What writing have you done for this?

What do you want to have done by the end of the retreat?

What do you think you can have done by the end of tomorrow?

What do you think you can have done by the end of tonight?

It’s important to write in sentences, as this is a warm up exercises. i.e. do not write in bullet points or list items.

So far, I have written a short treatment, of two pages, describing the main finding I want to promote in the article, and some of the potential implications of it to thinking about the fragility of peace in Northern Ireland in the context of Brexit. Further to this, I have written more material in the form of an email to a couple of staff within the university. I know one of these staff members, and have interest from him to progress further after next week.

By the end of the retreat, I hope to have a strong draft paper, though missing many of the key references, which I can pass to Brian for consideration over the following week. I also hope to have identified, and where convenient completed, a number of specific analyses which strengthen the argument and quantify the magnitude of some of the effects identified.

By the end of tomorrow, I hope either to have moved onto a different topic – most likely fertility – or to have identified that further progress on this particular project is an effective use of the finite time available.

By the end of tonight, I hope to have completed an abstract; and to have written the high level structure of the paper, including a number of topic sentences. I am not sure at this stage whether developing the structure from the topic sentences, or developing the topic sentences from the structure, would be more effective for me in this instance, and I hope that by starting to write on this I will have a clearer idea.

[words: 285]

WRITING SESSION ON WEDNESDAY EVENING [1 HOUR]

THE AIMS OF THIS SESSION ARE TO PRODUCE AN ABSTRACT, AND ALSO TO PRODUCE A SMALL NUMBER OF TOPIC SENTENCES, AND THEN TO START TO STRUCTURE THEM BY THEME. THIS WILL BE ONE HOUR LONG, AND I’VE NOT WRITTEN FOR A WHILE, SO IT MAY FEEL TOUGH. BUT I SHOULD KEEP AT IT. I SHOULD ALSO BE SURE TO TREAT IT AS SOMETHING VERY FINITE THAT I’M KEEN TO TREAT AS PRECIOUS RATHER THAN AN EXPANSE OF TIME TO TRY TO CROSS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

ABSTRACT

Background

The ‘Troubles’ in Northern Ireland led to decades of death, destruction and cultural and social instability. Throughout much of the latter part of the Twentieth century, terrorism was something much more associated with Northern Irish Christian sectarianism than with Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East. Terrorism in the UK was largely ‘home grown’, an outgrowth of bitter conflict and contradiction over identity in the island of Ireland, stemming from an unresolved tension about sovereignty and national self-identity which arguably began with the establishment of both the Republic of Ireland and the State of Northern Ireland in 1928[?], and exploded into a decades-long war in 1972.

Aim and methods

This paper will show how the scale of conflict after 1972 in Northern Ireland was large enough to affect the demographic records of Northern Ireland for decades. By arranging mortality risks for males and females in Northern Ireland by both age in single years, and year, producing a demographic ‘map’ known as a Lexis surface, we show how the events of 1972 led to very rapid increases in mortality rates in young adult males in Northern Ireland. We show how this mortality rate pattern is much more characteristic of wars than of trends typically observed in peacetime, and led to male death rates in Northern Ireland to exceed those of comparable populations in Eastern Europe during the height of the conflict.

Findings

The ages most affected by the mortality effects of the Troubles were between ages XXX and XXX. If mortality rates at these ages observed in Northern Ireland observed before 1972 had continued afterwards, then we estimate around XXXX more Northern Irish males would have been alive by the age of 50 in XXXX. If the mortality rates at these ages had remained at similar levels to the rest of the UK after 1972 then XXXX more Northern Irish males would have been alive by the age of 50. For females the relative disadvantage was much smaller…

Discussion

The very sharp increase in young adult mortality risks seen in Northern Ireland after 1972 compared with in the decades before suggests that the political and military events of that year, such as Bloody Sunday, ignited a ‘febrile’ and uneasy peace which had existed previously. Young adult male mortality rates then remained sharply elevated for about a decade, then moderately elevated for around a decade longer. By the time New Labour came to power in 1997, leading to the first successful peace process since 1972 and previously unthinkable power sharing arrangements which continued until 2017, most of the excess mortality likely associated with the Troubles had dissipated, suggesting there may have been more of a mutual willingness to engage in negotiations by this period than in earlier political regimes.

If the underlying sectarian tensions which allowed the events of 1972 to ‘ignite’ the decades long conflict still exist in Northern Ireland, then the state of Northern Ireland can still be characterized as politically ‘febrile’, and so there remains a clear and concerning risk that further rounds of war-like conflict risk being ‘reignited’ by future political events, the issue of the Northern Irish border in the context of upcoming Brexit negotiations being the most obvious example of a potential future flash point.

[END OF ABSTRACT]

MANUSCRIPT STRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

METHODS

A Lexis surface is a way of representing temporal population data as if it were spatial topographic data.

The dataset used was the Human Mortality Database.

The HMD presents all-cause mortality risks by age in single years and year for around 40 countries.

The availability of death rates for the same ages and years to those available in Northern Ireland mean that detailed comparisons between age-year specific mortality risks in Northern Ireland and neighbouring countries and regions can be made.

The human toll of the Troubles in terms of death rates was estimated using a lifetable approach. This involved taking the number of males and females born in Northern Ireland from XXXX to YYYY, and applying either the actual or counterfactual age-specific mortality rates to them, with the counterfactual rates being those which might have been expected if the increases in mortality rates seen after 1972 had not taken place.

‘Counterfactual’ estimates of age-specific mortality risks during the Troubles are produced based on a number of different assumptions.

Within younger adulthood, deaths through external causes, including violent death, are predominant causes.

The R statistical programming language was used, with visualisations produced using the Lattice package.

RESULTS

DISCUSSION

[WORDS 830]

THE NEXT SESSION WILL FURTHER REFINE THE MANUSCRIPT STRUCTURE IN TERMS OF SECTIONS, SUBSECTIONS AND TOPIC SENTENCES. A SERIES OF TECHNICAL TASKS SHOULD ALSO BE DEFINED IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THIS.