

A radical statistical career

Harvey Goldstein

History

- 1980s –Multilevel modelling – *enabled insights*
- 1990s – Insights led to *critiques* of league tables, 2000s – Involved in teaching
- statistics in schools – a *radical curriculum* innovation

Personally I reckon I'm part of the statistical (RSS council, editor, GETSTATS) establishment now

- But the establishment has changed.
- The RSS, by virtue of a commitment to science, and the use of the fruits of its labours in society at large *has become more radicalised*.
- Since 1980s (unemployment figures) it has increasingly been critical of policymakers and the use of evidence.
- This has not been reflected so much in traditional journals but more in publications such as Significance.
- Social science has acquired a higher profile than formerly and those with a quantitative social science expertise are more welcome.

Where should 'radicals' go?

- The concern of the profession with social matters and statistical literacy is a positive sign and I suggest is itself a radical move.
- Traditional politics seems largely pointless
- New political groupings however, especially the Greens, are one opportunity to engage and promote respect for statistical understandings.
- New concerns such as climate change are emerging that demand clear statistical thinking.

Radstats is still needed.

- The issues of the 1970s have not disappeared – they have changed their manifestations.
- Critiquing what is there demands not only a sense of justice and social concern – it requires a level of statistical competence and ethical integrity.
- Why not start by setting out to draft some decent ethical standards for statisticians?
 - Public transparency of analysis
 - Peer and public debate around statistical ‘findings’
 - Individual integrity within working environments
 - A proper discussion of uncertainty