Learning the Lessons of Terrorist Failure: The Dogs that Didn't Bark in Scotland and Wales

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Terrorist violence generates a great deal of attention from media, politicians and academics. Most importantly, the successful commission of a terrorist act creates an expectation of response among the general public. Yet, too often responses are dictated by the terrorist acts that do occur, rather than the campaigns of violence that fail: often as a result of state action. This policy brief studies cases in which terrorist campaigns failed to get off the ground and attempts to trace the factors behind these failures. In doing so, it is shown how lessons can be learned about how the failed cases can inform counter-terrorism policy, in terms of maintaining viable political alternatives and ensuring state action is carefully measured, proportionate and inclusive.

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Introduction

It can be no surprise that state responses to terrorism are shaped by the phenomenon itself and informed by historical examples such as the Provisional IRA, ETA and Red Army Faction. Little consideration is given to cases of terrorist movements that achieve little and fizzle out in a short period of time. Yet these cases represent the rule rather than the exception. Brian Phillips' research demonstrates that roughly half of emerging terrorist groups fail at some point in their first year.[1] If the factors that help to bring incipient terrorist movements to a premature end can be identified, then this might aid counter-terrorist policies, going forward.

Much can be gained by studying cases in which terrorist movements emerge but fail to present a meaningful challenge to the state against which they organise. It is from these cases potential insights can be gleaned with regard to the effectiveness of state responses, and the limitations or flaws in a terrorist actor's message. To illustrate, their assessment could contribute to a better understanding how and under which conditions popular support – central to any successful terrorist movement[2] – fails to materialise. Research has been conducted on some of these cases to draw out such lessons, specifically with regard to nationalist movements and their terrorist manifestations on which this policy brief focuses. See for example, Lee Dutter's work on Quebec;[3] Daniele Conversi's monograph comparing Basque and Catalan nationalism;[4] Jeff Goodwin's work on anti-Apartheid movements;[5] and Luis de la Calle's comparative study of movements throughout Europe.[6]

Similar cases worthy of attention can be found in the history of Scotland and Wales, especially when compared to the violent Republican campaign in Northern Ireland. All three constituent parts of the United Kingdom saw nationalist movements seeking various forms of change grow in the latter half of the twentieth century. In Northern Ireland, protest turned to sustained inter-communal violence in late-1969, resulting in intervention by the British Army. This led to a conflict that lasted nearly thirty years and saw more than 3500 deaths, including the deaths of more than 1800 civilians.[7] In contrast, nationalist campaigns in Scotland and Wales remained overwhelmingly non-violent, even though minor militant nationalist groups did emerge in both countries. Given similar political motivations (independence from the United Kingdom), cultural and historical connections with Northern Ireland, and the existence of a template for armed struggle so close by, investigating why these minor militant movements were unable to develop further could provide valuable lessons.[8]

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[1] Brian J. Phillips, "Do 90 Percent of Terrorist Groups Last Less than a Year? Updating the Conventional Wisdom," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, (September 2017).

[2] Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How terrorism ends: Understanding the decline and demise of terrorist campaigns.* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), 104; Jacob Shapiro, *The Terrorist's Dilemma: Managing Violent Covert Organisations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 1.

[3] Lee E. Dutter, "Why don't dogs bark (or bomb) in the night? Explaining the non-development of political violence or terrorism: the case of Quebec separatism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35, no. 1 (2012): 59-75.

[4] Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*: Alternative routes to nationalist mobilisation (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2000).

[5] Jeff Goodwin, "'The Struggle Made Me a Nonracialist': Why There was so Little Terrorism in the Antiapartheid Struggle," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (2007): 193-203.

[6] Luis De la Calle, *Nationalist violence in Postwar Europe*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[7] ""CAIN: The Sutton Index of Deaths," CAIN: The Conflict Archive on the Internet, Ulster University, 2019, http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/tables/Status_Summary.html.

[8] Further detail on these two cases can be found in Nick Brooke, *Terrorism and Nationalism in the United Kingdom: The Absence of Noise* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2018).

This policy brief therefore considers Wales and Scotland, where fledgling terrorist movements emerged that failed to break through in any meaningful way to support their political agenda. Three general lessons are drawn to emphasise what can be learned from studying such failed cases in the study of terrorism and political violence: 1) the importance of ensuring non-violent political opportunities are a viable avenue to pursue change; 2) the necessity to avoid state over-reaction to nationalist challenges; and 3) the value of shaping state action to promote inclusivity.

Background: The Cases of Scotland and Wales

Nationalist movements in Scotland and Wales have been powerful political actors in the United Kingdom in the last half-century. Since the late 1960s, the Scottish National Party (SNP) and Plaid Cymru (The Party for Wales – PC) have challenged the political mainstream in these countries: unionism, which supports the continuing unity of the various countries that make up the United Kingdom.[9] The retention of political union of the United Kingdom remains to this day, a popular policy in Scotland and Wales.[10] As a result, before the 1960s, little reference was made to the related constitutional arrangements by the political establishment in Westminster.[11] The growing strength of the nationalist voice in these countries brought about administrative devolution in the late 1990s that created distinct national political spaces, which has allowed both countries to prioritise different political concerns. The growth of the SNP, from a minor political movement in the 1960s to the governing party in Scotland in 2007, has upended traditional Labour Party dominance of Scottish politics and made Scottish independence a real possibility. The 2014 referendum on the topic may have returned a firm rejection of the notion, but the British referendum result in 2016 to depart from the European Union has ignited the SNP's interest in pushing for another referendum on Scottish independence.[12] By and large, nationalist movements in both Scotland and Wales have relied on constitutional and democratic political methods to achieve the change they seek. Yet in both countries, militant nationalist movements emerged to challenge the British state more forcefully.

Nationalist Political Violence in Wales

In Wales, *Mudiad Amddiffyn Cymru* (MAC – Movement for the Defence of Wales) carried out a bombing campaign during the 1960s in protest of externally imposed political decisions, such as the flooding of a valley (and a town situated in the valley) to create a reservoir.[13] The MAC's campaign was directed against infrastructure that in their view perpetuated the exploitation of Wales' natural resources (such as water pipelines, usually those exporting water for use in England), as well as the physical manifestations of British state control such as tax offices.[14] Following the announcement that Prince

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[9] Colin Kidd, *Union and Unionisms: political thought in Scotland, 1500-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[10] In the Scottish Independence Referendum held in September 2014, 56% of voters supported retaining the Union with the rest of the United Kingdom. Opinion polling in Wales has regularly and consistently revealed majority support for the status quo. A recent poll suggested 67% of voters would support retaining the Union between Wales and the United Kingdom (Roger Awan-Scully, "Does Wales Want to Abolish the Assembly?", Elections in Wales, 2018, https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/electionsinwales/2018/12/20/does-wales-want-to-abolish-the-assembly/).

[11] It could be argued that unionism in Scotland and Wales was reinforced by the types of symbols and rhetoric identified by Michael Billig. See: Michael Billig, *Banal nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).

[12] "Sturgeon to Seek Independence Referendum," *BBC News*, March 13, 2017, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-39255181.

[13] For more on the group see Wyn Thomas, *Hands Off Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer, 2013); John Humphries, *Freedom Fighters: Wales's Forgotten War, 1963-1993* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008).

[14] Humphries, *Freedom Fighters*, 84.

Charles was to be installed as the Prince of Wales, the group turned their ire towards the related ceremony: targeting buildings in which planning meetings were to be held and – as the event drew closer – the ceremony itself. Whilst those behind the campaign sought to avoid bloodshed, two men died when a bomb that they were transporting exploded prematurely in Abergele.[15]

Another, less serious movement emerged in Wales during the same period: the Free Wales Army.[16] Far more interested in attracting media attention than carrying out symbolic acts of violence, members of the group were jailed for their threats of violence in 1969.[17] During the 1970s, another movement emerged that targeted English-owned properties in Welsh-speaking parts of Wales. This movement with the name *Meibion Glyndwr* (the Sons of Glyndwr) was responsible for hundreds of arson attacks in the 1970s and 1980s, in protest at the purchase of property in Welsh-language communities by non-Welsh speakers. In their view, this phenomenon was pricing locals out of the market, and diminishing the importance of spoken Welsh in these areas.[18] The campaign came to an end in the early 1990s, with very limited police success in apprehending the perpetrators.

Nationalist Political Violence in Scotland

Throughout the 1970s, a series of small short-lived militant movements emerged as extreme manifestations of Scottish nationalism, all equal in their inability to make a serious political impact or generate sufficient popular support to maintain their short-lived campaigns. The Army of the Provisional Government of Scotland (APG) was involved in two separate plots to bring about Scottish independence but were successful only in getting caught and jailed for their plans.[19] The Tartan Army were responsible for a series of bomb attacks against oil pipelines and broadcasting infrastructure between January 1973 and September 1975, but their actions had little political resonance and those behind the bombings were caught before they were able to escalate their campaign.[20]

Emerging at the start of the 1980s, the Scottish National Liberation Army (SNLA) offered a longer-lasting, but equally feeble, militant brand of Scottish nationalism. Led initially from Scotland but later in exile from the Republic of Ireland, the group was responsible for a number of letter bombs in the early 1980s, a series of hoax threats in the mid-1990s, and infrequent varying threats in the early-2000s.[21] This latter period included the group's most prominent attack: the mailing of caustic soda disguised as beauty products to prominent political figures in the United Kingdom. A statement attributed to the group announced an end to their campaign in 2012.[22]

Comparing Militant Movements in Scotland and Wales

In both Scotland and Wales, minor violent nationalist movements emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century. Their targets included prominent British political officials

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[15] Ibid, 123.

[16] For more on the group see: Thomas, *Hands off Wales;* Humphries, *Freedom* Fighters; Roy Clews. *To Dream of Freedom: The story of MAC and the Free Wales Army (2nd edition)* (Ceredigion: Y Lolfa, 2001).

[17] Thomas, *Hands off Wales,* 265-281.

[18] Humphries, *Freedom Fighters,* Ch. 15.

[19] Brooke, *Terrorism and Nationalism in the United Kingdom,* 18-23.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid; See also: Andrew Murray Scott & Iain Macleay, *Britain's Secret War: Tartan Terrorism and the Anglo-American State* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1990).

[22] Morag Lindsay, "'Tartan terrorists' lay down weapons," *Aberdeen Press and Journal,* January 20, 2012.

and the Royal Family, as well as energy/water infrastructure. The first set of targets convey a message of anger at British political policies towards Wales and Scotland, and a desire to strike at targets that represent the British state as a whole. The second set of targets demonstrate concern about the (mis)use of natural resources, and a belief that Wales and Scotland were being exploited by the British state. In total, only two people died as a result of the actions of the myriad of minor nationalist groups emerging in these countries. These were both the result of a premature detonation of a bomb that they were transporting. In the vast majority of cases in both countries, the individuals behind these campaigns were arrested and imprisoned for their actions.

Research Design

Tracing the reasons why certain terrorist movements did not gain traction and could be considered failures is a difficult task, since proving why something *did not* happen is almost impossible on the micro level. However, through assessing history and the development of nationalist political movements in these countries, and by comparing these contexts to Northern Ireland, societal-level factors can be identified that can shed at least some light on why militant nationalism was ill-suited to these contexts.

To understand why terrorist violence is a feature of some campaigns and not others, it is necessary to understand the factors that give rise to terrorist movements: sometimes referred to as 'root causes'.[23] Considering that this policy brief focuses on nationalist movements and their terrorist outliers, the causes more applicable to these groups were identified. It is also necessary to identify the political demands central to the nationalist movements studied, as well as to have an understanding of how these movements have developed in terms of message and approach taken. For this purpose, historical accounts of these movements were consulted.

The case selection was conducted as to include movements that are both complementary and contradictory to one another. As three constituent parts of the United Kingdom, they have elements of a shared culture and history, but are sufficiently different in terms of the conception of national identity in each. From the 1960s onwards, nationalism has been a feature of the mainstream politics of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, but only one of the three (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) had seen a sustained campaign of nationalist political violence. Thus, having studied the roots of terrorist movements and the central threads of nationalist movements, four factors were identified that manifested differently in the cases studied.

The first factor relates to the democratic opportunities available to nationalist movements in each case: were they able to fairly and viably progress their political demands through a democratic structure? This may take the form of electoral politics or more direct forms of non-violent protest. The second aspect studied was the state's (common to these cases, the United Kingdom) response to the nationalist challenge in each case: how did state actors respond to political challenges and how did they respond to violence or threats thereof? The third layer looked at the conception of national identity within these movements: what were the barriers to entry of nationalist movements and were hybrid political opinions available and viable? Perhaps more importantly, who did nationalists conceive of as the 'other'? The final consideration concerned historical precedents for the use of force: could militant groups draw from the past to justify their actions? In each case, it will be shown that the conditions that

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[23] See, for example: Tore Bjørgo, *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, Reality and Ways Forward* (London: Routledge, 2004); Martha Crenshaw, "The causes of terrorism," *Comparative Politics* 13, no. 4 (1981): 379-399.

favour more militant forms of nationalism (limited democratic opportunity, repressive state responses, binary conceptions of identity and a strong historical precedent for violent action) were absent in Scotland and Wales. Having shown this, the lessons that can be drawn from these factors are identified, to consider how policy-makers can draw on these cases.

The Visibility of Democratic Opportunity

The first lesson to be learned relates to the level of political opportunity available to political actors. Democratic opportunity is central to the operation of a modern liberal state, as the public are able to hold their decision makers to account. Denying individuals, or groups, the ability to effect political change through constitutional means – either through disenfranchisement or gerrymandering – creates conditions in which non-violent means of protest are seen as ineffective and other forms of political activity are adopted. Research by Goodwin, [24] Schwartzmantel [25] and others demonstrate that terrorist violence often results from exclusion from the political process. Yet, the resolution of terrorist campaigns often involves negotiations that are held either directly or indirectly with a terrorist actor. Audrey Cronin highlights the importance of such dialogue in her study *How Terrorism Ends,*[26] and a number of scholars have considered the utility of negotiations with terrorist groups.[27] Ensuring political actors have access to the political process may avoid the escalatory adoption of violence.

Democratic Opportunity in Northern Ireland

The cases of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales help to shed some light on the manner in which political progress – which is not necessarily to be equated with political success – can diminish the attractiveness of other forms of violence. In Northern Ireland, the political process created following the partition of Ireland overwhelmingly favoured the Protestant (almost entirely Unionist) majority. The Catholic (almost entirely Nationalist) minority in Northern Ireland were largely disenfranchised and excluded from the political process, unable to bring about political changes that could have addressed issues with regard to the unequal provision of public housing and voting rights, among others.

At the outset of the 1960s, a number of protest movements – following the lead of the civil rights campaign in the United States – joined to form the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA), a non-sectarian movement aimed at achieving equality in Northern Ireland.[28] They made their demands known through non-violent forms of political protest such as sit-ins and marches. These tactics were adopted to a lesser extent in Wales by the Welsh Language Society (*Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg*), but were

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[24] Jeff Goodwin, *No other way out: states and revolutionary movements, 1945-1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[25] John Schwarzmantel, *Democracy and political violence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

[26] Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How terrorism ends: Understanding the decline and demise of terrorist campaigns* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[27] Anne Speckhard, and Khapta Akhmedova, "Talking to terrorists," *Journal of Psychohistory* 33, no. 2 (2005): 125; John Bew, Martyn Frampton, and Iñigo Gurruchaga. *Talking to terrorists: Making peace in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country* (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 2009); Jonathan Powell, *Talking to terrorists: How to end armed conflicts* (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 2015); Jerrold M. Post and Anat Berko, "Talking with terrorists," *Democracy and Security* 5, no. 2 (2009): 145-148.

[28] For more on the civil rights movement see: Niall Ó Dochartaigh, *From civil rights to armalites: Derry and the birth of the Irish troubles* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004); Simon Prince, *Northern Ireland's '68: Civil Rights, Global Revolt and the Origins of the Troubles* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007); Bob Purdie, *Politics in the Streets: The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1990).

largely absent in Scotland, as the dominant nationalist movement, the SNP, focused heavily on the ballot box at the expense of other methods of political protest.

One particular protest march in Derry on 5 October 1968 captured international attention, when news footage of Northern Irish police attacking protesters was beamed around the world. It brought attention to the movement's existence and political demands, stoking international sympathy.[29] More concerning for those sympathetic to the goals of the movement in Northern Ireland was a perception that the machinery of the Northern Irish state was violently repressing their movement and denying them a voice. Further attacks against marchers in early-1969 did little to quell the concern that political protest was ineffective at bringing about political change. The tension brought about by these events erupted into inter-communal violence in August 1969, creating the conditions into which the Provisional IRA were born later that year,[30] and dragging Northern Ireland into a spiral of reciprocal violence.

Democratic Opportunity in Scotland and Wales

By contrast in Scotland and Wales, nationalist political protest could tout tangible political successes in the 1970s. In Scotland, the nationalist movement helmed by the SNP forced traditional political actors to adopt a position on the question of Scotland's governance. This was an issue that had received scant attention prior to the first electoral successes of the nationalists in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The rise of the SNP (along with Plaid Cymru in Wales) was sufficiently concerning to the governing Labour Party, that the latter agreed to hold a referendum on the establishment of Scottish and Welsh Assemblies in the mid-1970s in exchange for the support of nationalist MPs.[31] Both referenda were to fail in 1979, but that this issue was put to the voters *at all* could offer evidence to nationalists in both countries that it was the voting preferences of the general public rather than the machinations of the British political machinery that were preventing their political goals from being realised.

Nationalist protest in Wales did not just take the form of ballot-box politics. Movements such as the Welsh Language Society used direct (but non-violent) forms of political action to protest against the secondary position afforded to the Welsh language by the British state in Wales, whether in official documents or on road signage.[32] Rather than facing the more aggressive response that marchers in Derry in October 1968 faced, these were met with a more accommodating response. Campaigns to elevate the use of Welsh in official business and for increased Welsh-language broadcasting brought about change and demonstrated an element of receptiveness among authorities to Welsh nationalist concerns.

In both Scotland and Wales, not only did nationalist movements have *direct* successes, they were also indirectly responsible for a shift in the political environments of both countries in favour of more nationalist policies, often adopted by their political rivals. Administrative devolution in both countries is the result of Labour Party policy rather than nationalist electoral success. The emergence, presence and challenge of the SNP and Plaid Cymru brought about change, and whilst it was not always immediate, it was sufficient to diminish the need for other forms of political action.

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29 Ibid.
30 Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA* (London: MacMillan 2004), 102-108.
31 Andrew Marr, *The Battle for Scotland* (London: Penguin, 2013), Ch. 4.
32 Colin H. Williams, "Non-Violence and the Development of the Welsh Language Society, 1962-c. 1974," *Welsh History Review* 8 (1976): 426-455.

Lessons Learned on Democratic Opportunity

The key set of lessons to take away from these cases is that receptiveness to political protest can help to effectively dismantle a violent actor's narrative that political militancy can achieve what other strategies cannot. If we take Wilkinson's claim that some terrorists are 'incorrigible' in their demands[33] then this approach would be flawed, yet many terrorist actors who have, in the past, espoused maximalist uncompromising views eventually sought a negotiate end to their armed struggle.[34] Moreover, within their communities exist a variety of political actors whose goals are more moderate and can be achieved through a political process, if it is sufficiently viable to permit change. Whilst some movements may be led by figures unwilling to compromise, for movements where genuine political concerns contribute to the recruitment of rank-and-file members a forum to air their grievances would be welcomed. Whether this form of political accommodation would be acceptable to the general public is a different concern, and one that would require careful political leadership.

It is important to ensure democratic avenues are open to those seeking political change, even if violent actors claiming to represent the same campaign are attempting to sway policy through militancy. Too often, concerns about media and public backlash limit the political options (and potential utility) with regards to state counter-terrorism strategies,[35] but it is clear from both non-violent and violent cases that working with representatives of a political movement offers many opportunities. The standard claim that 'we do not negotiate with terrorists' can be avoided if the state is prepared to engage with political movements before they adopt violence.

Measured Responses

The second set of lessons relates to the variety of potential responses available to state actors and the manner in which the state escalates its response when facing a prolonged terrorist campaign. Terrorism is, of course, communicative violence intended to open a dialogue with the state.[36] In some cases, the state will respond in a manner that is ill-conceived and it is often this heavy-handed response that drive terrorist campaigns forward.

Responses in Northern Ireland

The introduction of the British Army into Northern Ireland was a desperate decision that reflects the desperate situation of August 1969. It was a policy borne out of an absence of better options. The military's presence did, over time, contribute to the reduction of violence to an 'acceptable level', but there were also missteps along the way that unquestionably generated sympathy and support for the Provisional IRA.

Among the most notable of these were the policy of internment without trial, implemented in August 1971, and 'Bloody Sunday': the killing of 14 unarmed protesters

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[33] Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism versus democracy: The liberal state response* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 4.
[34] The campaigns of groups such as the Provisional IRA and ETA (centred around territorial demands) were ended through negotiations that saw both actors fail to attain this goal.
[35] Bart Schuurman, "Defeated by popular demand: Public Support and Counterterrorism in Three Western Democracies, 1963–1998," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 36, no. 2 (2013): 152-175.
[36] See, for example: Alex P. Schmid, "The Revised Academic Consensus Definition of Terrorism," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 6, no. 2 (2012); Ronald D. Crelinsten, "Analysing Terrorism and Counter-terrorism: A Communication Model," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 14, no. 2 (2002): 77-122.

by the British Army at a march in Derry in January 1972. Internment was particularly damaging for the reputation of the British Army as balanced arbiters in Northern Ireland because it overwhelmingly targeted the Catholic community, and because many of those arrested were mistreated during their imprisonment. Bloody Sunday was damaging for the notion of British justice and fairness, and created a perception that the British state did not value Catholic life. Inflaming the situation further was the heavily-criticised Widgery Report into the shootings that absolved the British Army of blame. These acts damaged the reputation of the British Army as an actor capable of dispensing justice and protection equally, and bolstered support for the Provisional IRA.

Responses in Scotland and Wales

In contrast, the militant nationalist challenges in Scotland and Wales were handled by the police and the judiciary. In the case of MAC in Wales, the key figures behind the group were arrested in late 1969 and imprisoned for their actions. Likewise, in Scotland, the key figures behind the actions of Tartan Army and other fringe militant groups in the 1970s were successfully prosecuted for their campaigns. The orchestrator of the SNLA's long-running but ultimately low-level campaign fled arrest to the Republic of Ireland where he was able to avoid extradition to the United Kingdom for three decades.

That the British Army was not introduced into either conflict represents the fact that the challenge did not overwhelm the police as the events of August 1969 did in Northern Ireland. As such, it could be argued that state actors did not have a luxury of options available to them for dealing with unrest in Northern Ireland, and that the introduction of the British Army was seen as necessary to restore order. This case makes clear that the availability of only bad options is a challenge for counter-terrorist actors. Yet the truth is that the emergence of the situation into which the British Army were introduced in August 1969 did not appear from a vacuum and policy-makers had abrogated responsibility in allowing this condition to emerge.

Lessons Learned on Responses to Terrorism

In terms of constructing a response to terrorism, too often state actors ignore the past and prioritise a show of force. A closer appreciation of the history of counter-terrorism demonstrates the role that state error plays in generating sympathy and support for non-state violent actors. The less aggressive approaches in Scotland and Wales do partially reflect a less tense context in which security actors were operating. Yet the even-handed responses in both cases denied militant opponents the publicity accelerant so desperately sought. The primary lessons from the cases of Scotland and Wales are that state response to terrorist outrage should prioritise the judiciary and the justice system over other forms of intervention. Demonstrating that state actors do not treat violence of a political nature any differently to other forms of violence delegitimises militant actors and provides a deterrence.

What it clear is that when state actors are in a position of military engagement against a terrorist campaign, there must be viable reporting structures to ensure missteps are addressed openly and swiftly. As such, it is important that state figures visibly provide justice when actors acting on behalf of the state act egregiously. The unwillingness of the British state to do so following Bloody Sunday, as well as after allegations of a 'shoot-to-kill' policy damaged the reputation of the British state – both in Northern Ireland and internationally.

Inclusivity and Identity

The final set of lessons is more abstract but can be policy-relevant with regards to avoiding the conditions under which political violence can gain popular sympathy. Discussions about inclusivity and identity relate closely to the above discussion of democratic opportunity, but this is only one facet of understanding how top-down decisions structure the identity possibilities of their society.

Identity and Nationalism in the United Kingdom

Identity in Northern Ireland, considered by scholars such as Guelke as a 'deeply-divided society',[37] is of paramount political importance. The creation of Northern Ireland as a territorial entity was done to ensure a Protestant majority, and the sectarian divide in Northern Irish society remains tense to this day. This background continues to shape constitutional preferences with regard to the future of Northern Ireland, whereby nationalist and unionist political movements still correlate overwhelmingly with historical sectarian divides in Northern Ireland. This is no new phenomenon and can be traced back through centuries of antagonism between Protestants and Catholics on the island of Ireland. The maximalist nature of both movements' demands (either the retention of a union with the United Kingdom or the re-integration of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland) make compromise difficult and non-sectarian political parties (such as the Alliance Party) have struggled to break through.

By contrast, nationalist movements in Britain are far less exclusive in their identity barriers. Whilst Welsh nationalism has developed as a political vehicle for protecting the Welsh language and culture, one can be a Welsh nationalist without speaking the language. Scottish nationalism is equally open in its membership and has been termed 'civic' nationalism as a result.[38]

The political opposite of these forms of nationalism is British Unionism, which has been equally open in its membership. Perhaps more importantly, there were moderate positions on a spectrum between nationalist and unionist: one could be both. This political idea was realised in 1997 with successful campaigns for devolved assemblies in Scotland and Wales. This was only possible because 'unionists' – an entirely ill-defined term with reference to non-nationalists in Scotland and Wales – did not feel threatened by the political progress of nationalists, something that was not the case for unionists in Northern Ireland.

Lessons Learned on Inclusivity and Identity

Drawing specific policy lessons from discussions about national identity is difficult, but it is clear that decisions made at the governing level structure the identity possibilities of citizens and elevate certain characteristics to a level of key political importance. In terms of political solutions to violent conflicts, a key element with regards to the state's impact in terms of identity are the manner in which equal representation is achieved to address any potential democratic deficits.

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[37] Adrian Guelke, *Politics in deeply divided societies* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012).

[38] See for example, Murray Leith and Daniel P.J. Soule, *Political discourse and National Identity in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011); Michael Keating, *Nations against the State: The New politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland* (London: MacMillan Press, 1996).

In the past, in cases such as Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Iraq, constitution builders have faced a challenge about balancing the inclusion of ethnic minorities, with a risk of hardening divides and encouraging voters to cast their ballots as ethnic blocs. One example of this could be the Alliance Party in Northern Ireland that has struggled to break through in a system dominated by parties that cater exclusively to one community.[39] Furthermore, the level of checks and balances in place to avoid a return to the tyranny of the majority can create inefficient and slow-moving political structures. Ensuring access to democracy for minority identity communities is vital but can focus all politics through the prism of identity: ensuring political flexibility (by allowing voters to ensure their voices are heard regardless of their political preference) is key to long-term resolution in these cases. These hurdles are not insurmountable, and dedication to this process can address the root causes of political violence in certain contexts.

In terms of modern counter-extremism policies, the state has a particularly important task in terms of how it prioritises its efforts with regards to identity groups. Focusing too narrowly on one community – as critics say the British state has done in the past with Northern Irish Catholics and today with British Muslims – creates a sense of suspicion and official mistrust around an entire community.[40] Furthermore, it creates a false perception that it is the community itself that is the root cause of the violence perpetrated by an unrepresentative minority. State actors, especially those involved in building inclusive political systems and countering violent extremism, must consider carefully how their decisions structure a certain community's relationship with the state, and their sense of membership of society.

Conclusion

This policy brief examined the benefits of studying terrorist movements that fail from a societal perspective. In the case of Scotland and Wales, militant groups failed as they were starved of popular support as a result of the (long-term) effectiveness of non-violent methods, the existence of an inclusive and layered cosmopolitan identity, and an accommodating response from state actors to nationalist demands. By contrast in Northern Ireland, an unwillingness to widen political participation to the Catholic community, an intractable identity divide between Catholics and Protestants, and violent responses to non-violent challenges created conditions in which non-violent methods seemed feeble, especially when inter-communal irregular violence flared up. Further research at the micro level has the potential to unlock new insights about how interrupting terrorist financing or access to materials can bring about the failure of an emerging militant movement. More broadly, by understanding the reasons groups fail to win popular support or gain a cadre of recruits able to maintain a violent campaign, the conditions that facilitate failure can be more clearly identified. Clearly, there is a lot of work still to be done. But the preliminary analysis carried out here has led to several interesting findings.

The cases of Scotland and Wales show how ineffective militant actors can be when competing with non-violent movements that reap rewards. Little can be more disarming to the claims of political militancy that violence is the only means of achieving success

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[39] Richard Breen and Bernadette C. Hayes, "Religious mobility and party support in Northern Ireland," *European Sociological Review* 13, no. 3 (1997): 225-239.

[40] See for example: Paddy Hillyard, *Suspect community: People's experiences of the Prevention of Terrorism Act* (London: Pluto, 1993); Marie Breen-Smyth, "Theorising the "suspect community": counterterrorism, security practices and the public imagination," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 7, no. 2 (2014): 223-240; Christina Pantazis and Simon Pemberton, "From the 'Old' to the 'New' Suspect Community: Examining the Impacts of Recent UK Counter-Terrorist Legislation," *The British Journal of Criminology*, 49, No 5 (2009): 646–666.

than the perception that political moderacy can bring about the intended outcomes. State actors should ensure representatives are heard and that *addressable* concerns are given serious policy consideration. Political actors should appreciate the potential electoral benefits of adopting policies that generate popular support: a tactic that 'unionist' parties have adopted in Scotland and Wales to great effect. Moreover, state policy – especially on counter-terrorist and counter-extremist measures – should not be framed with reference to a certain community. Inclusivity is a concept far broader than counter-terrorism, but political actors have a responsibility to govern in the interests of all, and over-zealous methods that demonise communities are highly damaging to minority communities. Where societies are deeply-divided, consociational forms of government bring about dialogue, and give minority communities a greater sense of agency in their future.[41] Doing so effectively is an onerous task but potentially addresses the root causes of militant violence. Finally, state actors must appreciate the role that they can inadvertently play in kick-starting terrorist campaigns and construct a response that maintains the state's morals and values. When states do misstep, this must be addressed openly and provide relief to those affected.

The lessons identified above are, to some extent, common sense and yet measuring the success of these approaches is often difficult. The two country-cases studied, along with a myriad of other failed militant campaigns, demonstrate that counter-terrorist policy can benefit from studying failure more closely.

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[41] For more on consociational forms of government, see for example: Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in plural societies: A comparative exploration* (London, Yale University Press, 1977).

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Nick Brooke
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