

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

<p><b>Institution:</b> Canterbury Christ Church University</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> Politics and International Studies (21)</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> Political and Psychological Responses to Violence and Conflict</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>This case study demonstrates how psychological and political science research has been utilised to inform policy and practice responses to violence and conflict. Work with the Forgiveness Project has utilised social-psychological research to develop the Forgiveness Toolbox. This is designed to assist key stakeholders, victims, perpetrators and civil society organisations in dealing with the psychological consequences of violence and conflict. The political consequences of violence and conflict were addressed, for example, through our collaboration with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Bosnia, which resulted in new material for their work on state and welfare reform.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The changing nature of violence and conflict in the post-Cold War period requires new multidimensional and interdisciplinary approaches to resolve these conflicts and create sustainable peace. The two key researchers for this case study are Dr Masi Noor and Dr Soeren Keil. <b>Noor</b> has been employed at CCCU from 2008, and <b>Keil</b> from 2011. There has, however, been a longer history of conflict and security related research at CCCU. For example, Dr David Bates (CCCU 2001 - present) and Professor AJR Groom (CCCU 2006 - present), who are both members of the <b>Conflict and Security Research Group</b> within the UoA, have worked on different aspects of conflict and security.</p> <p><b>Noor's</b> research (see below 3d-f) has provided a firm methodological basis in order to challenge orthodox strategies for group reconciliation in post-conflict societies. His most notable achievement in this field is the development and analysis of the concept of <b>Competitive Victimhood</b> which has demonstrated how different groups in inter-group conflict claim the label of 'victims' (3d). He has evidenced this phenomenon by examining groups that were involved in violence and conflict in Chile, Northern Ireland, Croatia, Israel and Palestine, amongst others (3e,f). This work has been recognised by the American Psychological Association, which awarded <b>Noor</b> an Early Career Award for Peace Psychology in 2010. Dr Keil's research has focused on the relationship between <b>state-building, democratization and transition in post-conflict societies</b>, with a special focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina (3a). His main achievement is to show how important a consensus on the nature of a state is in the process of state-building. He has furthermore demonstrated how the lack of such a consensus can severely influence strategies of democratization and state reconstruction (3b). More recently his work has focused on looking at different policy areas in post-conflict societies (3b-c). Thus, the work points out how the lack of a consensus on the nature of a state can limit post-conflict reconstruction. He has furthermore demonstrated the limits of ownership of local elites in a political environment that is still divided and in which tensions remain high. This work has been completed in collaboration with a former employee of the OSCE.</p> <p>The two academics involved in this impact case study have worked on generating a multidisciplinary approach towards impact under the headline of <i>Political and Psychological Responses to Conflict</i>. This is most visible in the joint policy paper, which <b>Keil</b> and <b>Noor</b> co-authored with <b>Bates</b>. The paper <i>Understanding Violence and Conflict: Interdisciplinary Lessons</i> has brought their academic experience together, and linked their intellectual findings to key recommendations for policy makers. These recommendations have been positively received by a number of leading policy makers, including think tank representatives in Bosnia (Centre for Peace Building), an important USAID project lead in Bosnia (Public International Law and Policy Group) and a key legal adviser to the OSCE Mission in Bosnia.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b></p> <p>a) Keil, S. (2013) <i>Multinational federalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>, Ashgate: Farnham. The main finding of this book is that Bosnia and Herzegovina represents a new model of federalism and federation. Federalism has been imposed by outsiders in the country, and it has become an</p>

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internationally administered federation. Political elites do not share a consensus on the nature of the state, and therefore federalism itself remains a contested concept amongst Bosnia's elites and peoples.

b) Keil, S. (2011) 'Social policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina between state-building, democratization and Europeanization' in: Stambolieva, M. and Dehnert, S. (Eds) *Welfare States in Transition*, Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, Sofia. This chapter discusses the development of social policy in post-war Bosnia. It concludes that social policy can be seen as an example of the more general problems of the states, pointing out particularly the contested nature of the state, the lack of progress in state-building, and the questionable role of external actors in the political system more widely.

c) Perry, V. and Keil, S. (2013) 'The OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Testing the Limits of Ownership' in: *Nationalities Papers*, 41 (3), 371-394. The main finding of this article can be summarised by the fact that it demonstrates the limits of ownership in a post-conflict society. By focusing on the role of the OSCE in education policy, the authors show how local elites have permanently failed to implement recommended guidelines and have not been able to fulfil their international obligations. This is explained by a lack of imposition powers for the OSCE and a general lack of consensus on the nature of the state in Bosnia amongst political elites.

d) Noor, M., Shnabel, N., Halabi, S. and Nadler, A. (2012) 'When suffering begets suffering: the psychology of competitive victimhood between adversarial groups in violent conflicts' in: *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 16 (4), 351-374. This paper integrates several novel and traditional theoretical models, including Intergroup Competitive Victimhood, Need-Based Reconciliation Model, and Common Ingroup Identity Model. In doing so, the authors identify competition over victimhood as an antecedent to the different psychological needs for reconciliation within the conflicting parties. This paper also identifies strategies to overcome the need for competitive victimhood by inducing the parties with a common ingroup identity which reminds both groups of their common suffering (e.g. loss of loved ones). The paper backs up its theoretical assertions by referring to published and unpublished empirical works derived from multiple disciplines (e.g. psychology, politics, international relations, history, sociology).

e) Noor, M., Brown, R. J., Gonzalez, R., Manzi, J. and Lewis, C. A. (2008) 'On positive psychological outcomes: what helps groups with a history of conflict to forgive and reconcile with each other?' in: *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 34 (6), 819-832. This paper deals with factors that may facilitate or inhibit intergroup forgiveness and reconciliation. Study 1 validates a host of predictors, ranging from identity and intergroup emotions to competitive victimhood, in the context of post-Pinochet Chile. Study 2 replicates and extends the findings from Study 1 in the context of the Northern Irish conflict. Finally, Study 3, conducted in Northern Ireland, sheds light on the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation. It was revealed that over time forgiveness was a potent predictor of reconciliation, though some support was also found for circular pathway.

f) Noor, M., Brown, R. J. and Prentice, G. (2008) 'Precursors and mediators of intergroup reconciliation in Northern Ireland: A new model' in: *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 47 (3), 481-495. This paper examines the structural interrelationships between the key variables involved in fostering and inhibiting reconciliation between conflicting parties. A model that specified competitive victimhood as a major negative antecedent of reconciliation orientation and a positive antecedent of justification of past violence, whereby trust and strength of identification with one's own group served as potent mediators of the above relationships, was empirically validated between the Protestant and Catholic communities in Northern Ireland.

A key indication of the quality of research in this area is evident through the support it has received from external funders.

**Noor** has been the Principal Investigator on a British Academy project on 'Overcoming *Competitive Victimhood* to foster intergroup forgiveness and Reconciliation Attitudes in Post-Pinochet Chile'. Period of Grant: 2008-2010. Value of Grant: £5,872.

**Noor** has also been recognised for his research by the American Psychological Association through the Early Career Award in 2010 for Peace Psychology.

#### Quality of Research

- **Peer review:** All journal articles have gone through the process of peer review. The target journals are themselves of international standard, and hence have highly competitive entry criteria.

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- **Funding:** Research for this case study has received funding from the British Academy.
- **Academic scrutiny:** A number of academic papers cited above have previously been presented at leading national and international conferences, involving practitioners and academics. **Keil's** publications have been reviewed and assessed by leading academics in the field before publication and have been published as part of major research projects.

**Prizes:** **Noor's** contribution to peace psychology has been recognised by the American Psychological Association with the Early Career Award in 2010.

#### 4. Details of the impact

The research outlined above has impacted on (1) *Practitioners and Professional Services* and (2) on *Public Policy, Law and Services*, specifically the work of NGOs (The Forgiveness Project, Centre for Peace Building in Bosnia) and civil society partner organisations (such as the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Bosnia and the Public International Law and Policy Group (PILPG)).

**Noor's** research, which he has developed in collaboration with victim and perpetrator groups, has been the basis for his engagement with the NGO *The Forgiveness Project*. He has been working with the Forgiveness Project since 2008. This work has led to the development and application of the Forgiveness Toolbox (<http://www.theforgivenessproject.com/about/>). The Forgiveness Project works with victim and perpetrator groups of conflicts across the world. Their main aim is 'to provide tools that facilitate conflict resolution and promote behavioural change' (<http://theforgivenessproject.com/>). The focus of the Toolbox is to develop 'skills [that] aim to enable individuals and groups to re-gain their diminished sense of agency following victimhood experiences.' In terms of *reach*, this Toolbox is publicly available on the internet and can therefore be utilised by NGOs, groups and individuals in a range of global contexts. It utilises the experiences of victims and perpetrators, who have worked with **Noor** and the Forgiveness Project. The *significance* of this work can be seen in terms of how it has filled a demonstrable gap in the necessary practical resources available for those working on the ground, in the field of dealing with the effects of conflict, specifically at the psychological level.

The impact has occurred through the process of developing the Toolbox. From the start there has been a strong input from practitioners (The Forgiveness Project), focusing on enhancing and improving effective practice. **Noor's** research had to respond directly to practitioner needs. Furthermore, victims and perpetrators of violence and conflict were involved at key stages of the design process, and challenged many of the assumptions of the research itself. Thus, participants have engaged with different concepts of victimhood, as can be seen by one participant's testimony: '*I can't look at myself as a victim – it diminishes me as a person.*'

Before going 'live' in July 2013, we put mechanisms in place to monitor downloads and access to the Toolbox, along with practitioners' narrative pertaining to its use. While **Noor's** work focuses on the psychological responses to violence and conflict, **Keil's** work is on institutional design in post-conflict societies. These approaches have recently been united in a policy paper, which has been distributed to partner organisations.

**Keil** was commissioned to write a report by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, and this has since been published by their office in Bosnia and Herzegovina (in 2011), and has been used to confirm their policy of supporting specific state reforms (<http://www.fes.ba/publikacije/2012/Welfare/soren.pdf>). As part of the Foundation's work in Bosnia, they have identified economic stagnation and social instability as key reasons for the on-going political crisis in the country ([www.fes.ba](http://www.fes.ba)). It can be demonstrated that **Keil's** work has enabled the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung to continue its focus on certain reform initiatives and provided wider information for key stakeholders such as young people, trade unionists and social democratic party members. For another research paper, **Keil** worked collaboratively on research with a practitioner and former employee of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). He has also worked with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Bosnia, for which **Keil** co-authored a paper on the territorial dimension of the Croat question in Bosnia. This paper has been used to inform policy debates in the country in 2013. In terms of *reach*, therefore this work has specifically focused on certain societal actors in Bosnia and

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Herzegovina. While enabling further public debate on fundamental issues of state-building and social policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this impact is also **significant**, because it enables the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (and other key actors in Bosnia) to apply intellectual knowledge in their practical work.

*Supporting evidence*

- Work with NGOs such as *The Forgiveness Project*, and *The Parenting Circle* can be viewed at [www.theforgivenessproject.org.uk](http://www.theforgivenessproject.org.uk), and <http://www.theparentscircle.com/> see also the homepage of the Forgiveness Tool Kit: <http://www.theforgivenessstoolbox.com/resisting-conformity/>
- Work with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For example, see **Keil's** contribution on their website: <http://www.fes.ba> Soeren Keil's Email exchange the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Bosnia.
- On-going email exchanges and academic consultations with Dr Valery Perry, the Chair of Party of the International Law and Policy Group in Bosnia (a USAID financed organisation to support civil society development).
- Email exchanges with Founder and Director of the Forgiveness Project.

Informing public debate: Research specifically dealing with the psychological responses to violence and conflict has featured in Times Higher Education article (4<sup>th</sup> June 2009) and as part of BBC Radio 4's 'Thinking Allowed' broadcast (19<sup>th</sup> January 2011).

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact****Documents/Websites**

1. Website of the Forgiveness Toolbox: <http://www.theforgivenessstoolbox.com/about/>
2. Keil's Report for the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Bosnia, <http://www.fes.ba/publikacije/2012/Welfare/soren.pdf>
3. Policy Paper on Understanding Violence and Conflict available via the Website of the Centre for Peace Building in Bosnia: <http://www.mreza-mira.net/wp-content/uploads/Policy-Paper-Keil-Bates-Noor.pdf>

**People**

1. Email correspondence with the Founder and Director of the Forgiveness Project, <http://theforgivenessproject.com/> (**contact I.D. 1**)
2. Email correspondence with the Chair of the Public International Law and Policy Group in Bosnia and Herzegovina, <http://publicinternationallawandpolicygroup.org/> (**contact I.D. 2**)
3. Formal written testimony from the Founder and Director of the Forgiveness Project (**contact I.D. 1**)

Formal written testimony from a Project Officer of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Bosnia and Herzegovina, [www.fes.ba](http://www.fes.ba) (**contact I.D. 4**)