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“Share Prices by Country” Critique

“Share Prices by Country” is a data visualization that employs line graphs to present the share prices of various countries over a selected time until March 2023. Despite the visualization effectively displaying share prices, it lacks a clear intention and message for the audience, which also remains unclear.

Nir Smilga, the author of the visualization, gathered data from the OECD to plot the share prices for different countries. One of the notable features of the visualization is the flexibility it provides viewers by allowing them to specifically choose countries and periods for comparison. The graphs are enhanced with indications of major global events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, which potentially influence the share prices. Additionally, the author successfully uses color to distinguish between the increase (green) and decrease (red) in share prices since the chosen year to begin with and light gray to show the performances of other countries for easy comparison.

Despite its excellence on graphs of share prices for various countries, it falls short in two components: “Who” and “What”. It does not specify the target audience and the actions it desires to inspire. Based on the content of the graph, the visualization may appeal to various groups, such as investors and traders seeking market opportunities in the future, financial analysts and economists analyzing economic trends or market conditions, or government officials comparing national economic performances with other countries. The wide range of potential audiences leads to a lack of focus. The brief explanation of share prices at the top of the visualization further confuses the intended audience, as such information is likely already known to most of the potential audiences. Additionally, the visualization does not offer predictions or models for future share prices and other factors that potentially led to the increase or decrease in share prices of specific countries, which might not be beneficial to the audiences mentioned above.

Along with the vague audience, the visualization also suffers from a lack of clarity in its messages. Focusing on specific countries within a certain region or economic power could have made its messages more meaningful. For example, if the graph contained an option to compare the share prices of only European or Asian countries, the message could have been more explicit. In other words, the graph broadly covering share price changes over several years contributes to the ambiguous intention, which also contributes to a missed opportunity in guiding the audience towards a specific action or insight. If I were to recommend some changes to the visualization, I would suggest the inclusion of macroeconomic indicators like inflation and interest rates, distinguished by a unique color on the graphs, to illustrate their potential correlation with the change in share prices.

“Share Prices by Country” by Nir Smilga is an informative data visualization that effectively shows the share prices over a selected period across various countries. The inclusion of significant global events and the usage of color on the line graphs contribute to a detailed and clear view of the share prices. However, the lack of indication of a specific audience and message contributes to the missed opportunity to deliver an important message or actions the viewers can take.