Critical InfoVis
Exploring the Politics of Visualization*

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* originally presented at CHI 2013
Visualizations are everywhere

Making complex phenomena more legible

Engaging viewers around diverse issues

Becoming part of our cultural repertoire
Do visualizations have politics?

Is there such a thing as a neutral visualization?

What is the role of the designer’s assumptions?

Can we consider values in visualization design?
Critical theories of knowledge

Knowledges are situated and partial [Haraway 1998]

Pedagogy of the Oppressed [Freire 1970]

Critical geography [Harley 1989, Monmonier 1991]
Critical approaches in computing

Reflect on a field’s premises and methods [Agre 1997]

Consider values in designing interfaces [Friedman, Sengers]

Role of critical theory and feminism in HCI [Bardzells]
Critical approaches in visualization

Critical visualization as an artistic practice [Hall 2008]

Rhetoric in narrative vis. [Hullman & Diakopoulos 2011]

Critical vis practice as local data reading [Loukissas 2016]

Feminist Data Visualization [D'Ignazio & Klein 2016]
A critical approach to visualization

Disclosure
Plurality
Contingency
Empowerment
A critical approach to visualization

Disclosure  reveal data sources, intentions, decisions

Plurality

Contingency

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**Disclosure** reveal data sources, intentions, decisions

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**Contingency** allow for a variety of experiences

**Empowerment** empower designers and viewers
A critical approach to visualization

Disclosure  reveal data sources, intentions, decisions
Plurality  offer a multiple perspectives on an issue
Contingency  allow for a variety of experiences
Empowerment  empower designers and viewers
Applying principles to engaging visualizations

Urban crime  War casualties  National budget
Stamen: Oakland Crimespotting
CNN: Home and Away
Guardian: You make the cuts
Now what
Now what

Tension between insight vs impact
Now what

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Making the invisible visible
Now what

Tension between insight vs impact

Making the invisible visible

Evaluating engagement
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References


