

Statistics and Human Rights Directed Reading Program

Spring 2022

Cindy Elder (mentee), Dr. Rrita Zejnullahi (mentor)

This quarter DRP with my mentor, Rrita, has been a wonderful experience. I have learned a substantial amount about my future career. I appreciated that she had a flexible schedule and that we found convenient times to finish our work over Zoom. I feel like we worked really well together, and I am so grateful to have a mentor like Rrita who encouraged and guided me based on my interests and her expertise.

Rrita help me to write R code to analyze the data I found for our final project, the Female Happiness Index, and provided great resources for learning more R coding. She helped me learn about different technical aspects of the statistical analysis like sampling survey techniques, interpreting odds ratios, how to use jack knife and the difference uses of qualitative and quantitative data, and the Principal Components Analysis which we used for our index.

Through our weekly readings, I learned about statisticians working in fields like state sponsored genocide, healthcare access, US crime data, and famine. Coming into this project, I felt very comfortable with the human rights concerns and historical context from my previous academic experiences, but I am grateful I could work with Rrita to build a foundation for the technical and mathematical aspects of these articles.

We talked about different organizations who are working on human rights issues like the Human Rights Data Analysis Group – HRDAG, and the UW's weekly seminars from the Center for Statistics in the Social Sciences. I attended the CSSS weekly lectures and it was great to hear about current research and think about possible fields that interest me (and realize which ones are not interest me at all.) We talked about opportunities like the UW Biostats Summer Institutes that can highlight various career

opportunities in different fields of statistics, like big data wrangling, epidemiology modeling, and research analysis. I am excited to continue my studies and prepare my application to graduate school in statistics. I feel privileged to have this opportunity.