

# An Exploration into the Relationship between Influencing Factors and Geographical Offender Profiling and the roles they play in Terrorism

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## PhD aims:

534 acts of terrorism were carried out in the United Kingdom between the years of 2000 and 2019 inclusive, as collected in the Global Terrorism Database (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), 2022).

This thesis investigates influencing factors, primarily motive and motivation, and geographical offender profiling, including geospatial behaviour, in relation to UK terrorist events between 2000 and 2019 inclusive.

**Study 1:** The first study identifies patterns in UK terrorism cases using media accounts of the known perpetrator's influencing factors in carrying out their attacks. The study also identifies the significance of secondary sources in conducting research into sensitive topics such as terrorism.

### Hypotheses:

**H0:** There will be no patterns of influencing factors identified in UK terrorism cases between 2000 and 2019.

**H1:** There will be significant patterns of influencing factors identified in UK terrorism cases between 2000 and 2019.

**Study 2:** The second study identifies a select number of cases to conduct geographical offender profiling with and analyses for information. The study also explores correlations between geographical distances of crime and home/base locations and influencing factors to determine if influencing factors hold any influence on the chosen locations of attacks. This also includes association between influencing factors and psychological models of geographical offender profiling.

### Hypotheses:

**H0:** There will be no relationship between geographical offender profiles and influencing factors of perpetrators identified in the first study.

**H1:** There will be a significant relationship between geographical offender profiles and influencing factors of perpetrators identified in the first study.

## Methodology:

### Study 1:

The sample is initially derived from the Global Terrorism Database (START, 2022), narrowed down to include only known perpetrators in UK cases between 2000 and 2019 inclusive through a number of factors, primarily the Belfast Agreement (1998) and the Terrorism Act (2000). This data is then supplemented by news articles from each event and analysed through descriptive statistics before a thematic analysis is conducted on the gathered information. The themes developed from the media information is discussed and analysed.

### Study 2:

Cases identified in Study 1 that contain information on the perpetrator's base or home location in relation to the crime location are gathered and geographical offender profiling conducted on those cases. The incidents are grouped via identified organisations versus lone wolf terrorists, in order to highlight differences in locations and influencing factors for the attack. GeoCrime is used for the geographical offender profiling and visual maps produced. Visual analysis and probability are discussed before being analysed alongside the themes found in Study 1 for correlations or relationships between geospatial behaviour and influencing factors.

- 409 incidents  
- 142 incidents in Belfast

- 4 incidents  
- 2 incidents in Rhyl

- 7 incidents  
- 3 incidents in Glasgow

- 114 incidents  
- 38 incidents in London

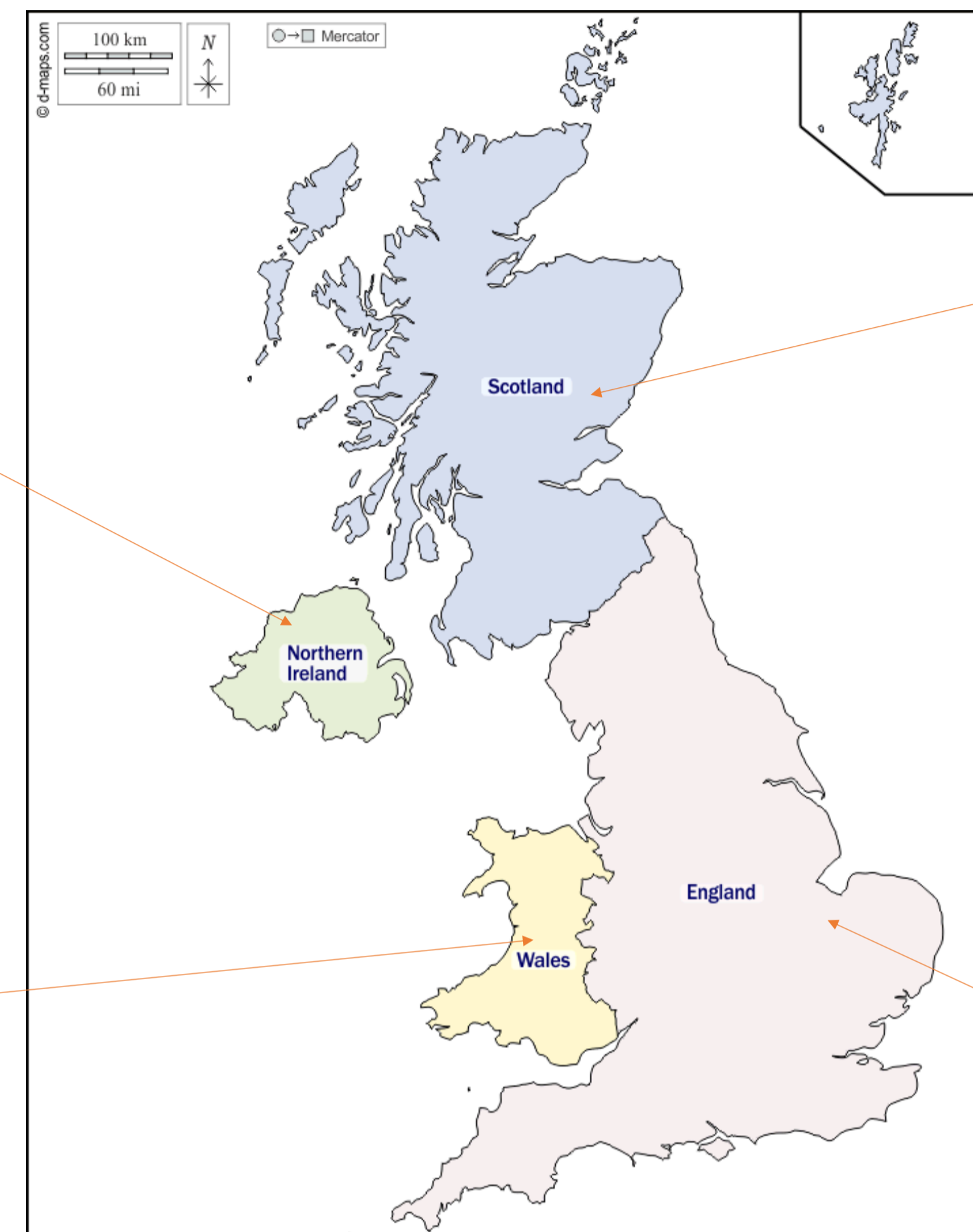


Figure 1: Map of the United Kingdom (d-maps, 2022)

## Initial Findings:

The highest number of incidents occurred in 2013 with 58 attacks. The following two years with the highest terrorist incidents were 2001 and 2015, both containing 56 incidents apiece. With 534 incidents between 2000 and 2019, the top three years make up 31.8% of the total number of attacks.

In literature, there is a general spike in suicide attacks from the year 2000 onwards (Tominaga, 2017). However, this thesis finds that of the 534 UK attacks, only 8 were attributed to suicide attacks, directly contradicting the increase in suicide attack as a method of terrorist attack. Bombing/Explosion is the most popular form of attack in general (n=288) followed by armed assault (n=118). Success rate for terrorist incidents in the dataset is 67% (n=358).

Dissident republicans carried out 114 attacks of the 534 overall attacks, with only a small number of attacks attributed to widely publicised organisations such as Al-Qaeda (1.5% - n=8). 80% of incidents result in the capture of the perpetrator(s) and 98.1% are alive post attack. The most frequent nationality of victims is Northern Irish (n=377), and most frequent target is private citizens and property (n=196).