Chapter 6 Questions and Exercises

1. Using data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics website <https://www.bls.gov/web/metro.supp.toc.htm>, find the unemployment rates for the metro area closest to you and two other metro areas of your choice for a given month in the years 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020, and the most current year. Taking *each metro area* one at a time, how would you describe the change in the unemployment rates from decade to decade in that metro area over the period from 1990 to the present? Do the unemployment rates stay about the same, increase, decrease, or display some other pattern? Next, comparing *across* the metro areas, which of the metro areas had the greatest changes in unemployment rates over this period?
2. The BLS Web page <https://www.bls.gov/emp/chart-unemployment-earnings-education.htm> provides unemployment rates by educational level for the United States as a whole. The website also provides data on educational attainment for each US metro area. Given the educational attainment in the metro areas you selected in Question 1, how well does educational level appear to predict metro area unemployment rates?
3. Using readily available website data on the industrial composition of the three metro areas you selected in Question 1, describe the industrial landscape of each community. How does the industrial composition in each metro area seem to be correlated with its unemployment rate?
4. The wage for a given occupation can vary considerably across metropolitan areas. Estimates of wages for occupations by metro area can be found in the US Bureau of Labor Statistics website at <http://www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm>.

Go to this website and under “Metropolitan Area Wage Data” click on the link that begins “For 375 metropolitan statistical areas.” Click on a metro area of your choice (other than the 20 we follow in the charts in this chapter).

Find the wage estimate (“mean annual”) for the following four occupations:

* Registered nurses (located under “Health Care Practitioner and Technical Occupations”)
* Civil engineers (located under “Architecture and Engineering Occupations”)
* Elementary school teachers, except special education (located under “Education, Training and Library Occupations”)
* Machinists (located under “Production Occupations”)

Next, find this information for three other metropolitan areas of your choice. In which metro areas is the average wage/salary of each of these occupations the highest? In which metro areas is the average wage/salary the lowest? How would you explain these differences?