DATA303 Handout
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Bibliographic citation

- Rosling, Hans, with Ola Rosling and Anna Rosling Rönnlund. *Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World--and Why Things Are Better Than You Think*. Flatiron Books, 2018.

Summary

- Factfulness urges readers to reconsider their perceptions of the world. Its primary focus is making us aware of some of our "instincts" that lead us to exaggerate situations and distort our perception of reality. The book lists ten of these instincts, such as the "gap instinct," which encourages people to think of the world as divided into two distinct groups of countries: developed and underdeveloped. The authors use data, statistics, and personal stories to demonstrate that the world is more complex than this binary viewpoint suggests. They argue that the media and education institutions often reinforce these fear-inducing beliefs and offer practical guidance on developing a more accurate, fact-based worldview.

Noteworthy quotations

- "This is data as you have never known it: it is data as therapy. It is understanding as a source of mental peace. Because the world is not as dramatic as it seems." (p.20)
- "There's no room for facts when our minds are occupied by fear." (p.96)
- "Remember: things can be bad, *and* getting better." (p.103)

Personal response

- From the very beginning of the book, Factfulness challenged many of my assumptions about the world. It was a really eye-opening read, to say the least. I appreciated the authors' emphasis on the importance of data in understanding the world and their practical tips for developing a fact-based worldview. Additionally, the book's discussion of the media's influence on our perceptions of the world was interesting. While we may want to make a difference in the world, this book made it clear to me that we must first have an accurate understanding of the world, which requires us to evaluate how much we rely on facts versus our gut instincts. The book also highlighted some timely ethical issues in Data Science that we touched on in class, such as media literacy and transparency. Overall, I would recommend this book to anyone interested in developing a more accurate and "hopeful" view of the world.