Option 1: is economic relocation rational? Evidence from the New Immigrant Survey (U.S.)

Research question:

Do individuals or households who decide to migrate for economic reasons (i.e. excluding refugees and migrants who name political reasons for their move) actually realize positive economic gains?

Context and motivation:

Economic migration (or "relocation") is a massive economic phenomena, especially to the United States. From a microeconomic perspective, the decision is complex as it balances better economic opportunity/conditions on the one hand (Sjaastad 1962), and loss of skill in the new country on the other (Kuznets 1966). The idea of the study then will be to observe whether economists can apply a "revealed preference" model to economic relocation (i.e. if individuals/households only move if their expected gains are higher than their expected losses) or if economic relocation (similar to non-economic immigration) is significantly driven by non-economic factors – or alternatively, if individuals/households are not able to correctly predict expected gains and losses.

Data:

1. New Immigrant Survey, Round 1 (2003 - 2004)
2. New Immigrant Survey, Round 2 (2007 - 2009),
3. Various data sets I can use to control for language and cultural distance between country of origin and the U.S.; data sets about diaspora infrastructure in the U.S. for various migrant groups; etc.

The New Immigrant Survey(s) provides a huge variety of data about pre-migration features and post-migration outcomes. This will be the key data sets which I will use.

Design:

Essentially create a multi-dimentional "threashold", or a model that predicts whether or not individuals/households will realize a positive or negative gain from the move (over a 4 year time gap after the move). So:

1. Choose random sample from the New Immigrant Survey that only includes "economic migrants" (exclude migrants who move for primarily political considerations)
2. Dependent variable, or Y, is predicted wage 4 years after migration, and X is individual/household characteristics (education, occupation, experience, age, gender, number of dependents, languages spoken, country of origin, etc.).
3. Using data from home countries, find individuals/households that are comparable to the ones who moved but chose to stay put. Analyze differences.

This design is clearly very flawed at the moment, and I need to think more about how to make this idea viable (and statistically sound). I know the design is vague, and there are multiple ideas here, but that's because I haven't narrowed it down yet and haven't explored the details of what data I have. I do however promise I will make it robust: I did well in econ 141 and know how to avoid statistical mistakes that seem to be all over the current rendition of the above idea.

Option 2: measuring the effect of fertility rate on labor market participation in religious vs. secular women in Israel

Research question:

What is the average impact of an additional child on a haredi woman's probability of participating in the labor market? What about a secular Jewish Israeli woman?

Context and motivation:

The connection between higher fertility and mothers' lower labor market participation rate has been established in other contexts (e.g. Angrist and Evans 2018), the connection has yet to be scrutinized in the Israeli context, where fertility rates are the highest amongst OECD countries. The Israeli context becomes even more interesting when one considers religious subgroups.The Ultra-orthodox or "haredi" population in Israel is a big economic burden on the country, in part due to low labor market participation rates and high fertility rates. Additionally, since haredi men are expected to spend their days in religious study, haredi women's incomes are often what determines household income. This unique cultural element allows us to better control against other factors which may influence labor market participation, including the income of the woman's husband.

Data sources:

- *IPUMS-International: Israel Population Censuses* to extract basic information about individual mothers and households
- *CBS Social Survey*: self-reported religiosity, number and ages of children, employment, hours, wages, etc.
- *CBS Fertility by Religiosity*: fertility rate by cohort/sector
- Israel Labor Force Survey
- Bank of Israel

Design/methodology:

The basic independent variable or X is fertility rate, and the basic dependent variable or Y is labor market participation. The exact design of the structural equation model will be developed later on. I anticipate that I will use some instrumental variable such as twin births, and various control variables, to isolate the impact of my key independent variable. I have yet to decide whether the key of this study is to simply measure the impact of an additional child on the probability of labor market participation, or if I want to compare that impact on different groups in Israel (e.g. haredi vs. secular jewish) using interaction terms.

Option 3: nationalism and responses to COVID-19

Research question:

Does stronger pre-pandemic nationalism in nation-states lead to higher acceptance of and compliance with restrictive COVID-19 policies (e.g. lockdowns, curfews, vaccine passports, etc.)?

Context and motivation:

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021/2 involved restrictive government policies put in place to limit the spread of the virus. While attention has been given to different policies and their level of effectiveness (Brauner et al., 2021), little attention has been paid to the willingness of the population to comply with said policies. The intuition behind this study is that countries that exhibit higher levels of nationalism will be more likely to identify with a country-wide effort, even if it comes at the cost of personal freedoms. Hence, studying the connection between nationalism and responses to COVID-19 may prove fruitful. Since the ultimate interest here is how effective were different countries' responses to COVID, this study seeks to add context to a limiting factor which governments had when constructing their responses: population compliance. This is the basic motivation for the study.

Data sources:

For nationalism:

- World Values Survey Wave 7 (2017 - 2022). 60+ countries represented. Questions which can be used to construct a nationalism index per country. Similarly the following data sets may prove useful:
- International Social Survey Programme: National Identity (1995, 2003, 2013),European Values Study, Afrobarometer, Asian Barometer Survey, Arab Barometer, etc.
- Pew Global – National Identity Index

For COVID-19 responses and outcomes:

- Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker
- WHO COVID-19 Dashboard

Design/methodology:

The basic independent variable or X is the level of nationalism, and the basic dependent variable Y is the level of compliance with COVID-19 policies.

1. Get weekly panel data for as many countries as I have adequate nationalism and COVID response data for.
2. Build nationalism index, assign score per country
3. Need to think about how to design this to be statistically valid. I know I have not elucidated this here but I will think about it more deeply.