

NEWS AND VIEWS

New Radical Statistics Books

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It is now some time since the publication of *Statistics in Society* (1998), and even more since *Demystifying Social Statistics* (1979). Moreover, the context in which statistics are produced, analysed and used has changed tremendously, even in 20 years. Hence, after several invitations to the RadStats and other mailing lists, a group planning new RadStats books met twice: in early October 2015 in London, and just before the 2016 conference in February in York. We have been working on *Statistics for Radical Change* (SRC, provisional title), a practical guide to doing political/community research, coordinated by Rachel Cohen and Jackie Carter; and *Radical Statistics in the 2020s* (RS2020), intended as an edited collection of short contributions of 3-4000 words each. This piece is about RS2020; more information on SRC will be available in due course.

The editors of RS2020 are Jan Böhnke, Jeff Evans, Sally Ruane, and Humphrey Southall; an editorial advisory board is being formed to include John Bibby and others. Its aim is to explore recent and ongoing developments in the status of statistics and the uses of data in contemporary society. It explores the social and organisational processes through which statistics are constructed, and the ways in which statistics are used and interpreted by government, non-governmental organisations, and a range of social organisations, so as to advance particular arguments and sets of interests.

The book does not attempt comprehensive coverage but addresses selected topics organised around a number of themes chosen because they reflect key spheres of social development emerging in recent years. We envisage that topics will include:

(1) How data are changing: 'Big data', data mining; changes to the use of surveys and administrative data; changes in the profession / discipline of statistics.

(2) Globalisation: Effects on data production, analysis, and trends in data ownership; the urge to 'compare' national economies, education

systems, adult skill levels, etc. (OECD, EU, etc.); challenges in measuring financial flows, climate change, movements of refugees, etc.

(3) The retreat of the state: measuring effects of government cuts, privatisation, and commercial confidentiality; related to health and social security reform.

(4) Economic life: Structures of ownership; challenges for accountancy in apportioning value; changes in working life; inequality and new developments in measuring it.

(5) Health and well-being: promoting happiness and ‘nudge’ policies; social divides and movements across boundaries; ageing and pensions; consequences of these divisions for health.

(6) Empowering people: Case studies of the use of statistics in campaigning.

The outline is currently being finalised, after which potential authors will be contacted.

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