

SFOU Grant Report

Sound knowledge in research methods is a vital building block of good research. The Swiss Friends of Oxford University helped me further this vital knowledge by supporting my participation in the ICPSR Summer Program in Quantitative Methods at the University of Michigan. The programme is one of the leading schools for research methods in the social sciences with a focus on quantitative methods. It is unique in its broad range of courses offered and rigour of methods training. For three weeks I had a total of 7.5 hours of classes per day.

The two main courses I was taking were *Bayesian Modeling for the Social Sciences II: Advanced Topics* and *Multilevel Models II: Advanced Topics*. The contents of both courses are not taught at my department in Oxford at that level so this was an incredible opportunity for me. Bayesian statistics offer a toolkit that can also be applied to many other statistical methods for problems that are computationally intensive and mathematically difficult to solve. During the last week of the course we applied the methods to large language models and covered methodological topics that are currently being discussed in research. Multilevel analysis takes into account that people are clustered in groups such as geographic units, time, or less tangible groups such as partisanship and incorporates these into statistical analyses. This is vital for many research questions in the social sciences.

The programme thus equipped me with invaluable knowledge I can directly apply to my own research and will be able to draw on a lot in the future. Apart from the courses themselves, being part of the diverse and engaged community of the programme was an inspiring experience. Further, I got to talk to researchers in- and outside of the summer school in Michigan about my own research and received helpful inputs.

Hence, I would like to thank the SFOU for their support making my participation at the ICPSR Summer Program possible. It has been an insightful experience that will help me on my further academic path.


Angela Odermatt

Oxford, 20.08.2023