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| Sommario/riassunto | In this fascinating study, Nico Randeraad vividly describes the turbulent history of statistics in nineteenth century Europe. The book deals not only with developments in the large states of Western Europe, but gives equal attention to small states (Belgium, the Netherlands, Hungary) and to the declining Habsburg Empire and Tsarist Russia. Then, unlike today, statistics constituted a comprehensive science, which stemmed |

from the idea that society, just like nature, was governed by laws. In order to discover these laws, everything had to be counted. What could be counted, could be solved: crime, poverty, suicide, prostitution, illness, and many other threats to bourgeois society. The statisticians, often trained as jurists, economists and doctors, saw themselves as pioneers of a better future. Offering an original perspective on the tensions between universalism and the rise of the nation-state in the nineteenth century, this book will appeal to historians, statisticians, and social scientists in general.
