

# **Laidlaw Research Proposal**

How have policy changes surrounding the safety of women, specifically the presence of the Istanbul Convention, affected the rate of femicides in Turkey?

I am, amongst many other things, a woman, a politics student, and a Turkish citizen. I was born in Istanbul, living there for 8 years and growing up abroad with a Turkish mother. I am deeply passionate about the political state of my home country and the impact it has on the safety of women. As such, the rise of femicide in Turkey has been an issue that I have been deeply passionate about for years. On a larger scale, the topic of gender-based violence in Turkey has been discussed in the political sphere for decades, with governmental action accompanying a disproportionately horrific epidemic targeting Turkish women in the form of continuous femicide. Action surrounding femicide in Turkey has been primarily geared towards non-governmental organisations attempting to provide hotlines, personal protection, and general information surrounding the femicide. As such, there has been little research done from an academic perspective surrounding the correlation between policy and the impact of such policy towards the health and safety of women in Turkey. The goal of this research study is to better understand ways that an academic perspective of Turkish politics can impact the action taken within the country.

The objective of Summer 1 is to write a research project discussing the limitations of policy surrounding gender empowerment, and what implications that policy has on the safety of women in Turkey. This research project will discuss the following in greater detail: the history of femicide in the country, past policy implemented to combat gender-related violence, and, most importantly, an evaluation on the effectiveness of the Turkish government's actions surrounding gender-related violence, focusing in on the scope of the Istanbul Convention in order to understand whether district-based policies have a different rate of efficacy than national law. I am specifically interested in investigating the rates of femicide in Turkey over the past 5 years. This is significant because it will cover the rise of conversation surrounding the validity of the Istanbul Convention, its attacks from Erdogan, and the aftermath of the convention being revoked. Applying this to an action-based plan will hopefully raise international awareness surrounding the issue, funnelling funding, attention, and action around the topic.

My process from a political science perspective intends on having both qualitative and quantitative elements. The qualitative aspect is an evaluation from a historical perspective: what policies have been implemented in the past? What has worked and what hasn't? Data science will hopefully allow me to pursue the quantitative element of my project. I am interested in looking into SPSS and Excel to employ an optimal analysis of my data from a social science perspective. Furthermore, I intend to put effort into data visualisation, understanding how best to present my findings.

Although the project idea has potential, I am faced with some natural limitations. The first is a limited fluency in Turkish. I am capable of speaking colloquially with individuals on the street, my family, etc. but my academic background in Turkey is limited and I could find myself facing difficulties speaking with Turkish researchers on the issue at hand. I do, however, think that this difficulty can be overcome by conducting my research on a more independent level and then focusing my action plan for Summer 2 in Istanbul. As such, the timeframe to better my language skills is extended and I am able to devote more time and energy to the content before needing to communicate internally with any organisation. I am also inexperienced in data collection and processing. This is where it is essential to have the support of my supervisor, Dr. Arıkan: with a specialisation in comparative politics, I feel that the area that I will need the most assistance in, the practical quantitative research element, can be supported academically over the course of my project, particularly in Summer 1.

## **Summer 1: 6-Week Plan**

### Week 1: Understanding the fundamentals of the research project

What is the structure of a research project?

What type of research can I do that is tailored to my question?

What does qualitative research look like in a data-oriented setting in relation to my research topic?

Who do I need to get in contact with for interviews? What historical research can I do for this project?

### Week 2: Researching the issue in depth

Reading old policy papers, historical accounts of the history of femicides, and major important government documents in order to work to answer the following questions:

- What is the history of Turkish femicides?
- What is the history of preventative action that has been enacted by the Turkish government?
- Are there any major political changes that have occurred that have prompted the rise in femicides in Turkey?

### Week 3: Project Content Part 1

- Historical research: What is the Istanbul convention? Why is it important? What is the purpose of its implementation?
- What is gender-based violence? What are the political consequences of gender-based violence?
- How does the issue at hand affect the civil state?

### Week 4: Data Science and Research

- Learning more about r-correlation, data science, and research
- Compiling annual data on SPSS on rates of femicide in Istanbul before and since the rescission of the Istanbul Convention (2017 to present)

### Week 5: Project Content Part 2

- Pulling together the research on the project, comparing it with the data science, and writing a conclusion
  - Strengths and limitations of the project topic
  - An examination of the methodology used to conduct the research
- Adding in necessary information on the history of the subject

### Week 6: Putting It All Together

- Pulling together the presentation:
  - What format do I want to use to present my findings? How will I visually format my qualitative and quantitative research?

## **Leadership in Action**

At this moment, the plan for Summer 2 is to work with one of many organisations based in Turkey in order to effectively implement my understanding of strengths and limitations of policy planning in the Turkish government. One of these is We Will Stop Femicide (Kadin Cinayetleri Durduracagiz), a volunteer-supported national organisation dedicated to creating action surrounding femicide. My scope of interest for action is significantly broader: I would be interested in working on the ground in Istanbul by volunteering for the organisation. This would involve working on a phone line, responding to crisis calls, doing work for legal review, and creating media content. I would also be able to engage with it in an international manner: they are looking to expand their sources to other countries, and Ireland does not yet have any personal ties with the organisation. They take volunteer applications regularly, which I would submit and interview for. As such, I could find myself being directly involved with Category C of leadership placement for Laidlaw, where I engage in in-field application of the research.

The limitations of this plan involve the possibility of travel restrictions in relation to COVID-19. As such, I can pursue a secondary, awareness-oriented action plan: by creating an online platform that speaks on the rates of femicide and politics using my research from Summer 1. This plan, albeit straightforward, possesses challenges: I would also like to see whether there is an optimal way to navigate the release of this information. Would it be optimal to create a social media account? How can I do so in a way that is accurate but also digestible? The weight of this topic, both in an emotional and academic context, is something I would need help navigating. However, with the correct advisorship and research, I feel that it is feasible to release this information in a balanced and holistic manner.

My relationship with this topic and leadership is multi-tiered in both Summer 1 and 2. Firstly, I intend on better understanding how to present data and information confidently. Taking initiative to work with these organisations, as well as presenting information on social change and political leadership, are all essential in becoming a

leader in spreading information in a digestible manner. Secondly, the topic of the project in itself concerns the topic of leadership: how do politicians practice what they preach in regards to legislation? Does good political leadership involve a dogmatic following of implemented law? How does a distrust in implemented law affect the way civil society and government officials act in response to the subject of said law? The ability to pursue leadership personally in empowering myself with more information, as well as learning about the validity of leadership from a governmental perspective, allows me to critically engage with internationality, leadership, and action through my proposal. As such, I feel that I can fulfil the sufficient requirements of the scholarship qualifications with passion and determination.