Dr. Soliman

Econometrics Final Project Proposal (Example)

Research Question:
What is the relationship between the legalization of marijuana and the rate of violent crime in U.S. states?

Motivation:
In recent years, the U.S. has seen an increasing number of states legalize marijuana for medical or recreational use. While supporters argue that legalization can reduce crime by displacing illegal markets and reducing law enforcement costs, critics worry that it may lead to an increase in violent crime. The economic and social consequences of marijuana legalization are complex, and understanding the effect on crime rates is crucial for informing policymakers on the broader implications of such laws. By examining the impact of marijuana legalization on violent crime rates, this study aims to provide evidence on whether legalizing marijuana increases or decreases crime, thus contributing valuable insights for future state-level policy decisions.

Potential Sources of Data:

NOTE: Include at least three datasets that can be downloaded in spreadsheet format (e.g.., excel file or csv file), i.e., not PDFs

1. **State-Level Violent Crime Data:**
    o **Data source:** Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program
    o **Link:** https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ucr
    o **Description:** The UCR provides national, state, and local crime statistics, including data on violent crimes such as murder, robbery, and aggravated assault. This dataset allows for a longitudinal analysis of violent crime rates across states.
2. **Marijuana Legalization Information:**
    o **Data source:** National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)
    o **Link:** https://www.ncsl.org/civil-and-criminal-justice/cannabis-overview
    o **Description:** The NCSL provides a comprehensive overview of marijuana legalization laws across the U.S., detailing which states have legalized marijuana for medical or recreational use and the specific year of implementation.
3. **Demographic and Economic Data by State:**
    o **Data source:** U.S. Census Bureau
    o **Link:** https://www.census.gov/data.html
    o **Description:** This data includes state-level demographic and economic variables, such as population size, income levels, unemployment rates, and urbanization, which can be controlled for in the analysis to isolate the effect of marijuana legalization on crime.