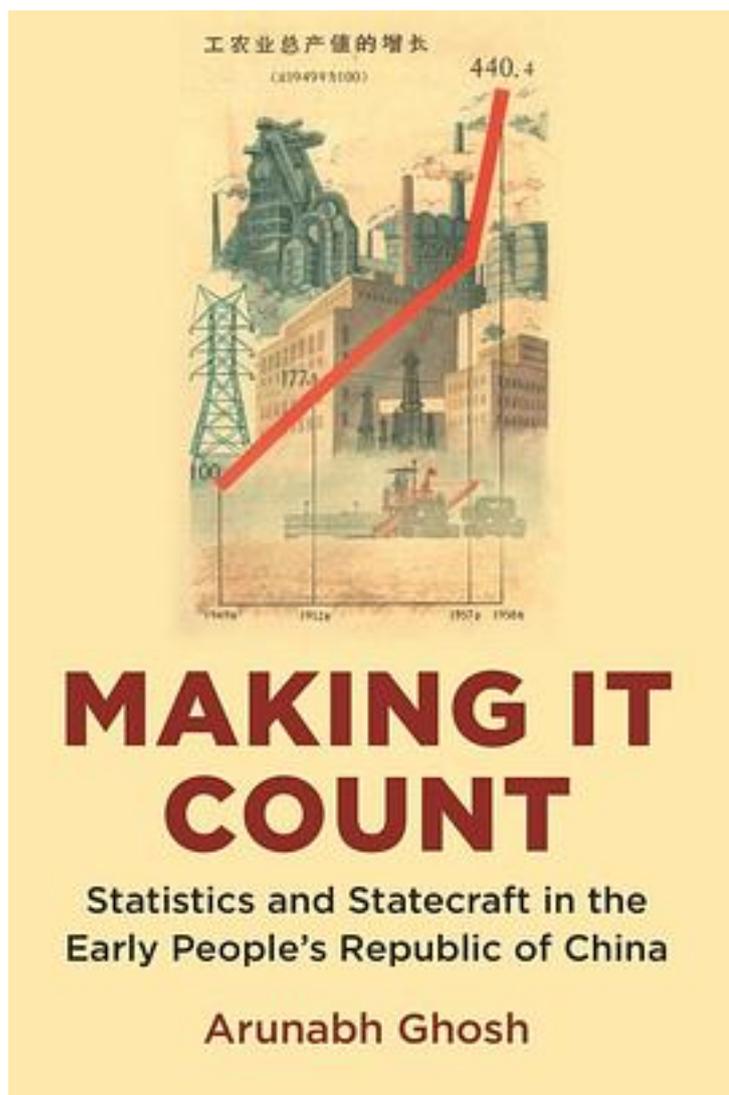


Making It Count



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In 1949, at the end of a long period of wars, one of the biggest challenges facing leaders of the new People's Republic of China was how much they did not know. The government of one of the world's largest nations was committed to fundamentally reengineering its society and economy via socialist planning while having almost no reliable statistical data about their own country. *Making It Count* is the history of efforts to resolve this "crisis in counting." Drawing on a wealth of sources culled from China, India, and the United States, Arunabh Ghosh explores the choices made by political leaders, statisticians, academics, statistical workers, and even literary figures in attempts to know the nation through numbers.

Ghosh shows that early reliance on Soviet-inspired methods of exhaustive enumeration became increasingly untenable in China by the mid-1950s. Unprecedented and unexpected exchanges with Indian statisticians followed, as the Chinese sought to learn about the then-exciting new technology of random sampling. These developments were overtaken by the tumult of the Great Leap Forward (1958–61), when probabilistic and exhaustive methods were rejected and statistics was refashioned into an ethnographic enterprise. By acknowledging Soviet and Indian influences, Ghosh not only revises existing models of Cold War science but also globalizes wider developments in the history of statistics and data.

Anchored in debates about statistics and its relationship to state building, *Making It Count* offers fresh perspectives on China's transition to socialism.

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标签

历史

海外中国研究

统计学

政治学

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评论

期待已久的Ghosh博士论文，终于见书。书名Making it Count（算数）一语双关，国家只有会“算数”（statistics）才能让其政策“算数”（statecraft）。而这也就意味着，冰冷的统计数字背后其实是变动不居的“统计政治学”：从苏式的全面统计（exhaustive），到夭折的印度式随机统计（stochastic），再到great leap forward时期复兴的毛式定点调查（ethnographic），Ghosh的新著都有详尽梳理。往上承接Tong Lam讨论民国的A Passion for Facts，往下则使人重思“大数据热”，甚至是当下疫情中的统计谜团。【不禁感慨一下，Madeline Zelin门下真是英才辈出】

从统计的角度看state capacity/incapacity。全方面书写毛时代的统计史，成功建立起了一套非常自圆其说的narrative: 从1950s的exhaustive enumeration + periodic reporting system, 到1957年向印度借鉴random sample survey的经验，再到反右+大跃进期间的typical survey主导。推动线性叙事的深层动力是冷战下三种意识形态和政治力量的角逐: 排除数学和自然科学的社会主义统计（exhaustive）

vs.建立在概率论上“驯服”偶然的资本主义的统计(stochastic) vs. Maoist的民族志-群众路线式“调查报告。”(Ethnographic)

重读了一下第八章。有个细节上的错误。把刘的调查方法当做毛的调查方法的一种并不妥。两者可能都是典型调查，但它们其实是相互竞争的，毕竟工作队和调查会的调查展开模式不一样。

期待已久

对这本书的期待值还挺高，但读下来有点失望。书并不差，但和好似乎距离远了一点。第三四章最有意思，讨论了一些非常具体的本体论、认识论、方法论上的政治（但这些具体的方法带来的社会后果却没细讲，统统纳入完整统计后果中了），除此之外不像是科学史，像是普通的中国史在统计界的应用，因此很多章节对稍稍了解那段历史的人都没什么新意和信息，很多段落都像是中文报告的翻译（也许有史料的价值？）。经常从对中央或者一些大政的概括突然就转到了地方上实施的成果，而这中间的最有意思的实施过程却都被略过了（不确定是不是因为没有资料），却在另外一些特别奇怪的地方描述详尽（比如某人的行程和教课内容）。标题中令人好奇的”statecraft“也在这种写作中被略过。理论上基本是顺着波特和哈金来讲，也提了曼，但都没什么新的贡献。

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书评

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