1 Introduction

Back in the old days, they called him 'the Big Lad', an epithet that referred to his physique as well as to his status in the movement. At the tender age of 21, he had already built a reputation as a commander whose considerable leadership skills were matched only by his ruthlessness. A clear demonstration of the latter trait occurred in 1971, when the community he lived in came under attack. He chose not to fight back, and ordered his unit to hold their fire. This was not because he feared that they could not hold their own against the British Army. The Provisional IRA, of which he was fast becoming a leading member, was emerging as the champion of the Catholic cause and would certainly have been capable of putting up a considerable fight. But instead, he let his people suffer a beating. Demonstrating his ability for cold-blooded *Realpolitik*, he calculated that the incident would enrage the people of Northern Ireland even further. These were the early days of the Northern Ireland conflict, and the Provisional IRA, so he believed, stood a serious chance at expelling the British from Northern Ireland. But for this to happen, he needed an escalation, and for that to happen, he needed the population to direct their anger against the British. The army raid that he left unopposed, would no doubt play into the hand of the Provos.[1] Such, in 1971, was his confidence in the armed struggle.

By 1994, however, Gerry Adams – as was the Big Lad's real name – realised how much things had changed. He once claimed that "[t]he British government has never listened to anything else but the use of force"[2], but now he firmly believed that he had to reason with them. He fought hard, and sometimes dirty, to get the hardliners in the Provisional IRA to accept a ceasefire that would allow Sinn Féin, the political party of which he was the leader, to join the talks about a negotiated settlement of the Northern Ireland conflict. Eventually he got his way. On 31 August 1994, the Provisional IRA announced that it would give the peace process

[1] E. Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 88.

[2] P. Hamann, *At the Edge of the Union* (BBC and Lionheart International Television, 1985), 33:26 – 33:30, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NciY4S9YVW8.

a chance and that it would commit no more attacks for the time being. The statement in which the group informed the public about its decision showed the balancing act that Adams had to pull off. It praised the "courage, determination and sacrifice" of those who had been committing terrorist attacks for the last 25 years, but it also stated that "a solution will only be found as a result of inclusive negotiations".[3] By this latter phrase, the group acknowledged that the future of Northern Ireland was partially in the hands of parties that wanted the British to stay. Just five years earlier, it would have been impossible to wring such a concession from the Provisional IRA's leadership. The ceasefire broke down in 1996, but was resumed after Adams again managed to convince the leadership of the Provisional IRA of the need of a ceasefire and negotiations. The peace process was concluded in 1998 by the Good Friday Agreement, in which the various parties involved committed themselves to a governance structure of Northern Ireland that is still in place today.

After the Provisional IRA's campaign had ended, the settlement of the Northern Ireland conflict became something of a model for how to deal with terrorist groups. The upbeat lesson was that even organisations that are strongly committed to political violence can be pacified when they are engaged in the working out of an acceptable compromise. This point was made not in the least by Gerry Adams himself. In the years after the Good Friday Agreement, he drew on his personal experience to comment extensively on the conflict in the Basque Country, and today he can still be booked as a speaker on such topics as 'Engaging with Cuba' and 'Making peace in the Middle East'.[4] Other participants also suggested that what worked in the case of the Provisional IRA could work against other

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[3] "Irish Republican Army (IRA) Ceasefire Statement, 31 August 1994," 1994, http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/ira31894.htm.

[4] G. Adams, "An End to Violence for the Basque Country," *Guardian*, February 27, 2010, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/feb/27/eta-basque-agreement-spain-terror; G. Adams, "Eta's Ceasefire Is a Political Shift," *Guardian*, September 6, 2010, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/sep/06/eta-ceasefire-basque-group-political-shift; G. Adams, "Basque Peace Move an Essential Step," *CNN*, October 21, 2011, http://edition.cnn.com/2011/10/21/opinion/adams-basque-peace. See also Adams' profile on the website of the Harry Walker Agency: http://www.harrywalker.com/speaker/Gerry-Adams.cfm?Spea_ID=1669.

groups as well. Hugh Orde, the Police Chief of Northern Ireland, argued in 2008 that the British government should start negotiations with Al Qaeda, confident that the two sides would reach an agreement.[5] The research community joined the fray by contributing such titles as *When peace fails: lessons from Belfast for the Middle East* and *Making war on terror: global lessons from Northern Ireland*.

It is understandable and legitimate that scholars and researchers assess whether the defeat of the Provisional IRA and the settlement of the Northern Ireland conflict hold any generally applicable lessons, but for such exercises to make any sense at all, it should first be established whether the lessons from Northern Ireland are of any use outside of Northern Ireland. The truth is that we know very little about whether or to what extent the lessons that were learned in the fight against one terrorist group can be transferred to a different case. This dissertation will take a first step towards a more evidence-based understanding of the wider applicability of counterterrorism lessons by examining whether counterterrorism measures have different effects when applied against different types of terrorist organisations or movements. To draw on the example of the Provisional IRA, the question is essentially: do the lessons from Northern Ireland apply only to groups that are like the Provisional IRA, to all other terrorist groups, or to no other terrorist group at all?

Regarding the general applicability of counterterrorism lessons, there is a strange inconsistency in the scholarly literature. On the one hand, many authors present their views on counterterrorism as pieces of advice on policies against terrorism in general, regardless of the nature of the problem, whereas, on the other hand, many authors argue for the need to tailor a counterterrorism approach to the terrorist organisation that is being confronted.[6] This latter point, however, has rarely been taken up.

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[5] V. Dodd, "Time to Talk to Al-Qaida, Senior Police Chief Urges," *Guardian*, May 30, 2008, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/may/30/alqaida.terrorism.

[6] See for example M. Crenshaw, "Terrorism, Strategy, and Grand Strategy," in *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy*, ed. A.K. Cronin and J.M. Ludes (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 78–79; and A.K. Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends:*

There are very few examinations of which countermeasures are needed against which types of terrorist organisation.[7] Therefore, this dissertation's central research question is:

Is there a relation between the type of terrorist organisation and the effectiveness of counterterrorism approaches that are applied against it?

A relation between counterterrorism effectiveness and the nature of a terrorist actor can be established from two angles, i.e. from that of a type of terrorist actor and from that of a counterterrorism policy or measure. In the former case, we are interested in whether a range of counterterrorism measures or policies have similar effects when applied against similar terrorist actors. The answer to this question is crucial in counterterrorism policy making, as it would help policy makers and counterterrorism practitioners select the right measures for the right type of terrorist organisation. Ideally, it would help us draw up a 'counterterrorism effectiveness profile' for each type of terrorist actor, which would show what measures are effective against it. In the latter case, we are interested in whether the effect of a counterterrorism measure or policy depends on the nature of the terrorist actor it is applied against. Here, we are interested in types of terrorist actors that a certain counterterrorism measure or policy can effectively be applied against. Is it a measure or policy that can be effectively applied against a wide range of terrorist actors or only against a particular type of terrorist actor? As an analysis from both these angles can be made on the basis of the same dataset, the main research question will be answered using the following two sub-questions:

- *Do counterterrorism measures and policies have similar effects against similar types of terrorist actors?*

Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), 206.

[7] A notable, if at times methodologically questionable, exception is G.D. Miller, "Confronting Terrorisms: Group Motivation and Successful State Policies," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 3 (2007): 331–50.

- *Does the effect of counterterrorism measures or policies depend on the nature of the terrorist actor they are applied against?*

As these research questions are essentially about effectiveness, the second chapter will review the literature on counterterrorism effectiveness. In this chapter, it will be argued that the existing effectiveness measurement frameworks are insufficient to answer the research questions. The first part of the third chapter will outline a new way to measure counterterrorism effectiveness. The essence of this new approach is that counterterrorism is broken down in separate counterterrorism principles, the effectiveness of which will be evaluated separately. The second part of the third chapter will outline a framework for the categorisation of terrorist actors. On the basis of this framework, we will distinguish three types of terrorist actors: revolutionary, nationalist and jihadist terrorism.

For each of these three types, two terrorist actors have been selected. In the chapters 4 to 9, we will examine for each of these six terrorist actors which counterterrorism principles were applied, and whether or not they were effective. The six terrorist actors that will be examined are the Weather Underground (chapter 4), the Red Army Faction (chapter 5), Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA, chapter 6), the Provisional Irish Republican Army (Provisional IRA, chapter 7), the jihadist movement in the Netherlands (chapter 8), and the jihadist movement in the UK (chapter 9). The six chapters on the various groups are structured in more or less the same way. The first part of the chapters will address the origins, ideology and modus operandi of the group or movement to familiarise the reader with people, events and organs that play a role in the second part of the chapter, where the actual tests of the counterterrorism principles take place. It should be noted that the background sections as well as the effectiveness assessments are not critical re-evaluations of the source material. While some debates or incongruities are noted, the chapters largely reflect a common ground that can be constructed on the basis of what governments, media, academia and the terrorists themselves have told us. Of course, if one would distinguish between these various kinds of sources or the views expressed in them, it would be possible to claim

that one view on the history of the group is more accurate or illuminating or than the others. This, however, was not the purpose of these six chapters. The source material was used rather than questioned, which means that the chapters 4 to 9 are based on the simple assumption that what governments, media, academia and the terrorists themselves have told us is true. To avoid inaccuracies, it has been attempted to find multiple and sources and multiple kinds of sources to substantiate each of the many claims and assessments about the nature of the terrorist actors and the way they were impacted by counterterrorism. However, as the four kinds of source material were not available in equal quantities for all six terrorist actors, it is possible that some of the case studies are biased in favour of the view of the actors (media, academia, government or terrorist) that did generate source materials. For instance, several members of the RAF and the Provisional IRA spoke out about their terrorist activities, whereas, at least so far, very few Dutch or British jihadists went public with their stories. Consequently, the view 'from the inside' has been taken into account in the chapters about the RAF and the Provisional IRA, but plays less of a role in the chapters on the Dutch and British jihadist movements. Instead, these chapters are based on government and media sources, which may constitute a bias.

In order to keep this study, as well as the reader, focused on the overarching goal, each cluster will be wrapped up with an intermediate conclusion that refers to the first research subquestion, the one about whether counterterrorism principles have similar effects when applied against similar terrorist groups or movements. Then, in the conclusion, we will answer the main research question by analysing whether the application the counterterrorism principles have different effects when applied against different types of terrorist actors. Also, we hope to be able to answer the other sub-question and draw up a profile that shows which counterterrorism principles should be applied against which type of terrorist organisation.

The groups that will be discussed in the coming chapters are very different from each other. For instance, they had widely different political

ambitions. Some wanted to nothing less than to change the world, whereas others would have settled for independence for their people or accession to another state. They also have different degrees of organisation: some were very organised, whereas others worked in a much less structured way. Further, some were deeply rooted in the community where they were active, whereas others were isolated and were left to their own devices. And yet, in spite of all these differences, they can all legitimately be labelled 'terrorist'. How is this possible? What is it that such a diverse group of actors have in common? In order to give some conceptual clarity about the phenomenon that is the subject of much of this dissertation, a brief expansion on the definition of terrorism may be helpful. The literature on how to define terrorism is enormous, so there is no need to elaborate again on how difficult it is to define terrorism.[8] For our purposes, it is sufficient to pick a definition that allows us to distinguish the actors that are subject to counterterrorism policies from actors that are in some ways related but are generally countered with different instruments. Examples include organised crime, hate crime, guerrilla, insurgency and violent political protest. A useful and workable description that sets terrorism apart from these other phenomena is the one formulated by Bruce Hoffman, who says that "terrorism is:

- ineluctably political in aims and motives;
- violent – or, equally important, threatens violence;
- designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target;
- conducted *either* by an organization with an identifiable chain of command or conspiratorial cell structure (whose members wear no uniform or identifying insignia) or by individuals or a small collection of individuals directly influenced, motivated, or inspired by the ideological aims or example of some existent terrorist movements and/or its leaders; and

[8] For two extremes in the debate on the definition of terrorism, the first arguing that it cannot be defined and should therefore not be studied as such, the second that a definition is not necessary to study it adequately, see respectively C. Tilly, "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists," *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 1 (2004): 5–13; W. Laqueur, *No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century* (London, New York and Harrisburg: Continuum, 2004), 232–238.

- perpetrated by a subnational group or non-state entity."[9]

The suggested motivation distinguishes terrorism from organised crime, where the main motive is financial gain, and hate crime, which has no political agenda in the sense that it is not intended to force a government or international organisation to adopt or abandon certain policies. The far-reaching psychological impact that Hoffman refers to, constitutes a crucial difference between terrorism on the one hand and guerrilla warfare and insurgency on the other. It is true that a clear victory in guerrilla warfare and insurgency sends a message, for example about the strength of the insurgents, but guerrilla actions, unlike terrorist attacks, are not primarily intended to do that. Rather, they are intended to inflict an operational defeat on enemy forces. In terrorism, the signalling effect is more important than the damage done to the enemy. Many terrorist organisations have references to military action in their names, but the intensity of terrorist violence is too low for it to be perceived as military action aimed at conquering and holding territory. More so than in guerrilla warfare, terrorist success lies in the psychological impact. The third bullet, the point about the perpetrators, allows for a distinction between terrorism and violent protest along the lines of, for example, the 1999 Battle of Seattle. Hoffman supposes a certain degree of organisational unity and clarity about the modus operandi, as opposed to the largely spontaneous rioting that regularly erupts around international summits. Another advantage of Hoffman's definition is that it will be recognisable to many students of terrorism, as it contains all elements that experts mention most frequently as necessary components of a definition of terrorism and that are most often used by governments and international organisations.[10] Put differently, it captures the essence of what people generally mean when they are talking about terrorism.

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[9] B. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, Revised & enlarged (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 40.

[10] A. P. Schmid and A. J. Jongman, *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories, and Literature* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 5;

William C. Banks, Mitchel B. Wallerstein, and Renée de Nevers, *Combating Terrorism: Strategies and Approaches* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2007), 7.