DATA 22700 Spring 2023

Exercise 7: Deception and persuasion

Due May 12, 2023

In this exercise, students will explore what makes a visualization deceptive versus persuasive. Students will search the internet for examples of visualizations and make arguements about the rhetorical role played by specific design choices. While students are invited to consider data visualizations in the context of political issues for this exercise, we expect that you will keep your remarks suitable for a classroom setting. **Comments that demean or dehumanize people on the basis of group membership are unacceptable.** Student should exercise good judgment and engage political issues around example visualizations in good faith and with respectful skepticism.

Students should submit their responses as a PDF document on Gradescope.

Instructions

Students' task is to **find two data visualizations** on the internet that rely on similar design strategies for rhetorical purposes. For example, this could be two charts that manipulate perception in the same way through the selection of axis or legend scales. One visualization should be considered deceptive by the student, and the other should be considered persuasive in a more benign way.

For each chosen visualization, students should copy the image to a new document, and write below that image **at least 3 key design choices** that serve a rhetorical purpose. For each design choice identified, students should:

- Described how it contributes to the take-away message of the chart.

- Argue whether it seems deceptive and explain your reasoning.

- Identify a reasonable alternative design choice, and speculate about why the visualization designer might have made the choice they did rather than the alternative you identified.

After analyzing the design of both visualizations, students should writing a short paragraph (less than 300 words) descibing **why you find one visualization more deceptive** than the other.