Exercise 6.2

Identify the Unit of Analysis, Universe and Dependent Variable in each of the seven condensed summaries of articles below. You may wish to go to the library and read them, but there is sufficient information here.

In “Gender, the Welfare State and Public Employment” American Sociological Review 63:688-710 (1998) Janet Gornick and Jerry Jacobs examined the impact of public employment on the gap between private and public sector wages and on the gap between male and female wages in seven advanced industrial nations. Data on variables for each nation came from the Luxembourg Income Study for the year 1989-1992. The size of the public sector varies greatly by country, from 41.5 percent of all working adults in Sweden to 17.1 in the United States. The authors found that nations with a large public sector, pay for government employment is almost equal to that of the private sector, but in nations with a smaller public sector employment, government pay is higher. They did not find a consistent effect of public sector size on the gender pay gap.

In “Labor Markets, Industrial Monopolization, Welfare and Imprisonment: Evidence from a Cross-Section of U.S. Counties.” Sociological Quarterly 31:441-458 (1990) Mark Colvin examined whether the rate of unemployment was related to rates of welfare and how unemployment and welfare affected rates of imprisonment. He gathered data from a random sample of 184 urban, industrial counties in the United States. For each county he measured many variables including: unemployment rate, liberalism of government, percentage of county population below the poverty line, welfare payments per recipient, crime rate, and the rate per 100,000 county population of new commitments to state penal facilities.

In “The State, Courts and Maternity Policies in U.S. Organizations” American Sociological Review 64:41-63 (1999) Doug Guthrie and Louise Marie Roth attempted to explain why some organizations give paid maternity leave to women. Data came from a survey of 712 medium and large-sized organizations in the United States. They were interested in a range of characteristics of the organizations that might explain whether a firm offered its full-time employees paid maternity leave and paid sick leave. The results showed that firms with a female CEO, with a high percentage of female employees and located in region of the U.S. with more legal protections for women were more likely to offer paid maternity leave. These firms were much more likely to have sick leave for full-time employees. The authors note that many laws defined pregnancy as a disability or illness in the 1970s and 1980s, and sick leave policies covered pregnancy.

In “Self-Perceptions of Black Americans: Self-Esteem and Personal Efficacy.” American Journal of Sociology 95:132-159 (1989) Michael Hughes and David Demo examined two kinds of self-esteem: personal self-esteem (an individual’s belief in his or her own virtue and moral worth), and efficacy (a sense of competence or personal control). Curious about a finding in past studies that black Americans showed high personal self-esteem but low efficacy, the authors looked at data from the National Survey of Black Americans. It is a sample of 2,107 black individuals, 18 years old and older who were interviewed in 1979 or 1980. Information on many variables was gathered: years of education, occupation, employment, job characteristics, family relations, friendships, attitudes towards self, attitudes about personal power, beliefs about black people as a group, etc.

Ching Kwan Lee studied women factory workers in “Engendering the worlds of labor: Women workers, labor markets, and production politics in the South China economic miracle” in American Sociological Review 60:378-97 (1995). Professor Lee wanted to understand work relations in factories in industrializing areas of Asia. He engaged in field research in two factories, one in Hong Kong, the other across the border in China, that were owned by the same company and produced similar electronics products. His data consisted of his observations on the factory floor, informal interviews with workers, and documents. He found different patterns of work relations in the factories. In one factory women were independent and had a lot of freedom, in the other they were dependent and had little freedom. He said the differences were due to differences in the age and marital status of the women, how the women were recruited to work in the factory, whether other job opportunities existed for the women, and the beliefs of the male managers in each factory.