

## **Editorial**

This issue of Radical Statistics begins with three pieces which demonstrate the value of the UK census and the damage that its potential cancellation will wreak. These articles highlight the disquiet that academics, policy makers and the public should feel about government plans for 2021 and beyond. In the first piece Danny Dorling outlines some of the surprises that have emerged from the 2011 census and suggests that only a government that does not care about its citizens would favour a plan which effectively makes it impossible to find out about them in the future (about where people live, about their needs, about their ages... etc). In the second piece Paul Norman makes the argument for the census and for small area data in particular. He ends with an appeal to everyone who has used (or is intending on using) census data to contribute their experience to the 'business case' for retention. The third piece, by Emma Stevens, is based on research conducted for an undergraduate dissertation. Emma surveyed human geographers about their use of the census and about how the proposed changes will affect their work. This article shows that the arguments made by Danny Dorling and Paul Norman are echoed by human geographers from across the UK.

The next section includes three quite diverse articles. The first, by Lucy Borland, provides shocking data on how changes in the regulation of lead in water in the UK (whereby 99<sup>th</sup> centile data is treated as a 'maximum') may mean that dangerous contamination is going unnoticed. Using equivalent data from Northern Ireland Lucy highlights the importance of absolute values where health is an issue. She also raises serious doubts about the effectiveness of tap-water sampling practices.

The next article, by Robert Grant, provides a timely overview of the history and potential of graphical representation of statistical data. He shows that graphics can provide a fruitful way to make and disseminate radical arguments. Perhaps most helpfully, he provides a wealth of practical suggestions, which will be invaluable for anyone toying with the prospect of learning more about data visualisation.

In the last article, Jonathan Bradshaw has written up his Radical Statistics conference presentation from February 2012. In this he uses

York as a means for thinking about inequality and poverty and the ways in which these are measured.

The issue concludes with David Elliman's enthusiastic review of *The Geek Manifesto*, Larry Brownstein's comment on assessing tests of scientific competence (an issue raised by *The Geek Manifesto*) and finally Russell Ecob's brief summary of the *Radstats* conference discussion on whether a fair voting system is possible, and what it would look like.

We hope that you enjoy, or at least are stimulated by, the articles in this issue. If you think that you have something to say that would be of interest to Radical Statistics readers, get in touch. We are always keen to receive articles, news stories or book reviews. If you are unsure about whether something is suitable, drop us an email and check.

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