Zack Storms
Economics
Mentor: Christopher Bollinger

*State-Level analysis of incarceration and unemployment in the United States (2000-2009)*

Despite being considered the leader of the free world, no other nation imprisons more of its citizens than the United States of America, which has unintended consequences for the labor market. Within the United States, the variation in incarceration rate by state varies from one tenth of a percent to nearly one percent of the state’s population. Incarcerating more citizens may reduce crime in the short run, yet the long term implications are far less certain. This analysis explores the effect that economic and social factors, specifically the incarceration rate, have on the level of unemployment in the United States, at the state level. The effectiveness of three strikes laws and mandatory sentencing guidelines are also called into question in this study. With astounding levels of recidivism, careful analysis is warranted in how the revolving door of prisons relates to labor market conditions in the United States of America. In the United States, criminal justice policy allows for substantial state intervention, which provides a large market reallocation of labor that has significant effects on employment trends. Whether or not incarceration increases or decreases the level of unemployment in individual states remains a debated topic.
68. Rick Guha  
Other Authors:  
Mentor: Chris Bollinger

*Brand Recognition on Equity Performance*

This paper analyzes the effect of brand value on equity performance through the use of different regression models. The movement of stock prices can be caused by a countless list of factors. Many of which are based on rational reasoning stemming from fundamental factors. Others can be derived from irrational reasoning, often rooted in flawed investor psychology. The question this paper seeks to answer is what effect, if any, brand recognition has on the performance of the associated stock. Brand recognition is particularly important to consider due to the large emphasis many corporations put on building and maintaining their brands. The obvious goal of this is to create perceived value which results in greater sales and benefit the bottom line. However if the perceived value of a particular brand is overvaluing the intrinsic value of the related equity, this will have negative effects for the owners in the long run. The findings do indicate a negative impact, however, the results are not statistically significant. The research used a sample of 84 publicly traded American companies over a six year period. The models used were multi-factor models based on the Fama-French three factor model, with the addition of other fundamental factors. All models consistently showed a negative impact on stock performance, although magnitude and significance varied.

69. Ross Hildabrand  
Mentor: William Hoyt

*Fayette County Property Values*

This research will explore the relationship between property values in Fayette County, Kentucky as a function of characteristics of the individual house, characteristics of the neighborhood a house is located in, the high school zoning of the property, the middle school zoning of the property, and crime in the area. The data will be compiled from the Property Valuation Administrator of Fayette County to provide characteristics of the homes and neighborhoods, and zoning and crime will be mapped to correspond to different properties and locations. This relationship is timely and relevant because of the school rezoning that will be taking place in the spring of 2015 in Fayette County.