### **Austerity Statistics**

& what changes in government data might mean for the analysis of social policy

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#### **Outline**

- The history of the statistics as the history of the state
- Some cuts in official statistics since 2010
- Austerity statistics v1.0 The Rayner Review
- Quite a lot or not much? Quantifying the cuts
- Conclusion: what this might mean for statistics & analysis

### A Quick History of Statistics

The Table of CAS

The Years of our Lord 1647 1648 1649 1050 1051 1052 1053 1054 1055 1656 1657 1658 484 Abortive and Stil-born 335 329 327 351 389 381 384 433 483 419 429 465 4074 743 892 465 4074 Aged Aged Ague and Fever 1260 884 751 970 1038 1212 282 1371 689 875 999 1275 111 118 86 92 102 113 138 1212 128 128 1271 689 875 999 1275 128 128 1271 689 875 999 1275 128 128 128 1271 689 875 999 1275 128 128 1271 689 875 999 1275 128 128 128 1271 689 875 999 1275 128 128 128 1271 689 875 999 1275 128 128 128 1271 689 875 999 1275 128 128 128 1271 689 875 999 1275 128 128 128 1271 689 875 999 1275 128 128 128 1271 689 875 999 1275 128 128 128 128 1271 689 875 999 1275 128 128 128 1271 689 875 999 1275 128 128 128 1271 689 875 999 1275 128 128 128 128 1271 689 875 999 1275 128 128 128 128 128 1271 689 875 999 1275 128 128 128 128 128 128 128 128 128 128	The Years of our Lord	1647	1648	1649	1650	1651	1652	1653	1654	1655	1656		-0
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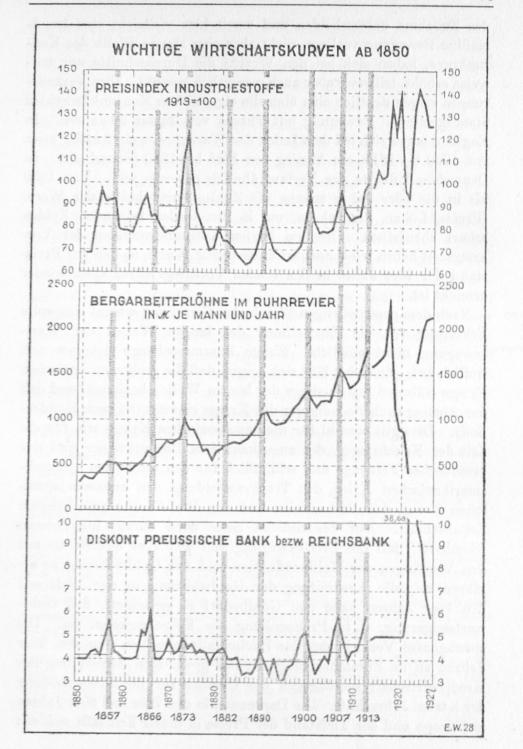
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FILLING UP THE CENSUS PAPER.

Wife of his Bosom. "Upon my word, Mr. Peewitt! Is this the Way you Fill up your Census? So you call Yourself the 'Head of the Family'—do you—and me a 'Female?'"



# Some statistical cuts (and non-cuts) under the coalition

#### **Cuts 1: Cancelling Data Collection**

- Cease special-purpose data collection exercises
- Large savings (£ms) especially for sample surveys
  - Less for administrative returns
  - Whose money and effort is saved?
- Examples: The Places Survey, The Citizenship Survey

#### **Cuts 2: Reducing Data Collection**

- Reduce sample sizes, rotating or removing questions, reduce use of observation experts
- Relatively large savings (£100ks £ms)
- Family Resources Survey,
  - Sample size 25,000 → 20,000
- English Housing Survey
  - Sample size cut 20-25%
  - Drop market-value element
  - Reduce or rotate neighbourhood questions

#### Aside: does sample size matter?

- Depends on:
  - Prevalence of the feature of interest
  - Size of population subgroups
  - Expected scale and speed of change
- (Rough) example from EHS sample size cut (17.5k  $\rightarrow$  13.8k)

Population	Prevalence	95% CI before	95% CI after
Everyone	40%	± 0.7	± 0.8
10% subgroup	40%	± 2.3	± 2.6
Everyone	15%	± 0.5	± 0.6
10% subgroup	15%	± 1.7	± 1.9

#### **Cuts 3: Reducing or discontinuing outputs**

- Stop producing digests, summaries, publications, series
  - That are (argued to be) little-used, redundant, or superceded
- Usually quite minor savings (£10ks)
- Examples
  - DWP: New Deal statistics
  - DWP: take-up of income-related benefits [proposed & rejected]
  - ONS: small-area income estimates [proposed & rejected]
  - ONS: end NOMIS [proposed & rejected]
  - DCLG: regional statistical summaries
- Policy orientation of decisions is often clear...

#### **Pickles on the Regional Classification**

"The old regional classifications are also misleading—they fail to quantify both the pockets of deprivation that can exist within regions or the differences between rural and urban England, and there is an inconsistency of approach to the size and population of each government region. They are arbitrary lines on a map that have no resonance —in contrast to England's long-standing cities, boroughs and counties which have a real sense of local identity and popular support, dating back centuries in many cases. England has no history of regional government, whereas it does have a great tradition of local governance that this Government wish to strengthen."

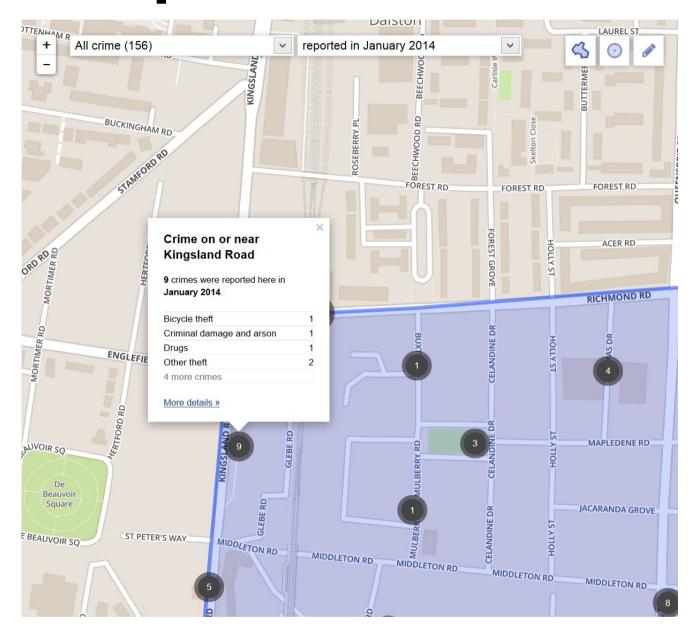
#### **Pickles on Regions and Europe**

"There is also a European dimension to the regions in the form of Eurostat's nomenclature of units for territorial statistics standard (the appropriately named "NUTS regulations"). It is the view of Ministers that the NUTS1 hierarchy is no longer appropriate for structural funds in England moving forward from 2014. Ministers reject the notion of a "Europe of the Regions" where nation states and national Parliaments are sidelined, and replaced with distant regional governments answerable only to a federal European super-state. Dismantling such arbitrary, unelected regional administrative structures will assist in that goal."

#### Transparency, Open Data, Big Data

- "Transparency"
  - Publish details of government expenditure items
- New applications / visualisations of administrative data,
  - The crime map
- Make existing administrative data free
  - e.g. Land Registry Price Paid data
- Widen access to existing material
  - More open publication of geo-data

#### **The Crime Map**



## Austerity Statistics v1.0: The Rayner Review

#### **Cabinet 07/02/1979**

IEW OF ERNMENT HISTICAL VICES 8. THE PRIME MINISTER said that she had asked
Sir Derek Rayner to carry out a review of Government statistical
services. She hoped that Ministers would ensure that their
Departments co-operated fully with Sir Derek Rayner in the
carrying out of this review.

The Cabinet -

Took note.

#### **Cabinet 01/05/1980**

THE MUNISTER OF STATE, CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT, said that the decisions which the Government had taken so far had led to reductions in Civil Service numbers from 732,000 in 1979 to 705,000 now, with the prospect of reaching a total not much over 670,000 by the end of this Parliament. This was not sufficient. Sir Derek Rayner's findings, and the work already completed by Departments, illustrated the scope for further substantial savings. He recommended, therefore, that the Government should announce now that their aim was to reduce the Civil Service to no larger than 630,000 by the end of this Parliament. If achieved, this would be below the previous lowest post-war figure of 640,000 in 1961. To allow for some increase in staff in particular areas where it might prove unavoidable, the target should include a small contingency margin of about 10,000 which the Civil Service Department would administer. To meet the net target of 630,000 each Department should aim to save 21 per cent of staff numbers in each of the years 1981-82, 1982-83 and 1983-84 in addition to the savings that had

#### **Rayner's Recommendations**

- Official Statistics to focus on the needs of government
  - "statistical work which is wholly necessary for central government"
  - "Rigorous appraisal of value for money"

#### White Paper 1981

- CSO budget reduction of 33%
- Manpower reduction of 25%

#### For whole GSS

Reduce staff by ¼, save £25m

#### Reductions in statistics

- Less frequent income distribution, ending of wealth distribution analysis
- Cutting back on methodological work
- Fewer briefings

#### **The 1981 White Paper**

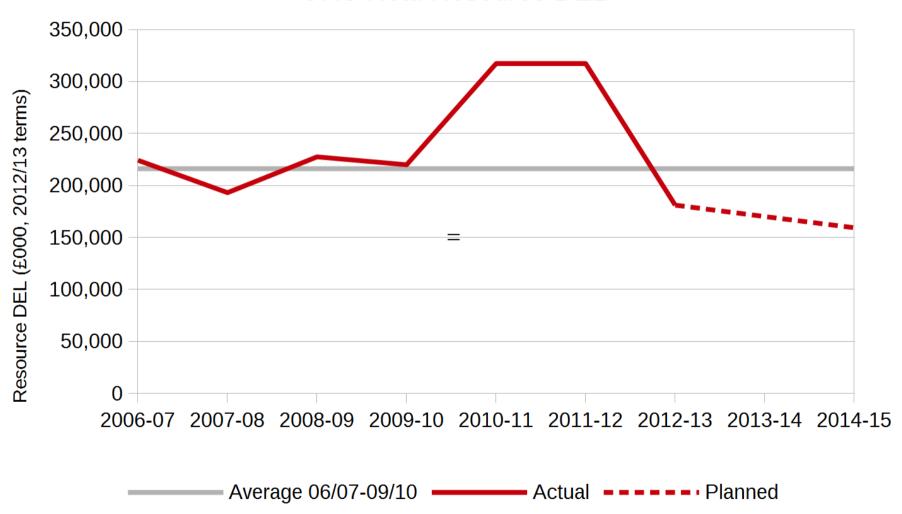
#### ESTIMATED AND PROJECTED EXPENDITURE AND MANPOWER<sup>1</sup> ALL STATISTICAL SERVICES

	May 1979		April 19	84	Reduction May 1979 to April 1984	
Central Statistical Office Home Office Lord Chancellor's Department Overseas Development Administration Inland Revenue Customs and Excise Defence Civil Service Department and Government Actuary Employment/Manpower Services Commission Health and Safety Executive MAFF including IBAP and Forestry Commission Environment and Transport Scottish Office General Register Office (Scotland) Welsh Office Health and Social Security Office of Population Censuses and Surveys <sup>3</sup> Education and Science Industry and Trade	Expenditure £ million pa 4·10 3·00 0·66 0·54 5·70 9·90 4·10 1·24 15·40 0·77 5·70 14·20 2·00 1·30 0·86 5·56 12·80 1·70 13·90	Manpower Nos. 263 307 74 36 608 1,311 292 114 1,430 54 324 527 158 184 90 517 1,100 140 1,399	Expenditure £ million pa 2·80 2·70 0·57 0·37 3·40 7·60 3·60 0·79 10·00 0·63 4·60 11·25 1·75 1·10 0·68 3·43 9·50 1·50 10·90	Manpower Nos. 196 260 62 22 313 983 237 61 960 43 245 360 140 159 69 322 791 111 1,054	Expenditure £ million pa  1·30 0·30 0·09 0·17 2·30 2·30² 0·50 0·45 5·40 0·14 1·10 2·95 0·25 0·20 0·18 2·13 3·30 0·20 3·00	Manpower Nos. 67 47 12 14 295 328² 55 53 470 11 79 167 18 25 21 195 309 29 345
TOTAL	0·99 104·42	9,001	0·83 78·00	6,451	0·16 26·42	2,550

### Quantifying the Cuts since 2010

#### **By Budget?**

#### ONS Real Resource DEL

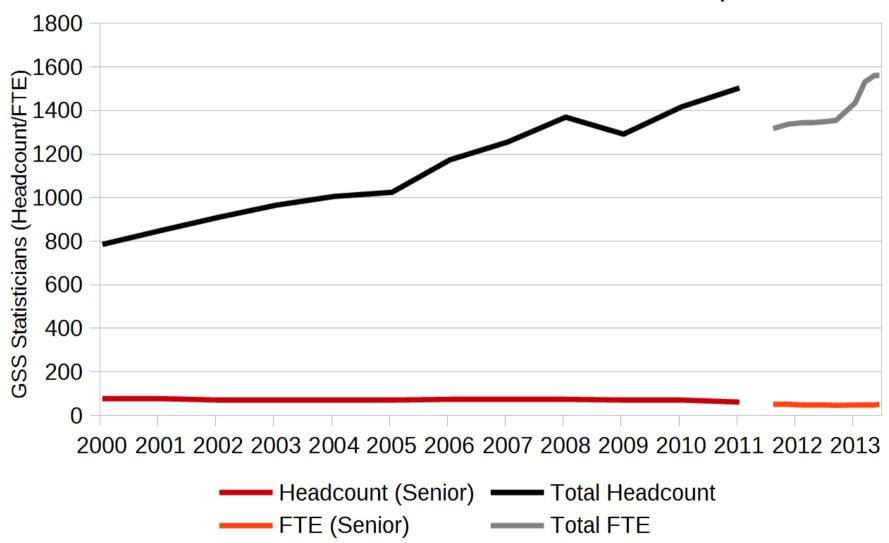


#### **By (Statistical) Outputs?**

Producer	2010	2011	2012	2013
ONS	217	230	179	185
HMRC	76	74	42	40
Communities	28	26	25	25
DWP	16	17	14	12
Welsh Govt	148	153	126	142
Scottish Govt	92	82	70	71
All others	508	554	476	498
Total	1085	1136	932	973

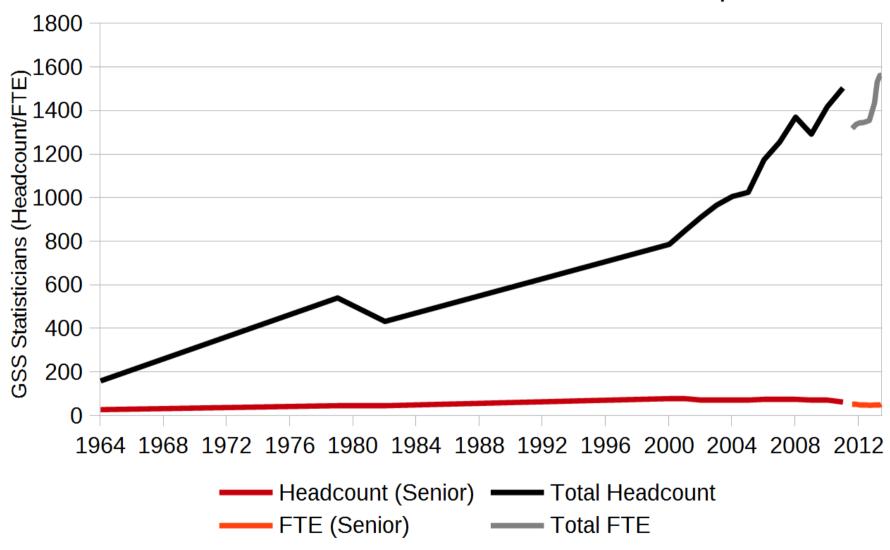
#### By Headcount?

Statisticians in the Govt Statistical Group



#### By Headcount – the long view...

Statisticians in the Govt Statistical Group



# Interpretations, Explanations, Conclusions

#### Why the cuts to date might be moderate

- Legislative or treaty protection?
  - 80% of ONS outputs are required by UK or EU law
- General conversion to evidence-based policy?
- Better scrutiny and consultation mechanisms?
- NB local government not considered here

#### **Market-making with statistics**

- Market organisation / decentralisation
  - Health, schools (Ozga)
- Private provision of public services
  - Labour market interventions, health, education
- Statistics indispensable
  - Market information
  - Pricing & valuation
  - Contract regulation

#### Implications for policy analysis

- Disappearance and discontinuity in data
- The de-legitimation of policy fields
  - E.g. neighbourhoods, regions
- The limits of transparency
  - What remains hidden? commercial confidentiality
- Expertise and authority
  - Who will do transparency? an "imagined public"
  - The role of expertise in measurement
- The future of large-scale enquiries
  - The future of the Census