

## **Reflections on Dataset Selection and Research Question**

### **1. Challenges Faced**

When trying to compile a list of indicators, the World Bank website made it unnecessarily difficult to select text. Neither double-clicking nor highlighting worked, forcing us to highlight everything, paste it into a text file, and manually remove the extra text. Eventually, we found a workaround—going into the detailed view, clicking on a subtopic in the right-side column, and then being able to select text. This made the process much smoother, but it was frustrating that such a basic function required extra steps. Another challenge was deciding whether to filter datasets by years or include all available years. Some of us chose to export everything for flexibility, while others initially focused on the U.S. before expanding based on research needs.

Understanding the dataset structure also took some trial and error. There wasn't a clear tutorial or FAQ explaining the DataBank's terminology and functions, so we had to click around and experiment. Later, we found a knowledge base that did explain some aspects, but it wasn't linked in an obvious way. If we had discovered it earlier, we could have saved time figuring things out on our own.

### **2. Difficulties in Formulating Research Questions**

Coming up with strong research questions was harder than expected. Since we don't have much experience in research design, many of our initial questions didn't fully explore the potential of the dataset. It took effort to refine them into something both meaningful and answerable. Aligning the dataset with proper analytical methods was another hurdle. At first, we didn't consciously frame our questions to take advantage of available techniques like correlation, regression, or clustering. As we worked through them we realized they could be adapted to fit those methods but it wasn't something we considered from the beginning.

### **3. Strategies Used to Overcome Obstacles**

We figured out most of the issues through trial and error. We joined a meeting with another group and the professor which helped clarify expectations. When refining research questions we switched our approach to start with the dataset structure first and then frame questions in a way that fit analytical methods. That made it easier to connect the data to relevant insights. We also had ongoing emails with the professor to clarify instructions, especially about indicator selection and dataset requirements.

#### **4. Reflections and Lessons Learned**

If we were to start over, we would go through the rubric in detail right away to catch anything unclear and ask questions earlier. We would also spend more time exploring the dataset to fully understand its structure instead of figuring it out as we go. Structuring research questions with analytical methods in mind from the beginning would also save a lot of time on revisions. This experience highlighted how important it is to plan research around the available data and tools rather than trying to extract insights after.