

Feminist Cartographies

Designing feminist map icons

Introduction

Feminist cartographies can be defined as the (often) visual expression of spatial information that addresses questions of power, inequality, representation, and ethics. A map may be feminist in content, form, and/or process. In this activity, you will create your own feminist maps beginning with icon design. Using feminist data visualization principles and Maki icons from Mapbox as inspiration, you will design new, alternative icons digitally or by hand!

Feminist Data Visualization Principles (D'Ignazio and Klein 2016)

- Rethinking binaries
- Embracing pluralism
- Examine power and aspire to empower
- Consider context and subjectivity
- Representing uncertainty
- Legitimize embodiment and affect
- Make labor visible

Goal: Use feminist data visualization principles to design alternative map icons!

Directions

Step 1: Pick an icon and think about its meaning and limitations. How can the icon be improved through a feminist lens?

Additional Prompts: What does the icon mean to you and why? What might it mean to other people? What assumptions are baked into the design of the icon? What are the icon's strengths and limitations? Can you apply feminist data visualization principles to the icon? If so, how and if not, why?

Step 2: Drawing on feminist data visualization principles (above), iteratively redesign the icon. Keep your sketches and drafts.

Step 3: Reflect on your designs in writing and annotate your sketches!

For example, what icon are you working with? Which feminist data visualization principles are you drawing on? How does your icon improve the original design? When would you use your icon and what are the limitations/advantages of your design?

Step 4: Discuss your designs within your group and prepare to share your process and designs with the broader group!

Outcome

If you're willing, please leave your designs on the table. I would love to take a look at your designs and incorporate them in my research. They will be completely anonymous. If you're not willing to share your designs, don't worry! Take your sketches with you!

