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Examining the Role of Interfaith Dialogue Initiatives Towards Peacebuilding: A Case Study of the Community of Sant'Egidio

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Abstract

Interfaith dialogue is the meeting of persons of different faiths to have a conversation, so at its most basic it essentially is talking. However, it is the nature of this talking that is crucial, as it involves all parties sympathizing with one another to understand their position (Smock, 2002, p. 6). Paul F. Knitter describes it as “the interaction of mutual presence speaking and listening and witnessing the commitments, the values, and the rituals of others” (Knitter, 1996, p. 14).

Using qualitative methodologies and undertaking fieldwork in both Italy (where the Community of Sant’Egidio is based) and Israel, I analysed the challenges and possibilities surrounding the place of Faith Based Actors (FBAs) within peacebuilding and development, asking whether there is an appropriate space for the collaboration of different faiths within the peace process, and if so what this may look like. In doing so I have explored the use of current interfaith dialogue initiatives as a tool for what Galtung terms ‘positive’ peace, analysing the connections between peacebuilding and development and religions place within these paradigms, and how they parallel positive and negative peace theories.

This research has shown that religion has a large role to play in peacebuilding, as FBAs are considered more trustworthy, they understand the perspective of religious communities, and can use the peace ethic inherent in their faith as a contribution to peace and development efforts. Interfaith dialogues were especially important in conflict as they were a form of community participation in peace activism, and showed solidarity and a commitment to learning about ‘other’ religions. People, organizations and FBAs are aware and realistic that interfaith dialogue alone does not have the power to end immediate conflict, but it does hold power to change the atmosphere in which many of the prejudices that cause conflict arise. I argue therefore, that interfaith dialogues can be seen as a ‘positive’ peace initiative, as it is a tool that can be used towards fixing rooted problems of conflict and contribute to sustainable peacebuilding through the changing of societal attitudes.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FBA	FAITH BASED ACTOR
NGO	NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION
UN	UNITED NATIONS
MDGs	MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS
WB	WORLD BANK
DANIDA	DANISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
NORAD	NORWEGIAN AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT
SIDA	SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY
IMPP	INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS FOR PRAYER AND PEACE
DDVE	DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE ON VALUES AND ETHICS
DFID	DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
IEA	INTERFAITH ENCOUNTER ASSOCIATION
ICCI	INTERRELIGIOUS COORDINATING COUNCIL OF ISRAEL
RFP	RELIGIONS FOR PEACE
GFN	GLOBAL FREEDOM NETWORK

Chapter 1: An Introduction

'Interreligious dialogue is no longer merely an academic exercise, or a spiritual luxury. It is a moral imperative, a global necessity.' (Kirkwood, 2007, p. 11)

The above quote sets the foundation for this thesis. There is no denying our world is becoming increasingly globalized. We live in a pluralistic and multi-cultural society; we have to find a way to live with diversity, and to live with each other in this world (Kirkwood, 2007, p. 9). Interfaith dialogues potentially have a role to play as a tool for communication between conflicting faiths. Academics in the field agree that interfaith dialogues are not the sole answer to peacebuilding theory and practice as social and political change is still required. However, dialogue provides an additional path to accomplishing changes. It is a path that is 'full of positive and constructive joint energy, based on creativity and trust' (Abu-Nimer, 2002, p. 16)

Interfaith dialogues are often facilitated by faith-based actors (FBAs), who are providing innovative approaches in the development field. The Community of Sant'Egidio is one such FBA. It began an initiative of inter-religious international meetings in the mid 1980s, with the aim of promoting mutual understanding and dialogue among religions, in a horizon of peace. The meetings have now become the largest annual inter-faith meeting, holding hundreds of talks, and bring together religious leaders from all areas of the world. These are centred on the motto; 'war is the mother of all poverty'. In the introduction to the 2007 meeting in Naples, Pope Benedict XVI said: 'While respecting the differences of the various religions, we are all called to work for peace and to be effectively committed to furthering reconciliation among peoples.' (Sant'Egidio, 2013). This quote is a reflection of the importance and potential of these inter-faith dialogues.

This introductory chapter comprises an explanation of the research rationale, a description of the research aims, objectives, questions and methodology, selection of field sites and an outline of the overall structure of the thesis.

1.1 Research Justification

Two perspectives drive the justification of this research. The first is my own positionality and life experiences that have resulted in my desire to engage in the study of the use of religions in development and peacebuilding. The second justification comes from an academic standpoint, where initial literature reviews revealed a significant 'gap' in recent academia on interfaith dialogues.

1.1.1 Personal Rationale

My interest in this particular topic not only steams from my undergraduate major of World Religions, but also from my past travels to Israel. As I come from New Zealand - where religion is often a personal relationship and rarely emerges within the public sphere - I was amazed by the centrality of religion in Israel. I found that people immediately assumed I was of Jewish decent and treated me as such. A lot of the daily life that I observed between Muslims and Jews, made me particularly interested in the interaction of differing religions. Upon expressing this curiosity in New Zealand, I caught the attention of a neighbour who had just returned from the Community of Sant'Egidio's annual 'International Meetings for Peace,' held in Italy. After further investigation I was fascinated at the scale and high-level representation at these meetings, yet I had not heard of them before. This lack of public awareness surrounding such interfaith dialogues was an initial indicator to me as to why such research was important.

1.1.2 Academic Rationale

After deeper research, I noticed that religion tended to be underrepresented within peacebuilding and development literature, but there were a lot of creative peace initiatives being organized by religions and religious organizations, which included interfaith dialogues. After investigating academic literature on interfaith dialogues, I found that there was not so much a 'gap' but a decreased interest in the topic. It seemed that a significant amount was written from 2001-2003, which parallels a major

world event: September 11. It seems that post-9/11 the topic of interfaith dialogues became a fashionable trend, but in recent years it has decreased. I believe, however, that the current conflict situations, such as the 2011 unrest in the Middle East and North Africa (the Arab Spring), and the rise of fundamentalism, reflect ongoing challenges and opportunities for the field of interfaith dialogue (Hayward, 2012).

1.2 Research Aim, Objectives, Questions and Methods

This thesis aims to investigate the potential role that these interfaith dialogues could play in relation to peacebuilding by examining current interfaith initiatives and using the Community of Sant'Egidio as a case study. In doing so, I look at the role, and the challenges and possibilities, surrounding religion's place within peacebuilding, and analyse whether there is an important space for the collaboration of differing faiths in order to build sustainable peace. Therefore the main aim of the thesis is 'examining the role of interfaith dialogue initiatives towards peacebuilding: A case study of the Community of Sant'Egidio'.

Accompanying the research aim and main question, this thesis intends to achieve three objectives:

- 1. Is there an appropriate space for religion within peacebuilding and development?**
- 2. What are some of the current interfaith dialogue initiatives?**
- 3. How are interfaith dialogues contributing towards 'positive peace'?**

. In order to answer the questions and objectives above, sub-questions were used to guide the data collection and fieldwork phase:

- What are the links between peacebuilding and development?
- What are the categories of interfaith dialogues?
- What are the some of the differences between interfaith dialogues in different contexts?
- Why do those involved view interfaith dialogues as important?
- How do interfaith dialogue practitioners define peace?

- How do elite or 'high level' interfaith dialogues influence activity at a community level?

This research was conducted using qualitative methods. I undertook fieldwork in two locations. The first was Rome, Italy, for the duration of June 2014, as this is where Sant'Egidio is based and was founded. The second location was Israel, for the first two weeks of July 2014, which enabled me to observe interfaith dialogues in a conflict context. My methodologies included semi-structured interviews with the organization's staff, observations of interfaith dialogues, and document analysis. I used existing data gathered by Community of Sant'Egidio and other organizations as well as online material, about their interfaith programs and initiatives. A more detailed analysis of methodology is given in Chapter 4.

1.3 Selection of Field sites

Both selected field locations have reputations for being religious centres of pilgrimage, however each location had a specific essence from which the research could benefit. The two locations chosen to reflect interfaith dialogue initiatives were Rome, Italy (where the primary case study is based) and Jerusalem, Israel where I observed community-based interfaith dialogues. By conducting research in two locations, I gained a perspective that is not narrowed by the organization's agenda and gained richer qualitative data. This allowed me to observe the processes of interfaith dialogues and initiatives as well as interview key participants.

1.3.1 Rome, Italy

One Month

Rome is the location in which the 'Community of Sant'Egidio' case study is based. Rome is both the capital of Italy and the capital of the Catholic world, as it is the home of the Papacy at the Vatican City. Although Italy is considered a developed country, its position as a religious capital made it the primary location for this research. Not only did I research the Community of Sant'Egidio at their headquarters, but also I had access to many other Catholic interfaith organizations, as well as the Anglican Centre in Rome (who also have a lot of involvement with interfaith dialogues).

1.3.2 Israel

Jerusalem, *Two weeks*

Initially, I only planned to travel to Rome, however after researching deeper into my topic, I became aware of many grassroots interfaith organizations that are based in Jerusalem. I managed to make contact with two organizations: the Interfaith Encounter Association (IEA) and the Interreligious Coordinating Council of Israel (ICCI). I also tried to communicate with Sant'Egidio members in Jerusalem, but had difficulty making contact. However, by including the community-based organizations such as the IEA and ICCI, I was able to gain a greater scope for the research. Not only did I observe what goes on at an organizational level, but also researched interfaith initiatives on the ground. Jerusalem is positioned on the border of the West Bank. The ongoing conflict between Palestine and Israel made it the prime location for this particular research, especially considering the relevance and the intersection of the key themes of conflict and religion, something that is explored later in the thesis.

1.4 Outline of Thesis

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters. Chapter Two is dedicated to the literature surrounding the topic. This is separated into five sections: religion and development, religion and conflict, FBAs in peace settings, interfaith dialogues, and the Community of Sant'Egidio. The discussion of religion and development sets the context of this research, outlining where religion currently stands within the development nexus. This section analyzes the influence that religion has on violence and the various arguments surrounding the role of religion in violent contexts?. The section on FBAs in peace settings draws comparisons between the involvement of FBAs in development and the involvement of those with secular agendas, as well as some of the challenges and possibilities surround their contribution to peace. The discussion of interfaith dialogues provides a review on the current academic literature on interfaith dialogues, and the differing methodologies of such practices.

The third chapter introduces the theoretical framework used in this research. It argues that contemporary peacebuilding practice uses an integrated approach to development, and that one paradigm cannot function without the other. It then outlines Johan Galtung's theories of positive and negative peace, and how these theories link with the integrated approach. In this chapter 'negative peace' is described as the 'the absence of violence, absence of war', while 'positive peace' is the 'integration of human society'. Galtung believes that in order to achieve peace, both positive and negative goals need to be addressed. This chapter outlines these theories and examines where interfaith dialogues fit into this approach.

In Chapter Four, the methodology used during the fieldwork phase is described. This includes a detailed analysis of the methodologies employed, positionality; ethical considerations; and justifications for the use of qualitative research methods and field sites. The chapter also provides a reflection on the fieldwork experience and obstacles that were faced during my time in the field, as well as the analysis process.

Chapter five provides readers with not only the context of fieldwork, but also an analysis of the people, and the range of organizations and initiatives that were involved in this research. This is important because certain contextual factors were unique to the two different locations, and these were only observed after entering the field. These factors were both theological and physical, and played an influential role in the practice of interfaith dialogue initiatives.

In Chapter Six, the findings from data collection are analysed. I discuss the processes of the interfaith dialogue observations, which are categorized into differing themes that emerged from the data. The remainder of the chapter outlines the participants' views on interfaith dialogues and peace.

The final chapter is a discussion of the insights gained from the research and how these findings are situated within the wider context of the literature. It is constructed in accordance with my research objectives and questions and is followed by a final research summary and conclusion. Finally, suggestions for the direction of future research are presented at the conclusion of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Religion, Development and Conflict

'As with all of the mysteries of life, death, meaning, purpose, relationships, evil, suffering and so on, we're not going to solve diversity. But we have to find a way to live with diversity, to live with each other, in this world.' (Kirkwood, 2007, p. 9)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines and frames the current arguments regarding religion's place within development theories and in academic literature, in order to contextualize the research aims and objectives. Four key components are addressed: religion and development, religion and conflict, Faith Based Actors (FBAs) in conflict contexts, and interfaith dialogues. The chapter concludes with an additional introduction into the case study, Sant'Egidio, as well as a summary.

2.2 Religion and Development

In the past, religion has been marginalized within development theory, policy and practice. This creates the assumption that fundamental religion is either so 'self-evident' to development practice and academia that it does not need to be accounted for, or that it is irrelevant to development intervention (Rakodi, 2012, p. 622). Historically, when development discourse did consider religion, it was viewed as a barrier to the progression of development achievements. This section of the literature review, seeks to understand the historical avoidance of religion in development; why in the last decade, academia is beginning to revive it as a missing ingredient to development efforts; and what some of the contemporary debates are towards religious inclusion. In doing so, it provides the context for the research aims.

Post World War II saw modernization theories become central to the economic systems in the west, paralleling the industrial movements of the time. Modernization was centred on economic growth. This early stage of development as a discipline emphasized the imitations of the West's policy imperatives, which focused on

producing more goods, services and income (Desai & Potter, 2014, p. 31). Therefore development and economic growth were universally regarded as the same. The success of modernization in terms of the economic growth of Western countries post-WW2, meant the West was now defining 'development' as 'economic development'. Modernization theories argued that if underdeveloped countries wanted to gain wealth, they needed to apply these western economic models into their own structures. This contributed to a secular approach to development, addressing cultural and religious aspects of an underdeveloped society as an obstacle to its overall development. The societies who did not adapt to western economic blueprints were regarded as likely to fail in the long run (Inglehart, 1997).

Through these modernization theories, it was anticipated that people would give up their 'primitive superstitions' and 'backward religious world-views' as their communities 'evolved' into developed societies modelled on the West (Desai & Potter, 2014, p. 753). This thought came to dominate western society, and soon the assertion of the separation of the church and state became prominent; religion became a factor within the private rather than public sphere, as its removal from the public sphere was seen as a necessary component in the impending transition into modernity and economic development (Desai & Potter, 2008, p. 485). This resulted in the subject of religion becoming an almost taboo topic, as well as increased secularization, with more 'rational' thinking replacing 'traditional' world beliefs in Western societies (Lunn, 2009, p. 939).

Following these dominating modernization theories came the 'impasse', which saw development begin to enter a new era.¹ In the 1970s/1980s, a growing consensus emerged, with academics and practitioners arguing that economic growth is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for development (Desai & Potter, 2014, p. 31). Thus, a deconstructive and critical period of anti-developmental sentiments arose, largely in the late 1980s and 1990s, and more constructive 'postmodern' ways of

¹ The 'impasse' is typically defined as a situation when no progress is possible due to a lack of agreement. Within the development context this was due to: 1.) lack of development and increasing diversity in the global south 2.) The critique on 'grand-narratives' like modernization 3.) Increasing globalization (DFID, 2012).

conceptualizing development surfaced. This included post-developmentalism, post colonialism, post-structuralism and post-traditionalism (Lunn, 2009). Post-modernism argued that without redistribution of income and wealth, inequalities are not going to be reduced, both at an individual and societal level. Therefore, development must be regarded as synonymous with 'enhancing human rights and welfare, so that self-esteem, self-respect and improving entitlements become central concerns of the development agenda, not just growth' (Desai & Potter, 2014, p. 31). Amartya Sen, a Nobel prize winner in economics, elaborated on this in his book 'Development as Freedom' (1999) arguing that development should be seen as a process of 'expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy', rather than concentrating on the means, or instruments, to achieve it (Sen, 1999, p. 3). Such an approach works against the enduring racial- and gender- based inequalities in society, as a path to social change and justice (Desai & Potter, 2014).

Other post-modern theorists, such as Wilber and Jameson (1980,) claim that there are discrepancies between the realities of previously colonized countries on the one hand, and the aspirations of a development project modelled on processes that had occurred in the colonizing societies on the other, and call for a re-evaluation of the relationships between development and religion (Wilber & Jameson, 1980, p. 467). However, this call for religious attention has been largely ignored. Ver Beek (2000) argues that, despite the centrality of religion in underdeveloped countries, it is 'consciously' avoided (Ver-Beek, 2000, p. 31). He conducted a search of papers published in three of the most prominent development studies journals between 1982 and 1998 and found only rare references to the role of religion in development and, on asking development agencies on their policies on religion, he found they avoided the subject in an official capacity (Selinger, 2004).

In post-modern theoretical frameworks, culture and religion are beginning to be reflected in academic study, which is expanding beyond the economic and technical to become more 'multidimensional' (Lunn, 2009, p. 941). These approaches agree that the beliefs of religious individuals plays an important fundamental role in underdeveloped countries, with most people engaging in some form of religious

practice in order to both relate to, and understand the world. While in the past religion has been neglected in both development practice and theory, it is now seen as an imperative aspect of development agenda; more participatory approaches claim that religious involvement must be taken into account. Many have started to realize that sustainable development can only be achieved if cultural values and beliefs are incorporated into the development process (Lunn, 2009).

This section introduced the use of both modernization and secularization, which resulted in the marginalization of religion from development's history. Post-modern theories of the 1980s/1990s led to a change in perception of religion's involvement in the development nexus. Post-modern scholars now argue that those living in Westernized developed societies still hold to modernization principles regarding religion, understanding it as only a single sphere of society, only giving it attention at suitable times (Lunn, 2009). Whereas the underdeveloped world religion is usually intertwined with culture, the two cannot be separated as they define all aspects of daily and community life (Benham Rennick, 2013). In the next section this topic of religious dominance within developing and 'non-Western' societies, as well as the contemporary rise in religious fundamentalism is expanded on, emphasizing the ongoing debates and critiques as to whether religion should be a serious tool within peacebuilding agendas.

2.3 Religion and Conflict

At this point we have come to understand the 'western academic' genealogy of religion and development, with a focus on the exclusion of religion from the development spectrum. It is equally as essential to explore these critiques of religion's influence on modern conflict in order to properly address the aim. This is because the research aims to understand peacebuilding contexts where religion does play a role, and places focus on interfaith dialogues in relation to religious tensions. There seems to be a unanimous agreement that the West's prediction of a religious decrease in the public sphere, once societies began to modernize, was proving to be wrong. Scholars such as Vlas (2010) argue that not only has religion failed to decrease, but religion has actually started to strengthen its influence within

the political realm in many Western and non-Western groups. The literature suggests that because of the push to abandon religion, many non-Western countries were inspired to revive religion as a form of protest against the marginalization they often faced from the West. Vlas (2010) names this the 'return of the sacred', claiming that the increasing politicization of religion is considered to be a 'revolt against the West' (Vlas, 2010, p. 299 & 300).

Since the end of the Cold War, the nature of conflict resolution and prevention has changed. Paul Richards (2005) claims that we are in a 'new war' setting that is post the Cold-War era of 'mutually assured destruction'². This 'new war' is based on East and West inequalities, political gains and greed, rather than grievance (Richards, 2005, p. 2). There are three key transformations to this 'new-war' era. Firstly, violence, war and politics have become much more widespread and visible since 1990, due to the increased capacity of international organizations to act, and the globalized media coverage of conflicts (Richards, 2005, p. 2; Smoljan, 2003, p. 238; Uvin, 2002, p. 6). Secondly, the intellectual and political hegemony of the Western 'liberal peace model' was strengthened, opening the door to much wider interventions in the internal dynamics of low-power countries, the list of which grew dramatically (Duffield, 2001; Uvin, 2002, p. 6). Thirdly, international and national donors are now increasingly linking security and development. Such donors view these paradigms as mutually reinforcing areas of intervention, both of which are necessary for building sustainable peace and development, a point that is discussed to a greater extent in Chapter Three (European Union, 2010, p. 8).

In 1993, Samuel Huntington wrote an article titled 'The Clash of Civilizations'. In his article he reiterated Richards' (2005) and Uvin's (2002) argument of civilization's consciousness. He claimed that non-Western civilizations would become actors within international relations rather than mere objects. Conflicts between different religious civilizations would be more common, sustained, and violent than those of the same civilization, which could lead to global wars. In addition, many non-

² A U.S. doctrine of reciprocal deterrence resting on the U.S. and Soviet Union each being able to inflict unacceptable damage on the other in retaliation for a nuclear attack (Dictionary, 2014).

Western countries would attempt to become part of the West but will face major obstacles in order to accomplish this (Huntington, 1993, p. 48). Scholars, such as Haynes (2009) and Abu-Nimer (2001) reflect on this text and argue its contemporary accuracy, especially because of Huntington's emphasis on conflict escalating between the 'Christian' democratic West and Islamic states, which adopt an anti-democratic dogma through the use of 'Islamic Fundamentalism' (Haynes, 2009, p. 55). Abu-Nimer (2001) remarks at the growing rate of rate of conflicts based on communal identity in the post-Cold War era (Abu-Nimer, 2001).

This political resurgence of many religious communities is often accompanied by violent clashes both in and between nations, often becoming the cause of extremism, especially when political interests only serve certain religious or ethnic groups (Turner, Reichberg, & Popoviski, 2009). A study by Toft (2007) shows that negotiation settlements are less likely if conflicts are fought where at least one side has religious demands. She also suggests a factor of manipulation, stating that when political elites are under threat they can reframe the issue under religious terms, and once religion is central, nonviolent termination is less likely to occur (Toft, 2007, p. 103). Svensson (2007) elaborates on this by using the Israel-Palestine conflict as an example. He states that at the beginning of the conflict it was a nationalistic movement for 'Pan-Arabic identities', but as it escalated, groups emerged that were mobilized by religious claims; with the conflict now being seen as a religious struggle, rather than a nationalist one (Svensson, 2007, p. 944).

Haynes (2009) suggests that there are three levels to religious involvement in contemporary conflict. The first is religious fundamentalism; these are groups that often believe they are under threat, and respond by setting out strategies to 'preserve their identity' (Haynes, 2009, p. 54). This can develop into both social and political offensives. The second is there are 'failed states' which lack government and are unstable environments (Haynes, 2009, p. 54). This allows religious terrorism to thrive, as people often turn to religion when security is threatened. The third is an elaboration on Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations', where there is a global clash between the West and East, to which we are currently witnesses (Haynes,

2009, p. 55). Religion can also be determined as 'central or peripheral' within conflict (Toft, 2007, p. 97). If combatants are fighting over whether the region or state should be ruled by a specific religious tradition, it is considered to be central. However, it is peripheral if the fighters identify with a certain religious tradition (Toft, 2007, p. 97).

In recent years, there has been an increased awareness of religion in the West; although it is predominantly regarded as a negative force (Marsden, 2012). This parallels the increasing rise in terrorism that is the most visible aspect of religious conflict within western societies. The recent terrorist attacks in Paris, Moscow, New York, Colombo, London, Madrid, Bali, Istanbul, Mumbai and Algiers were carried out by organizations with religious motivations, which supports this negative viewpoint. Academics such as Abu-Nimer (2001) claim that there is no doubt that conflict with religious components has risen throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, although others argue that a relationship between religion and violence is not unique to any time period. In 1984 David Rapport, a US political scientist said 'terrorism never disappeared altogether, there are just signs that it is reviving in new and unusual forms' (Palmer-Fernandez, 2004, p. 13). The 'Encyclopedia of Religion and War' does, however, show that, statistically, the number of terrorist groups that identify significantly, if not predominantly, with religion has dramatically risen since the 1980s. By 1992, the number of these groups had increased from two to 12. In 1994 16 of the 45 identifiable terrorist groups were religious, and in 1995 this grew to 26 (Palmer-Fernandez, 2004, p. 11).

An event that placed religions in a central position within conflict was the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001, New York. The presumed perpetrators declared that the world was at war with Christianity and Judaism. Western leaders tried to make it clear that it was not a fight against Islam, but terrorism. Rabbi David Hartman stated that:

We are not fighting to eradicate terrorism; terrorism is just a tool. We are fighting to defeat an ideology: religious totalitarianism. The opposite of religious

totalitarianism is an ideology of pluralism, an ideology that embraces religious diversity and the idea that faith can be nurtured without claiming an exclusive truth (Smock, 2002, p. 4).

On the opposing side, Osama bin Laden was urging all Muslims to bury their internal differences and consider themselves at war with all other faiths (Economist, 2001). This shock of terrorism 'going global' like it had never done before was followed by the realization that because religion was the 'prime motivator', religion was indeed a familiar feature of conflict (L. Marsden & R. Durward, 2009, p. 1).

The motivation for terrorism is frequently discussed within academia. Elaborating on the debate about 'revolt against the west' discussed earlier, Vlas (2010, p.303) argues that the distinction between religion as a 'metaphysical and ethical system', and 'politicized religion' as an 'anti-system revolt' needs to be. For this, she uses case studies of the violent acts of Muslims in Europe, claiming that when members of a religion go to the streets, they are driven by the frustration of not being integrated well enough, and the riots are a call for better integration into the West. Vlas goes on to state that radical Islam is far from surprising as the Muslim world often feels it is denied a decent place on the global scale (Vlas, 2010, p. 303). However, others argue more to the side of the metaphysical and ethical system, maintaining that religion is the central cause, as religious ideologies encourage followers to discount their physical survival. Religious followers often believe that the 'physical state is temporary, but the religious self is eternal', so to sacrifice the temporary to obtain the 'eternal' seems rational (Toft, 2006, p. 6). In many religious traditions, such an act can be rewarded in the afterlife (Toft, 2006, p. 6). Hasenclever and Rittberger (2000) claim that religious people are often manipulated into conflict because they more readily believe in divine promises of the manipulators. However, they do additionally suggest that evidence from the past proves other ideologies can equally be responsible for manipulation. Examples include nationalism, communism and fascism (Hasenclever & Rittberger, 2000). Krueger (2007) embarked on a survey that studied the roots of terrorism, and found that people with a higher education were generally more likely to say that suicide attacks against the West were justified.

When he broke this study down by income levels, there was no indication that economic situations affected this opinion. He claims his study shows that terrorists care more about influencing political outcomes, as they are motivated by political grievances rather than fewer opportunities and income. He ends by stating that most terrorists are not being martyrs because they have nothing to live for, but instead, they are so passionate about a cause they are willing to die for it (Krueger, 2007).

This discussion raises a crucial debate as to whether religion is inherently violent, which was a central theme to most of the literature on religion and conflict. As we have seen, some scholars believe that religion itself is the cause for conflict, while others believe it is a mask for more pragmatic causes. However, it is important to note that religion does not just revolve around a set of beliefs, but embodies social and community practice, organizational structures and a range of other factors. This multifaceted nature of religion means that there is little reason to assume that all of its features relate to conflict in similar ways, or relate to conflict at all (Neuberg et al., 2014, p. 199).

Research does show that religious individuals tend to be more prejudiced towards out-group members than non-religious people, although research on violent conflict between large groups shows little evidence of direct religious influence (Hall, Matz, & Wood, 2010, p. 128). Collier and Hoeffler (2004) investigated the factors that contribute to conflict through a statistical survey of over 100 internal conflicts. They argued that greed overshadowed grievance as the main source of conflict, stating that grievance proxies such as inequality, political rights, ethnic polarization and religious fractionalization were insignificant. Only dominance of one ethical system had diverse effects. Societies characterized by ethnic and religious diversity are safer than homogenous societies, as long as they avoid dominance (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004).

Haynes (2009) argues that there are four dangerous properties of religious conviction that create an opportunity for conflict. The first is the totalitarian nature

that can be adopted when religion is focused on the absolute and unconditional. Secondly, this claim of the absolute can, in turn, result in intolerance, 'over-zealous proselytization' and 'religious fragmentation'. Thirdly, religion can increase aggressiveness and commitment to use violence. Lastly, religious leaders can legitimize human rights violations in the name of religion. These leaders are usually men, which many academics agree can particularly increase the risk of women's rights abuses (Haynes, 2009, p. 53). Vlas (2010) argues that religion itself is not inherently violent, but individuals and their interpretations are, because under specific circumstances, religion can serve as a 'utilitarian tool' exploited by the warring parties. Since religion is becoming more globalized, no religious tradition as a whole can be blamed for violence (Vlas, 2010, p. 308). Similarly, religious fundamentalists think that most of society's solutions lie in faith, which in turn generates the recreation of religious states. If fundamentalists then come into political power, like nationalism, they promote one vision and one version of the religious tradition and declare this to be the only answer. This power that comes with state control means that force can be used to defend it, so wars that are fought by states and political entities can be religious, although the religion itself does not cause war (Turner et al., 2009).

This section has emphasized the more violent aspects of religion. It is important to mention that many religious loyalties do actively promote peace and diversity. Many well known leaders like Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, Ayatollah Sistani, Pope John Paul II, Pope Francis and Martin Luther King, used their power to promote non-violent resistance (Turner et al., 2009). However, for the purpose of this literature review, it is important to focus on the connections between religion and conflict, in order to provide the context for the upcoming section on Faith Based Actors (FBAs) working in conflict and development contexts. I outline the change in the conflict nexus since the Cold War, which has become more development inclusive (a subject that will be addressed to a greater extent in Chapter Three). Furthermore, religion is consistently being viewed as a perpetrator of conflict, especially from a Western lens. However, when we deconstruct the conflicting causes, it becomes more about manipulation, power struggles and political gains

than religion itself, and the statistical evidence tends to back this. Regardless, religion is a fundamental part of many people's lives, and if religious influences can be used as a tool to initiate violence, it must also have the potential to end it. These possible spaces for utilizing religion as a tool for peace are discussed in the upcoming section, which explores the prospects of using of religious institutions and NGOs in conflicted areas.

2. 4 Faith-Based Actors in the Conflict Context

The preceding discussion of the arguments around religions' involvement in modern conflict sets the foundation for this section as it brings forward the current arguments utilized by religious actors/organizations/institutions working in the peacebuilding field in areas where religion is central to daily and community life. FBAs (Faith-Based Actors) situated in the peace context are not a new occurrence, however over recent decades their work has become more significant. The most visible argument is that FBAs do not necessarily get superior results than secular NGOs, but that they have better connection and integration with local communities, which enhances their effectiveness.

FBA is an umbrella term, which generally is defined as organizations, individuals, or institutions that hold to religious values when working in the peace field.³ There are certain differences within the range of FBAs; some work at an international level, such as World Vision, Sant'Egidio or Catholic Relief Services. Others are at a more regional level, such as Wajir Peace and Development, or some will work only at a locally based level (Bercovitch & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2009, p. 185). It is imperative to note that global FBAs will often declare whether they are faith-based, whereas many regional and local FBAs are less likely to highlight a religious affiliation or motivation, often because they are situated in areas where religion is an accepted part of society (Nicholas, 2014, p. 248). The range in diversity of FBAs is similar to their secular counterparts, but as stated by Bercovitch & Kadayifci-Orellana (2009) there tends to be five features that separate them from secular NGOs: 1) emphasis on religious

³ This can be in any development field (such as health or poverty) but for the purpose of this literature review it is the peace context.

identity; 2) use of religious texts; 3) use of religious values and vocabulary; 4) religious rituals being used throughout the process; 5) FBAs involvement as a third party (Bercovitch & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2009, p. 185). These identifiers are an important preparatory point, because it is these factors of cultural links with the society in which they are working that is often what enhances FBAs' legitimacy in peacebuilding in comparison with secular based NGOs.

When we look into the potential role that these FBAs could play towards developing national and global security, it is important to address the debate around the foundation that religious institutions already hold within religious tensions. Scholars such as Vlas (2010) argue that a special role and considerable funding should be granted to these FBAs that are involved with interfaith dialogues, and training given to their leaders for interfaith peace building (Vlas, 2010, p. 309). In 2002 the UN secretary-general Kofi Annan said 'Religious institutions can play a role in preventing armed conflicts because of the moral authority that they carry in many communities' (Little, 2007, p. 4). Ter Haar (2011) writes that in conflict affected countries and regions; faith institutions are often the only surviving institutions. They run schools and hospitals, even during the most violent climax of conflict. Whether individually, or under interfaith alliance, faith communities constantly engage in peacemaking activities, and represent moral leadership to the community (ter Haar, 2011, p. 50). This suggests that to only focus on the role religion plays towards creating conflict, disregards important alternative variables and is an of underestimation of the attempts emerging from various religious traditions to help resolve conflict and build peace. Therefore, religion's role in helping resolve conflicts is a crucial component towards achieving human development more generally, especially when FBOs are centrally involved (Haynes, 2009, p. 60). Bercovitch and Jackson (2012) stated that to involve a cultural aspect in conflict resolution, a deep understanding of the culture would be required. An analysis of cultural artefacts such as symbolism, communication styles and visible gestures needs to be known if trust is to be acquired (J. Bercovitch & R. Jackson, 2012). Additionally, the 'Routledge Handbook of Religion and Security' (2012) proposes that the foreign services in western countries should create new positions for religious representatives, and suggests that they be

trained in diplomatic matters in order to be assigned to countries where religion is prominent. This would increase effectiveness of religious conflict resolution, and would mean political decision makers are taking genuine steps to involve religious aspects in peacebuilding (Seiple, Hoover, & Otis, 2012).

These arguments were addressed by the United States Institute of Peace who held a workshop in 2001 on international peacebuilding by faith-based NGOs. It claimed that when a conflict is escalated by a certain religious community, it can be best contested by that same faith community, in some cases by FBAs. The workshop similarly claimed that their religious affiliation can create improved collaboration through greater connections to organizations of the same faith, as well as global connectivity (US Institute of Peace, 2001). For example, Muslim organizations can rely on support from local Mosques and a large proportion of civil society when working in a Muslim context, similar to other religions (Clarke, 2006, p. 843). FBAs are also more likely to remain in an area for a longer period of time than secular NGOs, this in turn creates closer relationships and demonstrates solidarity with the local community (Nicholas, 2014, p. 248). FBAs and faith communities tend to have fewer restrictions on funding, which provides more freedom than governmental donors. For example, NGOs are hugely reliant on government funds, a situation which donors prioritise and disregard the assessment of needs (Ferris, 2011, p. 617). Many studies suggest that FBAs are far more trusted within underdeveloped communities than secular organizations, which is a variable that must be accounted for if development goals are to be sustainable (Tomalin, 2012, p. 698). This is an important dynamic to consider because FBAs and religious leaders hold respect, admiration and trust within their society, which allows for greater leverage in conflictual settings. Whereas secular agendas, especially from outside mediators, often incorporate tangible resources like money and power in their processes (Tomalin, 2012, p. 698).

These features are slowly starting to be recognized by international donors and more work is starting to be done in collaboration with FBAs. Large-scale development agencies are starting to view religious involvement as an effective means of on the

ground development. In the UK, DFID (The Department for International Development) has been seeking to understand the faith and development interface through collaboration with representatives of differing faiths, funding development projects run by faith-based organizations (FBOs), and working with UK faith communities on development education. DFID has also funded a five-year 'Religion and Development' research program grounded at Birmingham University (DFID, 2012). Since 2002, the World Bank has funded a unit called the 'Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics' (DDVE) with the objective of advancing understanding and advises on links between faith, ethics and service delivery. DDVE has developed partnerships and joint work with a number of faith-based organizations including: World Faiths Development Dialogue, Fe y Algeria, Fès Colloquium, International Movement ATD Fourth World, Women, Faith and Development Alliance, World Council of Churches, and World Conference for Religions for Peace. They have also collaborated with the thesis case study organization, the 'Community of Sant'Egidio', in which the World Bank and Sant'Egidio signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2003 outlining areas of common concern and possible collaboration (World Bank, 2014). Similarly, many other development funding agencies, national as well as multi-national, such as DANIDA, NORAD, SIDA, and various UN agencies, have formed partnerships with faith communities in the hope that it could help the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (Marshall & Keough, 2004). This includes a strategic framework for partnerships between Faith-based Organizations UNAIDS, to ensure delivery on commitments to universal access within the context of the AIDS response (United Nations, 2009).

Despite the increased partnerships, the recognition of religious practice is still critiqued within development practice. Secular development agencies (both governmental and NGOs) can face issues if they are recognized as supporting opposing religious traditions, as religious connections could provoke cultural tensions and compromise the intended development goals (US Institute of Peace, 2001). Similarly, FBAs can often be accused of only providing aid to those who have converted, or are willing to convert, and often avoid partnerships with more secular organizations for fear of more secular results being achieved (Desai & Potter, 2008,

p. 487). Many argue that FBAs can be problematic through suggestions that their faith characteristics make them less likely to deliver the type of development that donors value (Ferris, 2011, p. 619). Lipsky (2011) claims that although FBOs can be advantaged in understanding local context and resources, their transparency, accountability, feedback to donors and governments and helping communities form their own representative bodies is inferior to secular NGOs (Lipsky, 2011; Tomalin, 2012). Additionally, the effectiveness of FBA peace mediation is conditional as it is dependent on whether the parties perceive them as legitimate (Lipsky, 2011). Collaborative efforts are also needed in order to increase reciprocation; FBAs need to similarly form partnerships with NGOs, diplomatic communities and even international militaries in order to fully utilize their potential as peace builders (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011, p. 49).

However, this section suggests that the religious characteristics of FBAs create a unique position of engagement with religious communities. They can promote the peace ethic inherent in their faith to counteract its use as a tool for violence (Bercovitch & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2009, p. 199). As suggested in the introduction, FBAs may not be any more effective than secular NGOs, but their religious perspective allows more trust in the community, which reiterates the importance of participation within development practice. Religious institutions that are already established in conflict areas have a better chance with mediation than outsiders, based on the element of trust. As we will see in the following section, interfaith communication is vital to building on this trust component.

2.5 Interfaith Dialogues

One way in which religious participation could operate in conflict settings is through interfaith dialogues. Such dialogues, involve religious actors facilitating communication between the conflicting parties and developing common ethical principles, a process that secular agendas often cannot initiate (Smock, 2002). Interfaith dialogue is a 'simple concept'; the meeting of persons of different faiths to have a conversation, so at its most basic, such dialogue is essentially talking. However, it is the nature of this talking that is crucial as it involves all parties empathizing with one

another to understand their position (Smock, 2002, p. 6). 'Inter-religious' or 'interfaith' dialogue is a central aspect to this research. The preceding sections have outlined the context of religion in the development field, and the current views of FBAs in the peace process, whereas this section outlines the potential utilization of interfaith dialogues facilitated by FBAs towards sustainable peace between diverse religious beliefs. In doing so defines the nature of interreligious dialogue from the definitions of scholars and practitioners, as well as the varying types and methods, and outlines views on its authenticity as a suitable means of peace building.

Interreligious dialogue is often seen as a process in which members of two religious communities try to build bridges between their respective groups as they jointly and separately grapple with the basic issues of life, individually and collectively, and seek to bring a better understanding between the two communities, not only in terms of their definitions of self and community, but also in terms of their attitudes towards each other's beliefs, rituals, festivals and behavioural patterns (Eck, 1985, pp. 20-30). Martin Buber claims that 'true dialogue expresses an essential aspect of the human spirit, when groups listen and respond to one another with an authenticity it forges a bond' (Johnston, 2003, p. 56; Takim, 2004, p. 346). Raimond Panikkar notes that 'interreligious dialogue helps us discover the 'other' (Panikkar, 1999, p. 19). Lastly Forward (2001) states that 'dialogue begins when people meet, gain mutual understanding, share service, and dialogue becomes the medium of authentic witness' (Forward, 2001, p. 11). These definitions and descriptions, located from a range of times and sources, show that there is an essential commonality of learning about the other in an environment that exposes one's own prejudices in order to enhance interactions. It is not merely a casual form of dialogue, but a formal process in which members of at least two religious communities collaborate for an extended and serious discussion of the beliefs and practices that often separate the communities (Taylor, 1981).

Dialogue operates in three areas; the first is the practical, where participants help humanity. Second is the spiritual, where participants seek to experience their partner's religion, and third is the cognitive, where participants seek to understand

the truth (see Table 1 below). When inter-faith dialogue is used with international peace building, all three operations are needed (Smock, 2002; Swidler, 1998). There are a variety of levels within this process, each requiring their own sets of processes. David Smock, author of 'Interfaith Dialogue and Peace building' highlights this by detailing the variations. Firstly are the elite leadership models, where high-level religious leaders collaborate to advocate peace. This is particularly effective when religion has caused a societal division. Secondly is when elite interfaith bodies attempt engagement with combatants. These efforts are most effective when religious precepts and rituals are employed. Thirdly, is a grassroots effort, which provides a mechanism for cross-community dialogue, as it looks to transform participants into agents of reconciliation. This method places emphasis on prayer and repentance, which, in turn, can provide an admission of guilt from parties that will help towards the healing process. Smock also claims that another approach is to highlight the theological and scriptural similarities of the religious parties, which is most useful when the differing faiths collaborate in study to gain a greater understanding (Smock, 2002, pp. 7-8; Swidler, 1998, p. 24).

Other authors and practitioners have highlighted a more diverse range of processes. Diane Eck claims there are six types; parliamentary, institutional, theological, dialogue in the community, dialogue of life, spiritual dialogue and inner dialogue (Eck, December 11, 1986; Suwarno, 2005, p. 318). The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in its document Dialogue and Proclamation (1991), asserts four; 'dialogue of life' where people 'strive to live in an open and neighbourly spirit, sharing their human problems and preoccupations'. 'Dialogue of action' where 'religions collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people'. 'Dialogue of theological exchange' where specialists seek to deepen their understanding of their respective religious heritages and to appreciate other spiritual values. Lastly, is the 'dialogue of religious experience' where persons rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches, for instance with regard to prayer and contemplation, faith and ways in searching for God or the absolute (Brajovic, 2007, p. 154; Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, 1991). The Table below (Table 1) shows a classification of the categories of interfaith dialogues

discussed in the literature. This provides a clearer analysis of the different purposes of interfaith dialogues and how they are being used, using Smock (2002) and Swindlers' (1998) three operations as a framework.

Table 1: Categories of interfaith dialogues in literature

Operations of Interfaith Dialogues	Literature Categories	Explanation
Practical	Grassroots level Interfaith Dialogue in Conflict Leadership or 'elite' models	'Dialogue of action' where participants create interfaith dialogue initiatives in order to collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people. This includes Eck's parliamentary and institutional categories.
Spiritual	'Dialogue of life' 'Dialogue of religious experience' Inner dialogue	Being self-aware and understanding of other religions, as well as connection based, where participants share spiritual riches. Also includes daily interaction with those of other faiths.
Cognitive	'Dialogue of theological exchange'	Education based, where participants seek to learn off each other.

Source: Author

The different categories collectively tend to suggest that there is often a hierarchal system within the processes of dialogue. Smock (2002) and the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue (1991) tend to view elite dialogue as the dominant process. As this involves only those who are well educated and it is argued that this could neglect people from a grassroots level. It could also be disempowering if only a select few are bargaining for the entirety of the religious community (Dialogue and Proclamation, 1991). There needs to be far more emphasis on contacts in daily life and common commitment to action. This in turn will lead to exchanges of arguments in response to the important questions, which the circumstances of life raise in the midst of people. Exchanges of religious experience can also inspire theological discussion, which could encourage closer contacts between religious communities (Gopin, 2002, p. 10).

These suggestions are not to say that dialogue is the equivalent of conflict resolution because it is still essential that other vital tasks, such as 'reconstruction, the return of refugees, and the formation of civil and political institutions, are met simultaneously' (Brajovic, 2007, p. 150). However, interfaith dialogue has potential as a contributing element to sustainable peace, as it can create tolerance and social cohesion (Brajovic, 2007). There are limitations to this approach, which often link to society's cultural dimensions. True expressions are seldom raised, because it can regularly be shameful to promote true feelings, and often it is far more honourable to initiate war. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, they can bring a shift in emotions, from hatred to reconciliation and apology (Brajovic, 2007, p. 24). It is also important that the expectations are identified before the dialogue occurs, because otherwise conflict can escalate if expectations are not met. There needs to be a focus on well-defined activities, rather than pursuing too many objectives, or objectives that are too broad or distant from the lives of ordinary people (Forward, 2001).

Brajovic (2007) researched the role that interfaith dialogue could have played in Balkan wars. He says that the international community has mainly focused on infrastructure through economic strengthening. Although this is beneficial, it has been irrelevant in eliminating the sources of the war and conflict, since national division corresponded closely to differences in religious identities. Churches and Islamic communities in Bosnia failed to provide NGOs with any direction, instead delivering humanitarian assistance exclusively to the religious communities with which they identified. Brajovic argues that if there had been better religious dialogue, such things could have been avoided, and lives could have been saved (Brajovic, 2007).

As we see from these arguments, a multi-dimensional approach is needed when it comes to inter-religious dialogue. Other approaches do still need to be taken in peacebuilding, because it is unlikely that such dialogues can rebuild a state, but they can create a common ground to connect people and create tolerance. Interfaith

dialogues make it 'easier to attempt to enter the heart of the partner in dialogue, this should not only strengthen one's own traditions, but also bring tolerance to divided societies' (Brajovic, 2007; Hasenclever & Rittberger, 2000, p. 653). They can also play a role in the disapproval of violence, and can broaden the space for co-operative forms of conflict management, as well as building sustainable peace (Brajovic, 2007). Therefore, from this review, it is clear that interfaith dialogue is essentially about developing bridges between previously conflicting religions. It is a relatively new phenomenon, and the data is limited when reflecting on its contributions to peacebuilding. In addition, most of the sources came from the early post-9/11 era, and there has been a lack of exploration since that time. Following the examination of the varieties of interfaith initiatives in this thesis, it is hoped that a better understanding is gained of how they can be used towards peacebuilding and development.

2.6 The Community of Sant'Egidio

The Community of Sant'Egidio began as a small grassroots organization in 1968, based in Rome, essentially dealing with the needs of the poor local community. It began as an initiative of Andrea Riccardi, who was less than twenty at the time. He gathered a group of high-school students, like himself, to listen to and to put the Gospel into practice. They started going to the outskirts of Rome where much of the population were living in slums, starting an afternoon school for children. Their work has increased and is now in 77 countries, with 60,000 members. They consider their work to be 'community facing' rather than 'community based', as it engages with the local community by looking outwards not in. Specific labels like this one is an important feature in their work as it is what makes them unique among other FBAs. Sant'Egidio consider themselves a fraternity or a 'Christian community' rather than any kind of organization. Their work is on a completely volunteer basis and all have a shared commonality of 'living the gospel', in which they are dedicated to living out the Christian values as described in the New Testament (Sant'Egidio, 2013).

In 1986 the world's biggest interfaith meeting was held in collaboration with Sant'Egidio in Assisi, Italy. Assisi has specific religious significance, as it was the home of St Francis, a 12th century religious figure that emphasizes Sant'Egidio's interfaith values or what is claimed to be the 'spirit of Assisi'. St Francis revolutionized his contemporary corrupt church through his theories on peace between all faiths through finding common ground. Religious leaders from all faiths joined together in the meeting, to express solidarity and educate others on their faith in a way that had never been seen before. The success of the meeting allowed Sant'Egidio to establish it as an annual event. Since 1987, it has been held at a different location every year, with the aim of promoting mutual understanding and dialogue among religions in a horizon of peace. In the introduction to the 2007 IMPP in Naples, Pope Benedict XVI said:

While respecting the differences of the various religions, we are all called to work for peace and to be effectively committed to furthering reconciliation among peoples. This is the true 'spirit of Assisi' which opposes every form of violence and the abuse of religion as a pretext for violence. The Catholic Church intends to continue on the path of dialogue in order to encourage understanding between the different cultures, traditions and forms of religious wisdom (Sant'Egidio, 2013).

Similarly it was during the 1980s that they became engaged with international dialogues, in order to reduce and mediate conflicting groups. Although they were active in peace missions all around the world at the time, they gained recognition with involvement in the peacemaking field in the Mozambique civil war in 1992. Sant'Egidio was successful in bringing the government and the rebels of the 'Mozambican National Resistance' (RENAMO) together to talk peace. Although this was not necessarily an interfaith mediation, it is argued that they were successful because they were a neutral party with a compassionate outlook, with an essential aim of promoting peace (Sant'Egidio, 2010). Basically this breaks down to them having no economic or political agenda, so they were trusted as the neutral party (Sant'Egidio, 2013). Once peace negotiations were successful, the United Nations then assumed responsibility. In the past they have also been involved in peace efforts in Algeria, Guatemala, Burundi, Liberia and the Ivory Coast, Balkans, the

Democratic Republic of the Congo, and many more, much of which had interfaith elements and were the results of parties approaching them due to their success in Mozambique (Sant'Egidio, 2010). Sant'Egidio claims that they continue to monitor the conflicts long after they have supposedly ended and are always ready to help if called upon, a feature they claim differentiates them from other organizational agendas.

Sant'Egidio focus on the ideology of 'war as the mother of all poverty', and are involved in numerous development efforts with interfaith dialogue and religious freedom becoming a fundamental part within their aid and development practice. The organization is accountable for large-scale humanitarian efforts from international peace mediation to being among the global leaders on HIV/AIDS. They run programs across Africa, pushing scientific research on mother-child transmission, and advocating that everyone deserves equal access to the best care. The community also funds one of the largest HIV/AIDS research initiatives in Africa ('Dream'). Although they are now a large-scale international organization, they still perform localized community work, focusing on capacity building with marginalized groups of all faiths such as refuges for the old, homeless or poor, school for peace, mental health assistance, refugee language classes and support, soup kitchens, and hospices for AIDS patients. They are also activists against the death penalty, advocating through signatures and creating 'pen pal' friendships with prisoners (Sant'Egidio, 2013).

2.7 Summary

The first three sections of this chapter essentially set the foundations on which this research is based. Modernization theories of the past saw religion pushed into the private sphere and the neglect of religion in development. However, the approach of post-modern development theory is to argue that since religion is a fundamental part of underdevelopment, its inclusion and utilization is necessary for good development practice. The end of the Cold War paralleled the emergence of post-modern development. Since then, we have witnessed an increase of culture-based

conflict, and religion and politics being more intertwined, which stands in contrast to the predictions of the modernization theorists. This has led to negative attention being given to religion in Western societies, with religion often being viewed as the central cause of conflict. However, when we break it down, religion becomes only one component, with marginalization and political issues being more rooted causes. Despite this, religion's employment within the peace process is seen as central to many. International donors are starting create more partnerships with FBOs, as they recognize it as an effective means of on the ground development.

However, the literature search still left me unconvinced that religion is taken seriously as an authentic tool in peacebuilding. The theorists tended to provide suggestions as to how FBAs could be used, how religious institutions are playing an important role in conflict, and how there are partnerships for development, but no essential proof that was being utilized as a tool for peacebuilding. This is where interfaith dialogue came through, as an initiative towards sustainable peace building. Many of the scholars agreed that this is a viable solution, because through the education of 'the others' religious traditions, tolerance could be built. This also builds the argument as to why religious actors are so important with peace building, because if secular authorities are doing the negotiating, they may not understand the perspective of the religious communities.

The community of Sant'Egidio 'International Meetings for Peace' has emerged as an 'elite leadership model' of interfaith dialogue and, although there were critiques of this approach as to how it would reach the ordinary person, it is at least creating high-level awareness for this kind of dialogue (Sant'Egidio, 2013). Brajovic (2007) argues that this can lead to an exchange of arguments in response to the important questions, which can influence change in the fundamentals of the religion (Brajovic, 2007). My research based in Israel provided the opportunity to witness more grassroots methods of interfaith dialogue, as it was a conflict area, where all three-Abrahamic faiths (Islam, Christianity and Judaism) live together. Interfaith dialogue can seem like an idealized peace-building tool, but this gives greater meaning to my research. This thesis is about understanding the current initiatives underway within

interfaith dialogue, and how they are contributing to the promotion of peace, especially since, despite their evident success in many areas, there is a lack evidence to support their approach.

So to conclude, inter-faith dialogue was my focus for three reasons; first, it is working to reconcile a lot of the critiques that claim there is a lack of understanding and empathy between faith groups and governments, donors, secular development organizations and other parts of civil society. Second, as we have seen, many of the arguments of the past have stated that development practice has been influenced by a Western tradition of drawing a sharp distinction between religion and the state, and inter-faith dialogue is a potential way to utilize better religious inclusion. Third, inter-faith dialogues become even more important in armed conflict, particularly when religion is one of the factors of conflict or conflict is differentiated by religious identity (Smock, 2002).

Religion and faith have long been regarded as a barrier to development and inherently contentious. Faith groups are sometimes excluded by development agencies and believe that when they are allowed in, they have to “leave their faith at the door” (Brajovic, 2007). However inter-faith dialogue offers an alternative for understanding this nexus, and a way forward that has the potential for creating a new important space within development, not only through conflict resolution and peace building, but also in doing development.

Chapter 3: Positive and Negative Approaches to Peace: A Theoretical Framework

“Peace cannot be achieved through violence, it can only be attained through understanding.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson (Nguyen, 2015, p. 975)

3.1 Introduction

International and national donors are increasingly recognizing the linkages between security and development, viewing these as mutually reinforcing areas of intervention, both of which are necessary for building sustainable peace and development (European Union, 2010, p. 8). Conflict and peace studies typically outline two types of peace: ‘positive’ peace and ‘negative’ peace; ideas that were developed by the peace scholar Johan Galtung, in the early 1960s (Sandole, 2010, p. 8). This chapter outlines the connection between the integrated approach of peacebuilding and development, and Galtung’s structural violence theories of positive and negative peace, and the potential role interfaith dialogue could play within these frameworks.

3.2 Peacebuilding and Development

Sumner and Tribe (2008) claim that there are three perspectives that define development. The first sees development as a process of structural and societal change, which emphasizes structural transformation for long-term change in economies and societies (Sumner & Tribe, 2008, p. 12; Thomas, 2000, 2004). The second is development as a ‘vision or measure of progressive change’, which understands development as a set of performance indicators, goals or outcomes (Sumner & Tribe, 2008, p. 13; Thomas, 2000, 2004). The final perspective is a post-modern conceptualization of development as a set of ‘bad outcomes through the ‘imposition of Western ethnocentric notions of development upon the Third World’ (Sumner & Tribe, 2008, p. 14). In contrast, peacebuilding can be understood at first

glance as the 'building of peace' (Sandole, 2010, p. 8). However, like development, there are deeper complexities to its application. The United Nations defines peacebuilding as:

A range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives. (United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, 2007)

The former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, linked peace with development when he stated that 'there can be no development without peace, and no peace without development' (McCandless, 2014, p. 505). Indeed, the definitions and perspectives of development and peace building highlighted above are underpinned by similar variables, such as goal setting, sustainable resolutions, and strengthening societies. At the centre of both development and peacebuilding processes is the need to strengthen resilience and the capacity within society to manage change and resolve differences (European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, 2011, p. 1). Best practice of both paradigms is to work at multiple levels, using participatory, consultative methods in order to link grassroots activities with higher level perspectives (European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, 2011, p. 1). This reveals an intrinsic link between the two disciplines, because what is traditionally seen as 'development' work is also needed in peacebuilding.

Others see two contrasting approaches to the relationship between peacebuilding and development. The first is an *exclusivist* methodology, where 'peace building is a political endeavour entered into in response to security problems for a limited period of time, whereas development is a long-term strategy carried out under generally peaceful conditions' (Kuhne, 1996; Smoljan, 2003, p. 234). In contrast is the *inclusivist* line, that development underlies the philosophy of peace building which, ultimately, cannot succeed unless integrated with a development initiative (Bowen, 2009; Smoljan, 2003, p. 234 & 235; United Nations, 1995). The exclusivist

approach shows that the two paradigms need to work in a compatible manner, whereas the inclusivist approach shows that they are ‘mutually reinforcing procedures’, capable of complimenting each other towards a common goal (David, 1999, p. 27). However both approaches highlight the connectivity between development and peace building, one discipline cannot operate without the other.

This increasing relationship between the two disciplines has progressed since the end of the Cold War. As stated in the religion and conflict section in Chapter Two, the Cold War saw a shift in from inter- to intra-state war, which increased the need for development programs to be included in post-conflict rehabilitation programs. Another influential factor of this change in the relationship between peacebuilding and development, was the intellectual and political hegemony of the Western ‘liberal peace model’ (as defined in Chapter Two, religion and conflict) that was strengthened, opening the door to much wider interventions in the internal dynamics of low-power countries (Uvin, 2002, p. 6). The UN has since evolved its peacebuilding practice into a more integrated approach with development in its peacekeeping missions (Smoljan, 2003, p. 243). In 1994 the United Nations Agenda for Development defined development as one of the prerequisites for peace (United Nations, 1994). One year later, the *United Nations Supplement to An agenda for Peace* cited social and economic development, together with demilitarization, control of small arms, institutional reform, improved police and judicial systems, and monitoring of human rights and electoral reform, as peace building measures (Smoljan, 2003, p. 241; United Nations, 1995, p. paragraph 47). Similarly, the United Nations Millennium Report emphasized on a more integrated approach to conflict prevention and development (United Nations, 2000, p. paragraph 207). This shows that the United Nations conceptualization of peacebuilding is no longer primarily concerned with military and diplomatic issues, but now has more of a development focus towards attitudes and socio-economic circumstances of people in general (Smoljan, 2003, p. 241).

This section has emphasized the relationship between peacebuilding and development. As we can see, the nexus between development and peacebuilding

has changed; showing that peacebuilding now has a central focus of development thinking and practice. Accordingly, in modern development practice one paradigm cannot function without the other. The following sections of this chapter expand on a range of theories that promote this relationship, and provide a hypothesis regarding the role interfaith dialogue can have on integrated practice of development and peacebuilding.

3.3 Understanding Positive and Negative Peace

In 1964 the peace scholar Johan Galtung, noted in the introduction, wrote the editorial for the first edition of the 'Journal for Peace Research'. This editorial revolutionized the way in which peace research was defined. It was written at a time when the main theoretical focus of peace studies was addressing direct violence (Grewal, 2003, p. 1). Galtung challenged these dominant theories to include indirect or structural violence by claiming that peace research needs to move away from violence itself, and to concern itself more with human collaboration, and the reduction of hostilities (Galtung, 1964; Grewal, 2003). According to Galtung, people identify themselves as part of a social group where reciprocity and cooperation are dominating forms of interaction, but when this group is threatened by groups outside of their 'sphere', 'destruction often rules' (Galtung, 1964, p. 1). Paul Richards (2005) parallels this argument by claiming that humans relate through social cues, and those that promote war target the enemy as 'not like us' (Richards, 2005, p. 17). Galtung states that by combining integration and control of violence, peace can be obtained (Galtung, 1964).

Galtung (1964) defines two concepts; 'negative peace', which is the 'the absence of violence, absence of war', and 'positive peace' which is the 'integration of human society' (Galtung, 1964, p. 2). Sandole (2010) expands on Galtung's theories by stating that negative peace is often the more 'normative' or globally accepted view of peace, as it is the 'absence of hostilities and violence' (Hettne, 1983, p. 329; Sandole, 2010). An example could be viewing ceasefires as an experiment in temporary negative peace, which may or may not lead to long-term peace settlements

(Sandole, 2010, pp. 8-11). In contrast, positive peace approaches determine the source of conflict, rather than seeking to provide a quick solution. This can lead to the sustainable resolution of conflict, through restoration of relationships and the creation of social systems that serve the needs of the whole population. Although ending immediate violence can help to uncover the root of conflict, effort can be put into achieving 'positive' peace goals, even in the absence of negative peace (Sandole, 2010). Galtung claims that the inspiration behind positive and negative peace was the health sciences; health can be seen as getting rid of a disease (negative peace), or enhancing the condition of the body so it resists the disease (positive peace) (Galtung, 1985; Grewal, 2003).

Galtung expanded these ideas in an article titled 'Violence, Peace and Peace Research' (1969) which outlined the concept of structural violence. Later he states that his inspiration for his structural theories derived from Gandhi's approach to the same subject in a non-violent manner (Galtung, 1985, p. 145). Galtung argues that peace not only involves the absence of direct violence (negative peace), but also addressing the unequal social structures of society (positive peace) (Galtung, 1969; Grewal, 2003). Structural violence is a combination of inequality that prevents people from meeting their basic needs, social exclusion, and 'humiliation/assaults on people's dignity' (Uvin, 1999, p. 50). Galtung uses the example of tuberculosis; if someone died from the disease in the eighteenth century it could not be constructed as violence because it was almost unavoidable. However, if someone were to die from it today, despite the resources of modern medicine, this could be considered an act of structural violence (Galtung, 1969, p. 168).

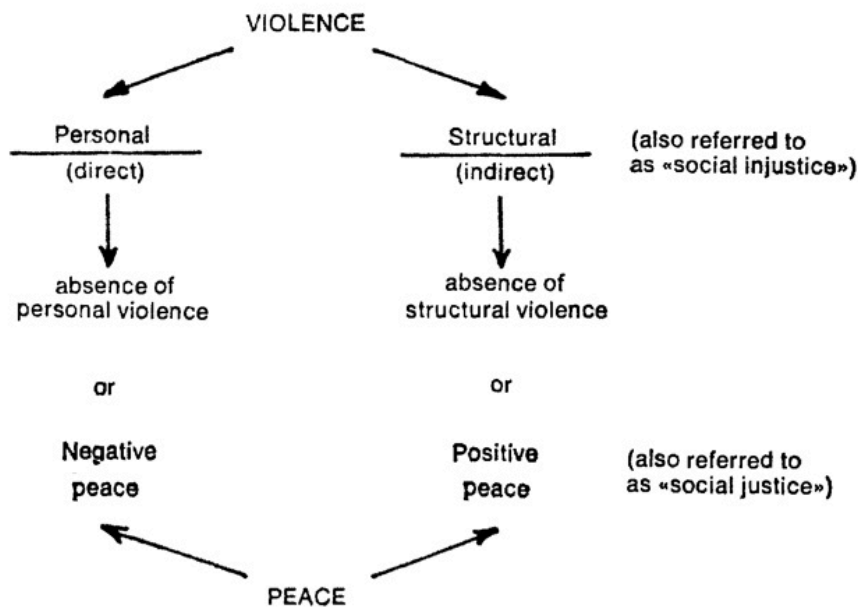
Galtung's work has been widely cited and has been drawn on by development theorists such as Sandole (2010), Harcup & O'Neil (2001), Carvalho (2001), Redclift (1988) and Baster (1972). Amartya Sen (1999) also makes connections to the concept of structural violence through the idea of development as freedom. Sen states that development requires the removal of the major structural sources of 'unfreedom', such as 'poverty, tyranny, poor economic opportunities, systematic

social deprivation, neglect of public facilities, and intolerance or over-activity of repressive states' (Sen, 1999, p. 3).

Galtung explains that it is the visibility of direct violence versus the subtlety of structural violence that allows direct violence to have more attention in society. Structural violence is 'silent and stable', where direct violence is 'obvious and fluctuant' (Galtung, 1969, p. 173). Similarly, a difference between personal or direct violence and structural violence is that direct violence can be traced to the actors who were involved. Structural or indirect violence cannot be traced to a single actor but is often ingrained into the structure of society (Galtung, 1969, p. 171). Uvin (1999) states that structural violence can include a social and spiritual dimension, rather than simply concentrating on economic and physical inequalities. Responses to structural violence should equally capture in a 'holistic manner' the 'meaningfulness and dignity of life as seen by people themselves' (Uvin, 1999, p. 50). Galtung (1981) writes that the only way to obtain richer peace is to reflect on the social cosmologies of the world (Galtung, 1981; Grewal, 2003). Similarly, Sen (1999) claims that the world needs more sophistication in understanding cross-cultural influences as well as our basic capability to enjoy products of other cultures and other lands, as well as have the ability to understand one another (Sen, 1999, p. 244).

These definitions of structural and direct violence mean that Galtung has also extended the definition of peace, thus peace is not just the absence of direct violence (negative peace) but also the absence of structural violence (positive peace) (Grewal, 2003, p. 2). Galtung asserts then that peace theory not only relates to conflict theory (negative peace) but development theory as well (positive peace) (Galtung, 1969, p. 183). Paul Richards (2005) builds on this, arguing that the concept of 'new war' (in this case direct violence or 'negative peace') is a hazard that first has to be contained before the deeper stages of development can occur and needs to be understood through patterns of violence embedded in society (structural violence) (Richards, 2005, p. 3 & 11).

Figure 1: The extended concepts of violence and peace (Galtung, 1969, p. 183)



We often want peace to be attainable or already attained. That is why it is easy to refer to negative peace approaches, rather than attempting to achieve something as idealistic as the absence of personal violence as well as social justice. Both goals are significant, and the view that one cannot dedicate themselves to both goals is pessimistic (Grewal, 2003). Galtung states that non-violent action which appears to be increasingly growing combines the two. Galtung writes that nonviolent action can work in two ways; the first is 'dissociative', which separates conflicting parties and allows the weaker parties to establish autonomy and identity of its own. The second is 'associative' nonviolence that can serve to bring conflicting parties together when a basis for equal non-exploitative partnership exists' (Galtung, 1969, p. 186). He concludes by stating that peace research needs to combine the two goals, and once this has succeeded, the greater concepts and forms of social action can be placed into theory and practice. Clark (2009) elaborates on this, arguing that for reconciliation to occur restoration of relationships is imperative, quoting that 'lasting peace requires changes in the attitudes of people in each group toward the other' (Clark, 2009, p. 361; Staub, Pearlman, Gubin, & Hagengimana, 2005, p. 300).

The collaborating authors of the article 'Revisiting Johan Galtung's Concept of Structural Violence' (2012) share the belief that his work still remains relevant in

contemporary peace theory and practice, and is very well suited to present day situations (Dilts et al., 2012, p. 192). They argue that in our current neo-liberal state, where economic and political inequalities are on the rise, there is now a greater need to understand the multifaceted nature of violence. In particular, Dilts et al (2012, p.193) draw attention to Galtung's argument that as our gaze focuses on the repetition of personal and direct aspects of violence, rather than understanding structural and cultural violence, structural violence becomes 'inherited' across generations, making it invisible (Dilts et al., 2012, p. 193). Dilts (2012) emphasizes that renewed attention is needed towards structural violence within the contemporary neoliberal context; because of the normalized inequalities it creates.

3.4 Applying these Approaches to the Research Context

The last two sections discussed differing theoretical approaches; the first indicating that in contemporary development and peacebuilding practice there is an integrated approach between the two disciplines, and the second outlining the concepts of negative and positive peace, including structural violence. Despite their separation of these two approaches are justifiably connected. As outlined in the peacebuilding and development section, an integrated approach to peacebuilding and development combines conflict, post-conflict development, conflict prevention and sustainable peace goals. When we look into the notions of negative peace and positive peace, a similar parallel emerges. Negative peace deals with the end of immediate violence (conflict), where positive peace deals with the sustainability and structural change (post-conflict development, conflict prevention and sustainable peace). Galtung clearly makes a link between negative peace (as conflict theory) and positive peace (as development theory) (Galtung, 1969, p. 183). A separation of the two concepts would be a reflection of pre-1990s peacebuilding and development practice, where there was not an integrated approach, and the disciplines worked as separate entities.

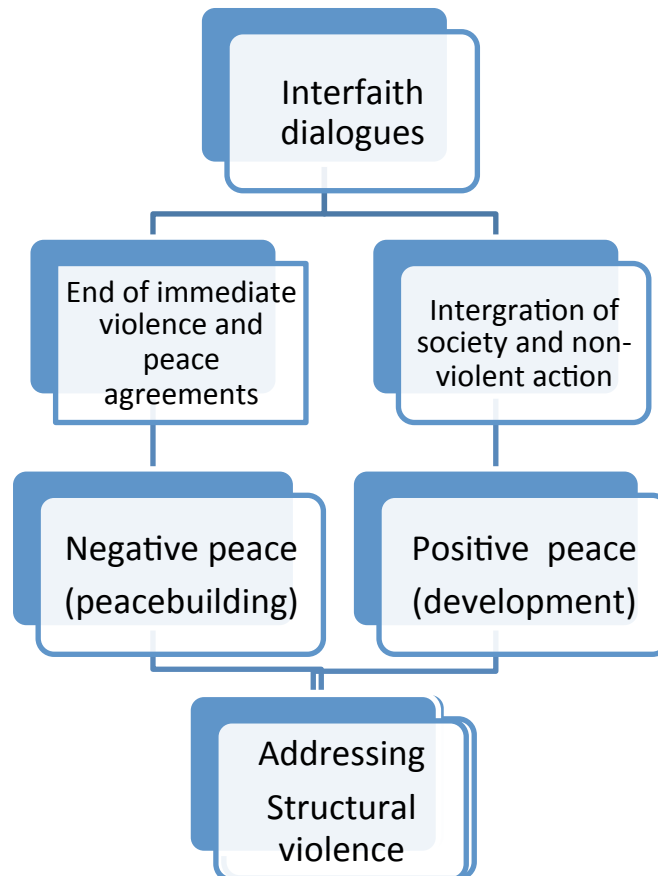
If we are to assume peacebuilding as negative peace and development as positive peace, then what potential role could interfaith dialogues contribute towards these theories? Recently published articles by Galtung (2014) argues that the time has now

come for mutual learning, and that the key to future approaches towards peacebuilding is dialogue and a mutual search for acceptable and sustainable solutions (Galtung, 2014a, 2014b). The prospect exists then that interfaith dialogues could contribute as a method of 'mutual-learning' and 'non-violent' activism towards achieving both peace goals in three ways. First, interfaith dialogue is a form of 'social action', and a space where 'equal non-exploitative partnerships can be created' and a way to obtain richer peace through reflecting on the social cosmologies of the world (Galtung, 1969, p. 186; 1981; Grewal, 2003). Second, as stated through the initial sections of this chapter, war is often promoted through the 'othering' of the enemy. Interfaith dialogue has the potential to breakdown this 'othering' through interaction with those outside of the normal sphere of interaction (Galtung, 1964, p. 1; Richards, 2005, p. 17). Third, Galtung clearly states that peace needs to be achieved by peaceful means (Galtung, 1985; Grewal, 2003), as well as arguing that 'if peace action is to be regarded highly because it is action against violence, then the concept of violence must be broad enough to include the most significant varieties, yet specific enough to serve as a base for concrete action' (Galtung, 1969, p. 168). I hypothesize that interfaith dialogue initiatives could fit into this category. If society denies the irreducible social aspects of conflict and peace, we are then avoiding the smartest asset we have, because 'social creativity seems more important than sophisticated equipment' (Richards, 2005, p. 18).

Although the literature largely agrees that interfaith dialogue can be used as a tool for peace agreements, it is unlikely that interfaith dialogues can rebuild a state or end immediate conflict alone (negative peace). However, such practices can create tolerance, show disapproval of violence and broaden the space for cooperation and the building of peace and change the atmosphere in which many of the prejudices that cause conflict arise (positive peace) (Hasenclever & Rittberger, 2000). Therefore, interfaith dialogues can be seen as a 'positive' peace initiative, as it is a tool that can be used to address deep-rooted problems of conflict and to contribute to sustainable peacebuilding. The figure below (Figure 2) reflects this, and indicates the layout of this theoretical framework, with addressing structural violence being the root of conflict resolution, and interfaith dialogue at the top. As it is a tool that can

contribute to elements of both goals and is practical form of greater social action once these goals have been achieved (Galtung, 1969).

Figure 2: Theoretical framework



Source: Author

Galtung states that positive peace is changing the minds and ideas of man, ‘about other groups, improved contact through exchange, improved understanding through studies, peace research itself, semantic analyses, improved communication, especially news communication, changes in the economic order of society, and so on to functional cooperation between groups or nations through technical and cultural cooperation or trade policies, to institutional fusion with superordinate bureaucracies, police forces, courts and governments till the world state is reached’ (Galtung, 1964, p. 3). Interfaith dialogue perfectly fits within these ideas, and has the potential to reflect the frameworks outlined in this chapter through the prospect of improving situations of structural violence and contributing towards positive peace.

3.5 Summary

This chapter has outlined the contemporary approaches to peacebuilding and development, an introduction into both positive and negative peace, and how such theories connect to the focus of interfaith dialogues. It has underlined how the theories of positive peace and negative peace parallel ideas of peacebuilding and development, thus reinforcing the importance of an integrated approach to dealing with conflict and development. The connection between positive peace and development (as two concepts dealing with societal and structural issues) shows that the potential of interfaith dialogue towards development practice comes through its potential role in building positive peace. This potential role will be returned to further in the concluding chapters.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter One, the purpose of this research is to provide a deeper understanding of current inter-faith dialogue initiatives in order to explore the legitimacy of religion as a tool toward peace building efforts. This chapter provides an understanding and justification of the methodology tools used throughout the research. The beginning of the chapter discusses the methodological considerations and qualitative methods that were employed during my fieldwork. This is divided into several sub-sections, which discusses both the motives and the theoretical framework of the research. The first is a justification of both the use of qualitative research; then a synopsis of the specific methods that were applied followed by the ethical considerations; concluding with positionality, where the issue of power in relationships was also deliberated. The chapter then elaborates on the participants involved in this research, challenges and experiences that I faced in the field, concluding with how I undertook the data analysis process.

4.2 Qualitative Research

The essence of my aim, as well as my research questions was to feed a rich narrative on the role of interfaith dialogue initiatives, and I created the research questions in order to find deeper meaning in the aim (O'Leary, 2010). The questions suggest a qualitative methodological approach was more appropriate because they were based on issues relating to social relationships, as well as organizational detail. Qualitative research techniques seek to produce and build theory rather than test and hypothesize it, and I collected data from natural settings in order to understand and build meaning (Stewart-Withers, Banks, McGregor, & Meo-Sewabu, 2014, p. 59). Qualitative research is interested in human settings and how humans make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures and social role. Such dynamics are especially relevant when studying topics surrounding the themes of religion and conflict (Berg, 2007). These social outcomes are hard to quantify and are

dependent on interpretations. Therefore, qualitative research methods were employed in this study in order to gain a deep understanding of interfaith dialogue initiatives and the impact they are having towards peace building.

4.3 Research Methods

Four qualitative methodologies were used for data collection: semi-structured interviews, document analysis, participant observation and reflective journaling. Each of these methodologies will be discussed in order to provide a rationale for their selection, as well as the fieldwork application of such methods. In addition, journaling, triangulation, and snowball sampling was utilized alongside the methodology selection, as means of verification and validation.

4.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews can begin with a well-defined plan, but also enable the use of flexible structure. This flexibility is provided in order to account for natural flow of conversation, especially if interesting tangents are addressed (O'Leary, 2010). The use of semi-structured interviews also allows for some questions to be left out if the interviewer feels it is required within the specific context of the interview (Laws, 2003). Therefore predetermined, open-ended questions were constructed before my fieldwork, which enabled a basic structure, but acknowledged the flow of conversation (Appendix 1). However, during fieldwork I ended up adding or altering some questions depending on the organization, or whom the person was, that I was talking. This was important within the different fieldwork locations, as some of the questions I asked in Israel were not applicable in Rome (see appendices 1). All 12 of the key interviewees were accepting of my recording, which allowed for unconstrained conversation that was not disturbed by constant note taking. Each interviewee's personal experience was an important source of data collection and since I lacked knowledge of these experiences, semi-structured interviews were therefore a suitable tool. Furthermore, because politics is often a sensitive subject in Israeli territories, semi-structured interviews allowed me to pre-determine interview situations and leave out specific questions on a case-by-case basis.

With a total of 12 key interviews achieved from a range of sources, I found the more qualitative questions had the most interesting digressions. Asking 'what does peace mean to you and what would it look like?' and 'why do you think interfaith dialogues are so important?' would open the door to interesting tangents and experiences, that more organizational based questions would not. I tended to transcribe the interview the night it occurred in order to both save time upon my return home and be able to reflect better on the points that were made, as well as improve my own interview technique.

4.3.2 Document Analysis

Document analysis allows for a collection, review and interrogation of various forms of written texts as a legitimate source of data collection. It requires the documents to be examined and interpreted, in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis was central to the triangulation and cross-referencing of the data. The documents gathered would help to verify the interviews and observation data. I did have to put a lot of pressure on people to remind them to give me copies of certain documents as I thought it was important to gather as much as I could while I was there, especially documents that were not available to me online. The documents ranged from minutes of meetings, notes from previous interfaith dialogues, newsletters, constitutions, and educational documents (see Table 1). However, subjectivity was an important factor as this data was dependent on the author's bias and his/her research reality, so the perspective of the author was important to consider while I analysed organizations documents (see Table 1) (O'Leary, 2010). My personal research positionality is addressed further on in this chapter.

4.3.3 Participant Observation and Journaling

As highlighted in the previous section, participant observation was especially important in both locations and was where a lot of the data was collected; in Italy whilst observing organizational structures; and in Israel whilst observing community-based practices. This tool was the most successful way of observing the obvious

differences between my two fieldwork locations. In Rome Christians and Muslims dominated the dialogues. The Christians all tended to be older white women and the Muslims were older educated immigrants. While in Israel, it was essentially Jews and Muslims, and a younger generation. The atmosphere and topics were also different; in Rome it tended to be practical topics like difference in prayer rituals. Whereas Israel the passion and tension was a lot higher, so the topics reflected this, as they were more theologically and peace based.

Although time limits did not necessarily allow me to be immersed within the either culture, this methodological tool allowed room for flexibility as well as the use of multiple techniques. Techniques included note taking, recording, photographs, fieldwork diaries and conversations. I used a structured plan on the specific issues I wanted to observe, a method that also allowed for relaxing boundaries and letting things happen (Appendix 2) (Stewart-Withers et al., 2014, p. 64).

4.3.4 Reflection Journal

I also included day-to-day journaling throughout my fieldwork, a technique that was not necessarily structured but more a representation of my own observations that were not necessarily captured within the other methodologies. This was used as a means of reflection on my ongoing positionality in the field through unexpected encounters and development of relationships (Stewart-Withers et al., 2014, p. 62).

My reflection journal became a central addition to the research, and I would put the effort into doing one entry each day, even if I did not manage to do any interviews or observations. They were a good source for capturing the thoughts I was having on my research, especially if my ideas were still developing on the subject. They also captured contemplations that I had while conducting the methodologies. For example, if I had conducted an interview, I would be able to write in my reflection journal the main things that I think came through in terms of data, and what could be improved on next time in order to build on ideas.

4.3.5 Triangulation

The use of these four methods is a form of triangulation, which makes it a stronger piece of research. Triangulation is the use of more than one source of data to confirm the authenticity of each source (O'Leary, 2010, p. 115). Every method has a different line of sight directed towards the same point and by combining several lines of sight researchers can obtain a more legitimate picture of the reality and present richer data (Berg, 2007, p. 5). Mayaux (2008:123) claims that by using three sources of data, multiple layers of data will be exposed; this once again allows for rich qualitative data. In this research, findings were triangulated through the use of interviews, participant observation and document analysis.

4.3.6 Snowball Sampling

Snowball sampling, 'chain referral sampling' or 'respondent-driven sampling' involves interviewing participants then asking them to refer you to other respondents who they think would be suitable participants for the research (Berg, 2007, p. 44). In preparation for my fieldwork I was in contact with certain members and staff within the organizations I was researching (managers, religious leaders, communications and education coordinators). At the beginning of fieldwork I did not know who the majority of the people that I interviewed were going to be, so I relied on the people I was already in contact with to recommend participants for the study, or to directly recruit them. Those participants then recommended additional participants, and so on, therefore building up like a snowball rolling down a hill.

Snowballing can also be used within document analysis, through following the citations of the document onto the next document or article (Gomm, 2008, p. 349). This technique was applied by asking participants or by further researching, for further documents I saw relevant in the reference lists.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

It is important that the ethics involved were taken as a serious aspect of the research. It is not just something that 'needs' to be approved before commencing fieldwork; ethics needs to be an ongoing concern for researchers (Greener, 2011, p.

150). Responsibility is a crucial aspect of ethical considerations; as a researcher, the dignity and well-being of my respondents is my responsibility (O'Leary, 2010, p. 40). This is especially important to recognize when exploring sensitive themes like religion and peacebuilding.

This research complied with Massey University's Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) requirements. As part of this, I completed the Development Studies in-house ethics process, which included completing an ethics form and discussion with both my supervisors and one other Professor within the Development Studies Department. As a result of this meeting the research was considered to be low-risk, and a low risk notification was sent to MUHIC.

As part of the Development Studies ethics process we considered my research methodologies. Safety concerns were reviewed, emphasizing the importance of ensuring my personal security in traveling to these areas alone. I have had unaccompanied travel experience throughout Europe, as well as traveling to Israel in the past, so it is a process I was comfortable with. We also highlighted religious/cultural concerns, as someone who is not religious and is being assimilated into religious contexts. I was concerned as to how I should respond to religious situations. However, as long as the 'do no harm' aspect was adhered to and I was respectful to all beliefs and cultural norms, with a willingness to observe and participate, there was no difficulty. Even though research with religious or political themes needs to be conducted sensitively. In Israel particularly, political views were a sensitive topic, so my views as a researcher remained neutral and accepting, and participants were given the right to withdraw at any time.

All participants gave written or oral consent, and I created an information sheet and consent form (Appendices 3 & 4). Depending on the situation, I either got participants to sign the forms at the end of interviews so they understand the information that was to be used, which minimized risk of deception, or had verbal consent recorded. I also made my participants aware of how the findings will be disseminated by outlining that once research is complete, the thesis will be available

online through the Massey website, so participants can have access to the final thesis.

4.5 Positionality

The concept of positionality includes the researchers given attributes such as race, nationality, and gender, which are fixed or culturally determined. Such attributes require textual disclosure in this thesis when they affect the data, to which they always tend to do at some level (Chiseri-Strater, 1996). Therefore this section discussed my own positionality in relation to the topic. Positionality is an important aspect to cover as the researcher's position "may influence aspects of the study, such as the types of information collected, or the way it is interpreted" (Sultana, 2007, p. 376). By acknowledging my own positionality I can reflect and give a 'critical self-scrutiny' on the way I deal with relationships and the interpretations of the research (Stewart-Withers et al., 2014, p. 62).

I am a white 24-year-old female with life experiences that are mainly situated in New Zealand and this will inevitably influence the interpretation of the data. My background is what I would describe as a secular Christian upbringing, which has evolved into a more agnostic/atheistic belief system. Nevertheless, I have always been fascinated by religion and was always encouraged question and explore its more theological aspects during my upbringing. Being aware of and acknowledging personal bias is the first step in acknowledging this subjectivity (Scheyvens & Storey, 2003, p. 68). In order to address this I had to make a conscious effort not to make any judgmental comments that had the potential to offend any of the participants or organizations involved in the research since the organizations are recognized as having fundamental religious beliefs. I do have familiarity with Christian religious protocols because of the way I was raised. I also have an understanding of the three monotheist religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) because of my undergraduate degree in Religious Studies, which I consider an advantage within my research.

I have gained greatly from the Development Studies program and, despite not adhering to any traditional religious belief, I place great value in human rights and

always respect a person's right to have freedom of choice. I believe that societies, communities and families can reach greater potential when religious harmony is applied. I believe education and connection between differing religious traditions would enhance peacemaking efforts. Therefore, I strongly believe in this research, but I must also recognize this subjectivity. As such I intend to try not to look for specific meaning that supports this view but rather take a neutral position.

The use of triangulation and various methods of data collection, helped to address concerns of positionality. As stated previously, a fieldwork journal helped reflexivity on my positionality in the field through things like unexpected encounters and development of relationships (Stewart-Withers et al., 2014, p. 62). Since there are limited sources addressing my specific research topic, I was significantly attentive to the research process to ensure the fairest outcomes possible.

4.5.1 Power in Research Relationships

Analyses have shown that power-based dynamics are inherent in any and all research, and have suggested that power is something to not only be aware of, but to negotiate with during the research process (Merriam et al., 2001). Researchers are often in positions of privilege, especially in the field of development, where researchers are often investigating marginalized or vulnerable communities (Ballamingie & Johnson, 2011, p. 712). However, unlike other typical International Development Masters Theses, my research was conducted in what are both considered as being 'developed countries' – therefore, the usual Western power imbalances were not so relevant to this research. However, as a 24-year-old female who interviewed older westernized males, there were issues of power from the participant over the researcher, or what researchers often title 'studying-up' (Conti & O'Neil, 2007, p. 63; Stewart-Withers et al., 2014). These structures of power were addressed by pre-emailing my contacts the template for my semi-structured interviews and plans for methodologies. This enabled preparation and thought by the participant before I arrived. It also allowed me to be taken seriously as a researcher by showing the legitimacy of my research.

4.6 Fieldwork experience

Going into the field, I did not know what to expect. I was extremely nervous boarding the plane, with the weighted feeling of this being my first ambitious move into a career in development. I was anxious at the thought of still not quite having a grip on the direction of my research aim, although other researchers in the department had continuously told me that this was a normal part of the process and as soon as I started my data collection it would become clearer. As soon as I started gathering information their predictions proved correct. My aim smoothly transitioned from a focus on conflict resolution to peacebuilding. It became apparent that although the organizations were doing some work towards conflict resolution, they were far more focused on overall peacebuilding aspects and the role of interfaith dialogues in building sustainable peace. This left me feeling more confident about the research, as the change allowed for improved alignment with the theoretical framework.

Participants I met throughout the data collection period often gave me contact details of someone else that I should meet, allowing for effective snowballing sampling. Before my arrival in Rome, I already had two initial contacts; Sir David Moxon Representative of the Archbishop Of Canterbury to the Holy See, and Monica Attias of the Community of Sant'Egidio. Once I arrived in Rome I sat down with David Moxon, and explained my research in greater depth and he informed me of people I could contact, as well as ideas to explore. Monica Attias was my gateway into the Community of Sant'Egidio, providing me with documents, information and potential participants. Data collection in Israel was similar; I had initial contacts such as Yehuda Stolov, where communication had taken place over email. These initial participants recommended documents I should look at or observations for me to attend.

The fieldwork in Rome allowed for observations of organizational structures involved in interfaith work, the role FBAs have to play within peace settings, as well as both elitist and community based methods of interfaith dialogues. Fieldwork in Israel

proved to be just as valuable as it allowed for observations of interfaith dialogue initiatives where conflict is a reality.

4.7 Limitations/Obstacles faced in fieldwork

There are many obstacles that are faced when conducting field research, and I definitely was not immune to research barriers. If done by chronological order, the first was the progression of research in Rome. My arrival in Rome coincided with the Roma tour of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This unfortunately meant that both the Anglican Centre and the Community of Sant'Egidio had to focus on the itinerary and planning of his trip, which meant I could not properly start researching Sant'Egidio until a week into my stay. However, as stated before, David Moxon had provided me with contacts to explore, so I was able to conduct research on other interfaith organizations as stated in Table 1.

One of the more obvious obstacles was of course the language barrier. Although everyone I researched did speak English, it did make it harder for participants where English was a second language, often finding it difficult to communicate with certain expressions or words, and a lot of the Sant'Egidio Church services I participated in were in Italian. Monica informed me when I did arrive that I will only be able to interview certain people because of the language barrier, which is a limitation in the research.

The most significant obstacles to the research were in Israel. This was due to the rising tensions between Gaza and the occupied territories. The day I arrived was the funeral for the three Israeli boys that had been killed by Palestinians (The Independent, 2014). I was staying in East Jerusalem when the riots over the retaliation kill of a Palestinian teenage boy began. It was from there that things started to deteriorate and missiles began being fired to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv by Hamas, events that will be discussed in greater depth in the upcoming results chapter. This affected the research process in several ways; first, quite often bomb sirens went off and people would have to evacuate into bomb shelters. This meant that some interviews and observations had to be cancelled due to both sensitivity

and time. Second, because of the conflict, there was a lot more sensitivity from groups about the presence of a researcher within the interfaith discussions. And third, I did end up having to cut my time in Israel short, after serious warnings that the Ben Gurion airport would be closed down because of the threats on the date of my departure. Unfortunately this situation did affect the research, as I was unable to complete all the data collection I had planned. However the two key interviews and one observation were key to my research as it adds value through the experience of the current conflict, and showed visible contrasts of interfaith dialogues between Israel and Rome.

4.9 Returning from the field

Returning from the field was a hard adjustment, especially after meeting interesting participants in the interfaith and peace fields. It was difficult not to stay there and help benefit the lives of others in some way, especially considering the escalating conflict in Israel. I kept thinking whether there was something more I needed to collect, or whether there was another area in my line of interview questioning that I had not addressed. However, it was important to remember that I did the best that I could and arriving home would enable some perspective on the research, as well as a chance to interact with other students who had just been through their data collection period (Kindon & Cupples, 2014, p. 222).

The actual analysis of my qualitative data created new understandings by exploring the often complex data, that preserved its richness while still trying to crystalize meaning, rather being able to summarize data through statistics (O'Leary, 2010). Therefore, my process involved coding the data in a way that enabled me to see both reoccurring patterns and thematic analysis, as well as interpret those meanings and patterns to draw the conclusions (O'Leary, 2010, p. 257). I was aware of the subjective nature that can often occur within qualitative data, and that the same data could have been interpreted differently by another researcher. The process of analysing qualitative data is an extension of our own inherent critical thinking, so I was aware of my own positionality in the process (Bazeley, 2013, p. 4).

4.10 Design of Data Analysis

The data analysis process meant going through a wide range of collected sources and analysing a large amount of data in order to identify both patterns and connections, as well as the way the data can be communicated and presented (Stewart-Withers et al., 2014, p. 75). The design process in which I conducted my analysis aligned with the suggested process of the table below. This method allowed for both planning and flexibility, enabling me to utilize the above points as well as continually analyse and reflect on the data (Bazeley, 2013, p. 33).

Table 2: Data analysis stages, Adapted from: (Stewart-Withers et al., 2014, p. 76)

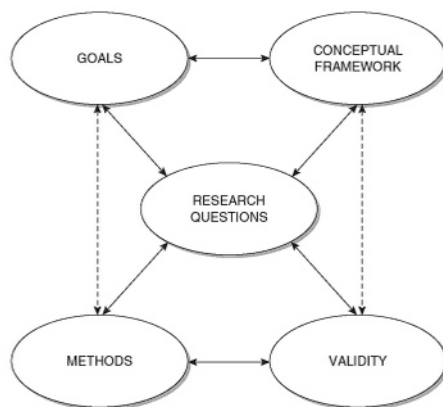
Data collection	Data organization	Data coding (deconstruction)	Developing theory (reconstruction)
Catalogue and index.	Begin organizing ideas while entering data.	Read raw notes and begin to apply some conceptual or thematic order to them.	Theoretical coding.
Think about naming and numbering systems.	Start coding your data: use broad categories and find threads.	Do this through a combination of description and analysis.	Compare and contrast codes.
	Compare transcripts.	Identify patterns in the data.	Find alternative explanations.
		Think back to your research question(s).	Describe emerging theory.

I began my analysis as if I was trying to solve a puzzle; I printed enlarged versions of my research questions individually. I then printed my transcriptions, observations, and stored documents; cutting the data out and placing the pieces into the research question I think it best fit, allowing me to compare the data. I then went through the piles and colour codes according to themes and patterns. From there, I began deconstructing the data, once familiar and visible patterns had started emerging. These included additional themes to the research questions, such as organizations

and initiatives, interfaith processes, and Sant'Egidio's interfaith involvement in conflict mediation. Furthermore, having research questions as themes I felt limited the data, as well as making more in line with the discussion chapter rather than focusing on the results themselves. Instead, I drew the key words from each of the research questions. The final reconstruction process meant going through each theme and creating mind maps from the data. Then I informally wrote one page on each theme. After this process I felt I had a design for the analysis that paralleled with the aim and emphasized on the research questions, as well as enabling a strong familiarity with the data, allowing me to formally begin writing the results chapter.

The process allowed for the research questions to be at the centre of the design, rather than the starting point as shown in Maxwell's interactive model of research design (Figure 4). Overall, although frameworks, goals and methods are also an impact, they are not as central to the design as the research questions are (Bazeley, 2013, p. 34; Maxwell, 2013).

Figure 3 Maxwell's interactive model of research design (Maxwell, 2013, p. 5)



4.11 Summary

This chapter has been designed to show the selection, process, justification and experiences of my methodologies. I have described the qualitative methodologies that were employed throughout the research, ethical considerations and my own positionality. I have also shown how I conducted the research in the field, the obstacles I faced, and the way the analysis was designed. As stated in my

positionality, I was attentive to the research process throughout fieldwork to ensure the fairest outcomes possible. The following chapters reflect these methodologies, as they are dedicated to the outcomes of the fieldwork.

Chapter 5: Places, People, and Organizations

5.1 Introduction

This is the first of the results chapters, outlining the ‘places, people, and organizations’ involved in the research. ‘Places’ provides an understanding of the contextual factors involved in the research. The term ‘people’ refers to the participants involved in the research, through both observations and semi-structured interviews. These will be outlined (see Table 1) in order to provide a foundation for the ‘organizations’ section, which provides an examination of some the current interfaith dialogue initiatives.

5.2 Places

After entering the field for the data collection process, it soon became apparent that there were certain circumstantial elements that were unique to the two different locations. These factors were both theological and physical and played an influential role in the practice of interfaith dialogue initiatives. In Italy, there was a large theological element; St Francis of Assisi was a central motivator for Catholic practices in the interfaith field. Similarly, the Second Vatican Council revolutionized the way Catholics interact with differing faiths. In Israel, the dominating inspiration for interfaith work was the reality of conflict. As previously mentioned in the limitations and obstacles faced section of the methodology chapter, conflict escalated during the time of fieldwork, which did have an impact on the research.

5.2.1 Theology of St Francis of Assisi

A theology section may seem out of place for a development thesis, however after arriving in Rome, it became clear that a lot of the work on interfaith when directed by a Catholic group such as Sant’Egidio, reflects the theology of St Francis of Assisi, who is often referred to as the ‘Spirit of Assisi’. Therefore, as St Francis is a philosophical guide, I felt it was an important aspect to cover.

Saint Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) was born bourgeois, the son of a wealthy cloth merchant. He joined the army and went to war against a neighbouring province, but was captured and became prisoner for a year. On his return home, sick and disillusioned with war, he went into a rundown church in his hometown of Assisi, where he had a vision from God, telling him to rebuild his church. St Francis took this literally and went on a mission to collect money from locals in order to rebuild the church. It was not until later that he deciphered God's message as metaphorical, as the church in this early medieval period was facing many corruption scandals (Mockler, 1976). St Francis's father, Messer Bernardone, was displeased in his son's radical actions and wanted him punished. St Francis then publically renounced his family and riches, stating that he was a man of God and did not need his wealth. The bishop was moved by this, embraced him and excused him from any punishment. St Francis went on to live a life of poverty, trying to live aligned with the biblical principles, often sleeping in caves and working with lepers. He embraced nature, emphasizing this through the idea of God and creation being one (Sant'Egidio, 2004).

St Francis was an advocate for peace, especially between the differing religions, actively attempting to end the holy crusades. In 1219, in the midst of the disastrous Fifth Crusade, Francis crossed enemy lines to gain an audience with Malik al-Kamil, the Sultan of Egypt and a nephew of the great Muslim warrior Saladin, in his camp on the banks of the Nile. Francis, who opposed the warfare, hoped to bring about peace and end the violence by converting the Sultan to Christianity. Although he did not succeed, the Sultan enjoyed the exchanges that he had with St Francis. The contemporary concept of interreligious dialogue did not exist at this time, but this event can be considered a dialogue, as it was a peaceful exchange of ideas between representatives of two opposing religions (Moses, 2009). St Francis did not succeed in conversion, but he came away from the peaceful encounter with revolutionary ideas that called for Christians to live harmoniously with Muslims, not through the sword, but through dialogue and peace (Sant'Egidio, 2004).

Since this time, Assisi has become known worldwide as the 'City of Peace', and this is a very proud and visible statement throughout the whole town, attracting pilgrims from all over the world. There is also a Franciscan order of monks and nuns who dedicate themselves to the teachings of St Francis. I was lucky enough to venture to Assisi within my first weekend of data collection alongside Sir David Moxon. It was an excellent entryway into research on interfaith dialogues as it is well regarded worldwide with interfaith collaborations through these teachings of St Francis, including the first internationally recognized interfaith meeting in 1987, held by the Pope in collaboration with Sant'Egidio in the St Francis Basilica Courtyard.

Sir David Moxon noted that a lot of this interfaith work is based around how we need to look for commonalities in our religions, rather than differences, especially in an increasingly globalized world. The biggest commonality is compassion and that is central to interfaith and the theology of St Francis. He stated that the deeper you get with God, the more in common you will have with others, sharing in compassion and love. He stated that a lot of people hide behind religion through acts of terror, but that it is the religions that need to stand up against them. David then went on to claim that a 'do not tell me, show me' approach is needed. This is what St Francis did, and he argues that the same is needed with interfaith dialogues.

5.2.2 Second Vatican Council

The Vatican has a theological influence on interfaith dialogues in Rome through the 'Second Vatican Council'. This council was held between 1962 and 1965, and addressed relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the modern world. One specific institutional change was its ecumenical efforts towards dialogue with other religions. Sant'Egidio documents such as 'Spirit of Assisi' claim that since Vatican II, 'no world religion has been able to think of itself in isolation' (Durand, 2008, p. 11). Meetings like the 'Spirit of Assisi' were ways of remembering the importance of Vatican II, because John Paul II stated that it offered other religions the 'spirit' which helps others regain the taste for religious values and the willingness to walk together' (Durand, 2008, p. 15).

5.2.3 Current Conflict Situation in Israel

Two weeks of my field research was located in Israel. It is therefore essential to give a brief outline of its often-controversial setting, because the conflict, as stated in the limitations/obstacles faced section of the methodology chapter, did affect the research. Like most conflicts, it is a complicated situation that has transformed into many different mutations and over the years. It can be broadly described as a dispute between two ethno-religious nationalist groups competing for the same stretch of land since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 (Waldman, 2011).

Since the 19th century Zionist movement, Jews had been settling in Palestine in an effort to establish their homeland. However, it was not until Post-WWII, with the genocide of over six million Jews, that there was international sympathy for the Zionist cause. In 1947, the UN voted to partition Palestine into the State of Israel, despite protests among neighbouring Arab countries (Bennis, 2007). This dispossessed and displaced over 750,000 Palestinians, who then came under the rule of Jordan and Egypt after Israel won its independence (Seidel, 2012). Since the erection of the State, there have been continuous conflicts between Israel, and Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Palestine, including the six-day war in 1967. After this period, Israel seized Jerusalem and occupied the West Bank and Gaza, turning the Palestinian inhabitants into colonial subjects and increased the amount of Israeli settlers (Judis, 2014).

The most recent escalation overlapped with my time on the field. Since this is a recent conflict, it is difficult to gain an academic perspective, however the media provides a good insight into the main events. On June 12th 2014, two men with Hamas affiliations killed three Israeli teenage boys (The Independent, 2014).⁴ Hamas denies association with these murders, but while searching for the boys, Israeli forces arrested over 500 Palestinians. After the discovery of the teenagers' bodies on

⁴ Hamas is a Palestinian Islamic political organization that governs Gaza independently of Palestinian authority. They are essentially an anti-Israeli militant group that has wage war in Israel since they were first founded in 1987 (Mishal & Sela, 2006).

July 1st, Israel launched airstrikes on Gaza, killing six Hamas militants. From this point, Hamas started taking responsibility for rockets fired into Israeli territory, some as far as Jerusalem and Tel Aviv (Judis, 2014). The IDF (Israel Defence Force) then launched the ‘Protective Edge’ operation, commencing a ground offensive into the Gaza strip in an attempt to stop Hamas attacks. It was not until August 26th that Hamas and Israel agreed to an open-ended ceasefire that was mediated by Egypt. Although the numbers vary depending on the source, it is estimated that over 2,100 Palestinians were killed, many of which were civilian casualties, and has left more than 11,000 wounded and 100,000 homeless. Israeli casualties include 64 soldiers and six civilians (Wood, 2014).

5.3 People

The participants in this research involved represented a wide spectrum of interfaith initiatives. Below is a table listing the names of participants and organizational affiliations, as well as related documents. Since all participants are involved publically in interfaith work they agreed that it was appropriate for me to use their names.

Table 3: Participants and Documents

	Organization	Participants	Documents Obtained
Italy	Community of Sant’Egidio	Monica Attias (Ecumenical Coordinator) Dr Alberto Quattrucci (Secretary General) Dr Claudio Betti (Director of Special Operations) Padre Angelo Romano (Head of African Relations) Community observation Elite observation	Book regarding the difference between Orthodoxy and other religions Summary of interfaith dialogue on ‘International Immigrants Day’ ‘Making Peace’, a book written by the community on their role in the international arena ‘The Spirit of Assisi’ a book on the progression of the International Meetings for Peace’ ‘Francis of Assisi’ a book written by the community on St Francis theology and its connections to their practice
	GFN (Global Freedom Network)	Antonia Stampalija (CEO) Sir David Moxon (Representative of the Archbishop to the Holy See)	Original constitution First Council Meeting minutes and summary, includes: Agenda of the meeting

			<p>Memorandum and Agreement Final press release Evaluation report of the 'Slaves no More' project on rehabilitation and reintegration</p> <p>Outcomes and milestones?</p> <p>Recommendations to the board of GFN regarding logistics of press conference</p> <p>Guiding principles</p> <p>Anglican responses to trafficking document</p> <p>Formalized Memorandum of Agreement with key Signatories</p>
	Religions for Peace, Italia	Dr Luigi De Salvia (Italian Branch Director)	<p>Interfaith 'Anti-Eating Disorders' Calendar</p> <p>Interfaith 'Religious Celebrations' Calendar</p> <p>Online documents</p>
	Lay Centre in Rome	Dr Donna Orsuto (Director and Founder)	Online documents
	Anglican Centre in Rome	Sir David Moxon (Representative of the Archbishop to the Holy See)	<p>Letters from the Archbishop of Canterbury on ecumenical dialogue</p> <p>Report from the 'Third International Receptive Ecumenism Conference</p> <p>2014 Annual Newsletter 'Centro', which includes articles on interfaith and GFN</p> <p>Pamphlet on ecumenical dialogue and the Anglican Centre</p> <p>Annual Review 2012</p> <p>'Opportunities and Needs' review 2014</p>
	Instituto Tevere	Community Observation	Online documents
	Vatican	Elite observation	<p>'The Tablet' analysing the Popes pilgrimage influence on the monotheist religions</p> <p>'Pontifical Council' archives</p>
Israel	IEA (Interfaith Encounter Association)	Dr Yehuda Stolov (Founder and Executive Director)	Ongoing access to interfaith groups and event summaries via email
		Community observation	
	ICCI (Inter-religious Coordinating Council of Israel)	Dr Ron Kronish (Director)	Ongoing access to interfaith groups and event summaries via email

Source: Author

5.4 Organizations and Interfaith Dialogue Initiatives

During data collection, I was able to examine the interfaith dialogue work of Sant'Egidio and other organizations, as outlined above (Table 1). By examining a range of interfaith dialogue initiatives outside my primary case study, I was better able to understand the different types of dialogue and how they are being utilized towards peace. Furthermore, since the research aim is to examine the work of interfaith dialogue initiatives towards peacebuilding, this section of the results chapter emphasizes 'inter-faith dialogue initiatives'. This gives some context for the subsequent sections through the introduction of the organizations I investigated, as well as an analysis of the initiatives that they are conducting.

5.4.1 Sant'Egidio

Sant'Egidio is the primary case study for this research and, as such, this section provides an extra background and analysis of the nature and activities of the organization. Sant'Egidio functions on five fundamental principles: prayer, communicating the gospel, solidarity with the poor, ecumenism and dialogue (Sant'Egidio, 2013). Although many of these elements were introduced / discussed in the literature review, the fieldwork provided a deeper understanding of the importance of these in practice. Sant'Egidio is a Catholic organization that promotes the idea of the 'good Samaritan' in the contemporary world, but members do not have to be strictly Catholic, and religious devotion ranges. The community in Rome is predominantly Catholic, but this can be area dependent. In Germany, half the members are Lutheran and in Russia and Ukraine the majority is Orthodox. Rome is the base and the founding location for Sant'Egidio, but is also established in 77 countries with ongoing communication and connection between these. Each community has a person who is accountable for the work, and it is usually the person who established the community in the city. Andrea Riccardi, the founder, is still the head of the Sant'Egidio; with many of the participants I interviewed being within the founding group of the community.

Within the collected data, I have identified three themes that are central to the interfaith dialogue workings of Sant'Egidio: Sant'Egidio as a 'fraternity', the 'International Meetings for Prayer and Peace', and Sant'Egidio and international conflict mediation.

Sant'Egidio as a 'Fraternity'

As mentioned in the literature review Sant'Egidio characterize themselves as a 'community' or 'fraternity' as opposed to an organization. Much emphasis was placed on this throughout my time in Rome, and it became an important factor in understanding their work. The remarks on this differed in each interview, but the message was the same: viewing themselves as a 'Christian community' not an NGO, an office, or a 'movement' (as a movement invokes the idea of people coming and going). They consider themselves to be a community, a 'family of families'. Most members are devout Christians who live the doctrine throughout their daily life and work exclusively on a volunteer basis. They differentiate themselves through the idea that the poor are not part of their mission, but part of their vocation; they are not social workers, but rather 'befriend' the poor, relating this back to the teachings of St Francis. As two participants noted:

It (Sant'Egidio) is an ecclesial community, we are not an NGO, we are a community. I wouldn't even say a movement, because a movement gives you the idea of people who come and go, a broken type of belonging. Whereas we are a community, which means that we do not live together, yet there are strong bonds of friendship and brotherhood and sisterhood. So it's a federation of families, or a family of families."
(Monica Attias, interview, June 2014)

We are not a FBO because we are not an organization; we are a community. And that already means something else; it is a fraternity of people who try to live together with the poor as friends. (Claudio Betti, interview, June, 2014)

International Meetings for Prayer and Peace

As stated in the literature review, the inter-religious 'International Meetings for Prayer and Peace' started in the mid-80s, as an initiative of the Community of Sant'Egidio, with the aim of promoting mutual understanding and dialogue among religions, in order to establish peace. The International Meetings for Prayer and Peace (IMPP) are in part, an extension of the notion of 'community'. Sant'Egidio

does not have staff to organize the meetings, but the community participates in its preparation and is moved by the 'interfaith spirit of Assisi' as a whole. Unlike other organizations such as 'Religions for Peace' who commit to international interfaith meetings every seven years, Sant'Egidio are able to hold the meetings annually for three days through a combination of volunteer participation and requests from religious leaders who are willing to make a yearly commitment.

We did try to do them once every two years because it is very demanding for our money. But most of the people who participated in those did not want that, they were very keen on having a yearly commitment/ a yearly moment. So the meetings are just one event each year that is fuelled and fed by daily contact, which is really made daily. (Claudio Betti, interview, June, 2014)

The IMPPs began after the 'Spirit of Assisi' interfaith meeting created by Pope John Paul II on the 27th of October 1986, as a way of supporting the United Nations' decision to designate 1986 as the "Year of Peace". Although Sant'Egidio did not organize this initial meeting, it gained momentum due to its popularity. Since this time, the meetings have continued in a different city every year. At the beginning, the meetings were introductions to each other's religions, but after this first phase of contact, they became more about discussions. The issues that are now discussed around what is titled the 'roundtable' are based on deeper reflections. They include women's role in religious life, ecological issues, theological issues, creation, martyrs, religious persecution and solving wars (Claudio Betti, interview, June 2014). Additionally, Sant'Egidio emphasized the importance of letting the public access the roundtables and participate. They are both recorded/streamed on the website, and you can enrol to watch the roundtable, where the public can ask religious leaders questions. On the last day of the meeting there is also a public walk on which everyone can attend.

In the beginning it was just meeting, so the meeting itself was the reason. They slowly became an extremely important moment of the date; I mean the meetings have become very high level. The level of the debate, of the issues is extremely high. If you are able to read some of the roundtables that took place, they are highly prolific and profound. (Claudio Betti, interview, June 2014)

Sant'Egidio did not want meetings that would only involve academics, but to invite those who were against such encounters. One such example was in 1989 the IMPP

was held in Warsaw, Poland. Sant'Egidio invited the Muslim and Jewish leaders to Auschwitz; there was initial resentment from both parties, but eventually they agreed. The Muslims were shocked at the occurrences in the concentration camps and allowed friendships to be built with the Rabbis who attended. From this, more participants started to attend and now, over 300 religious leaders from all over the world attend the IMPP.

Sant'Egidio and Interfaith Conflict Mediation

Sant'Egidio's involvement in international conflict mediation is connected with the 'fraternity' title and the International Meetings for Prayer and Peace, hence this is recognized as the third theme identified during data collection. Sant'Egidio believes that it is through the label of 'fraternity' which gives them credibility in the international arena, and which then builds on their international conflict mediation work. It is the IMPPs that allow this credibility to be established through the building of relationships. The parallel between the growth of the IMPPs and an increasing number of groups wanting Sant'Egidio's intervention in conflict reflects this.

We started with Algeria because of the meetings. Our work in Syria, I mean whatever you can do in Syria now it is because we have built relationships with bishops and one of our members was held captive in Syria. So it is true, the IMPPs help with building the relationships for conflict intervention. (Claudio Betti, June 2014)

The characterization of Sant'Egidio as a 'fraternity' or 'community' indicates a high level of transparency as opposed to corrupt agendas. Everyone is unpaid and committed to peace because of peace ethic inherent in his or her faith. This adds to the element of trust, as the risk of corruption is minimized when money is eliminated. Additionally, Sant'Egidio see their faith as an important factor when working in interfaith situations, as they are seen as people who are transparent in their beliefs, rather than paid employees or officials working for an organization. Participants also stated that NGOs need peace outcomes as part of their accountability, and do not continue with the process once 'peace' is achieved, Sant'Egidio, in the meantime, continues to work in all countries they have mediated in.

I think the source of our credibility is that we are a living Christian community, we are not an NGO, and we are not an office. We are Christians who live in their faith, and with their daily life and with their commitment. And this gives us credibility. Generally speaking all we do is for the poor people, as volunteers, our life of prayer and our commitment, all this is a very good ground to start the dialogue. Even with non-Christian believers, or even with non-believers, because in their perception they face someone who is not an 'official' or who is not an 'employee', who is not somebody who represents international institutions but is a human being who is living a certain degree of transparency with his own faith. So this I think is a good introduction for us to speak with everybody. I give you an example; for example the Muslim, generally speaking in the Muslim world they respect people who are strongly committed in their belief, religious people. So for example when they came to visit us, or they meet us, and they see our prayer, this for them is a good sign. They respect us, because they share this religious vision. The important thing here is that they do not feel as if they are speaking to professionals, they are speaking with Christians who are living their faith, with no hidden agenda. (Angelo Romano, interview, June 2014)

The fact that we are not being paid helps us not only with credibility, but shows we have no agenda, gives us no reason for delaying the resolution of a conflict, because this often happens, and we do not have to answer to donors, or at least not as much as the other organizations do." (Claudio Betti, June 2014)

In Chapter Two, I outlined Sant'Egidio's work in Mozambique as well as other countries in which they have performed mediation work. Those I interviewed believed that their credibility as a community allowed them to be successful in Mozambique as they gained the trust of the two parties by facilitating not in a 'neutral' way, but rather mediated in a Christian way that is inherent in their gospel.

I do not think that we have specificity in dealing with conflicts it depends on the situation. There is an ethic, which is typically Catholic in us, that moves us to do some things, so it is Catholic in a real sense, so universal." (Claudio Betti, interview June, 2014)

In the case of Mozambique our credibility as a community was central, it is not the only one, but it was really very clear. Mozambique was our real authority in this; I mean 1986/7, the negotiations finished in 1992 after two and a half years of negotiations. Before this we were nothing really, the community of Sant'Egidio, not a state, not an embassy, nothing, but our strength and our force was really this, we had a genuine interest in peace. In my opinion this was a very important point of trust and credibility. (Alberto Quattrucci, interview, June, 2014)

Other interfaith dialogue initiatives of Sant'Egidio

Other interfaith dialogue initiatives of Sant'Egidio I witnessed were at a grassroots level, paralleling the idea of 'community facing' action as it engages with the local community by looking outwards, not in (see Section 2.6). This included work with

immigrants of all religions, assimilating them into Italy through free language classes and help with accommodation. Much of the community facing work Sant'Egidio does it in collaboration with the Muslim community. Participants stated that their approach is to be open Christians, and invite them to their Christian events, but also to allow a space for them to continue to practice their own faith. For example, on Ramadan, they offer homeless Muslims a place for worship and a place to break fast. Their soup kitchen also feeds hundreds a week, many of whom are Muslim. Additionally, many Muslims help during the Christmas lunch for the poor. Sant'Egidio viewed this as important, because initially many Muslims did not want to enter churches, but now believe helping the poor is more important than maintaining separation from the churches.

On Christmas, Santa Maria in Trastevere and 50 other places are full of the poor people and are looked after by the community members, but many of those who help on the day are Muslim. So this is a very important sign, because before the Muslims did not want to enter the churches, because it was like a sin to enter the church. Now they have understood that the poor is a sacrament for them as well. (Monica Attias, interview, June, 2014)

Sant'Egidio also runs a rally in Rome for the Jewish community in remembrance of the Jews that were deported from Rome by the Nazis in WWII. An interview participant from Sant'Egidio, Monica Attias, stated that initially, Jews were afraid to remember, but more started to come after it began. From this Monica has had comments that the Jewish community now has a better perspective of modern persecution. In collaboration with Sant'Egidio, they have now begun campaigns against racism.

While I was in Rome I was able to witness the 'International Immigrants Day' ceremony on the 22 June, run by Sant'Egidio. This was an interfaith activity held at 'Santa Maria in Trastevere', where immigrants from all over the world came to remember the boat people who had died trying to escape their country and enter Italy. This is explained in greater depth in the process section.

5.4.2 Global Freedom Network (GFN)

The second interfaith initiative I was introduced to during fieldwork was the GFN, due to its affiliation with the Anglican Centre where I was staying. Upon deeper examination, the GFN exposed itself as a unique interfaith networking initiative with underlying development agendas. It is a human trafficking and modern slavery prevention NGO, but its main objectives are to work in collaboration with faith leaders as well as to advocate and lobby with businesses, other NGOs and the government to bring an end to human trafficking and modern slavery. Although they are not strictly grassroots in anti-human trafficking, they view themselves as action orientated through advocacy, and through the influence that religious leaders can have on their followers regarding such issues.

So our goal is through religious leaders, and that's not saying that the responsibility starts and ends there. But through leadership we can start at this end of prevention and people working at the coalface, who are actually hands-on, the two of us coming together, can actually start to squeeze on the areas where work is needed, so that people can be freed. (Antonia Stampalija, interview, June, 2014)

The newly elected Pope Francis and Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby began GFN. Sir David Moxon, representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Holy See, had already been discussing the idea of the two faiths (Anglican and Catholic) working in collaboration on the issues of human trafficking and slavery. Additionally Andrew Foster the founder of 'Walk Free', an anti-human trafficking organization, had been attempting to lobby religions into the cause. Pope Francis then led a workshop with those who work on the ground in the anti-human trafficking field, and medical professionals. This led to the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement 17 March 2014 at the Vatican. There were four signatories: Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, on behalf of Pope Francis, Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See Sir David Moxon, the Grand Imam of al-Azhar al-Sharif Ahmed El-Tayeb and Andrew Forest of the Walk Free foundation (see Picture 1).

The Joint Statement by the Global Freedom Network signatories underscores the searing personal destructiveness of modern slavery and human trafficking and calls for urgent action by all other Christian Churches and Global Faiths. It is an open association and other faith leaders will be invited to join and support this initiative. The Global Freedom Network will also carry out a program of coordinated action and activity with international organizations, governments and national authorities, civil society organizations and NGOs, as well as people of good will around the world, to

eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking by 2020 throughout our world and for all time. (GFN, 2014)

The GFN has three funding partners: the Anglican Centre, the Vatican and 'Walk Free'. It is a macro-financing program, with the capacity to research strategies to stop trafficking, and the money to fund the deconstruction of strategies to stop slavery. GFN are regarded as the faith representatives of Walk Free, as they believe they can access communities that secular organizations cannot. The elected CEO of GFN, Antonia, has a background in strategic planning in business management, as well as experience in the Catholic and Anglican communities. During our interview, Antonia discussed fair trade and she identified poverty and education as being prime factors in addressing modern slavery recruitment.

What we know about the slave labour is that businesses are doing it because they are making money by getting cheap labour or in some cases not paying for the labour. And if they are getting hundreds of people to come and do unskilled work, and they don't need to pay for them, well then they get money from the company buying those services, and the company that ultimately produces the product. So if it was all done legitimately it might cost them to produce this (holding her scarf) and put it on the shelves. But if it is costing \$5 they will want to put a mark up percentage on it. So if it is 50% then it would be \$7.50 and they would be making \$2 on the mark up. BUT if they no they can get all the labour cheap and it is only going to cost them a dollar, well then they will take that for a dollar and not really care who has paid the price (which is a human being) and they will still sell it for \$7.50, but they are just smart and they are going to make \$6.50 for it, instead of \$2.50. (Antonia Stampalija, interview, June, 2014)

Picture 1: Signing of the memorandum of agreement



The GFN is unique among the interfaith initiatives as it does not have theological education intentions, but rather it aims to unite religious leaders around the common cause of abolishing modern day slavery. They are working with Mohamed Ahmed el-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, towards the cause, and are currently negotiating with other faiths now that GFN has been established. Antonia stated that religion has a very large reach, with billions of believers around the world, because it is capable of contributing to issues of global justice.

It is no good talking about education, hospitality or prayer unless you roll your sleeves up and do something about the world's difficulties. And that is what the combined interfaith mission of GFN is about. (Antonia Stampalija, interview, June, 2014)

5.4.3 Religions for Peace, Italy

Religions for Peace (RFP) are a worldwide organization. The network consists of a World Council of senior religious leaders from all regions of the globe, six regional inter-religious councils and more than seventy national ones, the Global Women of Faith Network, and the Global Religious Youth Network. Headquartered in New York and accredited to the United Nations, *Religions for Peace* works to foster interfaith dialogue in 92 countries in six continents, including some of the most challenging places around the globe. The origins of *Religions for Peace* date to 1961, when a handful of senior leaders from the world's major faith traditions began to explore the possibility of organizing a "religious summit". They felt the urgent need for believers around the world to take action toward achieving world peace. The World Conference of *Religions for Peace* convened for the first time in Kyoto, Japan, on 16-21 October 1970 (Religions for Peace, 2014).

The countries involved in RFP each have their own branches, including their own initiatives, governing bodies and websites. I interviewed the Italian branch leader, Luigi de Salvia, who described it as a democratic organization with over 100 Rfp members in Italy. Every two years, there is a national assembly to elect the national governing body. The governing body is made up of people from a range of religions, and its main objective is to prevent antagonism between faiths. Luigi stated that their interfaith meetings involve "*reciprocal knowledge, comprehension, mortal*

understanding and common sharing on human rights.” There is an emphasis on building friendships through personal experience and reflecting on what is common.

Some of the initiatives in which RFP Italia is involved include interfaith programs in schools and hospitals. RfP also produces a calendar that has an explanation of all the most popular religions (see Picture 2), and has marked dates on important religious dates for all the faiths. On the side are explanations of why the various religious dates are celebrated.

Picture 2: Religions for Peace Calendar, 2014



Additionally, RfP hold international conferences and have a lot of youth involvement, with Francesca Baldini as the head youth co-ordinator. Their website contributes to interfaith advocacy, with information on the population of different religions in Italy, and summaries and articles on different religious holidays/festivals. They also outline interreligious events that are coming up, both by RFP and others.

5.4.4 Anglican Centre

I had a close relationship with the Anglican Centre during my stay, as outlined in the methodology. Although they have more involvement with ecumenical dialogue than

interfaith, I think it is important to mention as an organization because of their input into the GFN and their education programs that highlight interfaith studies.

I interviewed Sir David Moxon, representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Holy See, and he stated that the Anglican Centre has five roles:

1. Education: the AC provides courses and educational resources to people around the world, who want to look at different subjects that Rome can offer, including Anglican-Catholic relationships, biblical studies, mission studies, and inter-church studies. They focus on theological colleges, bringing groups of students to the AC, and provide a 'Scholar in Residence' program, where researchers can stay for no cost at the AC, and have access to their vast library collection (see Figure 3).⁵
2. Relationships with the Pope and the Vatican: the AC acts as an Anglican embassy to the Pope and the Vatican. They broker, maintain and encourage conversation between the Pope and Archbishop of Canterbury, and between the Vatican and the Anglican community.
3. A space of hospitality and prayer: the AC holds a weekly Eucharist with a lunch, and people can visit, whether it is to find out the contribution the Anglican Centre makes in Rome, a tour or to read in the extensive library.
4. A place for sharing new ideas around the world, like a think tank, to help Anglicans/Catholics around the world to combine or strategize or work in partnerships more creatively than they already do.
5. Project initiation, particularly between Catholics and Anglicans: This includes GFN, a practical initiative that involved ecumenism between the Vatican and the Anglican Church.

The Anglican Centre is mainly ecumenical between Catholics and Anglicans, but has worked with Muslims, Jews and Buddhists and Hindus in the Global Freedom Network. However their main emphasis is to try and heal the past wounds between Catholics and Anglicans.

⁵ The Scholar in Residence was the scheme that provided my accommodation and access to resources during my month in Italy.

Picture 3: The Anglican Centre Library



5.4.5 The Lay Centre

The Lay Centre is a Catholic accommodation service for students studying in Rome. I interviewed Dr Donna Orsuto, one of the founders of the Lay Centre and a Professor of Spirituality at the Pontifical Gregorian University. Dr Orsuto served a term as a consultant for the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and is currently a member of Commission for Ecumenism and Dialogue of the Diocese of Rome. Pope Benedict XVI named her a Dame of the Pontifical Equestrian Order of Saint Gregory the Great in 2011 (Lay Centre, 2014). I interviewed her at the Lay Centre headquarters. After this interview, it was clear that there were two main purposes of the organization:

1. To provide a residential community for lay students who are studying at the Pontifical Universities. Some of the students are from other religions, as many of these students are on scholarships. The providers of the scholarships want students to study at the pontifical universities and live with Christians, in order for there to be a mutual exchange, 'a dialogue of life' between the different students. The Lay Centre has 22 spaces, rooms, and currently (as at 2014) has) students from 14 different countries. Most years, the Lay Centre has students who are Muslims, Jews

and Buddhist, as well as a number of Orthodox students. This allows for both ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue.

2. To organize international programs for various groups, which include interfaith initiatives. These vary in times from 5-10 days. For the last 4 years, the Lay Centre has met with Cambridge Muslim College. This college of approximately 20 people, visits for 4- 5 days for an introductory program into Christianity, and enters into an exchange of dialogue. An example Dr Orsuto outlined included Christian and Muslims' ideals on marriage and the family. They were then taken to Mass, so that they would have an experience of going to a Catholic Mass, and had a discussion with a Benedictine monk about Mass.

Dr Orsuto claims that the international programs have four elements:

1. Using Rome as the classroom.
2. The opportunity to pray and respect other traditions. This includes creating safe spaces and planning the schedule around religious routines, while also providing opportunities for participation in Catholic rituals.
3. The importance of daily dialogue around the table. This emphasizes natural dialogue and friendships, so they treat mealtimes as a sacred time.
4. Putting students in contact with those who are the best in their field to optimize opportunities.

5.4.6 Istituto Tevere

Although I did not directly interview anyone from Istituto Tevere, two of my participant observations came from educational interfaith workshops between Muslims and Christians organized by Istituto Tevere. It is a non-profit organization, registered as a "Cultural Association" in Rome, Italy. The Institute was founded in May 2007 and has its office in the historical centre of Rome. The main goal of the Institute is to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue and to bring together people from different religions, cultures, nations, views and ideologies. The founders of the Institute are two young Turkish researchers at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. The Institute has organized several iftar dinners and sema rituals in five Italian cities.⁶ Tevere Institute also organizes seminars on Christianity and

⁶ Iftar refers to a meal served at the end of the day during Ramadan; to break the day's fast. Literally, "breakfast" (islam.about.com, 2014). Sema rituals refers to the Whirling Dervishes (or Sufi spinning) and is a form of Sama or physically

dialogue for the Turkish people living in Europe. The Institute receives funding from Turkish companies trading with Italy (Tevere, 2014).

The observations I witnessed were two instalments of a four part series on Muslim and Christian prayer. The themes I observed included Ignatian guided prayer and the mass. I go into greater depth on this in the next chapter, but the central motive was to create a space where Muslims and Christians could freely ask each other questions and have dialogue about their faiths.

5.4.7 Vatican

Similar to the case of Istituto Tevere, the only connection I had with the Vatican was witnessing the meeting between the Pope and the Prime Ministers of Israel and Palestine. This is also discussed in greater depth in the following chapter. However, it is important to comment on the influence the Vatican has on a lot of the organizations I researched in Italy. In particular, they all are Catholic-based organizations, which means that the Pope is their greatest influence. This was raised several times in my interviews, whether it was comments on the acts of the recently elected Pope Francis, or previous Popes and their association with them.

If you have the Pope, you have the Catholics. I would love to see people like Pope Francis in other religions. Pope Francis is very clear that he needs to change the situation right away, and a catholic church that is different will eventually change the world as well. (Claudio Betti, Sant'Egidio, interview, June, 2014)

Being based in Rome gives us a good chance because it is a very international city and we do have the Pope. Pope Francis is a good sign of hope, I mean he is very very 'Christian', he is very good. I mean each pope is his own shape, but it is one of the first times we have a very simple and very attentive Christian. He is changing a lot and he is a very simple man but at the same time he is very Jesuit, so very clever and intelligent. He feels the urgency to change immediately both the Church and the world. (Alberto Quattrucci, Sant'Egidio, interview, June, 2014)

The Vatican does have a department that specializes in interreligious relations named the 'Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue' (Dr Donna Orsuto from the Lay Centre was a member of this council). I was unfortunately unable to meet with

active meditation which originated among Sufis and is still practiced by the Sufi Dervishes of the Mevlevi order (exploreturkey.com, 2014)

them during data collection, but they have an archive of digital summaries from interfaith dialogue meetings as well as messages from the Vatican to other religions, for example, 'Message to Muslims for the End of Ramadan'. These messages are usually reflections on commonalities and best wishes for the festivals.

Let us work together, then, to build bridges of peace and promote reconciliation especially in areas where Muslims and Christians together suffer the horror of war. May our friendship inspire us always to cooperate in facing these many challenges with wisdom and prudence. In this way we will help to diminish tension and conflict, and advance the common good. We will also demonstrate that religions can be a source of harmony for the benefit of society as a whole. (Dialogue, 2014)

5.4.8 Interfaith Encounter Association (IEA)

The IEA is a community-based organization founded by Dr Yehuda Stolov, which is dedicated to promoting peace in the Middle East through interfaith dialogue initiatives and cross-cultural study. Although based in Jerusalem, they work throughout many areas of both Israel and Palestine. Their initiatives are community run groups that involve creating a safe space to have open discussions in order to learn about and encounter each other's religions. The aim of each group is to develop a community that exemplifies the desired relations of mutual respect and friendship, while still reinforcing the unique identity of each religion. Their values include equal representation of all faiths and genders; outreach to all faiths, (as well as the religious-secular divide); and continued recruitment through the group coordinators and attendees at both local and regional levels.

The IEA was my first interfaith dialogue encounter in Israel. I interviewed the head of the organization Yehuda Stolov, and observed a group encounter at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The motivation for creating the IEA was the Intifada, as people were looking for new ways to approach the issues facing the occupied territories.⁷ The core group that began IEA, of which Yehuda was part of, was already

⁷ Intifada is an Arabic word, which means 'shaking off', but is usually associated with political resistance. Yehuda is referring to the he First Intifada or First Palestinian Intifada, which was a Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories which lasted from December 1987 until the Madrid Conference in 1991.

well practiced in the interfaith field. As a result of their apolitical agenda and their bid for equal representation in their groups, after only two years of its establishment they had more people involved than all other interfaith groups in Israel combined. They run what are called 'group encounters', where members of the public are invited to attend in order to have a discussion about their faith and to learn about 'the other'. Yehuda Stolov, the executive director of IEA stated that a lot of effort goes into equal representation between Muslims and Jews. Christians are a minority in Israel, so it is harder to represent this group.

There are currently 65 groups, and approximately 4000 participants, with one third of these attending on a regular basis. Approximately 50-60 volunteer-group coordinators run these 65 groups from a wide range of locations around Israel and Palestine. Yehuda commented that despite the effort put into trying to get equal representation, they are not always religiously equal, some do have a quota, but others invite anyone who wants to attend, which can often mean that there are more Muslims than Jews or vice versa. He claims that this is acceptable, even if there is only one, as it still gives the opportunity for interaction. Additionally, there are four part-time paid staff, three are Muslims and one Jewish, and it has been so for the last 6-7 years.

5.4.9 Inter-Religious Coordinating Council of Israel (ICCI)

Founded in 1991, the ICCI, is an advocacy group, who work with youth and young adults, educators, communal and religious leaders, as well as other opinion-moulders such as journalists and bloggers, to promote Jewish-Arab coexistence within Israel and peace-building programs within Israel and the region. As an umbrella organization, ICCI comprises 60 Christian, Muslim, and Jewish institutions, including Jewish-Arab coexistence organizations, museums, universities, and other inter-religious organizations. Their mission is to harness both the values and teachings of the three Abrahamic faiths and transform it from division and extremism into a source of coexistence and understanding.

ICCI is the Israel chapter for Religions for Peace, and is one of Israel's members of the International Council of Christians and Jews. They serve as an umbrella organization allowing them to have a 'much greater impact' than one organization. They believe this allows them to connect with many influential religious leaders and opinion-makers and have hundreds of members. It comprises 75 Christian, Palestinian/Muslim, and Jewish institutions. I interviewed Dr Ron Kronish, the director of ICCI. He is a noted rabbi, educator, author, lecturer and speaker. Dr. Kronish has published articles and essays on Jewish politics, faith communities and the peace process, education, culture and contemporary issues in America and Israel. He has represented ICCI at the Vatican and at many international conferences, and is frequently consulted by media representatives (Israel, 2014).

The ICCI combines religious context and texts with work in conflict mitigation and management, with youth, young adults, women, religious leaders and the general public. Their programs are based on five core values they believe give them a unique approach to peacebuilding, and reflect humanitarian principles (Israel, 2014):

1. **Moving from dialogue to action:** the programmes combine facilitated dialogue, study, and action projects which demonstrate to the wider community the tangible benefits to be gained from working together towards common goals.
2. **Addressing the Conflict:** all programmes promote relationship-building, including frank and open exchanges of perspectives on subjects related to the local and regional conflict.
3. **Focus on communities rather than individuals:** participants are carefully recruited based on their potential to impact their respective religious communities.
4. **Long-term programmes and relationships:** all major programmes are long-term so as to encourage the building of lasting relationships.
5. **Religion as part of the solution:** by utilizing interreligious textual study as an educational tool, ICCI promotes religion as a means of bringing people closer together.

Some of their initiatives include religious leadership, which promotes meetings between Muslim and Jewish leaders. They run many lectures and symposiums on the

topic, with many of their members frequently touring the world lecturing on some of the interfaith topics. They are very involved in interfaith 'activism', holding many rallies to promote the initiatives, and to raise awareness on issues. They have recently formed a new coalition called Tag Meir that counteracts hate crimes and racism in Israel through lobbying and rallies. They are also in the beginning stages of creating a youth program for young Palestinians and Jews.

Chapter 6: Examining Interfaith Dialogues

This second results chapter discusses the information and themes that were collected during the fieldwork in relation to the aims of the research. The findings weave together differing and related views of participants regarding the practice of interfaith dialogue in a coherent structure. The chapter layout is guided by three significant themes of the findings: processes of interfaith dialogues, the importance of interfaith dialogues, and the peace definitions of participants. The collected data that brought out these themes establishes a foundation for the following discussion chapter.

6.1 Processes

The literature in the second results chapter suggests that dialogue operates in three areas: practical, spiritual, and cognitive (see Table 1). When inter-faith dialogue is used within international peace building efforts, all three areas are needed (Swidler, 1998). There are a variety of approaches used to achieve these operations, each requiring its own sets of processes. The literature outlined a diverse range, with each academic tending to have their own processes; from David Smocks 'elite leadership model' to Suwarno's 'life dialogue' (Smock, 2002; Suwarno, 2005). This section outlines the various processes of interfaith dialogue variations I observed during data collection, as well as comments made during in semi-structured interviews on the processes. Overall, I found the interfaith dialogues fit into five themes: Grassroots Model, the Development Model, Elite Model, Community Participation Model and Ceremonial Model. As stated in Chapter Five, interfaith interaction at a grassroots level, were processes like the immigration program of Sant'Egidio, but these interactions are harder to document. Similarly, the interfaith dialogue work of the GFN fit more into a 'Development Model'. Both of these models are discussed in the following chapter. This chapter places focus on the formalized interfaith

dialogues that I observed: the Elite Model, Ceremonial Model and Community Participation Model (see Table 4 for participation).

Table 4: Variation of ‘formal’ observations of the processes

Organization	Interfaith Dialogue Initiative	Theme	Process
Istituto Tevere	‘Ignatian Guided Prayer: a way the Catholics prayer with the Bible’	Community participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introductions; where we are from and what we do. 2. Seminar on the topic by Gary Whelan 3. Discussion and questions 4. Shared meal
Istituto Tevere	‘The Mass’	Community Participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introductions 2. Seminar on the topic by Keith Pecklers 3. Tour of the church and guidance on what is important for mass 4. Discussion and questions 5. Shared meal in designated groups
IEA	University encounter	Community participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introductions 2. Tour of the University, including the synagogue and mosque 3. Discussion over snacks and coffee
Vatican	‘Invocation for Peace’	Elite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Private meetings inside the Vatican 2. Introduction; the agenda for the meeting of ‘Invocation for Peace’ 3. First moment, invocation by the Jewish community 4. Second moment, invocation by the Christian community 5. Third moment, invocation by the Islamic community 6. Conclusion, asking God for the gift of peace to the Holy Land
Sant’Egidio	International Meeting for Prayer and Peace, 2014	Elite	<p>3 Day Duration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening ceremony 2. Discussions/panels on current issues 3. Closing ceremony
Sant’Egidio	‘International Immigrants Day’	Ceremonial	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sermons from religious leaders 2. Cultural performances by African and Asian communities 3. Lighting of the candles

Source: Author

6.1.1 Community Participation Model

Several of the interfaith dialogues observed involved community-based discussions. They were a method of dialogue that encouraged the general public to attend in order to promote interfaith relations and because of this, I have labelled these as the 'Community Participation Model'. Three of my observations illustrated this model: the IEA in Israel, and two from Istituto Tevere in Italy.

As reflected in the above Table, the process of this model followed was a similar pattern; introductions, an educational event, and a discussion followed by or involving a meal. The introductions gave participants the opportunity to state which religion they follow and why they have attended. The religions at the dialogues were evenly represented, and several of my interviews highlighted the amount of effort that goes into equal representation. The Istituto Tevere had both Sunni and Shiite Muslims, and Orthodox and Catholic faiths in attendance. The majority of participants from a Christian background were older females, whereas the Muslim representatives ranged between 20-40 years old. The IEA participants represented a younger generation between 20-30. They included Palestinian Muslims and Orthodox, and Israeli secular and Orthodox Jews. Responses toward attendance were location dependent; in Israel participants viewed their participation as a method of activism, an opportunity to be part of peacebuilding in a context where they otherwise felt powerless. Similarly, the ICCI viewed a lot of their work as a form of interfaith 'activism' through raising public awareness on issues through rallies and lobbying. A recent example was in March 2012; the Tag Meir coalition held a rally against racism at Jerusalem's Malha Mall, attended by some 200 people, in response to an incident that occurred there several days earlier, involving an altercation between Beitar Jerusalem football fans shouting racist comments at Arab staff members of the mall (Kronish, 2014), whereas in Italy, participants view dialogue more as an authentic educational opportunity, a chance to learn about 'the other' through exchanges.

Picture 4: Community Participation Model at Istituto Tevere



The second part of the meetings was an event that reflected the theme. The observed dialogues by the Istituto Tevere including the concluding encounters of a four part series on 'Conversations that Matter: Christians and Muslims talk about Prayer'. These were seminars by a religious expert on the theme of the dialogue. In Israel, the event utilized its location of the encounter at the Hebrew University by providing a tour, including the Synagogue and Mosque. However, it was the discussion after the tour that followed a theme of 'What Jerusalem Means to your Faith', where participants would discuss why Jerusalem is important to them. Yehuda stated that usually at such encounters there is a small presentation, followed by an open conversation. My observations paralleled this, and indicated that it was not the event, but the discussions that were central to the interfaith dialogues. The discussions in both locations provided a safe space where participants could freely and respectfully discuss their point of view and direct questions to the other attending faiths. The Istituto Tevere discussions acknowledged the differing perceptions between the denominations, for example, when a Sunni Muslim would answer a question, they would turn to a Shiite Muslim and ask their perspective. In Israel, it was clear that participants were uninformed about differing religions. For

example, an Orthodox Jew was interested to find out that Jerusalem is an important Holy Place for the Muslim faith. Participants of my semi-structured interviews acknowledge this; often claiming that in the end it does not matter what is talked about; themes are simply a starting point. As long as meaningful conversation is happening, it is constructive, as it will still build relationships and create friendships that otherwise may not have occurred.

Yehuda noted that people often come to the meetings with a lot of preconceptions but limited knowledge about the 'other', but after the meeting these were reduced as they felt a connection on a human level. Yehuda also stated that the media and the community you surround yourself with create preconceptions of 'the other', and it is not until one has interaction with the other through interfaith dialogue, that these can be abolished. He gave me an example:

The Jewish coordinator prays in a Synagogue and he has a good friend who attends. He was trying for years to attract the guy to try an encounter, finally he succeeds and they go up the hill to the direction of the Everest Hotel and before you get there you pass 5 or 6 houses of Benjalas, and when they reach a spot he said give me one reason why I shouldn't turn around and go back home. So the coordinator thinks for a minute and he said, because if you come you can then say that what you think about them is correct. So he continued driving, and now the man has never stopped coming since. It is very typical, because people become very sceptical, and the experience of the encounter is very strong and it changes them without telling them that we want to change them. Many of their preconceptions just evaporate. (Yehuda Stolov, interview, July 2014)

The concluding method in the process was a meal. This has significance as it was through the sharing of the meal that more intimate discussions between participants occurred, especially for introverted participants that would otherwise not speak during the designated discussion time. Such encounters reflect Dr Donna Orsuto's comment on the importance of dialogue around the table and the sacredness of mealtime, the 'dialogue of life'.

Yehuda stated that community encounters such as the Community Participation Model occur at three levels: they provide opportunity for encounters, they develop desired relationships between communities, and they act as a level of change for the community. So with time, the encounters progress from micro-level or individual – level to a macro-level or community-level. Similarly, Ron Kronish stated that ‘in the long term, as non-violence and mutual cooperation among local Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities becomes a model for society as a whole, we envisage a transforming of the public discourse which will empower peace-builders in the region to effect lasting change’ (Kronish, 2014). The Community Participation Model, therefore, has several aspects that make it unique from other models. They allow the community to contribute towards peace activism. They were safe spaces, where relationships could be intimately built. They allowed for a practical education on differing religions. There was an equal acknowledgement of all religions involved. Finally they emphasized the importance of discussion, which not only creates a learning encounter, but also eliminates preconceptions. Such points emphasize Dr Donna Orsuto’s comment of the dialogue of life, the importance of daily interaction; a factor that makes community encounters different from other models.

6.1.2 Elite Model

I observed two interfaith dialogues that can be considered as elite through the high-level leadership participation. The first observation was the ‘Invocation for Peace’ at the Vatican Gardens on the 8 June. Pope Francis, while on his Middle East tour in Jerusalem, had invited both the Prime Ministers from Israel and Palestine to promote peaceful co-existence. The second observation was of Sant’Egidio’s 2014 International Meeting for Prayer and Peace. This was held in Antwerp on the 7-9 September, and was themed ‘Peace is the future: Religions and Cultures in Dialogue 100 Years after WW1’.

Despite the leadership participation and the similarities towards promoting peaceful relations, the two dialogues had contrasting methodologies. The ‘Invocation for Peace’ was broadcast on many mainstream news channels over two hours. The

meeting was culturally inclusive, with each moment of the process read in the native language of the leaders. It also represented the faiths equally, with each leader having an entourage of Rabbi and Imams. Although the process involved intimate discussions prior to the broadcast dialogue, the meeting itself did not involve constructive conversation, but included speeches from the leaders on the importance of peace, rather than dialogue on peace.

Picture 5: Closing Ceremony of the International Meeting for Prayer and Peace, 2014.



The International Meeting for Prayer and Peace was held over three days and broadcast on the Sant'Egidio website, which is how I observed the meeting. Participation in this event was on a much larger scale, with the majority of the world's religions being represented at the meeting. Similar to the invocation for peace, this meeting not only involved religious leadership, but also political leadership, such as the Vice-President of the European Parliament. The leaders would sit in unity on the stage, while members of the public could watch the topical panels as well as the opening and closing ceremonies. The panels reflected issues that are relevant to contemporary society and the theme of 'Peace is the Future'. Some examples of panels were 'Sustainable Development and the Fight against Poverty in 21st Century'; 'Muslims and Christians Together for Peace'; 'Nigeria:

Exiting from the Tunnel of Violence; Iraq': 'What Future? and Religion and Violence' (Sant'Egidio, 2014). The panelists would respond to each other, as well as discussing the issue from their religious or political perspective.

Although these observations fit under the umbrella of an Elite Model, I would categorize them separately. The 'Invocation for Peace' was a display of peace, rather than constructive dialogue, so it could be considered as a ritualistic form of the Elite Model. The International Meeting for Prayer and Peace, although it had ceremonial factors, was centred around discussion on topical issues and had more public involvement; therefore I would categorize it as a more elite action dialogue. However both dialogues, as elitist models, focus on the reach such dialogues can have to the community by publicizing unity between religious leaders. It is done through streaming online, TV and participation through prayer. It reflects on the importance of influence. Pope Francis addressed the International Meeting for Peace reflecting this:

As religious leaders, we are called to be true "people of dialogue", to cooperate in building peace not as intermediaries but as authentic mediators. Intermediaries seek to give everyone a discount ultimately in order to gain something for themselves. However, the mediator is one who retains nothing for himself, but rather spends himself generously until he is consumed, knowing that the only gain is peace. Each one of us is called to be an artisan of peace, by uniting and not dividing, by extinguishing hatred and not holding on to it, by opening paths to dialogue and not by constructing new walls! Let us dialogue and meet each other in order to establish a culture of dialogue in the world, a culture of encounter. A religious leader is always a man or woman of peace, for the commandment of peace is inscribed in the depths of the religious traditions that we represent. But what can we do? Your annual meeting suggests the way forward: the courage of dialogue. This courage, this dialogue gives us hope. It has nothing to do with optimism; it's entirely different. Hope! In the world, in society, there is little peace also because dialogue is missing, we find it difficult to go beyond the narrow horizon of our own interests in order to open ourselves to a true and sincere comparison. (Press, 2014)

6.1.3 Ceremonial Model

A third model for interfaith dialogues is the Ceremonial Model. This was evident at the 'International Immigrants Day' service I observed. This paid tribute to the thousands of people of many cultures and faiths who have lost their lives trying to get to Europe by boat in the hope for a better life. It was held at Santa Maria in Trastevere, one of the oldest churches in Rome, and where Sant'Egidio daily prayer services take place. Several hundred people attended, including representatives

from several African and Asian communities that had tried to get to Europe by boat. These people represented many of the different faith groups, and were involved by singing songs from the different cultures, and lighting candles for those who died. This observation fits under its own category of interfaith dialogue as a 'Ceremonial Model' as it focused on religious practice and ritual as a way to respect interfaith/intercultural communication.

The service included sermons from different religious leaders who also got up and prayed for those who have lost their lives and for peace. Representatives from different Christian denominations, including Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Orthodox, and Ethiopian Christians, read these sermons. Although this was a Christian service, their speeches paid respect to the other faiths including the Jewish and Muslim faiths, and peace was wished upon them. They also emphasized the need for the world change so that people did not feel like they have to make such an enormous risk in the hope for a better life in Europe. Several African groups did a dance and song, as did several Asian groups. Then the names of those who had died were read out, while people lit candles at the altar in remembrance. It was very moving dialogue, including the singing and the different cultures together paying tribute. The beauty of the church added to this (see Figure 6). Even though interfaith elements were present, the theme of world peace was more prominent, with that being the theme of everyone's sermons.

Picture 6: Candles that had been lit during the ceremony



This type of 'ceremonial' interfaith dialogue contrasts with the previous models as it incorporates both elements of community and cultural inclusiveness as well as religious leadership. It highlights religious practice in order to commemorate an issue, which separates it from the other processes.

6.1.4 Overview of Processes

The community encounters followed a sequence that allowed for inquisitive learning and meaningful conversation that aimed to build relationships and will help the people know each other better, and connect at a human level. A lot of effort went into equal representation of the faiths for this to happen. Yehuda stated that when people of different faiths communicate on such a level, it is more intimate and humanity is more apparent, as they discover the humanity of the other. They find similarities in the conversation with each other's traditions and are a setting where such things can be discussed in a manner that does not threaten, but is constructive. People then make friendships with those they might not have previously. The more elitist models centralized on spreading, or promoting messages, and publicizing inter-faith relationships in order to reach out to a community level. Claudio Betti from Sant'Egidio stated that it is faith representatives that need to stand up for world issues, so their followers can be influenced and brought around to this way of thinking. Claudio said:

Having the 300 people together, it makes a very important message. It is visually almost a sign. You see all those people together, and you see them all dressed in different clothes, it is visually powerful. (Claudio Betti, Sant'Egidio, interview, June, 2014)

The Ceremonial Model focused on incorporating religious tradition into interfaith dialogue to improve intercultural relations. All three models were distinct in their own right, but they all share the focus on the importance of interfaith relations contributing toward sustainable peace, despite their different reach and methodologies.

6.3 Importance of Interfaith Dialogues

As seen in my semi-structured interviews, participants viewed interfaith dialogues as important as, in order to understand the space interfaith dialogues can create in positive peace, we need to understand why those in the field view it as a positive contribution. Therefore, this section explores the answers given by participants.

Below is a table that consolidates the responses around themes that were drawn out from semi-structured interviews on the importance of interfaith dialogue.

Table 5: Participants view on interfaith dialogues

Theme	Quotes from Interviews
<p>Interfaith Dialogue processes as both an ‘informal’ process and ‘formal’ process. The informal processes were more about daily interaction, were formal was more about its use in conflict or elitist situations. Some participants commented that both are equally important and needed.</p>	<p><i>“Dialogue should emphasize on the dialogue of life and that is the informal encounters and daily interactions that matter rather than the formal ones, such as eating together and praying together.”</i> Dr Donna Orsuto, Lay Centre</p> <p><i>“Dialogue is very precious today, but the dialogue has to be a really serious dialogue.”</i> Alberto Quattrucci, Sant’Egidio</p> <p><i>“We always say that you need to work at both the grassroots and at the top, and one without the other does not work.”</i> Claudio Betti, Sant’Egidio</p>
<p>Importance of religious leadership in interfaith dialogues. Faith has a large reach, as billions of people around the world are religious. Those involved viewed religious leadership and the influence they have on their followers as a powerful tool. So visually, elite interfaith dialogues are a good way of promoting peace. Some also claimed that religious leaders in collaboration could have a strong influence in lobbying governments.</p>	<p><i>“In order for us to reach billions of people around the world, we need to be working collaboratively with all faiths. So working with all faiths will help us achieve this. If we try and do it alone we won’t succeed.”</i></p> <p><i>“A religious leaders voice is very powerful in a community, because they can stand in front of billions of people every week and communicate messages. So its crude, but it is the reality.”</i> Antonia Stampalija, GFN</p> <p><i>“It is more powerful to say that, we have got the Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Catholics, the Orthodox, the Baptists and we are all here together. So when we put a message to the government or a country where there is a high prevalence of slavery or sexual exploitation, then that is a lot of faiths standing together saying we are standing united and we want you to do something about it.”</i> Antonia Stampalija, GFN</p> <p><i>“I dream of religious leaders who are good. The term good nobody uses that term anymore, but good is a beautiful term, they have to be good human beings.”</i> Claudio Betti, Sant’Egidio</p>
<p>Interfaith Dialogues as an education tool about ‘the other’. This enables interaction with ‘the other’, so humanity becomes more apparent, rather than unjust assumptions. It also allows for constructive conversation, and a safe space where questions can be asked, and similarities acknowledged. In conflict settings it allows not only for visual solidarity but inclusion of all</p>	<p><i>“This type of conversation makes it more intimate. People meet each other on a deeper level where the humanity is more apparent, and they discover the humanity of the other more effectively.”</i></p> <p><i>“In this type of conversation we find many similarities between the different traditions, which is definitely helping. Even more important that in this setting we are able to discuss differences in a way that only does not threaten but is constructive, and through this people train to develop friendships with people they may have disagreed with.”</i> Yehuda Stolov, IEA</p> <p><i>“It takes the conversation to a deeper level, that has existential value for anyone (religious and non-religious), more especially in this part of the world were religion lies very deeply in the culture and is manifested all</i></p>

<p>parties, and a chance for perspectives and voice to be heard.</p>	<p>over the culture.” Yehuda Stolov, IEA <i>“In conflicts we have to say that interfaith approach helps because if you don’t consider the existence of the other religions it is always a problem.”</i> Angelo Romano, Sant’Egidio</p>
<p>Interfaith Dialogues as a ‘contributor’ to peace. This includes religions use as a tool conflict prevention, rather than initiator. It also means that community participation in interfaith dialogue as a form of community activism.</p>	<p><i>“I think the future depends on it. Dialogue is the path to peace, and what we do at the Lay Centre, we have no illusions that we are doing great things, it is just a drop in the sea. But I really think that this drop can lead to great things.”</i> Dr Donna Orsuto, Lay Centre <i>“It can prevent people from waging war in the name of religion.”</i> Sir David Moxon, Anglican Centre <i>“It spreads an atmosphere of peace and respect around the faith base, which is a huge reach, and I think more and more we are seeing interfaith dialogue helping to reduce prejudice, enlightened thinking and understanding, and exposes terrorists for what they are, which are not religious people in the sincere sense of the word but military fanatics, bent on vengeance, so I think that’s where the fact comes in. But it also motivates people to volunteer, to be advocates and to join the struggle.”</i> Sir David Moxon, Anglican Centre <i>“Inter-faith dialogue is important because so many times religion has been and is used to feed the war, just like in the Central African Republic; the attempt of this Anti-Balaka is to use the hate of the Muslims for their own political purposes.”</i> Angelo Romano, Sant’Egidio <i>“Interfaith dialogues are one of the instruments we have to prevent fundamentalism from growing on both sides.”</i> Monica Attias, Sant’Egidio <i>“Interreligious dialogue is not a club of intellectuals. It is young people, old people, Bishops, ordinary people who are all believers to come together through solidarity.”</i> Alberto Quattrucci, Sant’Egidio <i>Religiously-motivated violence has been a significant deterrent to the progress of the Middle East peace process, and yet little to no attention has been paid to the Israeli and Palestinian religious communities, and few attempts have been made to utilize religion as a tool for peace and reconciliation. ICCI seeks to change this by fostering dialogue and the development of action projects to promote peaceful coexistence.</i> Ron Kronish, ICCI <i>“In the more hard moments of fighting, the groups of interreligious dialogue put it into the midst and they avoid the clash. It was in Ukraine with our community, the Orthodox and the Catholics and the others, they went into the big square there was fighting and they make a big prayer for peace. In my opinion, they can intervene, directly not only spiritually”</i> Alberto Quattrucci, Sant’Egidio</p>
<p>The pluralistic nature of society. The world is becoming increasingly globalized, and more cultures are clashing, causing an increase in religious conflicts. Interfaith dialogue enables pluralism, and that is an important aspect of a democratic society, and reduces the growth of fundamentalism.</p>	<p><i>“This world cannot be changed by one alone, you need synergy, you cannot do it by yourself. We are varied, we are many and we do not know why the Koran says it, but we are many and if we want to solve the problems of the world we have to solve them together.”</i> Claudio Betti, Sant’Egidio <i>“If you look at Iraq with ISIL, the redefinition of the borders is happening in Iraq and Syria, and probably Jordan soon. The war going on between Sunnis and Shiites risks affecting not only the Middle East but Europe and the western world as well.”</i> Monica Attias, Sant’Egidio <i>“Multi-faith and multicultural is a guarantee of democracy. A guarantee of democracy and limits fundamentalism, the plurality of civilizations, of faiths, of culture is guaranteed that there will be not ethnic or religious cleansing.”</i> Monica Attias, Sant’Egidio</p>

Source: Author

There are several key themes to draw on out of these quotes on the importance of interfaith. First, is the variations of the processes used by interfaith dialogues; some participants viewed it as an informal process while others viewed it as a formal process. Those that viewed it as formal were directing its use towards conflict mediation and the more elitist models of interfaith dialogue. Those that viewed it as an informal process are more involved in forms of interfaith dialogue at a community level. This is reflected in the processes, where community participation is centred on natural discussions between interfaith groups (the informal), as opposed to elite dialogues that focus on the ceremonial aspects (the formal). Sant'Egidio also tended to view interfaith dialogues at a practical level, through its use in conflict situations; an interesting factor when Sant'Egidio's role as international conflict mediators is considered. The Elite Model of interfaith dialogue is viewed as an influential tool through religious leadership providing messages and direction to followers. Interfaith dialogues can also build relationships at both community and elite levels that were otherwise unattainable and give a human face to 'the other'. Emphasis was given to the importance of pluralism in society, and for this plural society to work faith groups need to understand each other. Through this, interfaith dialogue can be seen as a 'community motivator'. Not only did Sir David Moxon mention this, but also the group encounter in Israel reflected this point. Those that attended the dialogue felt helpless towards the conflict, and being a part of an interfaith encounter was a way of contributing towards peace. As seen with Ron Kronish, interfaith dialogue enables the use of religion as a positive force, rather than negative, a point that is explored further in the discussion chapter.

6.4 Peace definitions

Tables 6 and 7 (see below) analyse the semi-structured interviews in relation to the theoretical framework. The first is the theme of negative peace, and the second table is the theme of positive peace. This is an important discussion in relation to the theoretical framework, as I wanted to examine whether those involved in interfaith dialogue interpreted peace in a way that parallels with the theoretical framework of positive and negative peace.

Table 6: Negative peace attributes from peace definitions

Negative Peace	
Themes	Quotes
End of direct violence. People related ending of violence as being the first step towards peace goals.	<p><i>"First of all stop the wars, and stop the violence. Peace is the beginning of a new society with a different attitude of the people among each other, a society in which the poor people are not marginalized."</i> Angelo Romano, Sant'Egidio</p> <p><i>"I think that peace is not only a peaceful condition of no wars; it is really a condition of harmony, a society in which people have not lost a sense in solidarity, in helping one another."</i> Monica Attias, Sant'Egidio</p> <p><i>"It is first of all the absence of war. The first thing that peace is, is that people do not shoot at each other."</i> Claudio Betti, Sant'Egidio</p> <p><i>"The biblical idea of peace just doesn't mean the absence of war, it means the presence of wholeness, wellbeing, positivity, hope, buoyancy, fullness of life, it is a many textured thing, it is not just the absence of war. And the word for that in the Bible is Shalom, which is a Hebrew word for wholeness and peace"</i> Sir David Moxon, Anglican Centre</p> <p><i>"Peace is changing the culture of a country, changing the heart of a country, but it is most of all stopping the fighting. If you do not stop the fighting there is no way for peace."</i> Claudio Betti, Sant'Egidio</p>

Source: Author

Table 7: Positive peace attributes from peace definitions

Positive Peace	
Themes	Quotes from interviews
Peace cannot be achieved until society and individuals have forgiven for the past	<i>"Peace is forgiveness, the fact that even if there has been a conflict in a country and then you have to live together, justice cannot solve the problem of co-existence. If you look at South Africa, peace was only achieved when there was this reconciliation, started by Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela, people who had the courage to look in each other's eyes without the desire of revenge."</i> Monica Attias, Sant'Egidio
Attitudes of society must be inclusive of the marginalized, with an emphasis on community wholeness and acceptance of those who are different from your own sphere.	<i>"Pope Francis says 'Cultra de la Scato' which means you can't just disregard a part of society. You cannot just throw it away, the idea that there are some parts of society that are not useful or garbage; an old person, poor people, gypsies, and after that it is solved. My idea of a society is an idea in which that does not happen. Because in my opinion the biggest thing for peace is mercy among the people who are living in the same society, solidarity and this attitude not to consider myself living, but someone who is a part of the community. A community that must accept that there are people that is different. Peace is living together."</i> Angelo Romano, Sant'Egidio
Sustainability through the building of human relationships	<i>"Then of course you have to do something more, once people stop fighting you need to start building human relationships."</i> Claudio Betti, Sant'Egidio
Link between poverty and conflict.	<i>"The linkage between peace and poverty, although everybody says you cannot link conflict to poverty, well you can. The countries that are poorest are the ones were there is the most conflict. Peace is changing the culture of a country, changing the heart of a country, but it is most of all stopping the fighting. If you do not stop the fighting there is no way for peace."</i> Claudio Betti, Sant'Egidio

Religion can have influence on how peace is conceived	<i>And the biblical vision is to get to that, to justices and righteousness, fair go, hope, reciprocity, restorative justice, freedom of rights and self-determination. All those things make up for fullness of life.” Sir David Moxon, Anglican Centre</i>
An individualistic definition, if you change your own attitudes it can have influence.	<i>“Generally peace is all the different views and approaches, different cultures and different people and different levels of people all co-exist in harmony, they support each other and they support the wellbeing of the whole.” Alberto Quattrucci, Sant’Egidio</i>
A change of attitude towards each other and putting it into practice in structures like the government. Respecting differences and a society that promotes pluralism.	<i>“This is not a zero sum gain, this is not a ‘if the other gains I loose’, it is exactly the contrary, if their situation is better my situation is better and vice versa. Then when this is internalized and practiced and this is the reality, there will be some politicians who will also sign an agreement.” Yehuda Stolov, IEA</i>
Peace is both individualistic and a societal change.	<i>“Peace I think begins with respecting the other, and really allowing the other to be different from you, and not trying to make everyone the same, and to wish the best for the other and to make every effort to provoke the good of the other, the common good together. So I would say peace, I mean there are different levels for peace; there is peace in the heart, and where you hope that the people you meet could come to a peace of heart and reconciliation through an encounter with you. On a wider level, there is unity within diversity, and respect of the other.” Dr Donna Orsuto, Lay Centre</i>
People working in the peace field need to change their attitudes toward peace, so it is not an immediate goal, but a sustainable goal.	<i>“I think that people who are working for peace and especially working for the prevention of conflicts, and reconciliation, in my opinion they should not think of peace as the final solution, but as an horizon. It gives life to your action for helping healing in relations, at different levels; communities, nations and so on.” Luigi de Salvia, RfP</i>

Source: Author

As you can see in these tables, there was a lot more discussion on attributes of positive peace attributes from participants. Participants viewed negative peace as the first step towards peace, but not the concluding one. These results showed that the interviewees felt that more is needed than simply the end of violence (negative peace) but more a change in society itself (positive peace). The definitions given of conflict, not only relate to the absence of direct violence, but to building sustainable peace through harmony, new attitudes and forgiveness. A more detailed discussion on this in relation to the theoretical framework is explored in the following chapter.

6.5 Summary

The results chapters provide an outline of current ‘inter-faith dialogue initiatives’, the processes attached to differing initiatives, the perspectives of participants

towards interfaith dialogues importance, as well as peace definitions, in order to contribute to the research aim and objectives. In Rome I was able to see a lot more of the organizational structures involved in interfaith work and the role faith-based actors have to play within peace settings, as well as both elitist and community-based methods of interfaith dialogues. In Israel, I was able to witness interfaith dialogues' initiatives in a context where conflict is a reality. From the encounters observed, and the triangulation of interviews and document analysis, I could see variations among interfaith dialogue that correspond with the literature as well as other original forms. The following discussion chapter addresses this, as well as analysing the more complex qualitative research themes such as the differences and similarities of these initiatives, grassroots effectiveness, and a deeper comparison between the two fieldwork locations and the different interfaith dialogue practices.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion of the Research

7.1 Introduction

This final chapter of the thesis explores the role of interfaith dialogue initiatives towards peacebuilding. The research questions are discussed in relation to the collected results, theoretical framework, and literature review that have been presented throughout the thesis. Structuring this chapter in sections of the research objectives provides a better understanding of the aim. This allows us to analyse whether there is a legitimate space for the contribution of religion in peacebuilding and therefore development, and if so what it may look like.

7.2 Is there an appropriate space for religion in peacebuilding and development?

This section aims to address my findings in relation to the literature review on the general placement of religion within peacebuilding and development. I address this by readdressing the integrated approach to peacebuilding and development, and mirroring the structure of the literature sections; FBAs in conflict settings, religions and conflict, religions and development, followed by a summary.

7.2.1 Linking peacebuilding, development and religion

Chapter Three outlined the modern integrated approach to peacebuilding and development. I think that it is important to readdress these approaches, because they are central to the framework of this research. In Chapter Three Smoljan's methodologies of the *exclusivist* and *inclusivist* approaches were introduced, the exclusivist approach views the two paradigms as compatible disciplines, whereas the inclusivist approach views them as 'mutually reinforcing procedures' (Smoljan, 2003, p. 234 & 235). This thesis has taken a more *inclusivist* approach. This is due to the parallels between peacebuilding as 'negative peace' and development as 'positive peace'. Galtung made a clear link between negative peace, as conflict theory and

positive peace as development theory, and that both need to be addressed in order to achieve peace (Galtung, 1969, p. 183). This linkage is shown through the reality that conflict needs to be contained before the deeper stages of development can occur (Richards, 2005, p. 3 & 11). Therefore they are 'mutually reinforcing procedures' as both concepts need to work together towards a common goal. This gives justification to the role of interfaith dialogues in development as a whole, through their use in peacebuilding, which, in turn, clears a space for sustainable development.

Chapter Two highlights the way in which religion and faith has often been regarded as a barrier to development and inherently contentious in the past. Faith groups are sometimes excluded by development agencies and believe that when they are allowed in, they have to "leave their faith at the door" (Brajovic, 2007). However, as shown in the results of this research, and the preceding sections, there are many positive contributions to development occurring through the use of the interfaith dialogues. This can be seen through examples like immigrant assimilation, the GFN proposal to combat modern slavery, and Sant'Egidio's involvement in conflict mediation. Thus, the potential of religion toward development practice should not be ignored or 'left at the door' by development agendas. The use of interfaith dialogues has potential to be used as a tool by the west to not only incorporate religion into development practice, but also use the influence religion can have on societies positively. Inter-faith dialogue offers an alternative to understanding the development nexus and, in terms of a way forward. It has the potential for creating a new important space for religion within development, not only through conflict resolution and peace building, but also therefore in doing development.

7.2.2 Religions and Conflict

The 'religion and conflict' discussion in Chapter Two highlights the debate as to whether religion is inherently violent. However, in the course of this research I found that religion is consistently given negative attention in Western societies, being viewed as the central cause of conflict, even though there are often other contributing factors. The results showed that participants were aware of this, and

placed blame on the media for creating such preconceptions. Interfaith dialogue therefore has a role to play in eliminating the western lens of viewing religion as a cause of conflict by facilitating human interaction with 'the other', and gaining a practical education on other faiths. It is important to also note that the media, especially social media, does have a positive role to play through the online broadcasting of elitist models. However, this broadcasting for meetings, such as the IMPPs, is most often done through independent means by Sant'Egidio via their website or YouTube channel. Despite the mainstream broadcasting for the 'invocation for peace' there is a need for better engagement on other high profile interfaith dialogues within mainstream media outlets.

Similarly, as shown in Chapter Six, participants discussed how interfaith dialogues is a way to promote religion as a positive peace tool, rather than a negative one. Sir David Moxon stated *'Religion can prevent people from waging war in the name of religion. I think more and more we are seeing interfaith dialogue helping to reduce prejudice, enlightened thinking and understanding, and exposes terrorists for what they are, which are not religious people in the sincere sense of the word but military fanatics, bent on vengeance, so I think that's where the fact comes in. It motivates people to volunteer, to be advocates and to join the struggle.'* (Sir David Moxon, Anglican Centre, interview, June 2014). As highlighted in the literature review, Rabbi David Hartman said something similar *'we are not fighting to eradicate terrorism, terrorism is just a tool. We are fighting to defeat an ideology: religious totalitarianism. The opposite of religious totalitarianism is an ideology of pluralism, an ideology that embraces religious diversity and the idea that faith can be nurtured without claiming an exclusive truth.'* (Smock, 2002, p. 4).

Kirkwood (2007) stated, the world is becoming more globalized, and cultural communities that once lived largely separately now have to live in closer proximity. Interfaith dialogue is a tool that not only recognizes and embraces diversity, but also promotes the peace ethic inherent in religions, rather than promoting religious interpretations that cause conflict (Kirkwood, 2007).

7.2.3 FBAs in peace settings

The key argument in Chapter Two regarding the role of FBAs in peace settings was that FBAs can promote the peace ethic inherent in their faith to counteract its use as a tool for violence (Bercovitch & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2009, p. 199). FBAs may not be any more effective than secular NGOs, but their religious perspective can allow more trust in the community. Religious institutions that are already grounded in conflicted areas are believed to have a far better chance with mediation than outsiders, based on the element of trust. When we consider the importance of trust, we see that this is the factor that the majority of claims on which the legitimacy of FBAs rely.

Throughout my results I echo this factor of trust through the conflict mediation work of Sant'Egidio. Sant'Egidio believes that the label of 'fraternity' gives them credibility and trust in the international arena, which then builds on their international conflict mediation work. Additionally, Sant'Egidio see their faith as an important factor when working in interfaith situations, as they are seen as people who are transparent in their beliefs, rather than paid employees or officials working for an organization. Participants also stated that NGOs need peace outcomes as part of their accountability, and do not continue with the process once 'peace' is achieved, while Sant'Egidio continues to work in all countries in which they have mediated.

These factors correspond with each other, showing how FBAs are in a unique position to use their faith as a tool for development and peace building. It shows that FBAs view their involvement in peace as having no hidden agendas, as everyone is unpaid and committed to it the cause because they genuinely believe in it through the ethics inherent in their faith. They see this as an important factor when working with those from another faith, as they are seen as people with transparency in their beliefs, rather than employees or officials. Additionally, it adds to the element of trust, as it minimalizes the risk of corruption when money is eliminated. I therefore conclude that FBAs do have a role in peacebuilding because of the trust element that FBAs have in communities in conflict zones.

7.2.4 Summary

From these sections, we see that religion does have a role to play within peacebuilding, which in turn, is also a role within development, so to rephrase the objective, rather than: 'religion does have an appropriate role to play within peacebuilding', it should be 'religion does have an appropriate role to play within peacebuilding, and **therefore** development'. I have discussed how interfaith dialogues can be tool that creates a space for religion within development goals, through both utilizing the positives aspects of religions and peace as well as general development initiatives.

7.3 What are some of the current interfaith dialogue initiatives?

This section examines the types of interfaith dialogue initiatives in relation to the literature and results. I examined the processes and methodologies to compare and make additional contributions to the literature. As outlined in the introduction, there is a shortage of recent literature on the subject of interfaith dialogues. This section discusses the categories of dialogues, how the two locations interfaith dialogue initiatives compare, and the community effectiveness of such initiatives. In doing so, this provides a foundation for the overall aim to contribute to the following research objectives.

7.3.1 Categories of interfaith dialogue initiatives

In the results chapter I categorize three methodologies: the Community Participation Model, the Elite Model and the Ceremonial Model. I also mentioned the 'Grassroots Model' and the 'Development Model'. The Grassroots Model emphasizes 'daily life' and daily interaction rather than formalized interfaith dialogues. This included the community-facing initiatives by the community of Sant'Egidio, such as assimilating immigrants into Italy, as well as casual meal interaction between the faiths at the Lay Centre in Rome. The Development Model focuses on interfaith collaboration to combat a development issue. These methodologies therefore, collectively suggest a diverse spectrum in the range of interfaith dialogues.

The literature suggests that there are hierarchal systems in interfaith dialogue, with elitist methodologies being the dominant practice (Gopin, 2002). There was a call for a greater emphasis on daily contacts and the commitment to action from a community level, which would in turn lead to the encouragement of closer contacts between religious communities (Brajovic, 2007). My results show that there was a diverse range of this type of daily interaction occurring. This included community activism through group participation in Israel, community learning through group participation in Italy, and the grassroots aspects that were mentioned above. These processes showed an eclectic range of community interfaith dialogues occurring. However, as previously stated, a large obstacle was the media, practitioners were concerned that only the negative aspects of religious conflict were displayed, which ignores the extent of the positive interfaith initiatives at work, which participants claimed often allowed for the communities negative preconceptions of 'the other'. As Yehuda Stolov stated *'I think the media plays a negative role here, I mean they reflect the reality, but the selection of what they choose is nearly always supporting the negative, and that is unfortunate.'* (Yehuda Stolov, IEA, interview, July 2014). Similarly, greater awareness is needed for dialogues that are publicized, like the IMPPs. This suggests that there is already sufficient emphasis on community and elite level dialogues, within the organizations profiled. However, there is a need for greater public awareness of their activities through media influence.

Table 8 compares my findings with that in the literature (as shown in Chapter 2, Table 1) . Although my categories differentiate, the overall themes of what the interfaith dialogues are trying to achieve are related.

Chapter Two outlined the 'Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue' four types of interfaith dialogue; 'dialogue of life', 'dialogue of action', 'dialogue of theological exchange' and 'dialogue of religious experience' (Brajovic, 2007, p. 154; Dialogue and Proclamation, 1991). Although all of the interfaith dialogues researched shared

Table 8: Comparison of categories of interfaith dialogues in literature and this research

Operations of Interfaith Dialogues	Literature Categories	Explanation	Categories Found in this Research	Explanation
Practical	Grassroots level Interfaith Dialogue in Conflict Leadership or 'elite' models	'Dialogue of action' where participants create interfaith dialogue initiatives in order to collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people. This includes Eck's parliamentary and institutional categories.	Leadership or 'elite' models Development Model Community Participation Model Grassroots Model	This result was very similar to the literature, as they are all 'dialogues of action' dialogues. However I felt 'dialogue of life' related best here through its practicality and emphasis on daily interaction.
Spiritual	'Dialogue of life' 'Dialogue of religious experience' Inner dialogue	Being self-aware and understanding of other religions, as well as connection based, where participants share spiritual riches. Also includes daily interaction with those of other faiths.	Ceremonial Model	Related largely to 'dialogue of religious experience' because of the different culture/religions interacting and sharing religious rituals.
Cognitive	'Dialogue of theological exchange'	Education based, where participants seek to learn off each other.	Community Participation Model Leadership or 'elite' models	This was not only practical, but fit into cognitive through 'dialogue of theological exchange' as the point was to learn about 'the other'.

Source: Author

elements of each of these variations, some were emphasized more than others. The 'dialogue of life' was emphasized through the Grassroots Model, and the Community Participation Model, where the shared drink or meal at the end of dialogue would

strengthen discussion and bonds. The 'dialogue of action' could be seen in the group encounters in Israel, where those participating viewed it as their way of contributing to peace efforts. The 'dialogue of theological exchange' could be seen in the IMPPs, where there were roundtable discussions that showed the perspective of different faiths on certain issues could be shared. Furthermore, the 'dialogue of religious experience' could be observed in the Ceremonial Model, where different faiths and cultures came and shared their spiritual riches. The Development Model was observed through my research of the GFN, as it is an FBO that was initiated on the basis of high-level religious commitment to combating modern slavery. The funding and signatories came from high-level leaders of multiple faiths.

Overall, I think this thesis can contribute to the overall understanding of the processes and categories of interfaith dialogue literature. All academics in the field tended to have their own categories. Whether it was Diana Eck's six varieties: parliamentary, institutional, theological, dialogue in the community, dialogue of life, and spiritual and inner dialogue or Smock's (2002) three models of elite, combatant engagement, and grassroots (Eck, December 11, 1986; Smock, 2002, pp. 7-8; Suwarno, 2005, p. 318). All tended to be similar in their definitions of the models, but were unique through small variations. I conclude that there were five main models to interfaith dialogue that I observed. These were the 'Elite Model', 'Ceremonial Model', 'Development Model', 'Community Participation Model' and 'Grassroots Model'.

7.3.2 Community Effectiveness

This leads us into the next sub-objective, the grassroots effectiveness of interfaith dialogue practice. This is an important aspect to address; because when I first began to read into the interfaith dialogue literature and learn more about Sant'Egidio's International Meetings for Prayer and Peace, I was concerned as to what extent such elitist modelled practices could affect or have influence on the general community.

The elitist models were the dominant processes discussed in Chapter Two. It was claimed that such models only involve those who are well educated, and can often

neglect those at a grassroots level, which can be disempowering if only a selected few are chosen to do the bargaining as a representation of the entire religious community (Dialogue and Proclamation, 1991). I agree with this statement when interfaith dialogue is used as a tool for religious mediation between conflicting communities, but when interfaith dialogue is used for things like the Community of Sant'Egidio's 'International Meetings for Peace', it is at least creating high-level awareness for this kind of dialect (Sant'Egidio, 2013). Brajovic (2007) argues that this can lead to an exchange of arguments in response to the important questions, which can influence change in the fundamentals of the religion (Brajovic, 2007). Sant'Egidio is also aware of how such meetings need to influence the public and have made them accessible online, and allow the public to attend the seminars. The GFN reflected on this through an emphasis on religious leaderships impact on their followers by holding an 'anti-modern slavery' stance. Similarly as discussed with the 'Invocation of Peace' at the Vatican, although more of a monologue than dialogue style, was centred on the importance of the publicity of unity between the faiths.

Another aspect is the importance of 'elite interaction' at Sant'Egidio's IMPPs, as this relationship building between religious leaders has an influence on their work as conflict mediators. The parallel between the growth of the IMPPs through attendance, and an increasing number of groups wanting Sant'Egidio's intervention in conflict reflects this. As Claudio Betti stated in the results chapter '*we started with Algeria because of the meetings. Our work in Syria, I mean whatever you can do in Syria now it is because we have built relationships with bishops and one of our members was held captive in Syria. So it is true, the IMPPs help with building the relationships for conflict intervention*' (Claudio Betti, June, 2014). It is through having built relationships through these elitist models such as the IMPPs, that allows for conflict mediation's grassroots influence, since conflict affects an entire community.

This research supports the use of a multi-dimensional approach when it comes to interfaith dialogue (Brajovic, 2007). Claudio Betti (Sant'Egidio) stressed this during our interview, stating that both grassroots and elitist models are equally important: '*We always say that you need to work at both the grassroots and at the top, and*

one without the other does not work' (Claudio, Betti, Sant'Egidio, June 2014). Similarly, the GFN stated *'our goal is through religious leaders, and that's not saying that the responsibility starts and ends there. But through leadership we can start at this end of prevention and people working at the coal-face, who are actually hands-on, the two of us coming together, can actually start to squeeze on the areas where work is needed, so that people can be freed'*. (Antonia Stampalija, interview, June, 2014) The research suggests that both elitist and grassroots approaches are equally important and needed for effective interfaith dialogue, as grassroots and community levels of dialogue get the community actively involved in interfaith initiatives, where the elite levels make a public, highly visible statement on its importance to their followers.

7.3.3 Comparison of the interfaith dialogue initiatives in the two locations

Having a section dedicated to a comparative analysis of the two locations is important because of their contrasting situations. This section compares the community participation models, as I did not observe other forms in Israel, so it would be an incomplete comparison. As I wrote in the research context chapter, Italy's practices of interfaith dialogue are influenced by Catholic theology, and usually organized by Catholic organizations. In Israel, conflict is a reality and faith has a much heavier influence on daily interactions. There are more obvious factors to consider, such as the differing faiths in attendance, with Israel having high Jewish and Muslim attendance, and attendance in Italy being Catholic and Muslim dominated. However, by comparing the two, we see interfaith dialogues in a location (Israel) where interfaith dialogue can be associated with more negative aspects of peace (direct violence), and where interfaith dialogues are being used in a society that is not affected by such factors (Italy).

The community participation models were very similar in the two locations. Both followed an order that allowed for inquisitive learning and meaningful conversation that would build relationships and help the people know each other better and connect at a human level. There were, however, certain factors that differentiated

the two. First, was the element of commitment to action. In Israel, the community's attendance in the group encounters was their way of contributing to peace in a situation where they otherwise felt helpless. By attending, they were showing a commitment to the community that they want to live in peace with 'the other'. The ICCI centralized a lot of their practice around interreligious dialogue through community activism through rallies and lobbying. This is not to say that interfaith dialogues in Italy were not also a commitment to action, but obviousness of activism was much more apparent in Israel. The Muslim community in Italy did have a level of activism, as they aimed to change the negative reputation in Islam in the West, but this type of activism was more about education, rather than directly contributing towards peace efforts. As such, there was a greater emphasis on negative peace aspects in Israel, as they were more subjected to issues of negative peace, where Italy was addressing positive peace issues in a non-negative atmosphere.

As mentioned in Chapter Five (5.4.8), apolitical agendas were also a contrasting factor. Although this was not the case with the ICCI, who hold a lot of rallies protesting occupation issues, and publishes many documents with political viewpoints. The dialogues I observed with the IEA had strictly no political affiliations, but had an 'apolitical nature'. They claim that is why they are popular, as it allows the participation of both Palestinians and Israelis from a wide range of political spectrums. In Italy, politics were not generally acknowledged, as it was not a controversial issue in the way it was in Israel.

As discussed in Chapter Six, interfaith dialogues in Italy and Israel have several similarities as forms of community participation. They provide opportunity for encounters, they develop desired relationships between communities, and they act as a level of change for the community. They allow the community to contribute towards peace activism. They were safe spaces, where relationships could be intimately built. They allowed for a practical education on differing religions. There was an equal acknowledgement of all religions involved. Finally, they emphasized the importance of discussion, which not only creates a learning encounter, but also eliminates preconceptions. Reaffirming what Galtung and Richards stated, that

interfaith dialogues have the potential to diminish this 'othering' through interaction with those outside of the normal sphere of interaction (Galtung, 1964, p. 1; Richards, 2005, p. 17).

To conclude on this comparison, it is important to note that the interfaith dialogues that I both observed and researched in Israel were not dialogues to negotiate peace settlements, but were about community participation and activism within a conflict setting (negative peace). The largest comparison was the level of activism and the apolitical agendas. Elsewhere, the dialogues were similar through the methodologies, importance of education on the 'other', constructive conversations, and forming relationships that would otherwise not occur.

7.3.4 Summary

This section has examined the methodologies of interfaith dialogue initiatives in relation to the literature and results. The results chapter itself showed the vast range of interfaith dialogue initiatives from a wide range of organizations. I have added my contribution to the research on the varieties of interfaith dialogues, contributing methodologies that have not yet been discussed in academia. I have analysed the concern of how elitist models of interfaith dialogue can influence a community level through the publicity of unity, and relationship building, but affirming that both models of community and elitist levels are equally as important as each other. I then outlined the similarities and contrasts of the two fieldwork locations, concluding that politics and the activist approach was the greatest difference.

7.4 How are interfaith dialogues contributing towards 'positive peace'?

The preceding sections showed how religion does have a potential place within peacebuilding efforts and began to touch on the role of interfaith dialogues as a tool that enables this. This section examines the role of interfaith dialogues to a greater extent through highlighting their importance as viewed by practitioners, and aligning this with the theoretical framework as to how interfaith dialogues can be used to contribute to positive peace. The theoretical framework chapter suggests that

interfaith dialogues can be seen as a 'positive' peace initiative, as it is a tool that can be used towards fixing rooted problems of conflict and can contribute to sustainable peacebuilding. By this association, interfaith is also a contributor to development because of the linking of positive peace with development; therefore interfaith is also addressing development through addressing these structural violence issues.

Chapter Three outlines that Galtung claims that peace research needs to combine both goals of negative (direct violence) and positive peace. Once this has succeeded, greater concepts and forms of social action can be placed into theory and action. I claimed interfaith dialogues could be used in both practices, during times of peace and conflict. Sandole claims that even though ending direct violence helps determine the cause of conflict, effort can be put into achieving 'positive' peace goals even in the absence of negative peace (Sandole, 2010). I think that interfaith dialogues are important in positive peace and can be used in both conflict and in non-conflict, as in both situations they were trying to build community resilience through connections, so such conflicts will not escalate. The situation in Israel however, could be argued as a negative peace situation and as the previous section shows there was a greater emphasis on negative peace in the dialogues there, but overall the dialogues that I observed were community movements and a form of 'non-violent activism' rather than peace negotiations to end direct violence between faiths (Galtung, 1969, p. 186). This creates the connection of interfaith dialogues as a form of 'positive peace' rather than negative peace. Participants of the research echoed the findings of the literature review that interfaith dialogues are not the equivalent of conflict resolution, but an element that has potential to contribute to sustainable peace.

Interfaith dialogue cannot end immediate issues faced by structural systems, but can work to change perceptions which can contribute to the process of addressing issues of structural violence. It creates 'equal non-exploitative partnerships' at a community level. Participants stated that by including both community levels and elite levels, perceptions of the 'other' could be changed through influence of leaders and the community. As Yehuda stated in the results chapter interfaith dialogues provide opportunity for encounters, they develop desired relationships between

communities, and they act as a level of change for the community. So with time, the encounters progress from micro-level or individual –level to a macro-level or community-level. Similarly, Ron Kronish stated that ‘in the long term, as non-violence and mutual cooperation among local Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities becomes a model for society as a whole, we envisage a transforming of the public discourse which will empower peace-builders in the region to affect lasting change’ (Kronish, 2014). Brajovic (2007) supports this by stating that the international community has mainly focused on infrastructure through economic strengthening. Although this is beneficial, it has been irrelevant in eliminating the sources of the war and conflict, since national division corresponded closely to differences in religious identities (Brajovic, 2007).

As discussed in the literature review, when we deconstruct religious conflict; marginalization, manipulation, power struggles and political gains become the central influence rather than religion itself, which are issues that align with structural violence concepts. Yet as mentioned previously, the general perception of ‘other’ religions, (which is often created by the media influence) is that religions are the perpetrators of violence. There is potential space for interfaith dialogues at a community level to eliminate these preconceptions through interaction with ‘other’ spheres of society. They allow for meetings at a human level, and are a safe space where curiosity can be addressed. As seen in the results it was a powerful tool for education on ‘other’ faiths, which promoted peaceful relationships. As seen in the previous section, religion can have an influence on how peace is conceived, by using the peace ethics inherent in religion; this too could have an influence.

It is important to mention the relationship between practitioners working in the field of interfaith dialogues (participants) and their definitions of peace. I made the connection in the results chapter that most definitions aligned with Galtung’s view, that more is needed than simply the end of violence (negative peace) to establish peace, but a change in society as well (positive peace). Many of the ways to achieve positive peace were aligned with a change in attitude at both an individualistic level, and a societal level. This is a reflection of the previous comment by Yehuda and Ron

Kronish in relation to micro to macro influences. They view the importance of interfaith dialogue as a tool to initiate these changes in attitudes through education on the 'other', addressing the pluralistic nature of society, and as a form of community activism towards peace.

So to conclude, the aim of this section was to examine the types of interfaith dialogue initiatives that are underway in order to analyse their role towards peace building contributions. Much of the literature focused on dialogue during conflict, whereas this research showed that it does not only need to be used during conflict situations. Interfaith dialogues centralized on changing preconceived attitudes in order to contribute to a change in society as a whole, which reveals it as a positive peace initiative at a community movement level. The elitist forms of dialogue were about publicizing to the community the interfaith alliances, whereas interfaith dialogues at a community level were about creating equal partnerships with the 'other'.

7.5 Limitations and Further Recommendations

Owing to a lack of recent literature in interfaith dialogues and its growing relevance through the current growth of religious fundamentalism and globalization, there are several recommendations I would like to suggest for further research. This also includes factors that limited my own data collection.

Interfaith dialogues are effective for those who are willing to participate. In Israel, the research indicated that a lot of effort went into attracting people who would not usually attend group encounters, and this did have a positive effect in changing perceptions. It was also a form of protest, or community activism, against fundamentalism through the act of pluralism. Participants did also mention that Islam could often be a hard religion to influence, as there is no central leader like there is with Catholicism or Judaism. Thus representatives in more elitist models were imams that did not necessarily represent the entire faith. I would therefore recommend that more research is required towards methods that would appeal to those who have more fundamentalist views.

As mentioned, this thesis focused on interfaith dialogues that were not contributing to peace negotiations. A further research area would be to observe dialogues that are created for the purpose of conflict resolution between conflicting communities. While other authors have reflected on this methodology, there is little recent academic literature about it. Researching this further would allow a better analysis as to whether it is a tool that can contribute to both negative peace through conflict resolution, as well as positive peace.

A final recommendation would be a media analysis. As I have mentioned on several occasions, participants often viewed the media as a negative influence towards preconceptions and religious contributions towards conflict. A deeper investigation as to how civil society gains its perspectives on the 'other' and whether they agree that the media does play a role, would be an appropriate analysis to further solve how such religious preconceptions arise. Furthermore, thinking of ways in which interfaith dialogues could be promoted to a greater extent in the within media outlets.

7.6 Research Summary and Concluding Statements

The intention of this research was to examine the role of interfaith dialogue initiatives towards peacebuilding. In doing so, this thesis has analysed the role of religion within peacebuilding and what this role might look like. In order to address the primary aim for this research, three key research conclusions can be discerned.

Firstly, the research has suggested that there is a space for religion within peacebuilding and, therefore, development. The literature had left me unconvinced that religion is taken seriously in these approaches. However, this research has shown that religion has a large role to play, as FBAs can hold more trust, they understand the perspective of the religious communities and can use the peace ethic inherent in their faith as a contribution to peace, and therefore development, efforts. The third objective is intrinsically linked with the second objective, as

interfaith dialogues have potential to be the tool in which to utilize religions' role within peacebuilding. Through the theoretical framework, it was revealed that interfaith dialogues are a contributor to positive peace, as they are working towards a change in society.

Secondly, the research showed there were a heterogeneous variety of interfaith dialogue initiatives. They ranged in methodologies, from elitist and ceremonial, to development based and community levelled. All methodologies are equally relevant as the elitist dialogues promote such relationships at an influential religious leadership level, whereas community level and grassroots initiatives allowed for community participation and human connections. The main differences between dialogues in a context of direct violence and a 'peaceful' context were the absence of controversial factors such as politics, and the level of activism.

I had three presumptions on inter-faith dialogue after reviewing the literature; first, interfaith dialogues were working to reconcile many of the critiques that claim there is a lack of understanding and empathy between faith groups and secular agendas. Second, inter-faith dialogue is a legitimate tool towards better religious inclusion in development. Thirdly, inter-faith dialogues become even more important in armed conflict, particularly when religion is one of the factors of conflict or conflict is differentiated by religious identity (Smock, 2002). As seen above, the results from the methodologies set by this research support these statements. Although, as I have mentioned, I did not observe dialogues as a form of peace mediation, I did observe dialogues in contexts of conflict where religion is a contributing element. They were important in conflict because they were a form of community participation towards peace activism, and showed solidarity and a commitment to learning about 'the other'. Many of the scholars and participants agreed on the importance of interfaith dialogues, because through the education of 'the others' religious traditions, tolerance could be built, therefore contributing to positive peace and thus development.

To conclude my overall thesis, certain things have become clear about the role interfaith dialogue initiatives could play towards peacebuilding. First is that

people/organizations/FBAs are aware and realistic that interfaith dialogue alone does not have the power to end immediate conflict (negative peace). It does, however, hold power to change the atmosphere in which many of the prejudices that cause conflict arise. Therefore interfaith dialogues can be seen as a 'positive' peace initiative, as it is a tool that can be used towards fixing rooted problems of conflict and contribute to sustainable peacebuilding through the changing of societal attitudes.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Semi-Structured Interviews, Original Layout

Question Guidelines for Semi-Structured Interviews

Organizational Level

1. To start us off, what is your name and what is your role?
 2. How many people work at you organization? And what kind of people is it made up of?
 3. Do you have one dominating religious practise?
 4. What are your policies when engaging with other religions?
 5. Does your work reach out at a community-based level? How so?
 6. What kind of inter-faith activities does your organization engage in?
 7. How are these interfaith dialogue activities initiated and what is the process of them?
 8. What your organizations priorities when it comes to inter-faith dialouge?
 9. What are the main religions that are involved in your inter-faith activities? Is it usually equal representation in the actitives? Who are the general people that tend to be more involved in these activities? (eg. Genders, ethnicities, age groups etc.)
 10. Have these activities been a success in your view? Do you think that there is any way that they could be improved?
 11. How would you define peace, and what does it look like to you?
 12. How does your organization view inter-faith dialogue?
 13. Why do you think it is important?
 14. On general terms, how do you feel religion is treated when it comes to peace issues? Do you think that there is a space for religion there, and if so what do you think it would look like?
 15. Do you think that interfaith dialouge/ activities have a role to play within peacebuilding? How do you think that this could be brought about?
 16. Are there any personal experiences/remarks or stories that you would like to or could share with me?
-

Appendix 2: Participant Observation Structure

Participant Observation

Information about the organization that overtook the dialogue:

How many are in attendance?

Who is attending? (Religions, ages, gender, ethnicity etc.)

Who is leading the dialogue?

What form of dialogue would you categorize it as?

What is the dialogue?

How is the activity explained to the participants?

What is the order of the dialogue?

Who is dominating the activities?

What where some interesting observations in terms of interfaith?

Further Notes:



Contact

School office

Email: pepadmin@massey.ac.nz

**Examining the role of interfaith-dialogue initiatives toward
peacebuilding: A case study of the 'Community of Sant'Egidio'**

Participant Consent Form

I have read and understood the information provided by the information sheet and additionally by the researcher. I voluntarily agree to be involved in this research

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions outlined in the information sheet.

Full name printed: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please tick if you wish to receive a summary of the findings once the research is complete

If YES please write down your email address or postal address below:

Email: _____

Address: _____



Contact

School office

Email: pepadmin@massey.ac.nz

Aim: Examining the role of interfaith-dialogue initiatives toward peacebuilding: A case study of the 'Community of Sant'Egidio'

INFORMATION SHEET

Buongiorno/ Shalom/ Salam Aleikum,

My name is Anna Baldwin and I am a student of International Development at Massey University in New Zealand. I have come to both Italy and Israel in order to conduct field research for my Master's thesis. My research investigates the role of interfaith-dialogue initiatives toward peacebuilding. In doing so, I will analyze the role and variations of interfaith dialogues, analyzing whether there is an important space for the collaborations of differing faiths in order to build sustainable peace. The research aims to produce a rich narrative and a deeper understanding; therefore my research will be undertaken in a qualitative manner. This research will enable interfaith organizations to have a voice and to present their view of religions role towards peace. Any contribution to this research will help expand our understanding of this topic and will help to identify the potential spaces for religious dialogue toward peace building.

I would greatly appreciate your contribution towards my research. However your participation is voluntary. As a participant you have the right to decline to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable with. You are also welcome to ask me any questions that you wish. If you don't understand what I am asking you, please ask so I can further clarify or rephrase for you. If a tape recorder is used it can be turned off at any time during the interview. If you do not want your real name used in this research please let me know. You can withdraw any information you shared with me before the conclusion of this research. The information that you share with me will only be used for the purpose of completing this thesis.

This project has been evaluated by peer review and deemed low-risk. It has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. As the researcher, I am responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the research that you want to discuss with someone other than the researcher please contact: John O'Neill, Director, Research Ethics, email: humanethics@massey.ac.nz, telephone +64 6 350 5249.

Thank you for considering my request to participate in this research it is greatly appreciated.

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