Econ 494, Section 004

Assignment 3: Data description

February 10, 2023

Due Tuesday, February 21, 11:59 pm

5 points

For this assignment, the purpose is to make sure you have data that is appropriate for the topic area you are researching and to begin explaining how you will use it and exploring it. You can think of the majority of the assignment as a rough draft of the data section of your paper. The assignment should typically be 2.5-4 pages, plus any exhibits, plus references. You may include references that are not specifically cited in this assignment, if you believe they will be used in your final paper, in order to facilitate building a more comprehensive reading list.

Please provide the following:

**Research question summary:** A reminder for me of the main area of your research, targeted as specifically as you can at the question you will be asking (2-3 paragraphs). This can be thought of as a refinement of your previous proposal, targeted as specifically as you can to the question you want to answer.

**Data section:** A rough draft of what the data section in your final paper may look like. This should include:

* A description of the data or datasets you will be using, source, variables, time frame etc.
* Related literature (data focus): What related research has used this data or similar data? How have they used the data? Explain the connection to what you are intending to do.
* Preliminary data analysis: This can be a sample description, some summary statistics, etc. What will be the main dependent variable you will focus on in your study? What are the potential explanatory variables? What is your methodological design, that is, what kind of variation in your explanatory variables are you anticipating will relate to variation in your dependent variable? Will your study say something about causation, or simply characterize correlation / data description?
* Make sure to provide a precise description of where you obtained the data, how the data was gathered, who was responsible for providing the data and documentation.
* Explain whether the variables you will be using in your study are taken “as is” from the data source, or do you need to do some cleaning, manipulation, or other calculations from the raw data to obtain the variables that will be used in your study. If any of this process is incomplete you may say what work you have done and what work remains.

The data section should include at least one nicely formatted table, with title, table notes, etc. This can be data description, summary statistics, or something else. Likely two tables would be warranted for many of you. Look at the papers you are reading in top quality journals to see how their discussion of data and early tables that begin to show sample properties and summary statistics of the data.

You may include additional content on methodology and empirical results if you would like to, but this would be optional just for me to see your progress, and is not a formal part of the assignment.