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Radical Statistics

19

OCTOBER 1980

Radical Statistics 19 was edited by Bob Gilchrist.

The Radical Statistics Newsletter is available by subscription. Current rates are £2.00 per year for individuals and £4.00 for institutions. The newsletter is available from Radical Statistics, c/o BSSRS, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG. Issues are normally produced in February, May and October.

Don't cry for me, Argentina

The news that the 1981 International Statistical Institute meeting is to be held in Argentina is slowly starting to get around. (See the article by Stephen Shenfield in this edition of the Newsletter). The eternal question is raised as to whether one should boycott contacts with such countries. Certainly a trip by a large group of international statisticians will be seen as a prestigious event by the Argentinian Government. In the unlikely event of any resolutions being passed at the conference calling for the release of political detainees, it is equally unlikely that the Argentinian Government would take any notice. Such a change of heart would hardly seem probable if the conference were a topic of international news, and it is scarcely that.

The answer to the question of going on such trips is that, if you feel strongly about a particular regime, then it is better not to go there, rather than risk the possibility of giving them any further credibility.

RADICAL STATISTICS 20

The next newsletter will be edited by John Lintott. Please send contributions to him c/o RADSTATS, BSSRS, 9 Poland Street, London W1. Publication will be in February, 1981; the copy date is January 19.

CLASSIFIED ADS.

LONELY HEARTS.

STATISTICIAN. Tall, dark, handsome, modest, seeks like-minded (M or F) radical, to edit RS21. All letters answered. Photo not necessary. Apply John Lintott, c/o BSSRS, 9 Poland St, W1.

PREPARATION OF EDA TEACHING MATERIALS.

The Nuffield Foundation has just awarded a small grant to assist in the production of Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) teaching materials. The members of this project are Cathie Marsh (Cambridge University), John Bibby (The Open University), Allan Scheult (Durham University) and Tony Weekes (York University). The main aim of this project is to produce material for teachers and students including the following features:

It will cover EDA techniques such as stem-plots, box-plots, resistant line-fitting and median polishing of two way tables.

It will focus on a particular theme, namely inequality and poverty. The material will be tested in draft in the 1980/1 academic year.

The project team would be interested to hear from anyone who teaches EDA at any level, and especially from those who could help with the classroom piloting of draft material, or who would like to receive a copy of the drafts. Please write to Cathie Marsh, SPS, Free School Lane, Cambridge.

AND NOW

A few words from our sponsors:

DEMAST: A new Open University statistics course

We are now in the DEMAST decade!

DEMAST is the code name for a new interdisciplinary statistics course which is being prepared at The Open University. Over 15,000 students are expected to take the course which should be available in February 1983. The provisional title for the course is "Understanding Statistics" and authors have been drawn from all six faculties as well as from outside the university. The six faculties - Social Science (D), Education (E), Mathematics (M), Arts (A), Science (S) and Technology (T) - provide the course code acronym, DEMAST 242.

DEMAST will in part replace the existing course MDT 241, Statistics - an Interdisciplinary Approach, but the style of the new course will be quite different. Emphasis will be placed on the relevance of statistical ideas to a wide range of topics. In this sense the philosophy of DEMAST is parallel to the Project on Statistical Education (POSE) developed for the Schools Council at Sheffield University. The stress in DEMAST is on real world problems rather than theory or technique. It is a major course aim to "present the fundamental ideas of statistics in such a way that the students gain a strong intuitive feel for the principles involved, and to underline the unifying role of these ideas".

The topics chosen cover the main academic disciplines of economics, education and medicine and health. However, the focus is upon their relevance to the student's everyday life, in his role as consumer, worker, parent, etc.. Thus among our topic areas we have the following: Consumer decisions, Wage bargaining, Indiscipline in Schools, Child development, and "Does Smoking Kill?".

Block A introduces economic topics, and a variety of exploratory ideas developed by John Tukey and others. The educational topics in Block B will lead to the basic techniques of statistical inference - interval estimation and hypothesis testing. Finally, Block C will reinforce and consolidate the exploratory and inferential methods introduced in the previous two blocks, and also develop ideas of control and experimentation.

The statistical "thread" which spirals through the course will not be purely technical in character. Indeed, one of the main themes of DEMAST is that statistics develops as the product of human responses to a wide variety of social situations - in short it is a "social product". Thus we shall also touch upon fundamental problems of epistemology and the sociology of knowledge. These themes and the statistical thread will be emphasised particularly in the Link Units which join the blocks.

As with other Open University courses, DEMAST will use broadcasting, cassette tapes and other media to improve our teaching. Before the course is finally prepared we wish to try out our material on as wide an audience as possible. If you would like to read some of the drafts and especially if you could use them in classroom teaching, then please write to

John Bibby (DEMAST),
Mathematics Faculty,
The Open University,
Walton Hall,
MILTON KEYNES MK7 6AA

or phone 0908-653844 (work) or 0908-647093 (home). Please use the same address if you have any other queries.

'HEALTH STATISTICS IN BRITAIN'
1980 STATISTICS USERS CONFERENCE

*To be held at the Royal Society, 6 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1
on Friday, 12th December 1980*

This conference is one of an annual series inaugurated in 1970 by the Standing Committee of Statistics Users. This is an independent committee whose function is to put the views of statistics users to the Government Statistical Service. It comprises representatives of a wide range of national organisations and professional associations with a special interest in statistics.

The Statistics Users Conferences provide a forum for (government) statisticians and those who provide and use their statistics to discuss topics of mutual interest. The 1980 conference, which is being organised by the Society for Social Medicine, is the first in the series to take health as its theme. This choice of theme is particularly timely as health statistics are the subject of two current reviews - those being conducted by the Joint Steering Group on Health Service Information and by Sir Derek Rayner (as part of a general review of government statistics).

The programme is set out overleaf. Together, the papers will critically review a wide range of health statistics and explore desirable future developments. Since the papers will be circulated beforehand, more than half the conference will be given over to discussion.

The conference fee of £23 will cover the precirculation of papers, the transcription and circulation of the discussion, and the use of rooms at the Royal Society, together with morning coffee, lunch, afternoon tea and reception. If you wish to attend the conference, please return the attached slip, together with a cheque for £23, as soon as possible.



I wish to attend the 1980 Statistics Users Conference on 'Health Statistics in Britain' and enclose a cheque for £23.

Name

Address

.....

Tel.No.

I should prefer to lunch at 1245/1330 (please delete as appropriate)

Please return this form to: Dr. I.T. Russell, Medical Care Research Unit,
21, Claremont Place, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4AA.

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RADICAL STATISTICS RACE GROUP

SPECIAL PREPUBLICATION OFFER

***** Britain's Black Population *****

BY

The Runnymede Trust

and


The Radical Statistics Race Group

To be published in November by Heinemann Educational Books. Price £4.95 paper, £13.50 hard back.

PREPUBLICATION PRICE ONLY £2.50 + 50p p+p

Available while stocks last.

Authors include: Heather Booth, Dave Drew, Mike Grimsley, Katya Lester, Pete Long, Robert Miles (Ed), Shan Nicholas, Shanti Patel, Usha Prashar, Colin Thunhurst, Nic Wright.

..... 

TO: Radical Statistics Race Group, c/o Dave Drew, Department of Maths + Stats., Sheffield City Polytechnic, Pond Street Sheffield. S1 1WB

Please send _____ copy/copies of Britain's Black Population at the prepublication price of £2.50 + 50p p+p.

I enclose £ _____

NAME

ADDRESS

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