experienced as well as the constraints they faced from society in practicing their religion drove them to the extremist groups. Women who leave to join extremist groups have been described as having “ambivalent agency’, that allows them a certain freedom from family and social restraints though they have to function within a strict hierarchy dominated by men.

In the secondary literature, Parashar sees that groups with fundamentalist religious ideologies often strive to remove women from public life, and “women have also been subjected to worst forms of violence both in public and private by the hypermasculine and misogynist religious worldviews of men.” She further sees that all organized religions include some form of “religio-political militancy”, and notes that women participating in violence on basis of religion “offer a complex understanding of “agency”.” While the violent actions of these women suggest that they have agency, their actions simultaneously “reinforce the masculine versions of religious ideology”, one result being that they “paradoxically serve to silence the voices of other women”. The mixed nature of agency is not, however, mentioned by Porter and Mundkur who instead mention how “the rise of political Islam has disempowered many Islamic women who live in countries where radical Islamists link culture, religion and patriarchal concepts of the ‘good Islamic woman’.

3.3.4 Religion as a Reason for Conflict

In the literature on women’s peacebuilding, religion is a few times portrayed as a reason for conflict. In the primary literature, it is stated that “many of today’s wars are religious or ethnic in origin. They are firmly in the realm of identity politics and in their most extreme form, deeply conservative and reactionary toward women and their rights.” In the secondary literature, Porter and Mundkur write that many violent conflicts today reflect “long historical bitterness with deep religious, ethnic and cultural roots”. Religion is thus portrayed as one of the underlying reasons for conflict.

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135 Coomaraswamy, 2015, p. 225-226
136 Ibid, p. 226
138 Ibid, p. 175-176
139 Ibid, p. 179
140 Ibid, p. 179
141 Ibid, p. 178
142 Porter and Mundkur, 2012, p. 163
143 Coomaraswamy, 2015, p. 21
144 Porter and Mundkur, 2012, p. 11
4. The Role of Women in Religious Peacebuilding

The following chapter will briefly outline the field of religious peacebuilding today. The primary and secondary literature concerning religious peacemaking will then be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively in order to explore how women are mentioned in the literature on religious peacebuilding.

4.1 The Field of Religious Peacebuilding

Although secularization theory suggested that religion would become less important as modernity progressed, religion has instead become increasingly significant in international affairs. The Iranian revolution of 1979 and the 9/11 attacks are example of events that illustrate this.\textsuperscript{145} According to Farr, “polls from across the globe show a growth in religious affiliation and in the desire for religious leaders to be more involved in politics”.\textsuperscript{146} Religious communities and institutions are today often viewed by nongovernmental organizations and international organizations as potential partners for peacebuilding efforts. Although many religious organizations have of course been dedicated to peacebuilding by themselves, the development of the secular peacebuilding field has prompted religious organizations to professionalize their work in a way that allows for close cooperation with other actors in the field.\textsuperscript{147}

While religious beliefs can have a role in exacerbating violent conflict, most religions also have a commitment towards peace with religious leaders and community members engaging in peacebuilding efforts. According to Gopin, understanding the religious beliefs in a society is necessary for intervening in a conflict in that society, not least because doing so allows a mediator to understand the spiritual language used by conflicting groups to express their frustration.\textsuperscript{148} Gopin distinguishes between two ways of encouraging tolerance; a “secular” moral discourse based on universal guidelines, prepared for example by the United Nations, and a religious moral discourse stemming from religious actors self-definition. When engaging in conflict resolution, Gopin sees it necessary to involve those religious actors that are willing to engage from the secular point of view, but also those who have their own moral discourse.\textsuperscript{149}

Brewer et al. argue that the research on the role of religion in peacemaking has been too focused on individual case studies, which often separates religion as an independent variable isolated from

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid, p. 112
\textsuperscript{147} S. Hayward, "Religion and Peacebuilding." \textit{United States Institute of Peace}, 2012, p. 1
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid, p. 6
the rest of the factors influencing the conflict and makes it difficult to draw any general conclusions for other contexts.\textsuperscript{150} In attempting to create a conceptual framework to better understand the role that religion can have in conflicts where religion is a conflict factor, they explore ways in which religion can become part of the solution of the conflict. According to them, religion can occupy certain strategic social spaces – intellectual, institutional, market and political spaces - and in this manner contribute to peace.\textsuperscript{151} However, the relationship between religion and the state will have an effect on how these strategic social spaces can be utilized. The religion/state relation influences whether the religious contributions to peacebuilding will be official or unofficial, and whether the religious group has a minority or majority status. This framework can be helpful in mapping and comparing the contributions of different religious groups to peacebuilding.\textsuperscript{152}

The role of religion in conflict mediation has been recognized in Finland. As part of the mediation support efforts, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland is for example supporting the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, with Finn Church Aid acting as the network secretariat.\textsuperscript{153} Two recent master’s theses have focused on the aspects of Finnish peacebuilding efforts related to religion. Lepomäki studied the support that three Finnish NGO’s (Finn Church Aid, the Network for Religious and Traditional leaders and the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission) have given to religious leaders in regards to peacebuilding, as well as the cooperation between these NGO’s and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.\textsuperscript{154} She found that there were mutual benefits for the Ministry and the NGO’s stemming from their cooperation, and that the NGO’s had an important role in regards to facilitating relationships between religious leaders in the local context and other actors internationally.\textsuperscript{155} The different NGO’s expressed similar views of the role of religious leaders in conflict resolution; religious leaders can serve to prevent conflict, facilitate communication and build trust during conflict and work for reconciliation in post-conflict societies.\textsuperscript{156} The most likely impact of religious leaders was seen to be on the grassroots level; in this way, the peacebuilding efforts of religious leaders could support and complement those of higher level processes.\textsuperscript{157}

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid, p. 1024-1025
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid, p. 1033
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid, p. 3
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid, p. 57
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid, p. 58
Krebs interviewed nine Finnish peace mediators and mediation experts to study how they understand the role of religion and religious actors in conflict and mediation. The participants of the study included representatives of Finnish NGO’s such as Finn Church Aid, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission and Crisis Management Initiative, as well as representatives of the Finnish Government and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.\textsuperscript{158} While religion was not viewed by the participants as a primary source of conflict, most participants thought religion could influence the conflict.\textsuperscript{159} For many of the participants, there was not much familiarity with including religious actors in conflict resolution work, and Krebs suggest that one reason could be that religion and politics are seen as separate fields in the Finnish context. This view was echoed by one interviewee, who pointed out that religion is seen as a private matter in Finland and thus it may be challenging to raise awareness about the impact religion can have on politics in other contexts.\textsuperscript{160} Similarly to Lepomäki,\textsuperscript{161} Krebs found that:

\begin{quote}
(…)} \ the religious leaders’ potential role to act as value leaders, inside (local) mediators as well as connectors between the elite leadership and wider society was brought up. In addition, some emphasized their role in post-conflict reconciliation was religious leaders have the potential to foster forgiveness or establish truth commissions. Overall, religion’s role was conceived as positive especially on the community level.\textsuperscript{162}
\end{quote}

While religion can be seen to have a positive impact on peacebuilding, working specifically with religious leaders may have certain implications. In Lepomäki’s thesis, one of the interviewees “noted that speaking of religious leaders leaves out a variety of other potential religious actors, highlighting the peacebuilding role of women and youth”.\textsuperscript{163} There thus seems to be an awareness of the fact that women often are not considered as religious leaders and thus may not be recognized for their peacebuilding efforts.

4.2 Quantitative Analysis of Literature on Religious Peacebuilding

In the quantitative analysis of the literature on religious peacebuilding, counting will be done of the number of times the words “women” or “gender” appear in the primary and secondary literature (see table 2, p. 8). For the primary documents, the entire sources will be searched for these words; for the secondary literature, only index references containing these words will be counted.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Ibid, p. 52}
\footnote{Ibid, p. 53-54}
\footnote{Lepomäki, 2017, p. 57-58}
\footnote{Krebs, 2013, p. 55}
\footnote{Lepomäki, 2017, p. 60}
\end{footnotes}
Primary Literature

The primary literature regarding religious peacebuilding consists firstly of a statement issued by religious and spiritual leaders when meeting at the Millennium World Peace Summit at the United Nations in year 2000. Secondly, it consists of a chapter on “Stable and Peaceful Societies” in a UNFPA report on religion and development. In addition to these two documents, the primary literature contains a UN Plan of Action for how religious leaders can contribute to preventing incitement to violence. The words women of gender are mentioned 3 times in the statement of the religious and spiritual leaders, 9 times in the chapter on stable and peaceful societies and 30 times in the Plan of Action.

Secondary Literature

The secondary literature on religious peacebuilding consists of six books and three book sections. Out of these, only one of the book sections holds no index reference to women or gender. The rest of the literature all has index references to women, women’s rights, participation, role or different networks and institutions of women. For these eight books and sections, the number of index entries regarding women ranges from 3 to 69, with the total number of entries being 147. Additionally, four of the books or sections of the secondary literature contains index references to gender, gender issues or gender equality. The number of index entries regarding gender ranges from 3 to 21 with an overall total of 35 index entries.

4.3 Qualitative Analysis of Literature on Religious Peacebuilding

In the qualitative analysis of the primary and secondary sources, several references are found to the peacebuilding work of religious women. However, the terms women and gender are also frequently utilized in ways that are not related to peacebuilding efforts. This section will focus on some of the recurring themes regarding how women and gender are described in the literature sample.

4.3.1 Women as Suppressed by Religion

The most common emerging theme regarding women in the literature on religion and peacebuilding is how women, their rights and their leadership are suppressed through religion. In the primary literature, the UN report on religion and development notes that there was discussion regarding how religious leaders “may hold relatively antagonistic and publicly articulated positions on women’s rights.”164 The report questions whether the engagement of religious groups in

peacebuilding may thus lead to a situation where some rights are considered more important than others.\textsuperscript{165} The report also suggests that some faith-based organizations hesitated to participate in the consultation because the convener, UNFPA, is mandated to deal with questions concerning reproductive rights. Additionally, some of the donors present at the consultation expressed that they would not want to engage in dialogue on cooperation with faith-based organizations if women’s rights were to be argued over.\textsuperscript{166} This conveys that there is a pre-conceived notion of religious leaders or faith-based organizations having strong opinions regarding women’s rights. In the UN Plan of Action, religious leaders are encouraged to “promote debates among religious organizations and with the wider society on gender equality”, suggesting this is an area in which they need to improve.\textsuperscript{167}

In the secondary literature, similar thoughts are expressed. Somer writes that women’s rights is one issue that secular and religious actors have disagreed on, and that there is a more conservative view on gender equality in Muslim societies. The result is that freedoms which are viewed as self-evident in advanced democracies will not be furthered by Islamic actors, even if these same actors can advance for example religious freedom.\textsuperscript{168} Kelsay, writing about Islam from a historic perspective, writes, “Wherever advocates of democracy suggested a form of social order that would grant equal rights to non-Muslims, women, (…) more “traditionalist” authors and movements saw a drift away from historic Muslim values”.\textsuperscript{169} According to Somer, “Many Islamic actors believe, for example, that the separation of men and women in public life promotes women’s freedom”.\textsuperscript{170} In certain religions, the rights granted to women are thus not the same as those granted to men. According to Galtung, religious groups viewing God as transcendent rather than immanent may see that some are closer to God than others. One possible result of this is that men are viewed as closer to God than women:

At the end of this type of thinking we find witch processes and all kinds of cruelties and suppression, direct and structural violence, done by men to women, up to our day, and beyond. This is theocracy used to legitimize maleocracy or patriarchy.\textsuperscript{171}

\textsuperscript{165} Karam (Ed.), 2014, p. 19
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid, p. 21
\textsuperscript{169} J. Kelsay, “The Comparative Study of Ethics and the Project of the Justpeace” in A. Omer, R.S. Appleby and D. Little (Eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding, Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 263
\textsuperscript{170} M. Somer, “The Janus-Faced Relation of Religious Actors and Human Security: Islamic and Secular Values in Turkey” in Lombardi and Wellman (Eds.), 2012, p. 33
\textsuperscript{171} J. Galtung, “Religions Hard and Soft” in L. Marsden (Ed.), The Ashgate research companion to religion and conflict resolution, Routledge, 2016, p. 250
As can be seen from the above quote, religious beliefs that emphasize a hierarchical relationship can legitimize suppression of women.

Hayward suggests that many religious women “feel forced to choose between their religion and women’s rights”.172 This problematic dynamic emerges in other secondary sources. For example, one source mentions that in traditional Hindu world view women have less power than men and their freedom is restricted.173 Robinson writes about how for Muslim women in certain areas of India, the problems facing the community as a whole are seen as more important by the religious leaders, and so take precedence over women’s issues:

Women’s rights issues (...) are all pushed into the background in the face of targeted attacks against the community. Muslim religious leaders rage against the foregrounding of such issues when, as they argue, the whole community is under attack. Women activists are castigated for even bringing up such issues.174

Activists who are working in these Muslim communities feel that they cannot speak on questions of women’s rights as the community is facing other attacks.175 Women’s rights are perhaps an issue in some religious community as the role of women is seen as an integral part of the faith, or as Coleman writes: “conservatives link women’s piety to the purity and Islamic authenticity of their societies”.176 Philpott suggests that although human rights are generally supported by Muslim scholars and states today, “certain ones remain disputed, especially the rights of women (...)”.177

Grim suggests that social restrictions on religious freedom can also have an impact on women’s possibilities of engaging in society. In examining the correlation between the number of seats in parliament held by women and the social and governmental restriction on religious freedom, it was found that “the barrier to women’s participation may be slightly more associated with the social regulation of religion than with government regulation of religion, which is much weaker”.178

The oppression of women on women by their religious communities restrict the women’s possibilities and methods of engaging in peacebuilding and decision-making. O’Neill writes:

That many religious institutions have played a role in perpetuating gender role stereotypes, in restricting women to a limited and narrow set of responsibilities within their hierarchies, and in

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172 S. Hayward, "Women, Religion and Peacebuilding”, in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 313
175 Ibid, p. 124
177 D. Philpott, "Reconciliation, Politics, and Transitional Justice” in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 331
advancing policies that tear into the very fabric of the push for women’s rights over the past decade is unchallengeable.\footnote{179}

What O’Neill writes about the hierarchies within a religious community restricting women is echoed elsewhere in the secondary literature. For example, traditional structures that exist in Muslim societies are mentioned as a barrier to women’s active participation in peacebuilding.\footnote{180} Hayward notes that women’s lack of official power in religious communities leads to a lack of influence as “power differentials between ordained men clerics and lay women prove difficult to manage in current processes of religious peacebuilding”.\footnote{181} Somer gives an example of Islamic non-state actors in Turkey:

An otherwise daring female activist fighting for gender equality took pains to avoid shaking a male interviewer’s hand at the end of a lively and candid conversation, visibly sensitive to the reactions of her male colleagues present.\footnote{182}

The above example was to illustrate the inconsistencies between the actors social and political liberalism, but it also conveys some of the challenges that women activist may face. Robinson writes of a similar case of a young Muslim woman who is engaged in social activism:

Her struggles exhibit the difficulties of the Muslim woman activist who has to contend not only with the perceptions of the Hindus (who think of the “veiled” Muslim women as backward) but also with the expectations of femininity within her own community.\footnote{183}

For religious women, challenges arise not only from the peacebuilding work itself but also from negotiating their roles in their own and surrounding communities.

A specific issue that illustrates the complicated terrain religious women have to navigate is the role of the headscarf. In Turkey, the Muslim headscarf was banned from in government offices and schools as an attempt to enable women to participate fully in public life. Somer, however, suggests that the ban actually restricted women who wished to cover themselves from partaking in professional life.\footnote{184} The religious non-state actors he interviewed felt that the ban was a sign on prejudice against pious people by the secularists. However, he also notes that:

The wearing of an Islamic headscarf has a Janus-faced impact on women’s human security, enabling more conservative women to join public life while increasing the legitimacy of religious-traditional and patriarchal social norms and practices.\footnote{185}

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\footnote{180} S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, ”Peacebuilding in the Muslim World” in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 433
\footnote{181} S. Hayward, ”Women, Religion and Peacebuilding”, in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 304
\footnote{183} R. Robinson, “Indian Muslim Leadership: Predicaments and Possibilities for Human Security” in Lombardi and Wellman (Eds.), 2012, p. 120
\footnote{185} Ibid, p. 39
This suggests that the relationship between women’s empowerment and wearing of headscarves is complex, and that refusing women the right to wear a headscarf may in fact limit women’s rights and freedom. In Nigeria, an increase in Muslim women covering themselves did not stir any controversy; however, when women resist to cover themselves with religious headscarves it was seen as provoking.\(^{186}\) Harris explains this dynamic in the following way:

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\text{(...) conservative changes tend to strengthen current patterns of masculinity – in this case, through a visible symbol of the male control over females that is such a vital part of masculine identity in this context. Changes in the opposite direction could be construed as attacks on masculinity and thus labelled dangerous.}^{187}\]

The headscarf thus is seen as symbolic of the power structures in which women are hierarchically placed below men.

### 4.3.2 Women as Empowered by Religion

Another theme that emerges on women and gender in the literature on religious peacebuilding is how religion can empower women and be utilized to strengthen women’s position in society. This theme does not emerge in the primary literature, but is mentioned in a majority of the secondary sources. Firstly, an aspect of how religion empowers women that is mentioned is how women’s religious beliefs often is what motivates women to engage in social action and peacebuilding activities. Sharify-Funk and Woolner write:

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Operating within a framework of religious identity and norms can be a major source of legitimacy and inspiration for women peacebuilders, whose work can benefit from religious teachings on human and women’s rights as well as peace. In some instances, explicit recognition of women’s role in peacebuilding or reconstruction by religious institutions can be a further source of legitimacy and empowerment. By engaging religious culture and identity, women can find ready counterarguments to those who would seek to marginalize them and escalate destructive conflict, and can speak in ways that lend moral credibility to their efforts.\(^{188}\)
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As described above, religion can serve to give women a legitimacy they may otherwise not be granted.

Women are generally more religiously active than men, and compared to men, women’s religious beliefs have a stronger effect on their political opinions and behavior.\(^{189}\) Hayward writes that “spirituality” is one of the most important motivators for women engaged in peacebuilding.\(^{190}\) In a case study of a church in Zimbabwe, it is mentioned that for a woman, “the discourses she heard in church supported the idea that she should engage in activism alongside the poor and prompted her to

\(^{186}\) C. Harris, "Community-based Pedagogies, Religion and Conflict Resolution in Kaduna, Nigeria" in Marsden (Ed.), 2016, p. 325
\(^{187}\) Ibid., p. 325
\(^{188}\) M. Sharify-Funk and C.J. Woolner, “Women, Religion and Peacebuilding” in Marsden (Ed.), 2016, p. 143
\(^{189}\) B. O’Neill, “Religion and women: Canadian women’s religious volunteering: Compassion, connections and comparisons” in Haynes (Ed.), 2008, p. 366
\(^{190}\) S. Hayward, "Women, Religion and Peacebuilding", in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 303
contemplate challenging the government”. This is a very concrete example of how women’s religiosity can inspire activism.

In addition to motivating women to social action, several of the secondary sources looked at how reinterpretation of religious texts can strengthen women’s agency. Coleman writes:

For centuries, women have engaged with religion to advocate for more female-friendly interpretations of texts and traditions and, by so doing, have generated support – among men and women – for an expansion of female educational, social, economic and political opportunities.

In her chapter on Islamic feminism, Coleman looks at how this has been done within the Islamic tradition. The view of Islamic feminists is that Islam fundamentally supports equality between men and women, and they attempt to further this view not by attacking the religion but from working within the religious tradition. This means for example “re-reading the Qur’an, putting the texts in historical context, and disentangling them from tribal practices and other local traditions.” Coleman gives examples of how these processes have looked in Morocco, Afghanistan, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia. In Morocco, the laws regarding family could be changed so as to improve the situation of women as a result of women activists using religious texts, historical sources and cooperation with clerics. In Afghanistan, women’s participation in community development councils could be secured by using religious arguments based on the Qur’an. Religious argumentation has also been used in Indonesia and Saudi Arabia to improve women’s rights.

In a similar vein, Kadayifci-Orellana suggests that Muslim peacebuilding actors can utilize their religious expertise to challenge structures that support gender-based discrimination or hinders women’s peacebuilding efforts. In Kenya, a group of women succeeded in advancing women’s participation in public decision-making through the use of religious values. In Somalia, a women’s movement managed to strengthen women’s participation in Somali peace talks, and a contributing factor to this was the fact that they located themselves within the Islamic tradition. Members of the movement “gained credibility through their religiosity and alliances with moderate Islamic groups”. Interestingly enough, it is also mentioned that the same women did not want to be seen as affiliated with feminist movements. Kadayifci-Orellana writes that “experiences of colonization, globalization, and imperialism, among others, influence the way the intentions of Westerners are

191 G. Ganiel, "Striking a Balance: Christianity and the Challenges of Long-Term Human Security in Zimbabwe” in Lombardi and Wellman (Eds.), 2012, p. 184
193 Ibid, p. 149
195 S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, "Peacebuilding in the Muslim World” in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 433-434
196 Ibid, p. 434
The Somali women’s reluctance to associate with feminism can be seen as one way of maintaining an Islamic identity and reducing the threat of being perceived as influenced by Western values.

Sharify-Funk and Woolner also see that religion can aid in making women’s voices heard. They write:

Knowledge of religious texts can therefore be helpful for the projection of women’s voices within a context of conflict insofar as it ‘roots’ women within an authoritative framework for in-group identity, facilitates challenges to constrained social roles and counteracts efforts to brand peacebuilding voices as loyal.\textsuperscript{199}

They suggest that when able to utilize religious discourse in their efforts for peace, it can be a great advantage to women. Again though, the risk of women being viewed as disloyal to their religious group is mentioned. Efforts to strengthen women’s position must be seen as authentic and legitimate and “not being driven solely by the desire to please a Western ‘other’.”\textsuperscript{199} Sharify-Funk and Woolner write that protection of women is a recurring theme in both Western and Islamic discourse. From the Islamic perspective, the Western notion of liberating women is seen to have been used as an argument for supporting military intervention and thus has strong associations with Western imperialism. U.S. declarations of working for women’s liberation in the Middle East resulted in difficulties for Muslim advocates of women’s rights. Sharify-Funk and Woolner suggest that additional attention needs to be given to the construction and interlinkage of gender identity and religious identities.\textsuperscript{200} As such, “religion should not be regarded as a monolithic force (…); rather, it should be recognized as a vital component of identity, values and worldview that plays a constitutive and enabling role in social action”.\textsuperscript{201} Grounding the work for empowering women within a religious tradition can therefore be one way to enable women to partake in social action and ensure that their efforts are viewed as legitimate. The secondary literature also gives examples of religious communities themselves actively trying to raise the voice of women. For example, churches working together for national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe “think that women and people from rural areas have been left out of public debate and that their voices should be deliberately included”.\textsuperscript{202}

In one of the secondary sources, Hayward argues that while religious women use scripture to shape their peacebuilding work, they additionally use religious texts or materials to reflect their own experiences and to empower themselves. She exemplifies this by referring to the use of stories about

\textsuperscript{197} S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, “Peacebuilding in the Muslim World” in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 434
\textsuperscript{198} M. Sharify-Funk and C.J. Woolner, “Women, Religion and Peacebuilding” in Marsden (Ed.), 2016, p. 146
\textsuperscript{199} Ibid, p. 146
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid, p. 147-148
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid, p. 145
\textsuperscript{202} J. Tarusarira and G. Ganiel, “Religion, Secular Democracy and Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe” in Marsden (Ed.), 2016, p. 113
biblical women by Christian women in Colombia to convey the experiences of women both as leaders and as victims, and further writes:

Women highlight religious support for their active participation to inspire themselves as individuals, to challenge gender-oppressive religious claims that would limit their work (put forward by clerical authorities as well as husbands, relatives, and others), and to undergird theologically an effort to transform structural gender inequalities – both within and outside religious institutions.203

The empowerment that women can find in religious resources is thus seen as not only allowing women to further gender equality within their own religious community, but also in society at large. Hayward suggests that when women engage in hermeneutics and reinterpret texts from their own religious tradition while paying attention to gender, it can make women question their tradition and engage politically. However, she also cautions that the kind of agency that arises from this process may look different from context to context, and may not correspond to a Western feminist view of agency.204

It is not just reinterpretation and utilization of religious texts that can empower women. Schirch writes about how ritual actions can be transformative, and suggests that “religious ritual is part of this empowering, creative, artistic, and sensual tradition of social transformation”.205 She uses the example of a salt water ritual for women who have suffered sexual abuse, in which the water is used as a symbol for sadness that the women marked themselves with. Schirch concludes that for the victims, this process also symbolizes “the transformation they are making from seeing themselves as victims to announcing themselves as survivors who are agents in their own recovery.”206

The secondary literature suggests that feminist scholars in the religious field have been more progressive in looking at the ways women can contribute to peacemaking than the field of peacebuilding studies. According to Pilar Aquino, the field of peacebuilding studies is strongly under the influence of sexism, leading to a situation where efforts of women are not recognized. However, she writes that “feminist theologians of liberation have been providing critical religious interpretations and theological resources for conflict transformation for decades”.207

A final way in which the secondary literature suggests religions can empower women is through strengthening human rights. For example, Wellman and Lombardi write that “liberal voices within a particular religion can play a uniquely important role in disempowering illiberal voices within that same religion. This can promote nor just intercommunal peace but also women’s rights and other

203 S. Hayward, "Women, Religion and Peacebuilding", in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 310
204 Ibid, p. 310-311
205 L. Schirch, “Ritual, Religion and Peacebuilding” in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 495
206 Ibid, p. 509
fundamental human rights.” Furthermore, the secondary sources mention that religious freedom has strong correlations with gender empowerment and a higher income for women, and where there is high religious freedom women tend to have better opportunities for education.

4.3.3 Women as Victims of Violence

Almost as frequently as it refers to women as empowered by religion, the literature on religious peacebuilding refers to women as victims of violence. In the primary literature, the report of the consultation on religion and development mentions that violence against women may be included as a target for peaceful societies within sustainable development goals. How this will be advocated and mobilized for was a question raised in the discussion at the consultation. The Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors, on the other hand, contains nine recommendations for how incitement to violence can be prevented. One of these is concerned with preventing incitement to gender-based violence, and objectives include working with cultural attitudes that reinforce sexual violence, reducing violence and discrimination that is based on gender and strengthening women’s faith leadership. The specific actions include condemning rape as a weapon of war, working with healing of memories and training women to support survivors through counselling. The Plan of Action in this way recognizes that violence and discriminatory practices are often targeted at women, yet remains mindful of the fact that women can take part in countering these practices.

In the secondary literature, the mention of women being subjected to violence is of startlingly high proportion. References to women being subjected to sexual violence are frequent: “the perpetrators raped women”, “women were systematically raped”, “women raped”, “raping of women”, “women being raped”. Additionally, the following citations are found in the

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209 W.C. Durham JR. and E.A. Clark, “The Place of Religious Freedom in the Structure of Peacebuilding” in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 288
211 Karam (Ed.), 2014, p. 18
212 United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, 2017, p. 6
213 Ibid, p. 11-12
215 T. Cooper, “Liberation Theology and the Spiral of Violence” in Murphy (Ed.), 2011, p. 543
secondary literature: “Muslim women especially being targeted and brutally raped”, 219 “sexual violence perpetrated extensively on women” 220 and finally, “men remain reluctant to admit incidents of rape and are known to have applied pressure on women to prevent them from reporting such incidents”. 221 The frequent combination of the words “woman” and “rape” suggest that women often are to be found in the position of the victim of sexual violence. Hayward mentions that men and children can also be subjected to sexual violence, 222 but in most of the secondary sources, sexual violence is only mentioned in connection to women. Other types of violence against women are also mentioned, for example, Hayward argues that even as a war has ended, women’s experiences of violence on social, political and economic levels may increase. 223 The domestic violence women may be subjected to is mentioned. 224 Cooper gives an example of how a Brazilian woman was forced to make a choice between violating her own beliefs and terminating a pregnancy or violating her children by giving up her job because of the violence of poverty. 225

Some of the violence against women mentioned in the secondary literature shows that the violence has connections to religion, with women either being subjected to violence due to religious law or because of discrimination based on religion. For example, Fluehr-Lobban writes about non-Muslim women being imprisoned due to beer brewing and another non-Muslim woman being sentenced to stoning under Shari’a law in Sudan. 226 Hackett also mentions women sentenced to death by stoning under Shari’a law, but in her case, these were Muslim women in Nigeria. 227 A case of death sentence on a Christian woman in Pakistan was issued for insulting Islam is also mentioned in the secondary literature. 228 In Tajikistan, women wearing hijabs were detained in the bazaar as it was viewed as a mark of extremism. 229 Gopin suggests that “organized religion has been one of the most important handmaidens and apologists for the worst empires and states of history (…) actively constructing the most long-standing forms of structural injustice against nonbelievers, against

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220 M. Pilar Aquino, “Religious Peacebuilding” in Murphy (Ed.), 2011, p. 577


222 S. Hayward, ”Women, Religion and Peacebuilding”, in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 301

223 Ibid, p. 301-302


225 T. Cooper, “Liberation Theology and the Spiral of Violence” in Murphy (Ed.), 2011, p. 545-546


227 R.I.J. Hackett, ”Nigeria’s Religious Leaders in an Age of Radicalism and Neoliberalism” in Sisk (Ed.), 2011, p. 126

228 B.J. Grim “Is Promoting Religious Freedom Dangerous?” in Marsden (Ed.), 2016, p. 224

229 K. Korostelina, ”Religion, War and Peace in Tajikistan” in Sisk (Ed.), 2011, p. 178
women (…)”. According to Harris, Christian missionaries in Nigeria attempted to remove women from the positions of power they had previously held, resulting in “the current situation that privileges violent patriarchy”. Women are thus not only victims of violence itself, but of systems that uphold the violence, of which religion can be one. This is echoed by Hayward, who suggests that in the literature on peacebuilding and women, religion is “described as a barrier to women’s advancement and protection. In short, women are described as victims of religion.”

The secondary literature also gives examples of protection offered to the women victims of violence. For example, Kelsay writes: “the order envisioned in historical Islam establishes a set of hierarchical relationships on which citizens are under the protection of rulers (…), women under the protection of men (…)”. Brekke similarly writes of the Hindu concept of security as gender-specific, where women are to be protected by the men in a household. However, this protection is not only limited to external threats, as “women must be guarded against their own desires and impulses”. Additionally, in a chapter on Sikhism, Singh writes of the raid in Punjab 1764-65 that “the targets of Sikhs never included women, who were treated as if they were old (burhiyas) respectable ladies”. In the above cases, women are portrayed as in need of protection, and part of the reason seems to be that they are hierarchically lower than men.

4.3.4 Women as Religious Peacebuilders

In the literature on religious peacebuilding, questions of how religious women engage in peacebuilding are at times addressed. In the primary literature, this is mainly seen in the UN Plan for Action, where there is a call for engagement from diverse faith actors such as women. There is a suggestion at forming a group of women faith leaders to work against extremism as well as training women religious leaders to counsel those who have experiences gender-based violence. The fact that being a woman counts as diversity of course indicates that women generally are not recognized as faith actors. However, the document at least recognizes that women are able to act as religious leaders.

230 M. Gopin, ”Negotiating Secular and Religious Contributions to Social Change and Peacebuilding” in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 345
231 C. Harris, ”Community-based Pedagogies, Religion and Conflict Resolution in Kaduna, Nigeria” in Marsden (Ed.), 2016, p. 323
232 S. Hayward, ”Women, Religion and Peacebuilding”, in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 303-304
233 J. Kelsay, ”The Comparative Study of Ethics and the Project of the Justpeace” in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 255
234 T. Brekke, ”Hinduism and Security: A Hierarchy of Protection” in Seiple, Hoover and Otis (Eds.), 2012, p. 83
235 P. Singh, ”All Shall Abide in Peace, Prosperity, and Justice: Sikhism and Security” in Seiple, Hoover and Otis (Eds.), 2012, p. 98
236 United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, 2017, p. 8
237 Ibid, p. 12
In the secondary literature on religion and peacebuilding, four of the books have separate chapters that focus specifically on women and religion, indicating that there is an awareness that the role of women needs to be acknowledged and further explored. In a chapter on Islamic feminism, Coleman writes of how women in Morocco were allowed to become religious guides as a means to counter extremism: “Women especially feel that the female preachers are good listeners who understand and relate to their problems better than male imams.” Hayward in her chapter mentions several religious women who have been active peacebuilders. She also shares some of the specific contributions of religious women in peacebuilding; they effectively work across boundaries to build bridges between different groups in society; they are often skilled at advocacy, giving psycho-social and spiritual support, mediating in conflicts and contributing to community development.

Sharify-Funk and Woolner in their chapter on women, religion and peacebuilding highlight that little recognition has been given to religious women’s peacebuilding work and to the ways in which it is indeed undertaken from a religious point of view. Partly this has to do with the portrayal of women:

Some of the work in this field, including UNSC 1,325 itself, has been criticized for advancing an ‘essentialist’ notion of women – one which depicts women as monolithic with an inherently peace-loving nature – and failing to take into account cultural, religious and socio-economic differences.

Sharify-Funk and Woolner further consider that the focus on high-level peace negotiations means that women’s peacebuilding activities are left unnoticed, since they tend to take place closer to the grassroots. In their opinion, the view of what peacebuilding is needs to be expanded to also include these activities. They use the case of Mindanao to exemplify the different peacebuilding roles women can take; they can be catalysts through creating relationships necessary for peace; they can be community mobilizers, facilitators and act as healers or inspirers; additionally, as a group they can act as a peace constituency. Religion can both empower and constrain women, and Sharify-Funk

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240 S. Hayward, “Women, Religion and Peacebuilding”, in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 303-309

241 M. Sharify-Funk and C.J. Woolner, “Women, Religion and Peacebuilding” in Marsden (Ed.), 2016, p. 139

242 Ibid., p. 138

and Woolner emphasize that women therefore utilize their religious and gender identities differently in different contexts.\textsuperscript{244}

The fourth chapter in the secondary literature that addresses women and religion focuses on religious volunteering of Canadian women based on a survey of over 8000 women.\textsuperscript{245} It is concluded that there are both personal benefits for women who are active in religious volunteering as well as public benefits for the surrounding community. Although religious organizations have received critique for limiting the leadership of women, the study suggests that religious volunteering allows women to develop new skills and also corresponds with a political interest and participation.\textsuperscript{246} The fact that the topic of religion and women has been placed in these four separate chapters (albeit better than not mentioned at all) still results in questions of religious women’s peacebuilding work being isolated to these chapters instead of being mainstreamed throughout the literature. This creates somewhat of a dichotomy between “religious peacebuilding” and “women’s religious peacebuilding”.

Outside of these four chapters focusing on women, there are some concrete examples of women who have been inspired to work for peace by their faith. Some of these are well known persons, such as Dorothy Day\textsuperscript{247} and Aung San Suu Kyi,\textsuperscript{248} but other names are also mentioned: the Brazilian nun and feminist theologian Ivone Gebara\textsuperscript{249} and Dekha Ibrahim Abdi, a Muslim peacebuilder working in the Wajir district of Kenya.\textsuperscript{250} There are also case studies where women religious leaders are mentioned. For example, Ganiel conducted interviews within an African charismatic church in Zimbabwe. A woman in the church ran a project visiting orphans and widows, yet she “saw her primary role as an evangelist – one whom God uses to save souls rather than to simply provide them with material sustenance”.\textsuperscript{251} This is a clear example of how religion is the primary motivation for engagement. However, peacebuilding can also come as somewhat of a byproduct of other needs requiring to be met. Dubois and Hunter Bowman highlight that for the women in Wajir, peacebuilding happened as a result of the women needing to get their everyday needs met rather than as an active

\textsuperscript{244} M. Sharify-Funk and C.J. Woolner, “Women, Religion and Peacebuilding” in Marsden (Ed.), 2016, p. 148
\textsuperscript{245} B. O’Neill, “Religion and women: Canadian women’s religious volunteering: Compassion, connections and comparisons” in Haynes (Ed.), 2008, p. 371
\textsuperscript{246} Ibid, p. 383
\textsuperscript{247} I. Chernus, ”Religion and Nonviolence in American History” in Murphy (Ed.), 2011, p. 561-562
\textsuperscript{248} Hecht, R. D. & Biondo, V. F. (Eds.), Religion and culture: Contemporary practices and perspectives. Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2012, p. 20
\textsuperscript{249} T. Cooper, ”Liberation Theology and the Spiral of Violence” in Murphy (Ed.), 2011, p. 544
\textsuperscript{250} S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, ”Peacebuilding in the Muslim World” in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 422
\textsuperscript{251} G. Ganiel, ”Striking a Balance: Christianity and the Challenges of Long-Term Human Security in Zimbabwe” in Lombardi and Wellman (Eds.), 2012, p. 180-181
4.3.5 Women as Equal to Men

Although not prominent, a recurring theme in the literature is a tendency to mention both women and men to convey that issues relate to both of them. In the primary literature, this is most clearly seen in the statement from the religious and spiritual leaders’ statement from the Millennium World Peace Summit. For example, there are statements such as “we accept that men and women are equal partners in all aspects of life”; a declaration of commitment “to collaborate with (...) all men and women of goodwill” and finally listing some basic rights “that all human beings regardless of religion, race, gender and ethnic origin have the right to”. In the Plan of Action, radicalization is to be countered by “mothers and fathers”.255

In the secondary literature there is also an inclination to write about both men and women. For example, Sisk writes that: ”There are both men and women clergy, and the case studies reveal both influential men and women religious actors”.256 Gross writes that “the affirmation of Islam is that, if men (and women) collectively submit to the will of God (...)”.257 On Sikhism, Singh suggests that Sikh ideals are in accordance with the postmodern ideal of gender equality.258 Similarly, the secondary literature mentions that a true Muslim must be compassionate to all, regardless of gender259 and in a chapter on Northern Ireland it is mentioned that both women and men carried out evil deeds.260 While the above examples demonstrate that there is an awareness of the importance of gender equality, it also serves to give an impression that women and men are participating and affected by conflict in equal measure.

252 H.M. Dubois and J. Hunter-Bowman, “The Intersection of Christian Theology and Peacebuilding” in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 551
254 The Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, Commitment to Global Peace, 2000
256 T.D. Sisk, “Conclusion: From Terror to Tolerance to Coexistence in Deeply Divided Societies” in Sisk (Ed.), 2011, p. 233
257 M.L. Gross, “Shi’a Muslims and Security: the Centrality of Iran” in Seiple, Hoover and Otis (Eds.), 2012, p. 57
258 P. Singh, ”All Shall Abide in Peace, Prosperity, and Justice: Sikhism and Security” in Seiple, Hoover and Otis (Eds.), 2012, p. 100
259 S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, ”Peacebuilding in the Muslim World” in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 427
5. Comparing Perspectives: Women, Religion and Peacebuilding in the Literature Sets

The aim of this thesis is to investigate whether and how the peacebuilding efforts of religious women are mentioned in the literature on the role of women in peacebuilding and the role of religion in peacebuilding respectively in light of Hayward and Marshall’s view of religious women’s peacebuilding efforts being invisible.261 This section will focus on summarizing the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses done on the literature samples in order to answer the research question.

The quantitative analysis on both sets of literature revealed that albeit not dominant, the concepts "religion"/"faith" were present in the literature on women’s peacebuilding and “women”/"gender” in the literature on religious peacebuilding. While the primary literature had roughly equal numbers of mentions, there was a clear difference in how often these concepts were mentioned in the indexes of the secondary literature. While “religion” and "faith" had a total of 13 index entries in the secondary literature on women’s peacebuilding, there was a total of 182 index entries on “women” or “gender” in the secondary literature on religious peacebuilding. This indicates that the literature on religious peacebuilding more frequently delved into topics related to women and gender than the literature on women’s peacebuilding did on matters of faith and religion.

The qualitative analysis revealed that religion in the literature on women’s peacebuilding was seen as a resource for the peacebuilding, for example though furthering women’s rights, by way of the efforts of women religious leaders and through religious women’s interfaith cooperation. In the literature on religious peacebuilding, women were described as being empowered and motivated by religion in their peacebuilding work. More specifically, it was described how women reinterpret religious texts and traditions to strengthen their own agency, reflect on their experience and to further peacebuilding efforts and women’s rights. Additionally, the literature on religious peacebuilding gave several examples of religious women’s peacebuilding efforts; how women can function as religious leaders but also the specific contributions of religious women such as advocacy, psycho-social and spiritual support expertise, conflict mediation skills and community development efforts.262 It was suggested that women as a group can function as a peace constituency.263 Similarly to the literature on women’s peacebuilding, the literature on religious peacebuilding also raised women’s cooperation

261 Hayward and Marshall, 2015, p. 2
262 S. Hayward, "Women, Religion and Peacebuilding", in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 303-309
over boundaries of religion or culture. However, it is worth noting that much of the theory on religious women’s peacebuilding efforts were contained in separate chapters, indicating that these questions are still isolated from the mainstream theory on religious peacebuilding.

Religious women’s peacebuilding efforts were not completely invisible in the literature sets, but neither was the topic explored widely. However, what emerged in the qualitative analysis of the two literature sets was that much was written on the role of religion in the literature on women’s peacebuilding and on women in the literature on religious peacebuilding. In fact, a myriad of different perspectives were found, at times even contradictory to each other. As such, while the literature on women’s peacebuilding described religion as a resource for peacebuilding, religion was also portrayed as a hindrance to women’s rights, as strongly connected to extremism and as a reason for conflicts. This suggests that a negative view of religion was predominant in the literature on women’s peacebuilding. Considering the negative aspects of religion brought forth, it is hardly surprising that religion is not brought up more frequently in the literature on women’s peacebuilding.

From what is written about women and gender in the literature on religious peacebuilding, religion is however not necessarily either seen as having a positive impact on women’s rights and position in society. In fact, much of the literature mentioned how women have been suppressed by religion. Interestingly, almost all of the examples mentioned have to do with Islam or oppression of Muslim women. By contrast, while the literature on women’s peacebuilding mentioned how religion can serve to oppress women, specific religions were mentioned more seldom and it was emphasized that the oppressive practices occur in many different religions. Why does the literature on religious peacebuilding focus more on Islam than other religions? While this may not have been the intention of the authors, the fact that the literature sample of religious peacebuilding as a whole hold so many examples of Muslim women being oppressed and not, for example, Christian women, suggests a tendency to portray Islam as an oppressive religion. Perhaps this could be seen to reflect a Western perspective, where there may still be a tendency to portray Muslim women as Khan writes: “veiled, exotic and oppressed by Islam”. Phillips and Saharso suggest that racist prejudice can be concealed by making women’s rights the sign of a modern liberal societies and thus encouraging stereotypical portrayals of “‘traditional’, non-western, illiberal ones”. As most of the literature on women’s peacebuilding is written from a feminist perspective, perhaps there is greater insight on the limitations

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on women’s rights in Western liberal societies, and thus also a willingness to be critical to other religions such as Christianity.

In the literature on religious peacebuilding, much was written about women as victims of violence. In the primary literature, this was mainly related to how gender-based violence can be prevented. In the secondary literature, however, much was simply stating ways in which women had been abused. Sexual violence was mentioned especially often. Research indicates that there are ways in which women are affected more negatively by violent conflict. For example, more women than men become refugees or displaced and in the aftermath of conflict, many households are headed by widows. On the other hand, men suffer higher mortality rates than women in violent conflicts, and violent conflict may actually open up new work and political opportunities for women.\textsuperscript{267} Portraying women only as victims does not give an accurate perspective on their role in conflict. The high proportion of portrayals of women as victims in the literature on religious peacebuilding suggests that women need to be protected, but it does not mention the women’s agency and thus does not encourage an image of women as active peacebuilders.

An addition theme that arose in the literature on religious peacebuilding was that of women and men being equal, having equal rights to certain services and different religious groups’ affirmation of this equality. This especially came forth in the primary literature. Additionally, at times there was mention of specific tasks of that both genders could perform; parenting, being a religious leader, doing evil deeds. While this could indicate that religious peacebuilding values gender equality, it could also be perceived as an attempt to convey that gender equality has already been achieved in religious communities. Considering Hayward’s and Marshall’s claims that men still hold most of the power in religious communities,\textsuperscript{268} claiming that gender equality already suggests that no further effort is needed to recognize the leadership and peacebuilding work of women or to carry out a gendered analysis of how men and women may experience and approach conflict and peacebuilding differently. While it is understandable that religious communities want to frame themselves as in favor of gender equality, especially considering that this has been raised as an important factor in peacebuilding work today, it may actually be counter-productive for women’s religious peacebuilding to do so.

Two topics emerged repeatedly in both sets of literature and are worth further investigating; these were questions of identity and agency. Regarding identity, there was a tendency in both literature sets to juxtapose religious identity and gender identity in attempting to determine which one is or should


\textsuperscript{268} Hayward and Marshall, 2015, p. 6-7
be of greater importance. In the literature on women’s peacebuilding, the rights of women were several times compared to the rights held by religious groups, and it was noted that women may have to decide whether they want to act in favor of their religious identity or their gender identity. Sjoberg’s view of the Copenhagen School of critical security studies’ opinion that “as members of nations, religions and races under threat, women are subsumed: they do not compose a group in and of themselves” is rather illuminating in this regard. It highlights what is also mentioned in the rest of the literature on women’s peacebuilding: that conflict tends to strengthen religious identity and in extension weaken the rights of women.

That fact that there seems to be a choice between religious and gender identity can also be seen implicitly, for example in the primary literature on women’s peacebuilding where Malala Yousafzai’s determination as a girl to receive education is juxtaposed with a “conservative backlash in many Asian and African societies”. It is, however, not mentioned that Malala herself is a Muslim. In examining media coverage of Malala, Khurshid and Pitts concluded the following:

> In the case of Malala, the media has constructed and mobilized her image as a global icon of girls’ education to further reinforce the images of oppressed Muslim girls and a homogenous Islam instead of highlighting the indigenous ideas of modernity that have informed and inspired Malala.

Khurshid and Pitts in this citation highlights the ways in which Malala’s religious and cultural background may have been what encouraged her strive towards education. While the primary literature on women’s peacebuilding does not mention Malala’s religion, neither does it mention this inspiring function it may have had. In juxtaposing Malala’s achievements with conservatism in society, it instead contributes to a narrative where religion and women’s rights are mutually exclusive. Malala’s identity is portrayed as belonging to the side of women’s rights, and her religion is not mentioned.

The juxtaposing of gender identity and religious identity was also seen in the literature on religious peacebuilding. Both the primary and secondary literature mentioned ways in which women’s rights may not be fully endorsed by religious groups. In the secondary literature, an example was given of how women felt they needed to be silent on issues concerning them as issues concerning their religious group took precedence. The oppression women experience from their own religious groups was also seen as limiting their ability to engage in peacebuilding or activism. However, the

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269 Sjoberg, 2010, p. 29
270 Coomaraswamy, 2015, p. 226
273 S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, "Peacebuilding in the Muslim World" in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 433
secondary literature on religious peacebuilding also mentioned how religious identity can both inspire women towards peacebuilding and grant their efforts legitimacy.\textsuperscript{274} Even so, the literature highlights the risk women run of being seen as disloyal to their religious group if engaging too closely with feminism and Western values (in the case of Somali women)\textsuperscript{275} or Western imperialism (in the case of women in the Middle East).\textsuperscript{276} Yet another aspect mentioned in the secondary literature is a case where women wished to downplay their religious identity in order to work collaboratively with other oppressed groups.\textsuperscript{277}

In the secondary literature on religious peacebuilding, Hayward writes that religious women “feel forced to choose between their religion and women’s rights”, arguing that this is a false choice.\textsuperscript{278} Also in the secondary literature on religious peacebuilding, Sharify-Funk and Woolner want religion to “be recognized as a vital component of identity, values and worldview that plays a constitutive and enabling role in social action”.\textsuperscript{279} However, based on the literature analyzed in this thesis, juxtaposing religious identity and gender identity – and in extension religious rights and women’s rights – seems to be fairly common both in women’s peacebuilding literature and religious peacebuilding literature. In this scenario, a religious woman engaged in peacebuilding seems to have to specify if she’s undertaking that engagement as a religious person or as a woman. This may contribute to the religious woman peacebuilder’s low visibility in both sets of literature: she cannot easily be claimed as belonging to one’s own as she simultaneously, through her identity, belongs to another group whose rights are seen as a challenge to those of the own group.

With a mindset of pitting women’s rights against religious rights, it is not difficult to see why there seems to be relatively little cooperation between scholars and practitioners on women’s peacebuilding and religious peacebuilding. Perhaps one way of addressing this issue would be to have a stronger intersectional approach both in practice and theory. Intersectionality theory originated as an attempt to improve the insufficient analysis of Black women’s marginalization by suggesting that it was not enough to acknowledge the experiences of being a woman or being Black; rather, the experience arising from the intersection of these identities needed to be acknowledged.\textsuperscript{280} For peace movements, paying attention to intersection of identities can potentially lead to the inclusion of a

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{274} M. Sharify-Funk and C.J. Woolner, “Women, Religion and Peacebuilding” in Marsden (Ed.), 2016, p. 143
  \item \textsuperscript{275} S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, “Peacebuilding in the Muslim World” in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 434
  \item \textsuperscript{276} M. Sharify-Funk and C.J. Woolner, “Women, Religion and Peacebuilding” in Marsden (Ed.), 2016, p. 146
  \item \textsuperscript{277} R. Robinson, “Indian Muslim Leadership: Predicaments and Possibilities for Human Security” in Lombardi and Wellman (Eds.), 2012, p. 124
  \item \textsuperscript{278} S. Hayward, “Women, Religion and Peacebuilding”, in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 313
  \item \textsuperscript{279} M. Sharify-Funk and C.J. Woolner, “Women, Religion and Peacebuilding” in Marsden (Ed.), 2016, p. 145
  \item \textsuperscript{280} K. Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics.” \textit{U. Chi. Legal F.}, 1989
\end{itemize}
greater number of people, and utilizing an intersectional analysis aids “to avoid silencing one part of a person’s identity while focusing on another”. This is precisely the problem when pitting religious identity against gender identity – one part has to be silenced, as has been exemplified by the literature.

In a study of the statements of fourteen U.S. peace movement organizations during the period 1990-2005, it was found that multiple-identity discourses were much less utilized than single-identity discourses, suggesting that in general, these organizations had not been successful in establishing intersectional approaches. From practitioners, criticism has been aimed at the Women, Peace and Security agenda for lacking intersectional analysis and thus dividing grassroots groups of women activists from each other. It is suggested that the WPS agenda:

(...) does not easily accommodate women’s agency that does not seek individual emancipation/empowerment or work within secular-liberal frameworks. Pious women or women belonging to political Islamist groups may not subscribe to the liberal objectives of the WPS agenda.

In order to also accommodate for religious women to partake in the Women, Peace and Security agenda, an intersectional analysis would be needed. Similarly, the field of religious peacebuilding could probably benefit from an expansion of what it means to be a religious peacebuilder, taking into account how this experience may differ for women. Much of the literature on religious peacebuilding still focused on women as victims of violence, as oppressed or simply as already being equal to men. More attention should be given to the ways in which women already utilize religion for peacebuilding.

A second topic that emerged in both of the literature sets was agency. In the literature on women’s peacebuilding, religion is partly described as a hindrance to women’s rights and by extension, women’s agency. For example, women’s political participation in Lebanon is described as negatively affected by the patriarchal stance of religious groups in Palestine, women’s leadership is not promoted in order to not upset religious conservatives. While there are examples of women having agency and being engaged in peacebuilding, it is not suggested that religion would be enabling this agency; rather, it is proposed that religious leaders should receive training on resolution 1325 and

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282 Ibid, p. 275
283 Ibid, p. 295
that empowerment projects for women need to respect the local culture in order to make progress.\textsuperscript{288} Additionally, it is suggested that diaspora religious groups can advocate for women’s rights to other religious groups.\textsuperscript{289} Agency related to religion is mentioned, however, in the case of extremism where women in the face of violence or alienation may join extremist movements.\textsuperscript{290} The ambivalence of this agency is discussed in two of the sources,\textsuperscript{291} and it is noted that while these women have the capacity to act, their actions are serving a hypermasculine version of religion, which in extension will not benefit women’s rights.\textsuperscript{292}

The literature on religious peacebuilding was still in general very positive towards the role religion can have in strengthening women’s agency. Several times it was suggested that religion motivates women to engage themselves in peacebuilding,\textsuperscript{293} and much was written about how religious texts and traditions were reinterpreted by women and used to further women’s rights and community development.\textsuperscript{294} However, as Hayward points out, the agency that women may find through religion does not necessarily correspond to what agency looks like from a Western feminist perspective.\textsuperscript{295} As Sharify-Funk and Woolner point out, this agency also looks different from context to context.\textsuperscript{296} In the literature on religious peacebuilding, it was noted that some religious women peacebuilders do not want to be seen as associated with feminism or Western values, as this would undermine their credibility.\textsuperscript{297}

It has been pointed out that for the Women, Peace and Security agenda, the intersection of identities needs to be taken into account regarding agency – for example, religion can be one factor that influences the agency of women.\textsuperscript{298} One way to understand the agency of religious women has been proposed by Saba Mahmood, who argues that:

\textsuperscript{289} Porter and Mundkur, 2012, p. 191
\textsuperscript{290} Coomaraswamy, 2015, p. 225-226
\textsuperscript{292} S. Parashar, “Women, militancy and security. The South Asian conundrum.” in Sjoberg, 2010, p. 179
\textsuperscript{293} For example, S. Hayward, “Women, Religion and Peacebuilding”, in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 303; M. Sharify-Funk and C.J. Woolner, “Women, Religion and Peacebuilding” in Marsden (Ed.), 2016, p. 143
\textsuperscript{294} For example, I. Coleman, “Women, Religion and Security: Islamic Feminism and the Frontlines of Change” in Seiple, Hoover and Otis (Eds.), 2012, p. 148; S. Hayward, “Women, Religion and Peacebuilding”, in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 310
\textsuperscript{295} S. Hayward, ”Women, Religion and Peacebuilding”, in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 311
\textsuperscript{296} M. Sharify-Funk and C.J. Woolner, “Women, Religion and Peacebuilding” in Marsden (Ed.), 2016, p. 148
\textsuperscript{297} S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, ”Peacebuilding in the Muslim World” in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 434
\textsuperscript{298} Pratt and Richter-Devroe, 2013, p. 3
(...) what may appear to be a case of deplorable passivity and docility from a progressivist point of view, may actually be a form of agency – but one that can be understood only from within the discourses and structures of subordination that create the conditions of its enactment. 299

What Mahmood wants to do is expand the concept of agency, which she finds to be closely linked to a progressive agenda and thus focused on agency as resistance to an oppressive power.300 She instead wants to emphasize that agency can also be found in inhabiting norms, even if this includes submission.301 Burke has written on the agency of religious women, and suggests that there are four different ways that religious women may hold agency: resistance, empowerment, instrumental and compliant agency. She suggests that by looking at these different forms of agency, "feminist scholars are forced to examine what is at stake politically and intellectually in focusing on how non-feminist actions are agentic".302 For the peacebuilding work of religious women to be recognized, both of these points are important. Firstly, as Mahmood suggests, it is necessary to recognize that women’s agency does not necessarily mean resistance to religious traditions and leadership, even if that may occur. Secondly, with a more careful analysis of what kind of agency that is active in the peacebuilding work of religious women, it may also be easier to assess the impact.

300 Ibid, p. 34
301 Ibid, p. 15
302 K.C. Burke, "Women’s Agency in Gender-Traditional Religions: A Review of Four Approaches." Sociology Compass vol. 6, no. 2, 2012, pp. 129
6. Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to investigate if and how the peacebuilding work of religious women is recognized and described in recent research on the role of religion in peacebuilding and the role of women in peacebuilding respectively. The hypothesis, based on previous research by Hayward and Marshall, was that the literature on religious peacebuilding would not mention women and gender much, and respectively, that the literature on women’s peacebuilding would not mention religion. If that held true, this thesis would attempt to answer why this invisibility and lack of connection between the two fields – women’s peacebuilding and religious peacebuilding – exists.

The conclusions drawn from this thesis are of course limited by the fact that the literature sample was small and for practical reasons was restricted to literature available through the University of Helsinki library. Despite this restriction, quite a wide range of literature was finally selected. Selecting appropriate primary literature proved to be challenging, especially literature concerning religious peacebuilding since by contrast to the Women, Peace and Security agenda, there is not actor responsible for a unified global agenda regarding religious peacebuilding. Two of the primary documents from the field of religious peacebuilding were produced by the United Nations, and arguably this may entail the documents being written about religious actors rather than by religious actors themselves. This thesis, however, aimed at giving an overview of the field right now and as such, the primary sources were deemed sufficient.

The method of research also brought its limitations. The quantitative analysis was used in order to give a brief indication of the occurrence of the topics of religion and women, but no statistical analyses were carried out and as such it only served as descriptive. For the qualitative analysis, coding was utilized in order to sort the data on women and religion into categories. As not much data was found on the peacebuilding work of religious women themselves, this method proved to be useful in identifying ways in which women and religion were described. This was helpful to the aim of the thesis of identifying reasons why lack of connections may exist between the two fields. However, coding as a method relies on the perspective of the researcher, and it is possible that another person working with the same data would have found other categories.

While a quantitative analysis revealed that terms that could be associated with religious women’s peacebuilding existed in the literature samples – the words “religion” and “faith” in the literature on women’s peacebuilding and the words “women” and “gender” in the literature on religious peacebuilding – the prevalence of these words was higher in the literature on religious peacebuilding. A qualitative analysis was made in order to understand how these words were used in the literature.

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303 Hayward and Marshall, 2015, p. 15
In the literature on religious peacebuilding, several references were made to religious women’s peacebuilding work. Typical contributions and roles of religious women in peacebuilding were mentioned, including roles as catalysts, community mobilizers, facilitators and healers\(^{304}\) and contributions such as cross-boundary work, advocacy, psycho-social support, conflict mediation and community-building.\(^{305}\) Most of the theory on women, religion and peacebuilding was limited to particular chapters on this topic, suggesting that it is still not mainstreamed into general theory on religious peacebuilding. In the literature on women’s peacebuilding, examples are given of religious women cooperating with each other\(^{306}\) using rituals as a means for conflict resolution\(^{307}\) and taking on leadership at the grassroots level.\(^{308}\)

In both sets of literature, religion was understood as a possible positive factor in women’s peacebuilding work. In the literature on women’s peacebuilding, one theme that emerged was that of religion as a resource for peacebuilding. The role of religious leaders and groups in countering extremism, as partners and stakeholders in peacebuilding initiatives and in furthering women’s rights was discussed. In the literature on religious peacebuilding, by contrast, women’s empowerment through religion was highlighted. Broadly speaking, it could be said while that the literature on women’s peacebuilding saw it as necessary to have knowledge of religion and partner with religious actors in order to further the Women, Peace and Security agenda, the literature on religious peacebuilding described women as being empowered by religion itself. The literature on religious peacebuilding strongly emphasized religion as a motivator for engaging in peacebuilding and reinterpretation of religious traditions and scripture as a way for women to describe their experiences and strengthen their agency.

Both literature sets conveyed problematic aspects of the combination of women, religion and peacebuilding. In the literature on women’s peacebuilding, religion was at times described as a hindrance to women’s rights, as strongly ties with extremism and as a possible reason for conflict itself. In the literature on religious peacebuilding on its side, there were recurring descriptions both of women as suppressed by religion but also of women being equal to men. Additionally, women were often portrayed as victims of violence. Interestingly, when writing about women being


\(^{305}\) S. Hayward, ”Women, Religion and Peacebuilding”, in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 303-309

\(^{306}\) Porter and Mundkur, 2012, p. 3; Porter and Mundkur, 2012, p. 165-166; A.C. Snyder, “A gendered analysis of refugee transnational peacebuilding capacity” in Snyder and Stobbe (Eds.), 2011, p. 31

\(^{307}\) S.P. Stobbe, “The Soukhouan Ritual: The Legacy of Lao Women in Conflict Resolution” in Snyder and Stobbe (Eds.), 2011, p. 70

\(^{308}\) Z.M. Tursunova, “Collective action as a space of agency, power and knowledge: A case study of gaps in Uzbekistan” in Snyder and Stobbe (Eds.), 2011, p. 82
suppressed or victims of violence, the literature on women’s peacebuilding more often referred to a multiplicity of religions, while the literature on religious peacebuilding tended to focus on Islam. Perhaps this is an indication of the literature being written from a Western perspective, where it is easier to portray Islam as an oppressive religion than to recognize oppressive tendencies in one’s own historical context. Much of the literature on women’s peacebuilding was written from a feminist perspective, and thus the oppressive hierarchies in all religions and not just Islam were addressed.

From the qualitative analysis of the two literature sets, two topics emerged that were visible across the different themes of how women and religion were described. These were questions of identity and agency. In both literature sets, there was a tendency to juxtapose gender identity with religious identity in a way that suggested that a religious women engaged in peacebuilding would have to choose which identity she operates from. Although this by Hayward was recognized as a “false choice”,309 the recurrence suggests that this view still finds ground in both practice and theory. This indicates that both the fields of religious peacebuilding and women’s peacebuilding could benefit from an intersectional analysis, where identities would not be seen as competing with each other but rather creating new possibilities for action in different contexts. A second topic was that which one author described as religious women’s “ambivalent agency”.310 While the literature on religious peacebuilding saw that women can be empowered to action through religion, the literature on women’s peacebuilding suggested that action from women within a (patriarchal) religious framework still has its limits. In line with Saba Mahmood’s research on religious women’s agency,311 one suggestion would be to recognize that women’s agency does not necessarily mean resistance to religious traditions and leadership, even if that may occur. The peacebuilding field could benefit from scholarly research on what the agency of religious women looks like and how it can be strengthened.

This thesis provided an overview of the state of the research on religious women’s peacebuilding at the moment. While it has been recognized that greater inclusivity is needed in the field of peacebuilding – including a strengthened role of both women and religious actors – this thesis shows that there is still much to do in terms of creating bridges between the fields of religious peacebuilding and women’s peacebuilding. While the literature on religious peacebuilding analyzed in this thesis addressed issues regarding women and gender more frequently than the literature on women’s peacebuilding addressed questions of faith and religion, both sets of literature had very little to say about the role that religious women might have in peacebuilding.

309 S. Hayward, "Women, Religion and Peacebuilding", in Omer, Appleby and Little (Eds.), 2015, p. 313
310 Coomaraswamy, 2015, p. 226
311 Mahmood, 2005, p. 15
It is clear that both fields could benefit from a better understanding of each other. This was perhaps specifically clear in questions regarding identity and agency, where especially the field of women’s peacebuilding could benefit from a more intersectional analysis of the layers of women’s identities that can be utilized for peacebuilding and a broadened view of agency. The role of religion should neither be over- or underestimated, but it needs to be properly taken into account considering that it has an effect on the peacebuilding work of women. Within the field of religious peacebuilding, on the other hand, it would be important to recognize that gender equality is not furthered simply by stating that men and women are equal. If the specific contributions of religious women are not recognized, there will still be a disproportionate focus on the peacebuilding efforts of men. Furthermore, the tendency to portray women as victims that was found in the literature on religious peacebuilding suggests that more attention needs to be given to seeing women as agents and not just passive victims. A critical eye is also needed when writing about the oppression of women, so that a focus on examples of oppressive practices within Islam does not mislead to a belief that other religions do not have similar practices. Looking forward, there is a need for further research on the intersections of women, religion and peacebuilding. Specifically, future research could address the different forms of agency exhibited by religious women engaged in peacebuilding and how religious and/or gender identity can enhance or hinder peacebuilding.
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