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Sharing Lessons between Peace Processes: A Comparative Case Study on the Northern Ireland and Korean Peace Processes

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Abstract: In both Northern Ireland and Korea, the euphoria following significant breakthroughs towards peace in the late 1990s and early 2000s turned into deep frustration when confronted by continuous stalemates in implementing the agreements. I explore the two peace processes by examining and comparing the breakthroughs and breakdowns of both, in order to identify potential lessons that can be shared for a sustainable peace process. Using a comparative case study, I demonstrate the parallels in historical analyses of why the agreements in the late 1990s and early 2000s in Northern Ireland and Korea were expected to be more durable than those of the 1970s. I also examine the differences between the two peace processes in the course of addressing major challenges for sustaining the two processes: disarmament; relationships between hard-line parties; cross-community initiatives. These parallels and differences inform which lessons can be shared between Northern Ireland and Korea to increase the durability of the peace processes. The comparative case study finds that the commitment of high-level leadership in both conflict parties to keeping negotiation channels open for dialogue and to allowing space for civic engagement is crucial in a sustainable peace process, and that sharing lessons between the two peace processes can be beneficial in finding opportunities to overcome challenges and also for each process to be reminded of lessons from its own past experience.

Keywords: Northern Ireland; Korea; peace process; peacebuilding; comparative peace processes

1. Introduction

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the new millennium appeared to usher in an era of peace in Europe and Asia. Major political parties in Northern Ireland, as well as the British and Irish governments, reached an agreement for peace in Belfast on Good Friday, 10 April 1998. This Good Friday Agreement, or Belfast Agreement, (hereafter the 1998 Agreement) offered a new prospect for peace, bringing an end to the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland. Two years after the 1998 Agreement, another momentous event for peace occurred in Asia. For the first time since the division of the Korean peninsula in 1945, the two leaders of North and South Korea met each other in Pyongyang and issued the 15 June Joint Declaration (hereafter the 2000 Declaration), which laid out a roadmap for peace and the unification of Korea. The Norwegian Nobel committee recognized the significance of these events and awarded the 1998 Peace Prize to SDLP leader, John Hume and UUP leader, David Trimble, and the 2000 Peace Prize to South Korean president Kim Dae-jung.

In both Northern Ireland and Korea, the euphoria after the signing of the agreements turned into deep frustration when confronted by continuous stalemates in implementing the agreements. The Northern Ireland peace process faced gridlock over the failure of the paramilitaries to decommission, fierce opposition from hard-line parties, and controversy over reforms for policing in Northern Ireland. However, the impasse of the Northern Ireland peace process did not seem to last long. In 2006, the two most hard-line parties from each side, the DUP and Sinn Féin, agreed to share

power through the St. Andrews agreement. Paramilitary groups finally underwent decommissioning. The historic visit by Queen Elisabeth to Northern Ireland in June 2012, and the picture of her shaking hands with Martin McGuinness, a former IRA commander and Deputy First Minister at that time, showed the progress that had been made in Northern Ireland, although there is a continuing identity conflict in the form of flags and parades, as well as issues related to how to deal with the past. In 2017, Northern Irish politics faced another deadlock due to the collapse of the power-sharing agreement between the DUP and Sinn Féin. Nevertheless, the peace process is still holding and is considered to be one of the most successful in the world.

Similarly, the Korean peace process, once seemingly on the way to an official ending to the Korean War, faced an impasse in the late 2000s after undergoing multiple crises, including the nuclear ambitions of North Korea, the deterioration of relations between the US and North Korea, and changes in South Korean policy toward North Korea. Unlike Northern Ireland, the Korean peace process seemed to be facing total breakdown. Most humanitarian, development, economic and socio-cultural exchange and cooperation projects have been suspended since 2010. Although North Korean participation in the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea has brought new hope for the resumption of the Korean peace process, the ongoing confrontation and provocation among the conflict parties is making the Korean conflict appear not only intractable, but also increasingly volatile. Why does one peace process hold despite challenges, and the other breakdown? Are there lessons to be shared between the two peace processes?

This article seeks to answer these questions by comparing aspects between the Northern Ireland and the Korean Peace Processes. This article first introduces contextual and methodological discussions about comparative research on peace processes. Then, drawing upon the results the comparative case study, this paper presents the potential benefits of sharing lessons between the Northern Ireland and Korea for a more sustainable peace process.

2. Methods

Each conflict is unique in terms of root causes, history, culture and social development, but some parallels can be found in the challenges of peace processes, such as issues of preventing violence, disarmament, dealing with past atrocities, human rights, building a new political structure, and reconciliation. However, the most difficult and commonly found challenge in any peace process appears to be maintaining the process after the agreement. Tonge says "Acceptance of the term 'peace process' requires understanding that transitions towards non-violence and the permanent eradication of conflict are non-linear, subject to regression and rarely short". Therefore, peace is not an event such as signing the agreement or temporary absence of war, but a process, which involves building "harmony in societal and inter-personal relationships" (Tonge 2014, pp. 6–7).

There are several theoretical and practical discussions pertaining to the conditions under which peace is durable and the recurrence of violence is preventable. Liberal peace theory, which has been widely accepted by major international organisations and government agencies, assumes that state weakness or failure is the main cause of violence; and the establishment of a liberal democracy, a market economy and universal human rights are essential conditions for peace (Richmond and Mitchell 2011, pp. 1–39). But this theory has received strong criticism, saying that this style of peacebuilding is reduced to top-down institutional remedies delivered by outside intervention representing global hierarchy and self-interests of the elite countries, and lacks an awareness of the context of the conflict. The critics argue that for a peace process to be sustainable, that process must be based in its own context, and must therefore have strong local initiative and commitment (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013, pp. 772–77). The background to this criticism is that the proportion of peace processes "negotiated by the parties primarily engaged in the conflict" has grown since the end of the Cold War. The increasingly local initiatives of peace processes and the criticisms against the liberal model have caused local conflict parties to seek guidance from other concurrent

peace processes and to share lessons with each other, rather than following the universal prescription provided by external interventions (Darby 2008, p. 246).

This is in line with the trend in international social research, which compares the social aspects of countries. According to Teune, the goal of international comparative research tends to be "lessons rather than creating or testing theory" (Teune 1990, p. 38). Researchers would 'select' which countries and social phenomena they wish to compare, either to better understand the phenomena or to produce policy options for positive change. Teune says that comparing countries "can be a way of understanding the 'best' forms of political organization to realize general values" (Teune 1990, p. 58). Comparisons between contemporary peace processes also carry the potential for biased views, flawed conclusions and misleading perceptions of reality (Hantrais 2008). But, unlike the liberal peace approach, the aim of comparative research on contemporary peace processes is not to produce a panacea for every peace process, but to identify parallels and differences in the challenges and opportunities of each peace process, which can serve as useful lessons for each situation (Darby and Mac Ginty 2000, pp. 4–8).

There have been attempts in Northern Ireland to learn lessons from other contemporary peace processes, such as the end of apartheid in South Africa and the Oslo process for Israel-Palestine (Edwards 2008, p. 202). Since the 1998 Agreement, there have been increasing efforts to promote Northern Ireland as one of the successful peace processes and to share the lessons (Darby 2008, p. 247). Although there have been many comparative research projects on the Korean peace process and the German unification process, interest in potential lessons from the experience of the Northern Ireland peace process for the Korean peace process has been growing of late (Mitchell and Kim 2017). However, the history of comparison between Ireland and Korea goes back for more than a century, to 1904, when Lillias Horton Underwood described Koreans as "the East's Irish People" (Underwood 1904). The main reason for this perception appears to be related to similar characteristics in the history of both conflicts. Although they are situated in such different and distant contexts—Europe and East Asia—Ireland and Korea share similar historical experiences of colonization, partition and war. In addition to these characteristics, the concurrence of the major breakthroughs in the Northern Irish and Korean peace processes make them well suited for sharing lessons with each other (Teune 1990, p. 44).

It should also be noted that there are significant dissimilarities between the Northern Irish and Korean conflicts. Geopolitically, the Korean conflict had been greatly influenced by the Cold War system of the surrounding superpowers, the USA and Japan, the USSR and China. Although the Cold War ended in the early 1990s, the interests of the surrounding superpowers continue to add complexity to the Korean conflict (Kim 2006, p. 3). Northern Ireland has not experienced such a hostile geopolitical environment as Korea. Instead, parties outside of Northern Ireland, such as the Irish and British governments, the US, and the EU, seem to have taken a supporting role. Domestically, both North and South Korea went through dictatorships during the Cold War period. Although South Korea was democratised in the late 1980s, North Korea remains an authoritarian state, which also makes the political dynamics in the Korean peace process different from Northern Ireland (Armstrong 2007, p. 28).

These differences in the geopolitical and domestic conflict-contexts do not mean that there are no lessons to be shared between the two peace processes. On the contrary, the contextualization of the dissimilarities between the Northern Ireland and the Korean conflicts can contribute to reducing the potential for biased views and misleading perceptions (Hantrais 2008). Taking into consideration the dissimilarities between the conflict-contexts, the next sections examine the parallels in historical analyses of the agreements in the late 1990s and early 2000s in Northern Ireland and Korea, and the differences between the two peace processes which emerge in the course of addressing major challenges for sustaining the two processes. These parallels and differences in the peace processes are expected to identify which lessons can be shared between the Northern Ireland and Korea to increase durability of the peace processes.

3. Pararells in the Breakthroughs at the Dawn of a New Millennium

Both the Northern Irish and Korean conflicts had been considered insoluble for several decades. However, breakthroughs in the late 1990s and early 2000s raised expectations that the conflict parties were finally on the way to a peaceful coexistence. In 1998, the major political parties in Northern Ireland, and the British and Irish governments reached an agreement in Belfast. There appeared to be a compromise on the future status of Northern Ireland. They agreed that:

> It is for the people of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively and without external impediment, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a United Ireland, accepting that this right must be achieved and exercised with and subject to the agreement and consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland.

They also agreed to create institutions across three strands. Strand One was to establish democratic institutions in Northern Ireland. A 108-member Assembly would be elected and constitute an Executive Committee, a power-sharing Cabinet, which combined the Unionist demand for proportionality with the Nationalist demand for a minority veto. Strand Two referred to North-South relations, the relationship between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. They were to form an intergovernmental confederal relationship by establishing the North-South Ministerial Council (NSMC), which does not have executive power, but has a consultative role. Strand Three involved East-West relations, a confederal relationship between the UK and Ireland. The 1998 Agreement created a consultative British-Irish Council in which the British and Irish governments, and the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man participate. It also established the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference to promote a bilateral relationship between the two governments and to discuss non-devolved Northern Ireland matters, such as security, rights, justice, prisons and policing (Hennessey 2000, pp. 172–81).

On 15 June 2000, the Declaration was signed by the North and South Korean leaders. They agreed:

> The South and North have agreed to resolve the question of reunification on their own initiative and through the joint efforts of the Korean people, who are the masters of the country. Acknowledging that there are common elements in the South's proposal for a confederation and the North's proposal for a federation of lower stage as the formulae for achieving reunification, the South and the North agreed to promote reunification in that direction.

This appears to be a compromise on the future status of the Korean peninsula. Both North and South Korea had been maintaining their respective positions to unify the Korean peninsula under their own systems. North Korea proposed a 'Federation Plan', of two governments under a Supreme National Committee with the Committee holding diplomatic and military control. On the other hand, South Korea proposed a 'Confederation Plan', with an institution for economic and social exchange, but with each government retaining diplomatic and military control until the final stage of unification, which would allow South Korea to eventually absorb North Korea. In the 2000 Declaration, both leaders agreed that Korean unification had to be approached incrementally. They also agreed to address humanitarian issues, such as separated families and long-term prisoners, and committed to the promotion of economic cooperation and cultural exchanges between private and civic sectors. Finally, they recognised each other's authority and "opened the channel of dialogue at the inter-governmental level" (Moon 2001, pp. 296–301).

The two peace processes made breakthroughs when the conflict parties reached agreement on how to coexist and develop relationships without resorting to violence. In both cases, the main conflict parties stressed that any resolution of the conflict would be the outcome of their own decision, without external interference. But these agreements at the dawn of a new millennium were not the first of their kind, in Northern Ireland or the Korean peninsula. Why, then, did these agreements appear to

be more significant breakthroughs than previous agreements, such as the Sunningdale Communiqué in 1973 in the Northern Irish peace process and the Joint Communiqué of 4 July 1972 in the Korean peace process?

In December 1973, the British, Irish and pro-agreement parties in Northern Ireland; SDLP, UUP, and Alliance Party, reached an agreement and issued a communiqué in Sunningdale, but this agreement broke down in 1974 as a result of the backlash from those opposed to the communiqué (Smith 2002, pp. 102–10). Dixon summarises the similarities between the contents of the Sunningdale Communiqué and the 1998 Agreement in the will of the majority, the cooperation between the Irish and the British governments, and a power-sharing deal. He says, despite the similarities, some of the hard-line parties who eventually participated in the 1998 Agreement had intensely resisted the Sunningdale Communiqué in 1973. For this reason, critics, including Seamus Mallon, term the 1998 Agreement 'Sunningdale for slow learners' (Dixon 2008, p. 267). This was also connected to the lack of commitment to implementation from the conflict parties who participated in the negotiation process. The British government did not provide adequate assurance of its genuine intention for peace to the Unionist community, but fuelled anger and fear by implying that there was no British interest in remaining in Ireland. The Irish government also failed to ensure the execution of the agreement, an outcome of a ruling by the Irish Constitutional Court that the Sunningdale Communiqué was merely a statement of policy, and therefore would be a violation of the constitution if it was carried out (Wolff 2002, pp. 7–8). Furthermore, the IRA seemed to believe they could end British rule by force. A large number of Protestant paramilitaries were also actively engaged in the violence (Ruane and Todd 1999, p. 2).

Concurrently, there was the Joint Communiqué of 4 July 1972 in the Korean peninsula. An optimistic mood for peace between the US and China, as a result of high-level secret visits in 1971, stimulated talks between North and South Korea. The Joint Communiqué, brought about by these talks, was the first agreement to be signed jointly by both North and South Korea since the division. The Communiqué became a frame of reference for succeeding agreements, including the 2000 Declaration with its three core principles for unification: 'independence', 'peace', and 'national unity'. Following the Joint Communiqué of 4 July 1972, South and North Korea formed a South-North Coordinating Committee and opened the Red Cross talks (Jonsson 2006, pp. 51–56). However, according to Oberdorfer, the limitation of this Communiqué was that it was not signed by the two official governments, but by the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) Director, Lee Hu-rak (South Korea) and the Director of Organization and Guidance, Kim Young-joo (North Korea) (Oberdorfer 2001, p. 21). Like the Sunningdale Communiqué, the Joint Communiqué suffered from a lack of commitment by the conflict parties to the implementation of the agreement. The two parties had tried to discuss humanitarian issues, such as facilitating family reunion, through the Red Cross talks and had sought political agreement through high-level government official negotiation in the Coordinating Committee. However, North Korea maintained that if political agreement regarding the withdrawal of the US military forces from the Korean peninsula, and the replacement of the armistice treaty with a peace treaty were reached, then humanitarian issues would be resolved as a matter of course. Whereas, South Korea argued that building mutual confidence through resolving humanitarian issues should come as a prelude to major high-level negotiations (Buzo 2002, p. 124). In the end, the talks effectively ceased in mid-1973, when the two sides reached an impasse following the half-dozen meetings of the Coordinating Committee (Armstrong 2007, p. 146).

The reasoning behind the higher hopes for the 1998 Agreement, unlike the Sunningdale Communiqué, has been commented on by several historical analyses by scholars of Northern Ireland. First, the IRA realised it would be impossible to achieve their goal militarily, and the inclusive negotiation process moderated the more extreme positions (Dixon 2008, p. 209). Second, political leaders from the Protestant communities, including David Trimble, became convinced that their goal of remaining in the UK could not only be compatible with sharing power with Nationalists

and maintaining a positive relationship with the Republic of Ireland, but could also be helpful in ensuring the current status of Northern Ireland in the UK. Furthermore, a negotiated settlement would end the violence that had threatened their lives. Third, the mutual mistrust was taken into account more seriously. The removal of the constitutional claim by the Republic of Ireland on Northern Ireland, the institutional creation of the NSMC and the right to hold both British and Irish citizenship in Northern Ireland transformed the zero-sum conception of the security dilemma. This was due, in part, to the influence of the EU in reframing the concept of state sovereignty. Fourth, the potential economic benefits from aid for peace, such as the EU Peace funding, incentivised the conflict parties to seek settlement beyond their differences (Mitchell 2015, pp. 26–32; White 2013, pp. 3–33). Finally, the negotiation and early implementation processes were more inclusive than previously. The negotiation process, mediated by the US, included groups that had historically been considered terrorists, as these groups had halted their armed campaigns. The creation of the Civic Forum guaranteed the involvement of Northern Ireland civil society in the implementation of the agreement (Wolff 2002, p. 20).

As in the case of Northern Ireland, hope in the Korean peninsula for the peace process was higher in the 1990s and early 2000s than in the 1970s. The reasons behind this hope, as suggested by several scholars of Korea, appear to be comparable to those in Northern Ireland. First, the economic superiority of South Korea and the diplomatic isolation of North Korea after the Cold war made it unfeasible for North Korea to achieve its goal of unification with military force under their system (Moon 2012, p. 181). Second, both South and North Korean leaderships began to recognise the value of dialogue. They appeared to believe that building a good inter-Korean relationship would be helpful in decreasing the security threat and avoiding a humanitarian crisis. Third, the mutual mistrust was more seriously considered. The South Korean government reassured the North by announcing it would not pursue 'unification by absorption' and provided humanitarian aid without preconditions. In response, North Korea accepted the South Korean offer of several exchange programmes in humanitarian, economic, and cultural sectors (Kim 2006, pp. 320–21; Moon 2012, pp. 19–29; Smith 2005, pp. 189–221). Fourth, potential economic benefits from inter-Korean cooperation, such as the Kaesong Industrial Complex, incentivised the negotiations between the two Koreas and increased hopes for the sustainability of the peace process (Kim and Noh 2010, pp. 173–98). Finally, the processes were more inclusive than previously. Associated governments, including China, Russia, Japan, and the US were supportive of the peace process in the late 1990s and early 2000s. South Korean civil society and the private sector were able to participate in the implementation process of the 2000 Declaration by providing humanitarian aid to North Korea, initiating exchange programmes, and opening economic cooperation with North Korea (Kim 2016, pp. 473–98; 2006, pp. 4–5; Moon 2012, pp. 202–4).

4. Differences in Addressing Challenges for Sustaining Peace Processes

In both Northern Ireland and Korea, the euphoria after the signing of the agreements at the dawn of the new millennium turned into deep frustration when faced by continuous stalemates during implementation. Ruane and Todd say the interplay between failures of political leadership and 'structurally defined' conflicting interests from their constituencies caused an institutional setback of the Northern Ireland peace process (Ruane and Todd 1999, p. 3). O'Kane says that the 1998 Agreement was reached in such a way as to "provide political elites with a 'creative ambiguity'" to interpret the agreement for their own benefit and to sell it to their respective constituencies as a victory (O'Kane 2013, pp. 525–28). Mistrust and dissatisfaction toward the agreement soon developed, due to a hesitation on the part of the IRA to decommission, and doubt about their willingness to observe the ceasefire. This gave the anti-Agreement Unionists stronger ground to oppose the agreement, which caused division within Unionism (Dixon 2008, pp. 278–79). Hancock says many Unionists began to feel that UUP leader Trimble "had given too much away to the Nationalists and Republicans and had received far too little in return" (Hancock 2008, p. 207). During this crisis,

Loyalist paramilitary groups including the UDA began to disregard the cease-fire, and the issue of policing also faced an impasse. Finally, the Northern Ireland Assembly was suspended, and by 2003 moderate parties such as UUP and SDLP had lost their political support to the hard-line DUP and Sinn Féin. Dixon says there was widespread belief that the popularity of the hard-line parties indicated the failure of the 1998 agreement. Opinion polls began to show the polarisation of public opinion following the agreement (Dixon 2008, p. 279).

Mistrust and dissatisfaction in the peace process was also growing in the Korean peninsula, particularly following the new US Bush administration's 2001 adoption of a hard-line policy toward North Korea. The former US Special Envoy to North Korea, Charles Pritchard, says that President Bush considered people who did not share his opinion of North Korea to be useless, and in this respect, "President Kim Dae-jung was the first, but certainly not the last, casualty" (Pritchard 2007, p. 71). The US labelled North Korea member of the "Axis of Evil" and accused North Korea of carrying out a uranium enrichment program for nuclear weapons, in violation of the Agreed Framework. North Korea argued that it was the US who first ignored promises to provide light water reactors (*BBC NEWS* 2007). In 2003, the new South Korean Rho Moo-hyun administration distanced itself from the previous administration's North Korea policy in response to increasing tension between the US and the DPRK over the nuclear issue and increasing criticism from conservative politicians. Rho appointed special prosecutors to investigate the alleged 'secret remittance' to North Korea for the inter-Korean Summit. The investigation of this scandal fuelled negative public opinion against the 2000 Declaration. Furthermore, the statement by North Korea on the development of nuclear weapons in 2005 and the subsequent nuclear testing in 2006 provided more ground for the conservative party to argue that South Korea gave too much away to North Korea in the peace process, and that North Korea diverted South Korean aid for military purposes (Kim 2010, pp. 154–62). In 2007, Rho met Kim Jong-il in the second inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang, which produced a Joint Declaration. However, conservative parties criticised this declaration for not having a clear commentary on the denuclearisation of North Korea, and the high cost which South Korea had to pay for inter-Korean economic cooperation (Lee and Lee 2016, p. 160). South Korean public opinion about the peace process was severely polarised, to the extent that people call this phenomenon the 'South-South conflict' (Kim 2016, p. 485).

Despite the similarities in the challenges shared by the conflict parties, such as the issue of disarmament, the role of hard-line parties, and the mistrust among the conflict parties, there were also different aspects between the two in the course of addressing major challenges for sustaining the peace processes.

4.1. Decommissioning and Denuclearisation

The UK, Ireland and US governments kept up the pressure on the paramilitary groups to disarm. Since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack on the US, the pressure on decommissioning the IRA mounted. According to Farrington, Republicans were affected by "guilt by association" and by "the difficult ambiguity they took towards the motives and actions of Al Qaeda". Particularly, the discourse of terrorism "made it more difficult for Sinn Féin to stress the reticence of the IRA to decommission weapons, despite the ideological reasons for that reticence remaining unchanged" (Farrington 2008, pp. 35–40). The IRA went on to the first act of decommissioning in 2001, but the proportion of the arsenal that had been decommissioned was still unclear. The UK and Irish prime ministers demanded an act of completion and photographic evidence. The Northern Bank robbery and the murder of Robert McCartney in 2004 were proof that the IRA was still active, and these incidents undermined Sinn Féin's negotiation position (Dixon 2008, pp. 307–8). The US Bush administration put more pressure on Sinn Féin. Sinn Féin was denied access to the St Patrick's Day festivities at the White House in 2005, and fundraising was banned in the US (Clancy 2013, p. 175; Schmitt 2008, p. 67). In July 2005, the IRA finally declared the armed struggle finished and began the final act of decommissioning. Although no photographic evidence was

publicised, the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning, a Protestant pastor and a Catholic priest confirmed the completion of the decommissioning in September. The loyalist paramilitaries also began decommissioning (Dixon 2008, p. 309).

Pressure on North Korea to denuclearise also increased during this time. Although North Korea wanted bilateral talks with the US concerning nuclear issues, China suggested a three-party formula in which China would have a mediating role, and the US insisted on including South Korea and Japan. Russia also pushed to be included as well. As a result, the Six-Party talks were initiated in 2003 (Pritchard 2007, p. 101). The Six-Party talks reached an agreement on 19 September 2005, under the principles of "Commitment for Commitment, Action for Action". North Korea committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and reverting to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in return for the provision of a light water reactor and energy assistance. Furthermore, the US and Japan agreed to take steps to normalise their relations with North Korea. As part of implementing the actions in the agreement, North Korea declared that they had shut down the Yongbyon Nuclear facility in 2007, and detonated the cooling tower at Yongbyon in 2008 (Bong 2010, pp. 25–27). In the same year, President Bush approved North Korea's removal from the US list of states sponsoring terrorism (Sanger 2009, p. 349). However, the Six-Party talks were suspended in December 2008, due to the failure among the six parties to reach a consensus on verification measures for denuclearisation. Pritchard sees the reason behind the failure of the Six-Party Talks as the lack of commitment to negotiate a settlement with North Korea through the Six-Party process. He says that US North Korea policy "has been fully captured by those in the administration who seek regime change" (Pritchard 2007, p. 131). However, it was not only the US, but also North Korea, whose commitment was in question. Having nuclear weapons was considered to be the ultimate option for survival by the North Korean regime (Cha 2010, p. 178). On 25 May 2009, North Korea resumed underground nuclear testing, and conducted three more nuclear tests, one in 2013, and two in 2016. Furthermore, the commitment to dialogue and negotiation with North Korea by the new South Korean Lee Myong-bak (2008–2013) administration (Buszynski 2013, p. 173), which had adopted a more hard-line policy toward North Korea, was put into question, as we will see in the next section. Since the suspension of the Six-Party Talks, the US and the South Korean conservative government have maintained North Korean denuclearisation as a precondition, not an outcome, for dialogue in the peace process, effectively excluding North Korea from the talks (Bader 2013).

The Northern Ireland case appears to suggest the usefulness of maintaining both dialogue and pressure for disarmament. However, the lessons from the decommissioning process need to be contextualised. Particularly when it comes to the Korean case, the decommissioning of non-state actors and the denuclearisation of a state actor have different geopolitical contexts. Furthermore, unlike the Northern Ireland case, the role of the US cannot be seen as neutral in the Korean case. US pressure, instead of encouraging denuclearisation, appears to have increased North Korean insecurity and its commitment to developing nuclear weapons.

4.2. Negotiation between the Hard-Line Parties

Another differing feature between the two processes in addressing similar challenges was the role of hard-line parties in sustaining the process. On 13 October 2006, the St Andrews Agreement, which laid the groundwork for the restoration of the devolution in 2007, was announced. Kennedy argues that the 2007 restoration of devolution was limited because it was not based on trust-building by the parties in Northern Ireland, but on significant outside pressure from the UK, Ireland and the US. Sinn Féin and the DUP shared power in 2007 under the same consociational structure created by the 1998 Agreement. (Kennedy 2009, pp. 259–63). Trimble called the St Andrews Agreement an identical twin of the 1998 agreement. Both Sinn Féin and the DUP were able to claim victory regarding the new agreement. Kane says that Sinn Féin promoted the agreement as a "brave decision to end the armed struggle and pursue the (unaltered) goal of Irish unity by exclusively peaceful means". For the DUP, "it became logical (if nonetheless deeply surprising) for them to shift

from being critics of the peace process to embracing the logic of the path it was on and claiming its outcome as a victory for their party and policies" (O'Kane 2013, pp. 530–31). As a result, there is still structural weakness in the peace process. However, White says the power-sharing agreement between these former extremist parties means "their popular advantage over the historically more moderate parties has diminished", as they themselves are part of the agreement and responsible for governing. Therefore, the new power-sharing deal was expected to be less vulnerable to internal opposition (White 2013).

As in the case of Northern Ireland, there were high expectations for the enhanced durability of the inter-Korean relationship when President Lee Myong-bak, from the conservative Grand National party, took office in 2008. Due to his former career as CEO of one of the Hyundai Group companies, Lee was considered to be a pragmatist and to be business-friendly toward North Korea (Kim and Noh 2010, p. 174). However, contrary to expectations, Lee took a hard-line position toward North Korea. He initiated the 'Vision 3000 Policy', which proposed South Korean aid to North Korea that would result in a per capita GDP of up to US $3000, on the condition that North Korea would implement a verifiable and complete dismantlement of its nuclear weapons program and introduce a market-oriented open economic system (Kim 2008, p. 8). According to Lankov, Lee accused the previous South Korean administrations of "propping up the North Korean regime and making it even more dangerous" and argued that "aid should be conditioned on meaningful political concessions from the North" (Lankov 2013, p. 174). This policy was unacceptable to North Korea, particularly since the survival of the regime had been the top priority for North Korea following the collapse of communist countries in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, according to scholars such as Armstrong and Huh, while North Korea may have changed policy priorities or the world around them may have changed, the objective, which is the strengthening of its regime and the unification of Korea under their system, had not shifted in content (Armstrong 2010, p. 227; Huh 2006, p. 71). In 2008, North Korea disconnected the direct hotline that had been set up during the Kim Dae-jung administration in 2000 (Ha 2008). Tensions between North and South Korea continued to increase as a result of the death of a South Korean tourist in the North Korean Mt Kumgang resort in 2008, the sinking of the South Korean naval ship, Cheon-an, and shelling of the South Korean island of Yeonpyeong in 2010 (Kim 2016, p. 484).

The case study on the Northern Ireland process demonstrates the need for making agreements between hard-line conflict parties, in order to increase the durability of peace processes. This lesson could be useful in the Korean peace process. However, when applying the lessons, the difference between North and South Korean political systems needs to be taken into account. The South Korean political leadership changes, according to the results of a presidential election every five years, while North Korea remains a dictatorship.

4.3. Building Trust across Communities

The biggest challenge of the two peace processes appears to be in increasing peaceful interactions between the conflict parties. Both the 1998 Agreement and the 2000 Declaration increased expectations of gradually building interaction and cooperation, which would then spill over into various sectors of society. White says that it was hoped that cooperation following the 1998 Agreement would create trust, "which allows people from different backgrounds to work toward compromise and a common good", and that the reduction of violence would lead to better relations across communities, but that there has not been a development of a "greater sense of social trust across the communal divide" (White 2011, p. 263). The Northern Ireland Executive publicly pledged to promote community relations, publishing strategies such as 'Together: Building a United Community' (T: BUC) Strategy, in 2013. However, the power-sharing arrangement still vindicated loyalty to identity groups, and new grievances toward the peace dividend have been rising, adding to the legacy of inequality and cultural antagonism. For example, Mac Ginty, Muldoon and Ferguson point out the hostility of the Protestant-Unionist community toward the growth of political, cultural and economic confidence in

the Catholic-Nationalist community (Mac Ginty et al. 2007, p. 9). Continuing communal tensions culminated in a 'flag protest' in 2012–2013, which was held in response to the decision by Belfast City Council to regulate flying the Union flag (Nolan 2013, p. 160).

In the midst of this, the Northern Ireland civil society, which had the potential to alleviate communal tensions, appeared to be losing influence on the peace process. Northern Ireland civil society had contributed to the peace process by building bridges across communities and changing perceptions between conflict parties, which led to the creation of the Civic Forum, a consultative mechanism on social, cultural, and economic affairs, in the 1998 Agreement (Cochrane 2001, pp. 107–10). The Civic Forum was suspended in 2002, along with the Northern Ireland Assembly. Although the St Andrews Agreement resuscitated the Assembly, the Civic Forum remains suspended. The 2014 Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report says that the power-sharing structure between the political parties does not give much space for the role of civil society in the political peace process (Nolan 2014, pp. 135–51). However, despite the many challenges, several community and voluntary organisations still continue to engage in cross-community, inter-community and single-identity work, based on common socio-economic interests of the whole of Northern Ireland. The EU has been continuously supporting these activities through funding programmes, such as PEACE. As discussed above, these funding programmes incentivised the conflict parties to seek settlement beyond their differences. Neither camp could not afford to discard the opportunity to improve the local economy for their corresponding constituencies. Evaluating diverse funding programmes, including the EU programmes, Buchanan says there are ongoing conflict transformation practices, "particularly at the grassroots level, prompting previously unforeseen levels of citizen empowerment and local ownership of the peace process, consequently highlighting the intrinsic value of grassroots participatory democracy" (Buchanan 2014).

As discussed above, following the 2000 Declaration in the Korean peninsula, "several cross-border peacebuilding activities, such as humanitarian, development, and economic cooperation, business, and socio-cultural exchanges" were expanded. "Within a few years, as part of these activities, more than half a million people crossed the border between North and South Korea" (Kim 2017). However, the North Korean regime has always been wary that increased people-to-people contact through these projects may undermine the control of the regime. The South Korean Lee Myong-bak government had been concerned that these projects may provide more time and resources for the North Korean regime to develop nuclear capability and to increase the legitimacy of the regime (Reed 2010, pp. 210–15). Consequently, the majority of inter-Korean cooperation and exchange programmes have been suspended since 2010. In 2013, the South Korean Park Guen-hye administration tried to differentiate her government from the previous administration by introducing 'Trustpolitik', which was basically a two-pronged approach that emphasizes a balance between strong deterrence/defence and dialogue/cooperation. However, as a result of nuclear testing rocket launches by North Korea and the US–South Korea joint military drills, the tension on the Korean peninsula increased, tilting the balance toward a more hard-line policy. Meanwhile, upon the death of his father Kim Jong-il, Kim Jong-un became the new leader of North Korea in 2011. In order to maintain authority and legitimacy, the new Kim Jong-un regime has been trying to improve the economic situation, as well as to achieve guarantees for security. North Korea calls it the 'Byungjin line', simultaneously developing the people's economy and strengthening the nuclear deterrence. However, the paradox in this policy is that the economic sanctions were imposed on North Korea primarily because of the country's nuclear weapons program and the development of long-range rocket systems (Kim 2016, p. 484). There have been a few attempts, such as the family reunions in 2015, to improve the relationship between the two Koreas (Whiteman and Kwon 2015). However, following the fourth nuclear test by North Korea in 2016, the inter-Korean relationship deteriorated to the point that the Kaesong Industrial Complex, the only surviving cooperation project since 2010, was closed (Choe 2016).

Meanwhile, South Korean civil society groups, such as the Korea NGO Council for Cooperation with North Korea (KNCCK), and the Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation (KCRC) have been advocating the need to resume interactions between people from North and South Korea,

as well as political negotiations between the governments. For example, the KNCCK organised an international conference in 2015 and urged "the two Koreas to explore a variety of mechanisms for carrying on dialogue including through bilateral, people to people, cultural, and educational exchanges" (The Korea NGO Council for Cooperation with North Korea 2015). The KCRC initiated a series of dialogues in 2016 among diverse people from the South Korean government and civil society, in order to create a participatory process for creating and implementing a policy on the Korean peace process based on the social consensus (The Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation 2016). However, unlike Northern Ireland, the peoples' interactions between the two Koreas remain suspended.

The continuing efforts to build trust across the communities in Northern Ireland can provide lessons for the Korean peace process. It shows the need to maintain interactions between people despite an impasse in the political peace process. Nevertheless, there are two key dissimilarities between the two contexts that need to be considered when sharing lessons about building trust across the communities. First, North Korea is a dictatorship. The limitations placed by the authoritarian regime need to be reflected in trust-building strategies at the civilian level. Second, although there have been several proposals to create a regional institution for economic and security cooperation, such as Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI), in East Asia (Woo and Snyder 2015), there is no supporting supranational actor in the Korean peace process, such as the role of the EU in the Northern Ireland peace process. Recognising these two key dissimilarities would be beneficial to contextualising the lessons from Northern Ireland for the Korean peace process.

5. Conclusions: Sharing Lessons

Once considered insoluble, both the Northern Ireland and Korean conflicts saw breakthroughs in their peace processes at the dawn of the new millennium. There were some parallels in these breakthroughs. Both events were influenced by a hospitable external political environment. The local conflict parties realised that they could not achieve their goals with armed force. The measures for security assurance and trust building became more central. The foreseeable economic benefits of the agreement were promoted. The agreements were more inclusive than those in the 1970s. In both cases, however, the central issues of the conflict, the incompatibilities of the goals of the conflict parties, were deferred in order to reach an agreement. Therefore, unresolved conflicts remained in both Northern Ireland and the Korean peninsula. As we have seen previously, following these breakthroughs, both peace processes faced similar challenges, such as changes in geopolitical and domestic political situations, delayed disarmament, and limited contact and lack of trust between the conflict parties.

On the other hand, one of the biggest differences between the Northern Ireland and Korean peace processes is that the former maintained a negotiation process to address the challenges, while the negotiation process in the latter case has been suspended for the past seven years, except for occasional high-level talks and one-off events. Mitchell says the Northern Ireland peace process has two faces, the one that still shows a bitter stand-off "riven with political, economic and demographic insecurities" and the other, which shows improved quality of life due to the creation of political space for the negotiated settlement (Mitchell 2015, p. 200). The same bitter stand-off can be found in the Korean situation, but in contrast to Northern Ireland, the suspension of South Korean aid to North Korea and the inter-Korean economic cooperation barred civic engagement between the two Koreas. There were certain critical moments in the Northern Ireland peace process that represent significant differences between the two peace processes. First, the IRA and other paramilitary organisations declared the decommissioning of their weapons. Second, the hard-line parties, Sinn Féin and the DUP, were included in the agreement and shared power. Third, despite challenges in power-sharing and the weakened role of civil society, inter-community projects have continuously been encouraged by the Irish and British governments and the EU. These three different courses of events can provide valuable lessons for the resumption and sustainability of the Korean peace process, although the dissimilarities

in the geopolitical and domestic political dynamics between the two cases require the contextualisation of the lessons. A common lesson emerging from the comparative case study appears to be that the commitment of high-level leadership in the conflict parties to keeping negotiation channels open for dialogue and to allowing space for people's interaction, despite the challenges in the geopolitical and domestic political situations, is crucial for a sustainable peace process. In the Korean context, the authoritarian character of the North Korean regime, and the lack of a supranational institution for East Asian regional cooperation, should be taken into account.

This principal lesson would not only be applicable to the Korean case, but also to the Northern Irish case itself. With the 2016 Brexit vote in the UK, there appears to be a potential change in the geopolitical environment of the Northern Ireland peace process. Brexit is causing concern that it could cause the return of a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The Northern Ireland peace process, once again, appears to be unstable. The DUP promoted a "Yes" vote for Brexit and, following Brexit, Sinn Féin promoted unification (Young 2016; Halpin 2016). On top of that, the Northern Irish Assembly has been dissolved since the power-sharing between DUP and Sinn Féin collapsed in January 2017 over the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scandal (*BBC NEWS* 2017). Meanwhile, the Korean peninsula seems to be getting another opportunity to make a breakthrough in the peace process, as North Korea agreed to send its team to the 2018 Winter Olympics hosted by South Korea (*BBC News* 2018). The comparative case study of the Northern Irish and the Korean peace processes showed that a peace process is not a linear process that follows a certain institutional prescription. A peace process will always face crisis, and it will also be given opportunities to make breakthroughs due to changing environments. In this regard, comparing and sharing lessons from the concurrent peace processes could be beneficial for a peace process in terms of finding lessons on how to overcome the challenges in its own contexts, and also in terms of being reminded of lessons from its own past experience.

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