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**COUNTERINSURGENCY IN CIVIL WARS:  
COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF UNITED KINGDOM AND  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

No matter how stable a state is, civil wars pose a great threat to the security of its citizens and the legitimacy of the ruling regime. Effective counterinsurgency strategy will be quickly implemented to defeat the rebels. One would expect that a democracy is in disadvantage fighting the rebels as the tolerance to loss of human lives is relatively low. Non-democracies however would seem to have a greater freedom in choosing their counterinsurgency methods as they are not as constrained by public opinion, elections and freedom of press as democracies. Although these assumptions are accurate in most of the interstate conflicts, it doesn't seem to apply for civil wars.

This paper compares counterinsurgency in two different political regimes – in democracies and anocracies. United Kingdom and its counterinsurgency in Northern Ireland serve as the first example. Russia and its counterinsurgency in Chechnya as the second. By contrasting both United Kingdom's and Russia's behaviour in their fight against rebels in similar situations the paper is comparing to what extent the counterinsurgency methods between two different political regimes actually differ. As a result we will see that in the case of crisis, democratic governments tend to act decisively and sometimes even retract from their established moral values such as human rights.

Keywords: counterinsurgency in civil wars, United Kingdom's counterinsurgency, Chechnya, Russian counterinsurgency, democracies in civil wars

## INTRODUCTION

Counterinsurgency in civil wars has been studied relatively well, but it often lacks a comparative angle. In general understanding, the assumptions on the use of violence by democracies and non-democracies in different interstate wars have been applied to civil wars as well. However, the problems the state is facing in an interstate war are not always the same as the ones in an intrastate war, thus the strategy will be applied accordingly. For that reason a comparative case study on counterinsurgency in fairly similar conflicts, but by different government regimes would provide a better understanding on the issue. Therefore, this research is inspired by the lack of previous findings on this question. This research is relevant, because by investigating states' behaviour in civil wars it could be possible to foresee potential issues that may arise in the process. What is more, the research is important on the field of international relations as well as in comparative politics, because it reveals the overlapping features of different political regimes. The research problem is to discover to what extent the counterinsurgency methods of democracies and non-democracies differ in the civil wars.

It is often believed that their political regime gives a disadvantage to democracies in fighting against rebel movements. Since, non-democratic regimes are not challenged by opposition, and not obliged to listen to public opinion to the same extent as democracies, they have a greater freedom in choosing their methods of counterinsurgency. Democracies are law-abiding and must carefully design their strategy, e.g. minimize civilian cost to secure electoral support in the future. Furthermore, democracies are constrained by a certain time period – the adversaries can almost arrive at an agreement, but after the elections the new government might not want to sign the peace deal on the same terms. This makes democracies unreliable parties to negotiate with, although it is not safe to say that non-democratic regimes would be any more trustworthy.

Nevertheless, it is not always true that democracies are not using excessive violence to terminate civil wars, as the case study of United Kingdom shows in this paper. Labelling the rebel movements

as terrorist organizations could serve as an excuse in perpetrating extensive military operations against the groups. While the public opinion prevents democracies to use extreme violence, such as violating human rights, it also increases the pressure on the government to successfully resolve the conflict.

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the behavioural difference of counterinsurgency in civil wars between different political regimes. The method used will be comparative analysis, building on two case studies – IRA rebellion against United Kingdom and Chechen-Russian conflict. Both of the rebel movements include elements of ethnicity and religion, but they are fighting against different political regimes. Through these examples it is possible to determine if there is any significant difference in counterinsurgency actions taken by democratic United Kingdom and non-democratic Russian Federation.

When assessing this question the different characteristics of the regimes must be taken into account. Rational publics, accountable leaders and open media are important factors distinguishing democracies from autocracies (Lyll 2010, 168). Scholarly literature has established that public opinion in democracies is very sensitive to high number of casualties (Lyll 2010, 167). Then again it is difficult to acquire reliable information on the same subject from non-democracies, since the leaders are usually successful in covering up the proofs. Also, people living under non-democratic regimes probably experience more civilian killings or disappearances that are left unprosecuted.

There is a wide range of opinions about the correct definition of civil war. This current study will abide by the verdict of Karl DeRouen Jr. in his comprehensive analysis “An introduction to civil wars”. As there is a number of definitions offered by different organizations DeRouen takes a rough estimation that all intrastate conflicts, which result in 25 deaths per calendar year can be treated as civil wars (DeRouen 2015, 5). Thus, he follows the Uppsala Conflict Data Program guidelines, which have also been embraced by different scholars (Thémner 2013, Wallensteen 2014, Petersson 2014). DeRouen notes that most of the definitions derive from two main elements: “the number of deaths and the identity of the disputants” (DeRouen 2015, 4).

There is another term, which needs specification. The meaning of non-democracy can be very broad and include regime types from moderate authoritarianism to totalitarian dictatorships. Non-democracy here indicates that the regime is not a United Kingdom style liberal democracy. In this

paper United Kingdom serves as an example of liberal democracy and will be opposed by the political regime type of Russia, which is anocracy. What is anocracy and how Russia fits into this concept will be explained in the following chapters.

The research itself is qualitative, not quantitative. First, it will be reviewed how different scholars have addressed this question so far. Then, a short introduction about the historical background of both case studies is presented to better understand the essence of the conflicts. Through historical overview it will also be revealed that the conflicts share similar features allowing a relatively competent comparison. An important factor here is definitely geographical and cultural proximity. The analytical part will compare different actions taken by the UK and Russian government in similar situations. In the following chapter a possible effect of the counterinsurgency methods on the outcome of civil conflicts will be analysed. Finally, the conclusions on this matter will be submitted while reflecting back on the case studies. The author sets up the following questions for examining the counterinsurgency in civil wars.

Are non-democracies more inclined to use violent methods to defeat the insurgents than democracies? What are the motives of counterinsurgency in both regimes? To what degree the methods implemented to fight insurgents by democracies and non-democracies show similarities?

It is a common understanding that a state wishes to defeat insurgents, because they threaten the state's stability. Naturally both governments see the insurgents dangerous to their legitimacy. However, one can speculate if a democracy uses counterinsurgency to guarantee the safety of its people, while a non-democracy sees it as an opportunity to strengthen its firm rule.

After viewing the results of both of the conflicts the paper analyses if similar counterinsurgency methods would lead to a similar outcome of the conflict. Is establishing stable democracy possible when the counterinsurgency methods have been non-democratic in their nature? In the final chapter it will also be revealed, why United Kingdom was finally able to reach reconciliation between the fighting parties, but Russia was not.

# **1. THEORETICAL PART**

## **1.1. Previous findings**

Many influential scholars (Blaufarb 1977; Summers 1995; Horne 2006; Galula 2011) have conducted great researches determining why democracies in spite of their military strength have been unsuccessful in winning insurgencies. One of the reasons why United States withdrew its forces out of Vietnam was the growing public disapproval. After seeing images of US violence against Vietnamese civilians from the television, wave of protests emerged increasing the pressure on Washington to pull back its forces. Restrictions set to counterinsurgency tactics by democratic political regime in the example of Vietnam has been viewed by Douglas Blaufarb and Harry Summers (Blaufarb 1977; Summers 1995). They provide a great insight into this topic, but without a parallel case study on a similar case, these are mere interpretations of history, and are lacking scientific value on the field of conflict studies.

Similar situation occurred in Algeria, where France struggled fighting against Algerian revolutionaries. The conflict started in 1954, when Western European economy had not yet recovered from the devastating impacts of World War II. Thus the public opinion was very critical of its government decision to engage in yet another war – particularly sending young Frenchmen to die in Africa to sustain highly unpopular colonial system. The negative outcome of the war for France – Algeria gaining its independence – has largely been explained by the political system. Although, France had military superiority, its democratic nature constrained the government to use more destructive measures to defeat the rebels. Such assumptions have been made by many scholars, David Galula and Alistair Horne amongst them (Galula 2011; Horne 2006).

Jason Lyall has conducted probably the most thorough study about the relationship between political regimes and counterinsurgency. He argues that one should question the common understanding that democracies are less competent in defeating domestic insurgencies. His first argument criticizes the



research on that subject so far, because all studies have examined democracies separately, not in comparison to autocracies, which the examples above illustrate (Lyall 2010, 171-172). Comparative analysis provides a better groundwork to make more reliable suggestions on this matter. Another factor that the previous studies haven't addressed is the fact that democracies often choose which conflicts to fight. Therefore they have the opportunity to weigh the possible outcomes carefully ensuring that the war results in victory (Lyall 2010, 168). Non-democracies have often no choice but to suppress homegrown insurgencies, because they are seriously threatening state's legitimacy. His findings suggest that democracies have "no causal effect on either war outcomes or duration" (Lyall 2010, 168).

Contrasting 20 autocratic regimes with 20 democratic regimes, Max Abrahms found that democracies are actually better in countering terrorism, because the population there is more sensitive to civilian casualties, and thus governments feel the need to act decisively to confront terrorism quickly (2007, 239-259).

Studies so far have mainly focused on analysing the probability of victory in conflicts for non-democracies and democracies. Quantitative data has its limits, because it hasn't taken into account that government regime often determines in which type of conflicts the states get involved in. Democracies are usually far less threatened by internal insurgencies, which means that they participate more in external conflicts than autocracies (Fearon, Laitin 2001, 25). Studies have shown that anocracies, regimes between the firm autocratic rule and stable democracy, are far more susceptible to civil conflicts (Hegre, Ellingsen, Gates, Gleditsch 2001). Gandhi and Vreeland (2004) on the other hand offer a different viewpoint and state that civil wars are less likely to occur under anocracies than pure dictatorships (Gandhi, Vreeland 2004, 31). Fearon and Laitin also agree that anocracies, which encompass elements of both democracies and autocracies, are the most vulnerable to experience civil wars, because that type of regimes are more unstable than autocracies and democracies (2001, 25). However their study still revealed that autocracies experience more internal insurgencies than democracies (Fearon, Laitin 2001).

Michael J. Engelhardt studied if state's regime has a significant influence on the outcome in a counterinsurgent war. He did not find strong evidence that a form of government can determine the result of the war, but made a number of observations about the differences in counterinsurgency strategies between democracies and non-democracies (1992). In democracies the public opinion can

easily turn against war, when the casualties rise, but it is also important to note that because of that they are often more able to limit excessive use of force in their counterinsurgent warfare (Engelhardt 1992, 52, 54). His study also found that “even in defeat, authoritarian regimes showed uncommon tolerance for suffering” (Engelhardt 1992, 55). For example, the Portuguese counterinsurgency massacred over 50 000 Africans in its response to insurgency in Angola (Engelhardt 1992, 56). Democracies however have moral restraints and would not find public understanding for such brutality in counterinsurgency (Engelhardt 1992, 56).

For state’s survival, or for the ruling government’s to be more precise, the internal rebellions are far more dangerous than border conflicts with neighbouring nations. Internal insurgency is capable of overthrowing the ruling government. While it is certain that a loss in interstate war harms the ruling government and many leaders decide to resign, it doesn’t lead to direct change of government as it does in the case of loss in a civil war. Also, in interstate conflicts the states can evaluate their chances of victory, and based on such calculations make a rational decision if or when to withdraw the troops. Intrastate conflicts involve the governments whether they want it or not, and even if the fighting occurs between different rebel groups, the state still becomes the battleground which decreases the governability of the state.

## **1.2. Counterinsurgency or counterterrorism?**

The actions undertaken by the governments have been identified as ‘counterinsurgency’ in the title of this paper. In order to clarify the meaning behind the word, a short explanation will be provided.

The terms counterinsurgency and counterterrorism are closely related, yet they are not interchangeable and are sometimes applied irresponsibly. Thus it is necessary to draw a line between counterinsurgency and counterterrorism. At first the terms should be viewed without the auxiliary ‘counter’.

Scholars have struggled to arrive at a mutual agreement regarding the definition of terrorism. Besides, there is still no common understanding, who is a terrorist and who is a freedom fighter, because it all depends on the person’s viewpoint. Rebels fight for their cultural identity and political freedom (Sambanis 2001, 266). Nevertheless, attempts have been made to form a common

definition based on different sets of criteria. One of the most concrete definitions the author has found states that: “Terrorism is a politically motivated tactic involving the threat or use of force or violence in which the pursuit of publicity plays a significant role (Hirsch-Hoefler, Pedahzur, Weinberg 2004, 286).” Matthew Michael Moore also views terrorism as a strategy (2011). He considers terrorism as a possible tactic of insurgency and believes that it is a form of strategy that might be implemented by the insurgents in civil wars (2011, 12, 26). In that sense, terrorism is something that can be a part of insurgency, but all insurgents are not automatically terrorists.

Naturally the governments can also resort to terrorism (Kalyvas 2006), but the actions taken by the leading regime to tackle or prevent terrorism is counterterrorism. Since terrorism is regarded as thoroughly negative, appointing that term to insurgents might serve the interests of the government. Labelling insurgents as terrorists vilifies the violence against the government. This is also one of the reasons the word ‘counterinsurgency’ is used in this paper. It offers a more neutral tone, while encompassing a greater scope of behaviours.

David Galula views insurgency as a careful step-by-step action with the goal to overthrow the leading regime (1964, 2). To simplify the notion even more, he states that: “An insurgency is a civil war (Galula 1964, 2).” Therefore, counterinsurgency (often known by the abbreviation COIN) can be addressed as “all measures adopted to defeat an insurgency” (Kilcullen 2006, 11-112). This exact approach is also taken in this paper. Counterinsurgency is a set of measures taken by the governments, which experience civil war in their nations. As previously stated, terrorism can be a strategy used by insurgents. Hence, counterterrorism can be an element of counterinsurgency. Paul Dixon also emphasises that one can tell the difference between counterterrorism and counterinsurgency by the popular support for the insurgents in the latter (Dixon 2009, 356).

Even though both the United Kingdom and Russia have addressed the Irish and Chechen insurgents as terrorists (Thatcher 1984, Kovalyov 2002), and it is in fact true that terrorism was sometimes part of their strategy, it is clear that the insurgents held a strong political agenda with the desire to secede from the governing regime. Therefore, in the context of this paper the fight to suppress insurgents is a counterinsurgency.

## **2. THE CASE STUDIES**

### **2.1. Defining the political regimes of the case studies**

At first, the political regimes of the case studies should be determined. While there could hardly be any serious arguments contending that the governmental system in United Kingdom is democratic, determining Russia's political regime can be a little more complex. If after the Cold War it might have seemed that Russia was taking steps towards democracy, then Putin's dictatorial reign during the last decade has firmly installed Russia's political course (Englund, Lally 2011). In spite of the government's attempts to create a different image of the nation to the international society, it is safe to say that Russia is not a full democracy. However, it would not be entirely correct to call Russia an autocracy, because the country still embodies a number of democratic elements, most notably democratic elections.

As Russia is constantly blamed on suppressing civil society, political opposition and free press, it is quite clear that Russian version of democracy is very different from the United Kingdom's democracy. The meaning of democracy is open to discussion. Surely, what can be considered a democracy for some, might be something very different for others. As the aim of this research is not to specifically determine Russia's political regime, but rather compare two case studies from which one is certainly a democracy, the author has decided to rely on data from Polity IV, which has ranked political regimes around the world (Appendix 1).

In the years since the collapse of Soviet Union Russia has been awarded a score between 3 and 6 (Appendix 1). With a score between 6 and 9 a state qualifies as a 'democracy' and between 1 and 5 as an 'open anocracy'. In the purpose of this research an average score of relevant conflict years will be used to determine Russia's political regime. Average score of 14 years, when the civil war was officially ongoing (1994-1996 and 1999-2009) is approximately 4.6. With the score of 4.6 Russia can be described as an 'open anocracy'. What exactly is an anocracy is of course a debated matter,

but the most general explanations defines it as a mix of democratic and autocratic features (Gandhi, Veerland 2004, 2). In the previous chapter it was revealed that many scholars believe that anocracies are the most vulnerable to experience civil conflicts.

United Kingdom on the other hand, has been extremely consistent with its score. For every single year since 1968, United Kingdom has received the score 10 (Appendix 1). According to Polity IV a state with a score of 10 qualifies as a 'full democracy'. This is also the highest score possible. Thus, the question regarding the political regime of United Kingdom does not need more attention at the moment and a clear distinction between United Kingdom's and Russia's regime is evident.

## **2.2. Northern Ireland and the Troubles**

Events that caused lots of troubles in Northern Ireland, but also in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland, have been named accordingly – the Troubles. It has been largely agreed that the period the main fighting took place was from 1968 until 1998. The actual roots of the conflict go back centuries and are essential to understand the behaviour of both IRA and the British government during the Troubles.

Ireland is more of a geographical term referring to the whole island in North Atlantic Ocean, just east of the island of Great Britain. Republic of Ireland is a nation-state, but it does not have complete jurisdiction over the island of Ireland. In the course of history religion and ethnicity have determined political power zones. Today the northern part of the island, known as Northern Ireland is part of United Kingdom, and the rest of the island is a completely sovereign entity – Republic of Ireland.

Throughout history Ireland has always been somewhat of a burden to the British. Until 1919 British crown was a *de facto* ruler of both of the islands, but Irish were known for their disobedience, and eager to use every opportunity to rise up against the regime. In the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century king James I gave large pieces of lands in the region of Ulster (province in Northern Ireland) to English and Scottish settlers (Hachey, Hernon, McCaffrey 1996, 19). It was part of the crown's plantation policy – the lands were taken away from local Irish population to weaken their economic, and thus political stand in the society. The settlers were Protestant and pro-British, whereas Irish were

strongly Catholic and rather nationalist. This type of colonization guaranteed support to the government in London then, in 17<sup>th</sup> century, and continued to serve its purpose throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ethnic and religious borders are still very clear – when Republic of Ireland remains very Catholic, then the majority of Protestants on the island live in Northern Ireland. At its founding in 1921, Northern Ireland had a population of 1.3 million – two thirds of them Protestant and in support of staying part of United Kingdom (Golway 2000, 279).

In the aftermath of some revolutionary acts in the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century (English 2006, 108), Britain felt the need to suppress the Irish once and for all, because losing colonies in North America was already damaging trade and economy of the empire. The Acts of Union in 1800 dissolved Irish Parliament, meaning that the little autonomy the Irish had had, was abolished (Golway 2000, 91). This, however, was a temporary solution, because Irish Republicanism awakened in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century in the form of Home Rule movement advocating the repeal of Acts of Union – many prominent Irish started to argue that Irish questions should be discussed in Dublin, not in London (Hachey, Herson, McCaffrey 1996, 110-111). However, the movement didn't represent Ireland as a whole. As the result of 1800's Acts of Union British rule over Ireland increased, benefiting economically the island's northeastern corner, where the industry concentrated (Hachey, Herson, McCaffrey 1996, 47-50). The distinction between people of Ulster and the rest of Ireland became even more evident, especially in its capital Belfast, which identified itself solely as part of United Kingdom (Golway 2000, 179). Protestant settlers in the North had little interest rebelling against the King and the Parliament, since their loyalty laid there. So, in response to Home Rule movement, Ulster loyalists<sup>1</sup> organized their own movement to defend the union of Ireland and Great Britain (Golway 2000, 179).

By the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century role of religion in European politics had largely decreased, but not in Ireland, where Catholicism was the main national element differentiating Irish from the British. One of the reasons why antagonism was strong between these two groups was the fact that the British viewed the Irish with prejudice – they were perceived fanatically Catholic “caught in the authoritarian and superstitious clutches of popery” (Hachey, Herson, McCaffrey 1996m 138-139). The hostility against English was explained by the centuries of repression.

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<sup>1</sup> Golway 2000:279: Loyalists and Unionists were two different terms used for the people of Northern Ireland who supported staying in the Union with United Kingdom. However, there was a distinction of class. Working-class people used the term “loyalist”, while highly educated people leaned towards the term “unionist”.

Sinn Féin, an Irish party supporting more of a radical approach, won the elections in 1918, but the members of the party refused to take seat in House of Commons<sup>2</sup> in 1919, and decided to declare independence by establishing an Irish Parliament in Dublin. This led to Anglo-Irish War, also known as the Irish War of Independence, from 1919 to 1921, where Irish Volunteers founded national army under the name Irish Republican Army – IRA (English 2006, 288). This army had no chance against one of the most powerful armies in the world – the British Royal Army, and thus resorted to unconventional methods, such as guerilla warfare, aiming to make Ireland as ungovernable as possible for the British (English 2006, 290). Launching small scale surprise attacks while wearing no distinctive uniform (Golway 2000, 265), and then quickly melting into civilian population was the strategy of IRA in Anglo-Irish War, and also during The Troubles. The strategy paid off, because Britain and Irish sat behind the negotiation table in 1921 to sign Anglo-Irish Treaty, which gave Ireland a similar dominion status as one of Canada and Australia (English 2006, 307). This however did not satisfy the thirst for full independence dividing the leadership into two different sides, which led the country to Irish Civil War (1922-1923) (English 2006, 307). IRA was the most aggressive belligerent fighting against the treaty (English 2003, 34).

In the search of possible solutions to the Irish question, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George proposed Better Government of Ireland bill in 1920, which became the groundwork of partition of Ireland – establishing two different parliaments, one in Dublin, and the second one representing six of Ulster’s nine counties in Belfast (Golway 2000, 264). When Irish Free State was established in 1921 with the Anglo-Irish Treaty, it did not include those 6 counties in Ulster, which remained part of the United Kingdom under the name Northern Ireland (Golway 2000, 273). Sinn Féin took an enormous victory from 1921 elections – 124 of 128 districts outside the northeast (Golway 2000, 271) – with an agenda to unite all Ireland under the rule of absolutely sovereign Irish government (English 2006, 288). Nevertheless, many were tired of fighting and wanted to pursue independent governance in the form of Irish Free State, in spite of the requirement to swear oath to the British crown (Golway 2000, 274). In 1923 pro-Treaty side was victorious in Irish Civil War, thanks to military assistance from British government (English 2003, 35).

Still, Irish saga wasn’t over for the Brits. London was forced to swallow Dublin taking more and more liberty in foreign policy than one would expect from a dominion (Hachey, Hennon, McCaffrey

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<sup>2</sup> The House of Commons is the lower house of the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

1996, 187). At the same time, IRA, not recognizing the legitimacy of Irish Free State, had established itself as a military organization fully committed to the purpose of uniting all 32 counties of Ireland (Hachey, Hernon, McCaffrey 1996, 187). Adopting elements of left-wing political ideology gave IRA an opportunity to successfully exploit contemporary social issues like unemployment and poverty, which consequently increased the organization's support (Hachey, Hernon, McCaffrey 1996, 187). In 1937 Irish Parliament abolished Irish Free State replacing it with Eire, meaning Ireland in Gaelic, and in 1949 the country was officially named Republic of Ireland, and stepped out of British Commonwealth.

Meanwhile in Northern Ireland, the government had been ruled by pro-British Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) since its beginning in 1921, while its Catholic population was not only unrepresented, but also experienced discrimination (English 2006:367). Discontent amongst them resulted in foundation of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) in 1967 calling for fair allocation of public housing, ending the manipulation of electoral borders, which guaranteed victories for the loyalists, the repeal of extensive Special Powers Act<sup>3</sup>, and mechanisms for preventing discrimination by public authorities (English 2006, 367). NICRA, inspired by black civil rights movement in the United States, was an organization campaigning for Catholics' civil rights (English 2003, 100). In the light of this movement, government led by UUP's Terence O'Neill attempted to reform the country, but in his failure to satisfy the hopes he had raised amongst the Catholics, he also managed to prompt excess fear for the Protestant majority (English 2006, 367). People's protests followed, which were answered with violence from the loyalist organizations and the police – the situation escalated to an extent that Northern Ireland in its incapability had to ask help from London. O'Neill then decided to resign the position of Prime Minister in 1969 (Hachey, Hernon, McCaffrey 1996, 235). In 1973 the political leaders in the North finally agreed to form a new government, where for the first-time power would be shared with the Catholics (Golway 2000, 300). Disapproving such reforms unions led by loyalists went on a large-scale strike, which shut down the province for more than two weeks (Golway 2000, 300).

In 1969, intense violence emerged in Belfast after police and Ulster loyalists attacked Catholic civil rights march (English 2003, 101). Catholics, already feeling suppressed by the government now saw

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<sup>3</sup> Civil Authorities Special Powers Act of Northern Ireland 1922 allowed the government to “take all such steps and issue all such orders as may be necessary for preserving the peace and maintaining order.” It meant the Northern Ireland Parliament could take itself the liberty to ignore laws.



that the police is not capable of protecting them, and this enormously increased support to IRA, which was now seen as the alternative organization to guarantee security (Dawson 2005, 102-103; English 2003, 102-103). In response to 1969 riots, British Army, now present in Northern Ireland, built a barrier to separate Protestant and Catholic neighbourhoods, which divided the two sides even more (English 2003, 101-103). The conflict had began, and the British government was now responsible to solve the civil unrest in Northern Ireland. However, the counterinsurgency methods used by the United Kingdom were not always democratic.

Jeff Goodwin argues that democracies have been more successful in including masses in the governing process through elections, variety of political parties, freedom of speech, and allowing different civil society movements (2001, 13). Authoritarian regimes include economic and political elite, but exclude the masses, and this is the source of grievances. A similar idea is presented by Fearon and Laitin (2001). They believe that by giving people the vote, democracies are lowering the discrimination rate in the state (Fearon, Laitin 2001, 6). Nicholas Sambanis also believes that “lack of democracy is a significant predictor of the onset of an ethnic civil war” (2001, 260). In this case, The Troubles is the exception that proves the rule. In United Kingdom it appears that the democratic regime failed to include all the groups. By excluding the Irish nationalists from political sphere, the government created frustration in the group, which led to violent rebellion against the regime.

Fearon and Laitin have come to a conclusion that economic factors can increase the chance of civil wars, even in democracies (Fearon, Laitin 2001, 28). High poverty rate among certain group might be high enough to make a guerrilla life attractive enough to young men prompting them to join the rebel movement. United Kingdom is not usually associated with poverty, but it is true that economic situation in Northern Ireland is worse than in the rest of the country. There is evidence that during the Troubles Catholics were worse off compared to the Protestants. The Continuous Household Survey for the period 1983-1984 showed that working class Catholics reported more difficulty in paying rent than the Protestants belonging to the same class (Rowthorn, Wayne 1988). The Census of Population reveals a much higher rate of unemployment among the Catholic men compared to Protestant men, figures were respectively 17.3% and 6.6% in 1971, and 30.2% and 12.4% in 1981 (Osborne, Kormack 1986, 215).

Even though many scholars have agreed that democracies are less prone to be the grounds for civil wars, there are still many factors, which can persuade people to join the insurgency. In the case of

Northern Ireland it is probable that poor economic situation was one of the motives persuading young men to join the IRA. Clearly, the motives were much more far-reaching since ethno-religious tensions are not the result of diversity, but of polarization and exclusion (Collier, Hoeffler 2004, 571). As there is a link between country's ethnic and religious diversity and higher risk of civil war (Fearon, Laitin 2001, 5), the fact that United Kingdom, despite its democratic regime, was drawn into civil conflict can be explained by various reasons.

### **2.3. Chechen-Russian conflict**

Chechens belong to a different ethnic group than Russians. They have their own language and traditions. Chechens practice mostly Sunni Islam in its various forms clearly distinguishing them from Russians, who belong to Christian Orthodox religion (Lapidus 1998, 9-10).

Excluding a short-lived independence period from 1917 to 1921, when Chechnya formed a state with Dagestan under the name United Mountain Dwellers of the North Caucasus, the territory has been part of Russian Empire and Soviet Union for centuries (Lapidus 1998, 8). Turbulent events in 1991, when Soviet Union collapsed, gave an opportunity for Chechen nationalists, led by former Soviet military general Dzhokhar Dudayev to declare independence, but this new country struggled to find any economic success (Magnusson 1999, 20; Lapidus 1998, 11; Cohen 2014, 20). When in 1994 opposition, supported by Russian military, took up arms against Dudayev's regime, civil war in Chechnya began – the rebels supported the independence, but opposed Dudayev's dictatorial leadership (Cohen 2014, 22; Magnusson 1999, 76).

Surprisingly, immense financial and military aid to the rebels didn't secure victory for them. Russia's attempts to hide its ties with Chechen rebels were fruitless, and by the end of 1994 Russian air force started to publicly bomb Chechnya (Magnusson 1999, 76-77; Lapidus 1998, 7). Despite the negotiated ceasefire between Dudayev and Russian Minister of Defence, troops entered Chechnya to restore Russian territorial integrity – marking the beginning of the First Chechen War (Dash 2000, 1517). Chechnya was an interest of Russia, because of the energy resources and transportation routes through the Caucasus region (Lapidus 1998, 10). Russia planned to achieve a quick victory and annex Chechnya with a week, but the former world power faced unexpected difficulties in

defeating Dudayev's supporters (Cohen 2014:28-29). Lack of motivation and inefficient preparation caused high desertion rate in Russian Army.

Nevertheless, Russia ordered large-scale airstrikes on Chechen capital Grozny, which cost thousands of lives. The official estimation by Yeltsin's adviser and Duma member Sergei Kovalev was that 27 000 people died in these attacks, although it is believed that the casualties were much greater (Cohen 2014, 41; Magnusson 1999, 81). Despite the resistance from Chechen forces was impressive, the Russians managed to conquer the city (Magnusson 1999, 80). Fighting continued from both sides preventing the new pro-Russian government in Grozny to take seat (Magnusson 1999, 81). Eventually, Chechens retook the control over their capital in 1996, resulting in Russia's loss in the First Chechen War (Magnusson 1999, 83). Despite their unquestionable military superiority, Russians were powerless against Chechen guerrilla warfare.

The Chechens were able to reinforce their sovereignty. However this type of sovereignty doesn't fit into our common understanding of an independent nation-state – it was more a secessionist government, which didn't gain any international recognition (Kramer 2005, 5). Also, the Khasavyurt accord between the two governments included a clause that Russia and Chechnya will have to find a proper solution to the conflict by the end of 2001 (Kramer 2005, 5). Chechens were allowed to enjoy the victory only for a brief moment, because internal political changes in Russia shifted power from Boris Yeltsin to Vladimir Putin. Although Putin was known to be a Yeltsin loyalist, his goal was to lead Russia to a different path. Putin's success can largely be accounted for his reminiscence of former Soviet glory, and Russia's offensive against Chechnya became the first imposition of that type of contemporary imperialism.

The political course Chechen leaders were taking, like implementing sharia law, made Russians more and more cautious (Cohen 2014, 37-39; Kramer 2005, 7). Since the war had left Chechen economy in ruins, one of the main sources of income became kidnapping high-profile Russian officials (Kramer 2005, 6). Chechnya also experienced high internal violence, which became the only tool holding the weak government in Grozny in power. During that time terror acts perpetrated by Chechen extremist Islamist groups started to spread into Dagestan, a republic in Russian Federation, where they attempted to assist local fundamentalists to establish an independent Islamic State of Dagestan (Cohen 2014, 39-40).

Chechnya started to cause more and more trouble to Russian Federation. The bombings targeting civilian apartments around Russia killed approximately 300 people in September 1999 alone (Kramer 2005, 7). Chechen radicals were blamed on these attacks by the government, even though their involvement was contended later (Kramer 2005, 7). The bombings and War of Dagestan were sufficient reasons for Moscow to begin the Second Chechen War, where Chechnya was officially reinstated as part of Russian Federation.

Russia didn't repeat the mistakes of the First Chechen War and focused on long-distance weaponry, for example Grozny was conquered rather quickly by using air attacks (Cohen 2014, ix). The war then transformed into rural guerilla fighting, in which Russia had a bit more difficulties to defeat its enemies. Unable to win Russian military, Chechen rebels resorted to terrorism launching number of attacks – mostly suicide bombings – on airports, concert halls, subways and other public places (Cohen 2014, 1; Kramer 2005, 45). Most notable events scaring the whole Russian nation appeared in 2002, when Islamist militants from Chechnya took 916 people in hostage in Dubrovka theater in Moscow, and in 2004, when more than 1100 people were taken hostage in Beslan high school (Cohen 2014, 2-3).

Ethno-religious factors have received a lot of attention as potential causes of civil wars. In fact, Collier's and Hoeffler's research found that the domination of ethnic majority is the only grievance, which has any significant effect on civil wars (Collier; Hoeffler 2004, 588). In accordance, Nicholas Sambanis consider fighting for the survival of ethnic identity a much stronger incentive than economic intentions (Sambanis 2001, 266). Chechen War is an ethnic conflict, because one of the sides was “a marginalized ethnic minority with a distinct sense of, and desire for, its own national homeland (Lyll 2010, 2).”

## **2.4. Summary**

These two case studies share a number of similar features. Both rebellions were caused by ethnic grievances – Chechens and pro-Irish population of Northern Ireland fought against a dominant ethnicity. In both civil wars religion was an important factor dividing the fighting sides. There is a clear distinction between the pro-Irish Nationalists and pro-British Unionists, because the first are overwhelmingly Catholic and the latter Protestant. In Chechnya the population is Muslim, but the

Russians follow the Russian Orthodox Church.

One of the major differences between these case studies is the fact that the insurgents in Northern Ireland sought unification with the Republic of Ireland, not independence, but in Chechnya the goal was to secede and become independent from Russia, which they managed to do for a short period. Also, Chechnya is ethnically much more homogenous than Northern Ireland, which does not necessarily explain, but may be one of the reasons the conflict in Chechnya was much bloodier.

### **3. METHODS OF COUNTERINSURGENCY**

What is effective counterinsurgency? According to Fearon and Laitin it is the ability to distinguish rebels from non-combatants and ensuring that the lives and living conditions of the latter would not be harmed in the fight against the rebels (2001, 9). Although politically and militarily a difficult problem, this is certainly expected from the democratic governments as the people will hold the government responsible for the casualties. Nevertheless, democracies have struggled to guarantee the safety of non-combatants – one of the most notorious cases is definitely the U.S military's failures in Vietnam, where it came public that the local people suffered great losses due to the actions taken by the U.S army (Krepinevich 1986). The Brits have also received a fair amount of criticism for their counterinsurgency in Northern Ireland (Kennedy-Pipe 1997). Effective counterinsurgency is more rare for the non-democracies as their government forces are usually less well-equipped and less paid. They either cannot or do not want to prevent the abuse of power by the military – in fact, opportunity to loot and pillage can even be given as a bonus for the military for their services (Fearon, Laitin 2001, 9). International actors have criticized Russia for its counterinsurgency methods, which have often violated number of human rights in Chechnya (Human Rights Watch 2007; Haque 1999, 15-29).

There are advantages and disadvantages for both regimes in the counterinsurgency strategy. Clearly, non-democracies are less dependent on public opinion, since their rule is not challenged by the following elections. In democracies however, the electorate is able to express their opinion during the elections. Hence, if the public opinion does not approve how the government has handled the civil war, they may not give them another mandate. Another disadvantage for democracies is the power of media. Freedom of press allows journalists to cover the possible mishandling of the conflict, whereas in non-democracy the media is largely suppressed by the ruling regime. In this chapter the counterinsurgency methods of United Kingdom in Northern Ireland and the counterinsurgency methods of Russia in Chechnya will be analysed and compared.

### **3.1. Counterinsurgency doctrine of United Kingdom**

Historically, British counterinsurgency has been famous for its “hearts and mind” approach, which they have usually chosen over large-scale military operations (Engelhardt 1992, 57). Winning over the people by not using unnecessary violence against them and not looting their homes can grant the support of the civilians. Yet, in Kenya, Palestine and Northern Ireland the British forces are known to have used torture as part of their counterinsurgency (Charters, Tugwell 1989, 222-223).

When the military forces were first deployed in the streets of Belfast, their purpose was peacekeeping between the two communities, not counterinsurgency. This changed within months when it became evident that a proper counterinsurgency strategy and intelligence was needed (Charters, 2009). The elements of the British military doctrine are rather democratic in their nature as they take into account the consent of the people and try to use the minimum amount of force. To what degree the United Kingdom actually stood by this doctrine is another question.

Officially, the British counterinsurgency doctrine favoured the police to an army in the fight against the insurgents (Dixon 2009, 359-360). It is true that the police was an important actor in British counterinsurgency in Northern Ireland, but the Troubles, being the bloodiest conflict within the United Kingdom, also needed a military response.

British Army Field Manual says that in the postcolonial era the fundamental policies of counterinsurgency are “minimum force, civil/military cooperation and tactical flexibility” (British Army Field Manual 2009, 30). Other crucial points mentioned in the same manual include the importance of securing the support of the people and a long-term solution for the crisis (British Army Field Manual 2009, 30). In the view of B. W. Morgan, British Army failed to use minimal force in Northern Ireland, even though this was expected from them based on the British military doctrine (2015). Paul Dixon also describes British counterinsurgency in Northern Ireland quite brutally as it included “considerable degrees of coercion and abuse of human rights” (2009, 376). The senior officers were well aware that strategically they needed to hold back the violence, but it was not an easy guideline to follow in the middle of the crisis (Morgan 2015).

### **3.2. Counterinsurgency doctrine of Russian Federation**

Chechnya, together with other republics in North Caucasus, is viewed as the terrorism and insurgent hotspot in Russia (Mazurova 2016, 1). Putin has taken a very strong position in fighting against terrorism, which can be illustrated by Russia's intervention in the Syrian Civil War. As terrorism is considered one of the greatest national security risks in Russia and internally it is concentrated in the North Caucasus, it is naturally a focal point in Russia's military doctrine.

After Boris Yeltsin's resignation in 1999, Putin was appointed the Acting President of Russian Federation. On the same day he visited the troops in Chechnya. In his bid to gain more support during the presidential elections, he courted the military with the new war in Chechnya for which the military commanders were given freedom in choosing the strategy to wipe out the insurgency (Mazurova 2016, 4). In comparison to the British counterinsurgency in Northern Ireland, which was mostly the responsibility of the police, Russia's counterinsurgency was controlled by the Russian Armed Forces.

The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation (2014) marks down the main internal military risks, one of them being "activities of terrorist organizations and individuals aimed at undermining the sovereignty and violating the unity and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation", and points out the main tasks of the Armed Forces, troops and other bodies in peacetime, including "to combat terrorism in the territory of the Russian Federation" (Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, 2014). Therefore a strong perception of threat from terrorist and separatist organizations is present in Russia til this day.

Alexei Arbatov, State Duma Member from 1994-2003, writes in "The Transformation of Russian Military Doctrine: Lessons Learned from Kosovo and Chechnya" that the main lesson learned from the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia was that decisive and massive force is the most efficient problem solver and breaking the laws and humanitarian sufferings acquire a secondary meaning – the point is that the goal justifies the means (2000, 20-21). What is more, he bluntly states that: "Limiting one's own troop casualties is worth imposing massive devastation and collateral fatalities on civilian populations." (Arbatov 2000, 21) The fact that NATO used extensive force in Yugoslavia in Spring



1999 was an excuse for Russia to implement violent counterinsurgency campaigns in Chechnya in September 1999, because after the First Chechen War (1994-1996) there was a certain taboo against using force in such manner in Chechnya (Arbatov 2000, 21). Arbatov even suspected that countries like Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran could take part in the secessionist movements against Russia's government in Chechnya (2000, 6). The security position of State Duma Member Arbatov is very much in line with Russia's counterinsurgency in Chechnya.

### **3.3. Types of violence and casualties**

In non-democracies the leaders have more freedom to neglect the advice from other members of state institutions (Lyal 2010, 173). This lets them act more irrationally, which is demonstrated by the example of Russian President Boris Yeltsin's behavior during the First Chechen War. Yeltsin's decision to attack Chechnya found strong resistance from prominent army officials and since the President didn't pay any attention to their suggestions, many resigned, which definitely weakened the military leadership. The effects of this appeared shortly after – Russia struggled enormously in their fight against Chechen rebels. Thus, during the First Chechen War the state of Russian Army was very disorderly – lack of training and low morals led to indiscriminate violence, which in most cases doesn't serve its purpose and as a strategy is likely to backfire (Kalyvas 2006, 144). Increased civilian casualties caused great upset, and Russians lost the support of ethnic Chechens, who opposed Dudayev. Therefore, non-democratic counterinsurgency can be less rational than democratic, because institutions have far less influence over the decisions of the leader, which, in the case of First Chechen War was a shortcoming of anocratic regime.

The highlight of state violence during the Troubles was Bloody Sunday in 1972, when British soldiers opened fire against unarmed civilians, who were marching on the streets of Londonderry (English 2003, 148-152). As a result, northern Catholics lost confidence that the state would be able to provide them lawful protection. In general understanding the state violence on Bloody Sunday was completely unjustified, since the soldiers opened fire against peaceful protesters. As Martin McGuinness, politician of Sinn Féin put it: "As far as I am concerned the British Army got away with murder on Bloody Sunday." (English 2003, 153) British government had a different view on this matter. In the aftermath they set up a Public Inquiry to investigate if the army was responsible

for any wrong-doings, but it was declared that the soldiers can't be held guilty, since they had acted fairly (Dawson 2005, 153). Public pressure forced the government to allow re-investigation. 26 years later it was finally stated that the state was guilty of the killings, and the violence used was by all means unjust (Dawson 2005, 171). British Army abused their power when they decided to massacre unarmed civilians – such act shouldn't be left unpunished in a democratic country. This example demonstrates that democracy doesn't always prevent government from using indiscriminate violence.

The nature of violence used by democracies and non-democracies is likely to differ. Although United Kingdom failed to target only the people known to be terrorists, their choice of violence was much more discreet and the attacks were carefully thought-through. Russia using incumbent violence more extensively and indiscriminately has caused far greater civilian sufferings than United Kingdom. The populations of Northern Ireland and Chechnya are both between 1 and 2 million, the latter having a slightly smaller population, but the number of civilian casualties varies greatly. The total death toll of the Troubles is 3532 (CAIN, University of Ulster). Although there is no common agreement how many people have actually died in Chechnya, the figure is somewhere between 45 000 and 250 000 (Cohen 2014, 41). Since Russian counterinsurgency has resulted in much higher number of casualties it can be stated that non-democratic regime is likely to use higher level of violence.

However, this doesn't necessarily mean that state's political regime has great impact on counterinsurgency tactics. Some may argue that because democracies are known to be more cost-intolerant forced United Kingdom to keep casualties very low. The perception of "cost" can depend on multiple factors, like historical experiences and the population of the country. 250 000 lives seems a very small amount for Russians, who lost 20 million people in the Second World War, not to mention that Russia is a far bigger nation than United Kingdom. Even though Russia as an anocracy might tolerate a higher number of casualties, human lives still have a meaning for them and can have a great influence on public opinion. For instance, civilian deaths in the First Chechen War made the conflict very unpopular and eventually caused Yeltsin to withdraw. In the Second Chechen War the blockade on media didn't reveal the real number of casualties, so it is difficult to estimate the reactions.

### **3.4. Public opinion**

While it is believed that democracies are more careful when using unnecessary violence not to cause public outrage, it can't be automatically assumed that the autocracies wouldn't do the same (Lyll 2010, 171-172). Non-democratic governments do have less constraints in the use of power, but nonetheless, they need popular support to legitimize their rule. Although many dictators are notorious for killing millions of people, it is not the best strategy in the long run, because people won't forget and forgive that easily. Therefore, it is in the best interest of an autocratic leader to keep the state violence under control – just enough to suppress the uprisings, but not involving high civilian casualties. This tactics is very similar to democracies, which attempt to keep the violence limited to a certain extent.

As it appeared that Russians were incapable conquering Chechnya with a short period of time as was initially promised, the public opinion grew more and more hostile against the First Chechen War. Eventually in 1996 Yeltsin withdrew the troops, because there was no popular support for the war. Even non-democratic leaders need to justify the relevance of the war, and in this case Yeltsin couldn't adequately explain the necessity of war in Chechnya. Although lack of popular support was definitely not an only influencing factor, non-democratic Russia behaved somewhat democratically by listening to public opinion.

United Kingdom on the other hand failed to compromise diplomatically with the insurgents during the 1981 hunger strikes in Northern Ireland, when the state was blamed on the deaths of 10 IRA prisoners (English 2003, 201-203). The matter was rather simple actually – IRA prisoners asked from the government to be treated as political prisoners, not as common criminals, the difference being the permission to wear their own clothes and be in contact with each other. This policy had been enforced previously, but the government taking a more radical approach to IRA repealed such policies. The strike was initiated by Bobby Sands, who on 9<sup>th</sup> of April was elected to the British Parliament, but who never had the opportunity to take his seat in the House of Commons, because on 5<sup>th</sup> of May, on the 66<sup>th</sup> day of his hunger strike he died (English 2003, 199-200). More than 100 000 people attended his funeral in Belfast, emphasizing the immense impact Sands had on the Nationalist community in Northern Ireland (CAIN – The Hunger Strike of 1981). A person winning

more than 30 000 (CAIN – The Hunger Strike of 1981) votes during the democratic elections was treated like a regular criminal by the authorities. Although the British press was very hostile against the hunger strikers, the international media was shocked that the British government was unwilling to compromise with such minor requests and instead let an elected member of the parliament starve to death (Doughty, 2016). The IRA members in prisons became martyrs, while British government failed to show any sympathy or humanity towards them. What is more, Thatcher's government had more than two months to find a solution, but insisted its firm anti-terrorist policies with the cost of 10 young men's lives, all of them in their 20's.

### **3.5. Terror attacks**

Although it is presumed that democracies are more cost-intolerant for civilian casualties (Gartner 2008, 95-97), making them preferable targets for terrorists, it can never be predicted in which way the government reacts to such attacks. 9/11 was an incentive for US to invade Afghanistan, while 2004 Madrid train bombings convinced Spanish authorities to withdraw their troops from Iraq. Since the state behavior in response to terrorism varies even within democracies, it is even more difficult to make contrasting assumptions for different political regimes. Nevertheless, since terror attacks were important elements in both of these conflicts, attention should be given on the effects.

The Chechens hoped that large-scale terrorist attacks against the Russian population would turn the people against the government (Kramer 2005, 47). When the armed rebels seized control over Dubrovka theater in Moscow in 2002, they demanded Russia to grant independence to Chechnya and immediate withdrawal of troops from the region, in return of the lives of more than 800 people held captive (Kramer 2005, 51). Clearly any state would struggle to fulfill demands as radical as these, so the terrorists finalized their suicides taking with them 130 civilian lives. The strategy backfired – directly after the hostage crisis the number of Russians who insisted tougher policy in Chechnya increased sharply (Kramer 2005, 56). Although the public opinion after the attacks supported intensifying the use of force in 2002, the endurance of the conflict changed these views. 2004 surveys about the Russian sentiment over Second Chechen War found that people had realized that increased violence in Chechnya is not a viable solution and only leads to further attacks on civilians, thus the majority favored peace negotiations (Kramer 2005, 56). Although these polls

suggested that prolonged counterinsurgency would decrease Putin's popularity, they had little effect on him. Then again, he didn't have much of a choice – he had obtained his power on the ground of solving the Chechen problem and losing second time there in ten years would have destroyed his public image. So, in response, Putin exploited terror acts to instigate fear amongst his people to justify further violence in Chechnya.

IRA began to act more as a terrorist organization launching attacks in the pubs in England killing dozens of innocent civilians (Golway 2000, 301). British reaction was to arrest ten men of Irish descent and convict all of them for these pub bombings, only to admit many years later that these men having spent sixteen years in jail were in fact innocent (Golway 2000, 301). This shows that British government acted impulsively ignoring the fact that there were no strong evidence to convict these men. During the peace years public opinion in a democratic country wouldn't forgive such discrimination.

Both, United Kingdom and Russia, faced the public pressure to defeat the rebels, because civilians died in the terror attacks. The response was similar – more aggressive policies against terrorists, which often rejected legal and judiciary constraints. The counterterrorism in these cases had a similar nature during the conflict, but what distinguishes democracy from anocracy is the fact that the leaders can be held accountable for their actions after their term. If the opposition comes to power during the next elections, they can easily start to investigate government's actions and prosecute the democratic leaders if it would be found they had not acted according to the law. Surely, same could happen in non-democracies, but the leaders there are much less intimidated, since they are not willing to let opposition to take the power in the first place. Despite having regular elections in Russia, Putin has ensured that his reign would continue for a long period of time.

### **3.6. The use of media**

Non-democracies have the privilege to determine what is and what is not covered by the media. Great civilian sufferings caused by the incumbent violence can be easily hidden from the public eye, while the cruelties and crimes committed by the anti-government groups, true or not, are very well presented. Thus authoritarian rulers can successfully manipulate the public opinion. In the case of Second Chechen War, Putin's administration skillfully used state-controlled media to legitimize the

invasion to Chechnya. The wave of bombings in 2000 was blamed on Chechen extremists, and even though Chechens openly denied the responsibility, Putin was able to create fear and panic on national level, and channel the anger, which otherwise might have blamed the government not providing safety and domestic security, against the Chechen separatists (Rigi 2004, 147).

During the First Chechen War signs of indiscriminate violence and civilian casualties were broadcasted by independent media agents (Forsberg, Herd 2005, 458), who at this time were not as suppressed by the government as they later became under Putin's rule. As a result Russian public opinion was strongly against the war. In the Second Chechen War Putin imposed an information blockade around Chechnya, that could be penetrated by only a few opposition journalists (Forsberg; Herd 2005, 462). One famous example was Anna Politkovskaya who risked her life to correspond the real events from Chechnya to Russian people (Burrett 2011, 197).

After Putin won the elections in 2000, his administration immediately started to re-establish control over media (Burrett 2011, 196). In spite of being in the hands of Kremlin friendly oligarchs, Russian television channel NTV had maintained a small degree of freedom, but the coverage of Dubrovka hostage crisis in 2002 became fatal to NTV, because they didn't go along with the state's official standpoint, which put all the blame on Chechen extremists and portrayed the events as something similar that had happened in the US during 9/11 (Burrett 2011, 65, 196). Airing interviews with Chechen women who had lost their loved ones in the result of massive attacks on civilian villages revealed the reasonings behind the Chechen terror attacks (Burrett 2011, 63). Since such reports questioned Putin's proclamation of his "war on terror", NTV's management was soon replaced by even more pro-Kremlin people (Burrett 2011, 64).

Freedom of the press is one of the main pillars of democracy. The power of media to shape public opinion has made politicians very careful in their statements and actions. Every negative step discovered by the media can end up on the cover of the magazine, thus the media is holding the governments accountable for their actions. Without press freedom the country can't really qualify as a full democracy.

In 1985 the government temporarily prohibited airings of a documentary, which involved discussions of Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness and Democratic Unionist Party's<sup>4</sup> Gregory Campbell about the Troubles, which was followed by one day strike of National Union of Journalists (Miller 1995, 51). In 1988 the Home Secretary of United Kingdom Douglas Hurd used British Broadcasting Act of 1981 to ban broadcasting statements of eleven Irish political and military organizations (Miller 1995, 48). As a result the appearances of Sinn Féin, considered the political wing of terrorist organization IRA, declined tremendously in television, and the conflict in Northern Ireland was significantly marginalized in the British public sphere (Miller 1995, 72). British government basically denied air-time for a political party with sizeable electoral results (English 2003, 239) – something that is very likely to occur in a autocratic country, when the state wants to suppress the political opposition.

By issuing restrictions on media during 1988-1994 United Kingdom authorities were accused of being “authoritarian” and “anti-democratic” (Fouri 2010, 459). The biggest embarrassment for British government was the statement of South African apartheid President P. W. Botha, when he threatened his country to implement similar measures as Britain to “smother the views of people” (Moloney 1991, 10). This broadcasting ban has so far been the only example of such censorship in British broadcasting history (Miller 1995, 72). It has been noted that: “The ban was very effective in limiting criticism of British government policy on Ireland.” (Miller 1995, 72)

Although the control over media was not nearly as extensive as it was in Russia, British government went beyond the limits of democracy in its counterinsurgency against the IRA. Both countries used media as a tool of counterinsurgency to suppress the voices of the rebels. Similarly as Putin was protecting his nation against terrorist propaganda, United Kingdom and its leadership didn't see such prohibitions violating the principles of democracy, because it was in the best interest of the state. As British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher famously expressed her opinion about press freedom: “We must try to find ways to starve the terrorist and the hijacker of the oxygen of publicity on which they depend.” (Apple 1985).

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<sup>4</sup> A political party in Northern Ireland, which is pro-UK, Protestant and Ulster loyalist.

### **3.7. Including the insurgents' supporters in public sphere**

The insurgents, often labelled as criminals, are either excluded or they have excluded themselves from the governing process. Although clearly opposing the insurgents, United Kingdom and Russia attempted to include the supporters of insurgents in the political life. Including citizens in the governing process is democratic in its nature, but serves mainly the interests of the governments, because it helps to reduce the popular support for the rebels and thus halt their political ambitions.

In 1973, a referendum was held in the Northern Ireland asking the citizens if they would rather remain in the United Kingdom or join the Republic of Ireland. This border poll was a democratic step which resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Unionists – 98.9% voted for remaining part of the United Kingdom, but was boycotted by the Nationalists (CAIN). In spite of the fact that the UK organized a democratic referendum, which gave a chance to the people to voice their opinions, it is debatable if something that is considered illegitimate by almost half of the population is truly credible.

Later in the same year, an attempt to implement power-sharing arrangements in Northern Ireland was made by the British government. Sunningdale Agreement encompassed a number of provisions serving the interests of the Catholics, including minority veto, more representation in the political institutions, and creation of the Council of Ireland, which would have consisted of members from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (Jesse, Williams 2001, 585). This proposal was not welcomed by all the Protestants. Strikes provoked by the Ulster Workers Council in May 1974 led to the collapse of Sunningdale Agreement and a direct rule over Northern Ireland by British government was once again set in place (Jesse, Williams 2001, 585). As Stacie Goddard put it: “Sunningdale was an ambitious, spectacular failure.” (Goddard 2012, 502)

A similar method was used by Russia in Chechnya. This however was an obvious strategic move to gain greater control over the rebelling territories. During the Second Chechen War, Russia cleverly employed ethnicity, the main reason of the conflict in the first place, in its advantage. Russia's tactics was “Chechenization” – giving more power to Chechens, while ensuring that the people appointed to high positions would be loyal to Kreml (Lyall 2010, 3). Forming local troops consisting



of ethnic Chechens, Russia took a dangerous step, which paid off. By the end of 2005 around 20 000 Chechens had joined the counterinsurgency – salary, protecting their homes and families, and the prospect of being on the side of the winner were enough to motivate ethnic Chechens to take Russian side in the conflict (Lyll 2010, 3).

Jason Lyll studied the effect of “sweeper’s” ethnicity on Russian counterinsurgency and discovered that Chechen rebels showed more initiative to engage in violence against Russians than against their fellow nationals (Lyll 2010, 9). The reason for this is that people tend to instinctively care more about the people from the same ethnic group. That sort of “us versus them” mentality appears in this case as well. However, the reason why Russian sweeps were more likely to be answered with the insurgent violence, could be the fact that Russians showed higher level of cruelty towards the Chechens. Nevertheless, by recruiting Chechens in the military Russia gave a certain degree of authority to Chechens, which integrated them in the governing regime that their co-ethnics were fighting against.

Pro-Russian Chechen troops also had an advantage over Russians, because they had a much better knowledge of the surrounding areas, and knew which measurements would bring them success (Lyll 2010, 15). Thus, the perceived risk to locals was lower from Russian troops and higher from Chechen troops. For that reason, denunciations to co-ethnic soldiers were more likely – people considered Chechen troops far more dangerous in their pursuit to discover the rebels (Lyll 2010, 16).

## **4. THE AFTERMATH**

This chapter will give a brief overview of the conflicts' outcomes and examines it through the different political regimes of the case studies.

### **4.1. Northern Ireland**

The struggle to solve the Northern Ireland question lasted for a century, but it finally came to an end on April 10<sup>th</sup> 1998 when a power-sharing government was established with mutual agreement between Unionist, Nationalist and Republican parties of Northern Ireland, and the governments of both United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (Goddard 2012, 501). This arrangement is now known as the Good Friday Agreement or Belfast Agreement.

The severity of the Troubles can be illustrated by the BBC survey carried out in 1998 just before the Good Friday Agreement was signed. People expressed great pessimism towards the peace talks – only 13% of the electorate believed that the opposing parties would reach a settlement. The fear that paramilitary organisations could derail the search for peace was marked by 82% of the people in the same survey (BBC 1998). The road to peace was a rather difficult endeavour and it was no surprise that the people were skeptical about the results of the peace talks.

Nevertheless, a peace deal which was acceptable to all parties was negotiated. There are several theories, why the conflict resolution finally succeeded in 1998 and not any time before that. In the study of conflict resolution the concept of ripeness has been stressed a lot. William Zartman explains the concept with “mutually hurting stalemate” – in this point the parties realise that victory will not be achieved by neither of them and without a solution the sufferings will continue, although not always in the same degree for both parties (Zartman 2000, 228). Stacie Goddard however, argues that the Good Friday Agreement succeeded thanks to the presence of right brokers behind the

table, because they could at the same time “build a winning coalition for a settlement, as well as marginalize spoilers who seek to undermine the peace.” (2012)

In order to ensure peace after conflict resolution the new government should also provide political representation to all groups. Hartzell and Hoddie have found a positive correlation between the durability of peace and implementing power-sharing institutions (2007). Power-sharing government was the only possibility for democratic conflict settlement in Northern Ireland and an attempt which failed in 1973, finally succeeded in 1998.

Good Friday Agreement officially ended the guerrilla war which had terrorized Northern Ireland, and the whole United Kingdom for 30 years. Unfortunately, peace building process is much more difficult than simply signing an agreement. The war is over, but the political instability in Northern Ireland is not. In April 2018, on the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, Northern Ireland had been without a government for fifteen months, because the power-sharing agreement between the pro-British Democratic Unionist Party and pro-Irish Sinn Féin has not been restored in more than a year (Beesley 2018).

Today, in the result of 2016 Brexit vote, the border question between Ireland and United Kingdom is once again making headlines. As United Kingdom is leaving the European Union there are fears about establishing border control between Ireland and Northern Ireland, where until now people have enjoyed the European Union’s free movement principle (CNBC 2017). It is still not certain if there is any reason to be afraid of creating the hard border between the nations, but the situation was quickly exploited by Sinn Féin’s Martin McGuinness who suggested a border poll to unite Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (Reuters 2016).

In spite of the current political insecurity in Northern Ireland, the conflict resolution was always meant to establish democracy and peace in the region. The counterinsurgency methods used by Russia and United Kingdom were sometimes more similar than would be expected, but their ultimate goals is what makes them very different counterinsurgents in civil wars.

## 4.2. Chechnya

In 2006, three years before the official termination of the Second Chechen War, John Russell elaborated on the obstacles of peace in Chechnya and suggested that peacebuilding can only be effective if both sides recognize that “the ability to compromise is a strength and not a weakness” (2006, 942). Democracies in general prefer diplomatic approach to conflict resolution, since it minimizes casualties and is more acceptable by the public. In Russia the mentality is rather different. John Russell also suggests that one of the greatest obstacles to peace in Chechnya was Caucasophobia – a form of racism developed among Russians, which opposes the Russians to Caucasian people such as Chechens (2006, 943).

Today Chechnya is *de jure* a Republic in Russian Federation, but in reality the Russians have bribed Ramzan Kadyrov’s government with generous federal monetary subsidies to prevent any further rebellions (Cohen 2014, v). Ramzan Kadyrov has been accused of “human rights violations, corruption, embezzlement of public funds, and protection of his inner circle from criminal charges” (Mazurova 2016, 4). Similar accusations have been made about Vladimir Putin, thus in a way the Kadyrov style governing is acceptable in the Russian Federation. The UK however, would never allow that kind of dictatorship in Northern Ireland. Also, Kadyrov has made himself one of the strongest supporters of Putin. In 2009, when Russia officially ended its military actions in Chechnya on April 15th, the fight against guerrilla rebels was trusted to Kadyrov in cooperation with FSB (Mazurova 2016, 4). This has been named a “Chechenization” of the conflict from Russians to the hands of the Chechens (Matejova 2013). Kadyrov’s regime is strongly opposed by the Islamic separatist groups, whom he fails to control (Matejova 2013, 21).

Now, Russia’s strategy in Chechnya is having the power officially in the hands of the Chechen elites, but ensuring that they will always remain loyal to Kreml and keep the situation under control in the region (Matejova 2013, 18). However, violence continues. Chechnya is supposedly the hub of Islamic State recruitment in Russia, as many young men have joined the army of jihadists (Deutsche Welle 2018). There have also been recent attacks by the Islamic State against the Russian soldiers in Chechnya (Deutsche Welle 2017). The popularity of extremism shows that the situation in

Chechnya may have improved since the active fighting period, but is still not stable and peaceful to this day.

### **4.3 Summary**

Even though the counterinsurgency methods in Northern Ireland and Russia were rather similar, the outcome and current situation differ greatly. The reason for that is the different approach taken in the peace building process. Also, the expectations by the counterinsurgents were not the same. In spite of sometimes using not so democratic methods to suppress the IRA, it is by no means that the UK would have allowed a non-democratic region in its Kingdom. In Russia however, democracy in Chechnya was never the goal.

Peace agreement in Northern Ireland was signed in 1998 and the military actions in Chechnya were officially terminated in 2009. In Russia the conflict was resolved with “Chechenization” – the power in Chechnya was handed to a group loyal to Moscow and led by Ramzan Kadyrov. This action did not include democratization and there are number of corruption allegations against the ruling regime in Chechnya. In Northern Ireland however, the conflict was terminated by including all the parties behind the negotiating table. A solution acceptable to all sides was finally negotiated and power-sharing democratic government established. Active fighting in both conflicts has officially ended, but even on this day we are reminded the past events through some political struggle in both regions.

## CONCLUSION

Regardless the political regime, a state is expected to guarantee a stable and secure environment for its citizens. Insurgencies on state territories challenge the authorities, and decrease domestic safety. In response the state is likely to act as decisively as possible to defeat the rebels. Terror attacks by Chechens and IRA greatly decreased state's domestic stability in Russia and United Kingdom, thus strong measures to defeat insurgencies were a rational policy of both states.

The idea that non-democracies have more freedom choosing their methods, hence leading to increased use of violence was mainly applicable to Russia's tactics in Chechen-Russian conflict. Democratic government of United Kingdom, expected to have more limitations to its use of power, often neglected its democratic principles. Media was used as a tool by both countries to influence the public opinion in their advantage. Also, unjust violence was part of both countries' counterinsurgency – British Army killing unarmed innocent people in Northern Ireland on Bloody Sunday, and excessive violence used against Chechen civilians by Russian troops.

Both United Kingdom and Russia tried to some extent include the supporting groups of the insurgents into the public sphere. 1973 border poll in Northern Ireland was democratic in nature as it gave a voice to the people through a referendum, but it was boycotted by the Catholics. This was followed by a Sunningdale Agreement, which also tried to include the Catholics in the governing process, but due to strong oppositions from the Protestant side, this was once again a failure. Russia was a little more successful in making the Chechens part of their side by using ethnic Chechens in the sweeps to suppress the Chechen rebels.

In conclusion, comparing the methods of counterinsurgency used by United Kingdom and Russia, the differences are not as remarkable as one would expect from different political regimes. It seems that during the crisis years, democracies are likely to implement less democratic methods to establish stability. Non-democracies, on the other hand, don't always have complete freedom to do whatever they wish. Russia couldn't entirely neglect public opinion, while democratic United

Kingdom was often less affected by the views of its electorate than democracies are ought to be. The assumption that democracies are weaker counterinsurgents in civil wars is not always accurate. Yes, it is true that Russia used far more brutality to suppress the Chechen rebels, but United Kingdom also used more violent methods to counter Irish nationalists than one would expect from a democratic nation. The states choose their counterinsurgency tactics based on the fact how they are affected by the insurgents.

In conflict resolution the ambitions and methods of United Kingdom and Russia were rather different. In Northern Ireland, it was always the goal to establish peace under the supervision of a strong democratic government. In Chechnya however, democracy was not intended. What Russia really wanted to see in the established government was absolute loyalty to Kreml and ability to keep rebel groups in Chechnya under control. Putin found this in Ramzan Kadyrov, who's authoritarian regime keeps a firm grip on power in Chechnya. Based on these two case studies, it can be said that political regime doesn't determine state's strategy in the fight against rebels, but it truly has an effect on the outcome of the conflict. Thus, similar counterinsurgency methods do not necessarily mean that the outcome of the conflict is similar. The example of United Kingdom proves that establishing stable democracy is possible when the counterinsurgency methods have been non-democratic in their nature.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Ranking political regimes of United Kingdom and Russia (until 1991 Soviet Union), 1968-2009

Year	United Kingdom	Russia
1968	10	-7
1969	10	-7
1970	10	-7
1971	10	-7
1972	10	-7
1973	10	-7
1974	10	-7
1975	10	-7
1976	10	-7
1977	10	-7
1978	10	-7
1979	10	-7
1980	10	-7
1981	10	-7
1982	10	-7
1983	10	-7
1984	10	-7
1985	10	-7
1986	10	-7
1987	10	-7

**Explanation:**

- 10 to -6 Autocracy
- 5 to 0 Closed anocracy
- 1 to 5 Open anocracy
- 6 to 9 Democracy
- 10 Full democracy

 Relevant conflict years

Appendix 1 continued

1988	10	-7
1989	10	-6
1990	10	-4
1991	10	0
1992	10	0
1993	10	5
1994	10	3
1995	10	3
1996	10	3
1997	10	3
1998	10	3
1999	10	3
2000	10	3
2001	10	6
2002	10	6
2003	10	6
2004	10	6
2005	10	6
2006	10	6
2007	10	6
2008	10	4
2009	10	4

Source: Polity IV Individual Country Regime Trends, 1946-2013; author's calculations