

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: York St John University		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 31 Theology and Religious Studies		
Title of case study: The Role of Religion in Facilitating Dialogue and Practice for Peace and Reconciliation		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008 - 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Professor Sebastian Kim	Chair in Theology and Public Life	April 2005 - June 2017
Professor Pauline Kollontai	Professor of Higher Education in Theology and Religious Studies	January 2000 – August 2020
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>The Centre for Religion in Society's (CRiS) research expertise contributes to the theory and practice of peace and reconciliation and to facilitate dialogue within and between religious groups, practitioners, and policymakers. A direct result of Professor Sebastian Kim's work on the theory of peace and reconciliation was the setting up in 2015 of the Center for Christian Unification Leadership (CCUL) in South Korea, which is the largest and most influential Christian ecumenical unification movement in South Korea. Complementing this theoretical expertise, is Professor Pauline Kollontai's work on the role of religion in building just, peaceful, and sustainable societies, which has led to the establishment of a book series with two international co-editors, enabling dialogue and collaborations between religious and secular actors (practitioners, policymakers, and academics).</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>CRiS provides a collaborative forum where researchers from theology and religious studies, humanities and social sciences and religious and secular actors come together to look at the role of religion in global society. Sebastian Kim's research on developing methodologies for public contributions of religion to building peace and reconciliation in modern and post-modern societies underpins impacts in India, South Korea and the UK.</p> <p>In particular Kim developed four theories of peace-making for religious communities: First, peace-making is integral to the faith and practice of religious communities, therefore, religious enthusiasm and inspiration can be utilised to bring about peace and reconciliation since a religious motivation for peace-making is a powerful tool in dealing with conflict situations. Second, since religious traditions provide some of the fundamental explanations for, and insights into, both war and peace, religion offers critical understanding of the process of peace-making and utilising these resources for peace is vital for peace-making. Third, religious traditions possess unique authority and capacity among the followers of a religion to deal with conflicts, particularly by preventing conflict and making sustainable peace. Fourth, religious traditions can be effective in practical ways, especially in reconciliation, since religious traditions provide deeper understandings of reconciliation which involve memory, confession and forgiveness.</p> <p>Following the four theories above, Kim's research focused on their implementation in terms of building communities for sustainable peace, justice and reconciliation, and how these</p>		

approaches from various global contexts are used. His work is designed to influence theory and practice by bringing academics, practitioners and policymakers, and community and religious leaders together.

The second stream of research is from Kollontai's work on religion's role in building just, peaceful, and sustainable societies in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Nigeria, and Israel. This demonstrates that while the role of religion has become more visible and acknowledged by academics, religious and secular actors, knowledge of the potential impact of religion on peace building often remains vague. Kollontai's research shows that addressing critical global issues such as those presented in the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals requires the joint effort of religious and interdisciplinary voices, and the cooperation of relevant actors – academics, practitioners, and policymakers, and that a variety of platforms are shown to be an essential tool for this purpose. Working with Dr Ayse S. Kadayifci-Orellana (Conflict Resolution Practitioner, Centre for Global Policy, Washington D.C. USA) and Professor Christine Schliesser (Zurich University, Switzerland) a book series, '*Religion Matters: On the Significance of Religion in Global Issues*', published by Routledge, has been designed as a new and comprehensive collaboration platform.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- [3.1] Kim, Sebastian, (2017) 'United Korea or Christian South? The Role of Christianity in the Division of the Peninsula 1945-1948' in Pauline Kollontai, Sue Yore and Sebastian Kim (eds), *The Role of Religion in Peacebuilding: Crossing the Boundaries of Prejudice and Distrust*, London: Jessica Kingsley. [Can be Supplied by the HEI upon Request]
- [3.2] Kim, Sebastian (2015) 'Justice and Peace will Kiss Each Other (Psalm 85): Minjung Perspectives on Peace-building', *Transformation* 32/2, 1-14.
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0265378814537765>
- [3.3] Kim, Sebastian (2008) 'Reconciliation Possible? The Churches' Efforts Toward the Peace and Reunification of North and South Korea' in Sebastian C.H. Km, Pauline Kollontai & Greg Hoyland (eds), *Peace and Reconciliation: In Search of Shared Identity*, Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 161-78. [Can be Supplied by the HEI upon Request]
- [3.4] Kollontai, Pauline (2019) 'Promoting the 'Peaceable Garden Culture of Religion': The Challenges of Growing Inclusive and Just Community from the Perspective of Theology and Religious Studies', in Jansen, B. (2019) *Rethinking Community Through Transdisciplinary Research*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. [Listed in REF2]
- [3.5] Kollontai, Pauline (2014) 'Finding a Path to a Common Future: Religion and Cosmopolitanism in Bosnia-Herzegovina' in Rovisco, M & Kim S. C. H. *Religion, Cosmopolitanism and Public Life*, London: Routledge. [Listed in REF2]
- [3.6] Schliesser, Christine, Kadayifci-Orellana, Ayse and Kollontai, Pauline, (2020) *Religion Matters: On the Significance of Religion in Conflict and Conflict Resolution*, London: Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003002888>

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The development and implementation of theory Kim articulated was achieved mainly through CRiS's international series on peace and reconciliation and other collaborations, which included symposia and consultations with other scholars, religious and community leaders, practitioners and policymakers in South Korea, China, UK and USA. One direct result was the establishment in 2015 of the Center for Christian Unification Leadership (CCUL) in South Korea, a joint venture of various Christian denominations to promote peace activities among Christians. This has become the largest and most influential Christian unification movement in South Korea, conducting regular nation-wide conferences and seminars for promoting peaceful unification on

the Korean peninsula, training Christian young people, and providing study materials for churches. Kim has been a key consultant to the CCUL for its formation and development, and also a keynote speaker for various conferences and seminars organized by the CCUL. Kim is also involved in producing study materials for Christian youth for the promotion of peaceful unification in light of the four theories he has developed.

The main aims of the CCUL are preparation for Christian leadership for peaceful unification through the training of young Christians and established Pastors, holding seminars and conferences, and providing study materials for pastors to use in their churches. The CCUL also conduct "Insight Forums" and unification educational programs for youth groups. In 2020 their latest study materials include a textbook for church meetings in Seoul and the wider region to study unification through worship and Bible study under the theme of unification mission. The Head of the CCUL states that this new textbook is intended to increase the number of churches and their members participating in the unification mission. Academic study through the CCUL is available through a masters and a doctoral program on Christian unification studies, in collaboration with Soongsil University, the oldest university in Korea and well-known for its emphasis on the peaceful unification of the Korean peninsula.

Kollontai's research on the role of religion in building just, peaceful, and sustainable societies has led to the establishment of a book series in 2019, with two international co-editors, to facilitate the collaboration of religious and secular actors in co-authoring volumes. The first volume, on religion, conflict and conflict resolution was published in July 2020 and reflects the book series' aim of providing an inter-religious, inter-disciplinary and cross-sector approach. The second volume, *Religion and Global Diplomacy*, written by two former Irish Ambassadors, a Polish policymaker and an academic from South America, was published in November 2020.

The book series has received positive responses on the rationale, scope, and design of the book series and volumes. These include from a Senior Program Officer, United States Institute of Peace; an Israeli politician and activist; a practitioner/academic in conflict resolution and inter-religious dialogue and Senior Advisor to King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, and a former member of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa (TRC). Overall, their responses state that combining cutting-edge research with case studies and concrete implications from practitioners, policymakers, and academics, in a concise and accessible form, would further bridge-build between these oftentimes separated spheres of engagement through author collaboration, and dissemination and promotion by authors to their respective audiences.

In 2019 the series editors were invited to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Washington D.C. to speak about their book series. As a result, USIP offered to hold a round table discussion event on the aims and impact of the book series in Washington D.C. in July 2020. USIP is an influential body in American policy making, founded in 1948 by USA Congress. Due to Covid-19 this event was cancelled with the aim of rescheduling in early 2021. In October 2020, the Institute for International Conflict Resolution and Reconstruction in Dublin invited Kollontai, Schliesser and Kadayifci-Orellana to discuss their book series and first volume in a webinar, with Gary Mason (Founder and Director of Rethinking Conflict, Northern Ireland), Professor Martin Leiner (Jena Centre for Reconciliation Studies, Germany), and a former Irish Ambassador, which was attended by over 70 participants. As a result of the webinar the first and second volumes, (available through Open Access) and the book series are being promoted through their networks to enhance listening, dialogue and debate between religious and secular spheres.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[5.1] Testimonial: Director of Center for Christian Unification Leadership, South Korea.

[5.2] Report: Summary of reports on the work of the Center for Christian Unification Leadership

[5.3] Testimonial: Practitioner/academic in conflict resolution and inter-religious dialogue and Senior Advisor to King Abdullahbin Abdulaza International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue.

[5.4] Testimonial: Senior Program Officer, United States Institute of Peace.

[5.5] Testimonial: ex-Irish Ambassador.

[5.6] Survey Data: Feedback from participants attending webinar on Religion Matters in Global Issues, October 2020