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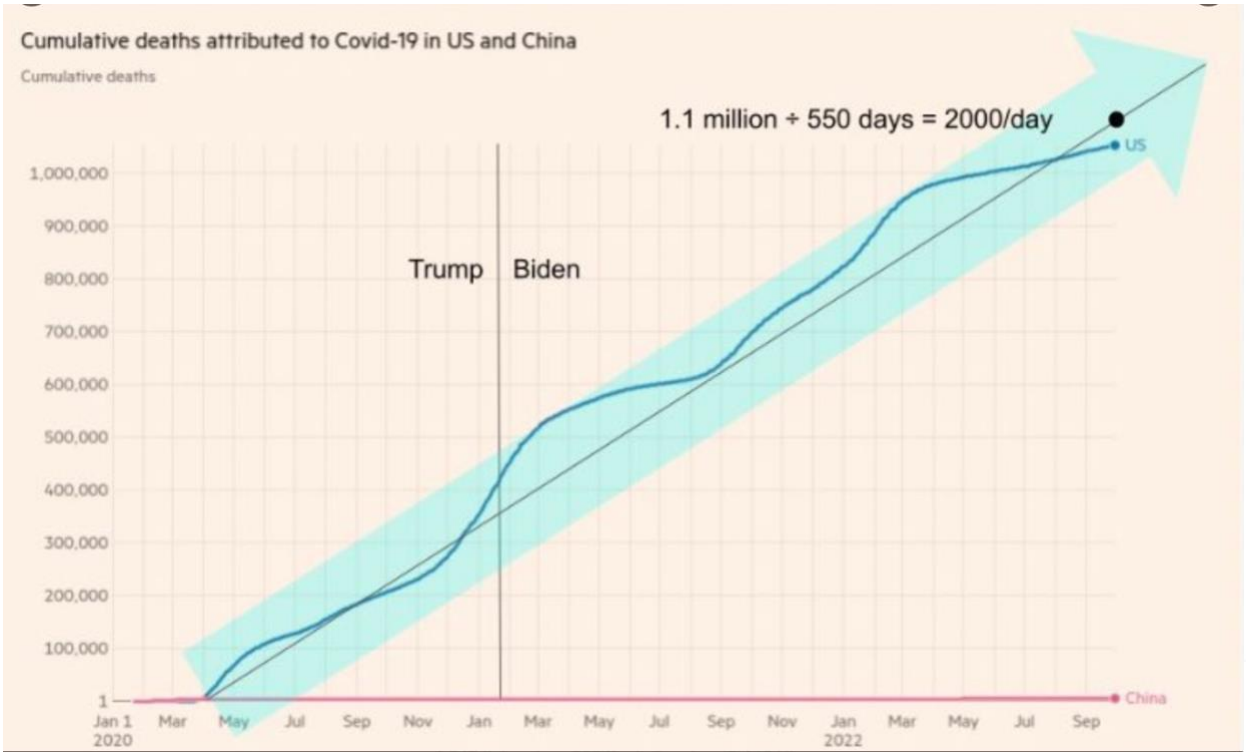
Nem2pq
Reflection #2

In the second half of “How Charts Lie,” by Alberto Cairo he explores several other ways in which charts, graphs, and visualizations can be misleading to its interpreter. One of his examples that resonated with me happens to be his discussion about how global temperature rise over time. I find climate change to be one of the most pressing issues of our time, and one that will impact my life going forward in ways I can only imagine. Misrepresentation of this data could be catastrophic for many of my peers and I, as it could lead to decisions that could cost lives. The temperature rise of .85 °C over the past 100 years does not seem like much when viewing temperature over the past 10,000 years, but looking on a more condensed time scale (~ 2000 years) we see that it is a major change in recent time (Cairo, 2019). This is one of many metrics that will be vital in determining steps we as a society need to take to ensure a safe future. I value that Cairo decided to use this as one of his examples, as it is pertinent to my world view and many of my actions on a day-to-day basis. Cairo’s other examples and warnings when it comes to interpreting charts in the second half of the book have helped me to more easily come up with questions about a chart’s validity. Based off what is missing or trying to lead us from a chart and whether it this lack of data has helped me to more effectively interpret charts, as well as question whether my own biases may be affecting my interpretation.



[Link to Graph]

The above visualization is attempting to show how each presidency has impacted covid deaths in with in the US vs. China. I believe that one of the main issues of this graph is that the twitter user is attempting to draw a conclusion from the graph in which there is not enough data shown, and that the wrong types of data are being show. From chapter 4 in “How Charts Lie”, Cairo explains how graphs with a lack of and too much data and confuse truthfulness and usefulness (Cairo, 2019). The graph above this does this by showing cumulative total deaths. This makes it hard to interpret an exact rate in which the amount of covid deaths have changed. Additionally, the graph does not include total covid cases, so it is impossible to determine the number of deaths proportional to the number of covid cases. This could be a more damning statistic in which to potentially compare the two presidents. Other problems with the visualization include the lack of citing a source and the inclusion of a blue arrow that looks like an error bar but seems to have no meaning

other to distract the viewer from what the data is showing. I hope when other twitter users see visualizations like this that they try to interpret it critically, and do not let their biases impact them.

Word Count: 508