

# Does violence lead away from freedom?

July 14 2015

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Independence is more likely to be successful for countries where the struggle has been peaceful, than in places where violence has been used, according to a new study at the University of St Andrews.

The report, *Scotland and Separatism: Reverberations of the Scottish Independence Referendum on Separatist Politics*, examined the effects in politics around Europe following the Scottish independence referendum last year.

Author Dr Kieran McConaghy, of the Centre for the Study of Terrorism

and Political Violence at the University, found that areas such as Northern Ireland and the Basque Country, where terrorism had been used in the fight for independence, were actually further away from their goal than Scotland and Catalonia.

His research found that the independence movements in Catalonia and Scotland, as well as being overwhelmingly non-violent, had also moved to embrace a broader notion of what it means to be Scottish or Catalan, centred on civic identity rather than one purely based on language or ethnicity.

Dr McConaghy also concluded that despite the upsurge in interest and support for Scottish nationalism, it has not encouraged the Welsh to similarly seek secession, although the Welsh nationalists certainly had benefited from the publicity gained by association with the Scottish independence referendum, in terms of potential for further devolution of power to the Welsh Assembly.

Dr McConaghy said: "It is important to separate speculation around referendum time from the tangible effects on politics in the clear light of day. Despite considerable attention given to Welsh nationalists, Plaid Cymru, at the time of the Scottish referendum and before the general election in May, this did not translate into votes for the party.

"The party appears to have failed to connect with voters. What we are seeing in Scotland and Catalonia are invigorated, positive independence campaigns, with broad understandings of national identity. These are the independence movements that are generating support, rather than exclusivist and violent independence movements."

The research also found that voters tend to be most interested in the socioeconomic factors over any other factor when deciding whether or not to support independence.

**More information:** The report is available online: [www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~cstpv/re ... ScotReport\\_Final.pdf](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~cstpv/re...ScotReport_Final.pdf)

Provided by University of St Andrews

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