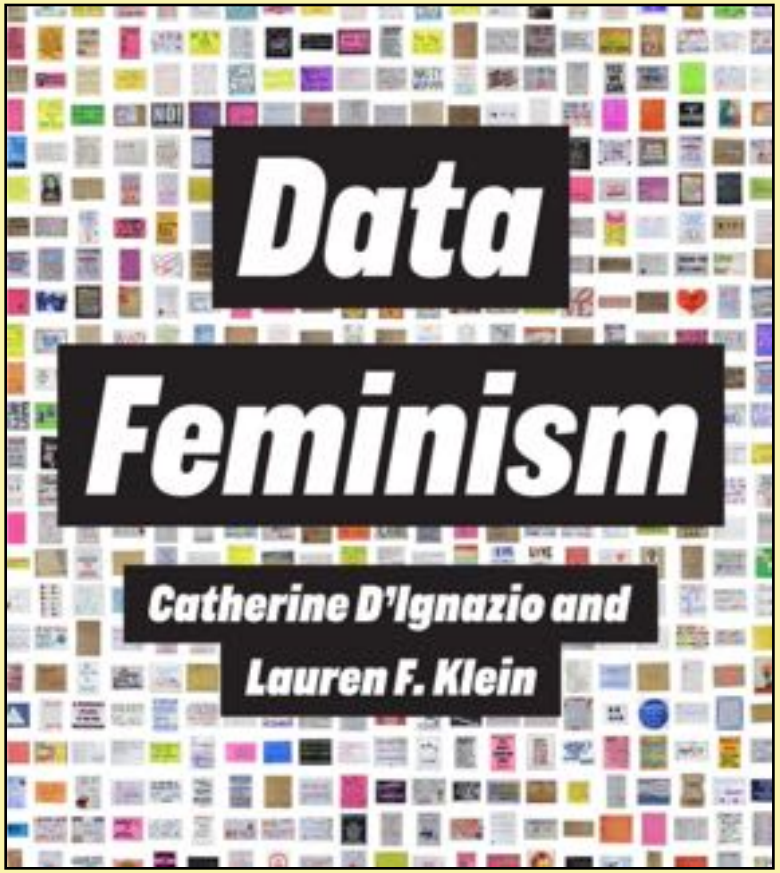


MIT Press, 2020

Catherine D'Ignazio
Assistant Professor of Urban Science & Planning
Director, Data + Feminism Lab
MIT
@kanarinka

Lauren F. Klein
Associate Professor of English and Quantitative Theory & Methods
Director, Digital Humanities Lab
Emory University
@laurenfklein

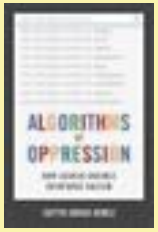
Read the book at: datafeminism.io

“Data is the new oil.”

– The Economist, Intel CEO, Reliance Industries CEO, UAE Minister of Artificial Intelligence, Google execs, etc, mainly elite white men

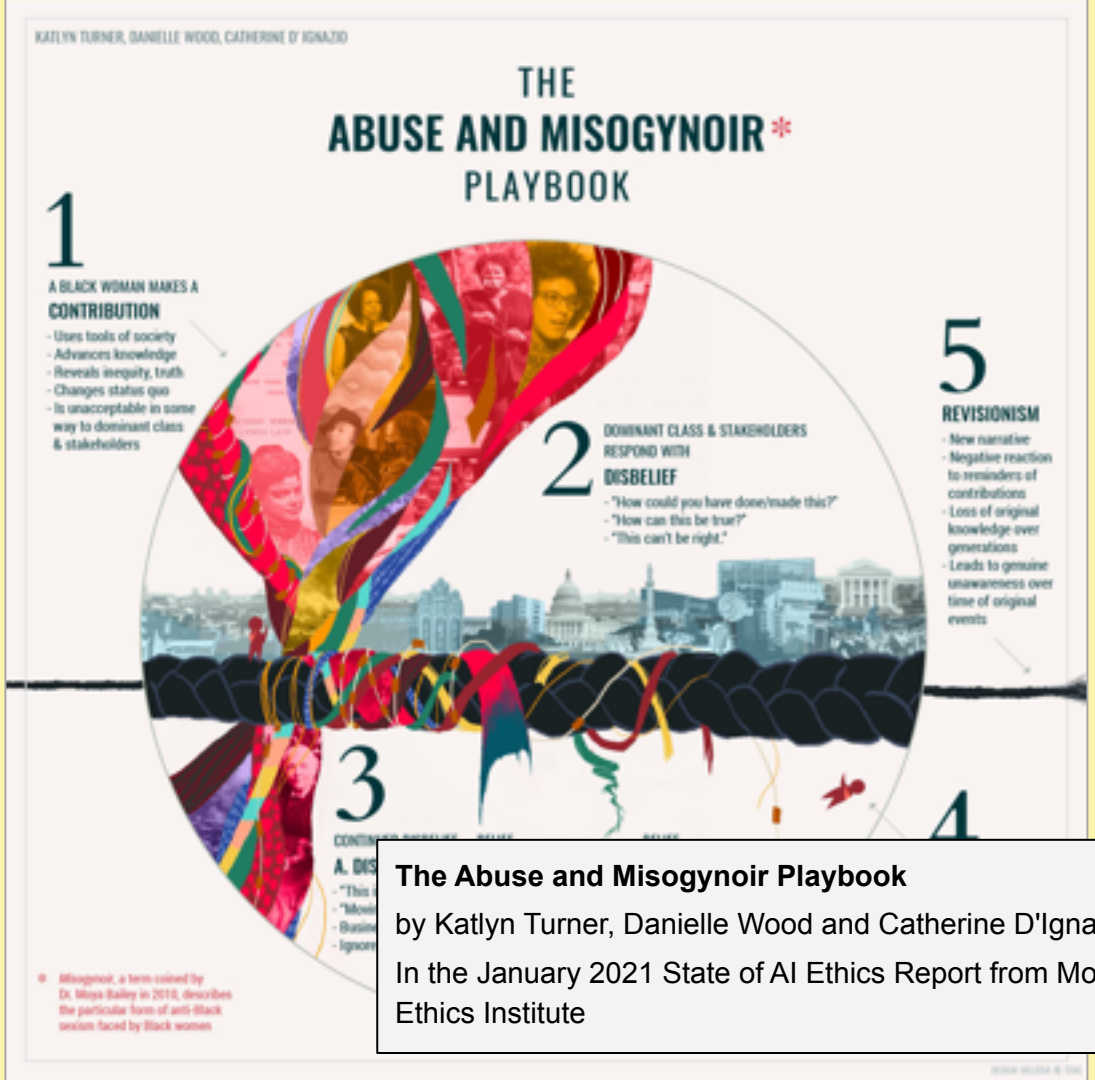
“Data is the same old oppression.”

– BIWOC, white women, Indigenous people, immigrant communities, LGBTQ+ individuals, + more…



Dr. Timnit Gebru, until recently being fired, was Co-Lead of Ethical Artificial Intelligence (AI) team at Google

Go to http://bit.ly/drgebru-petition to sign the petition



The Abuse and Misogynoir Playbook

by Katlyn Turner, Danielle Wood and Catherine D'Ignazio

In the January 2021 State of AI Ethics Report from Montreal AI Ethics Institute

FEMINIST

Feminist: the person who believes in equal rights for men and women and non-binary people.

- Beyoncé (mostly)

Feminism: organized activity on behalf of women's and non-binary people's rights and interests.

- Merriam Webster (mostly)

Feminism: the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes.

- Merriam Webster

Intersectional feminism is not only about women and gender.

It is about power - who has it and who doesn't.

Intersectionality is a concept out of Black feminism, including the Combahee River Collective (1974-1981) and Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989).

In today's world,
data is power.

Intersectional feminism,
when applied to data science,
can help that power be challenged and changed.

7 Principles of Data Feminism

Examine power

Challenge power

Rethink binaries and hierarchies

Elevate emotion and embodiment

Embrace pluralism

Consider context

Make labor visible

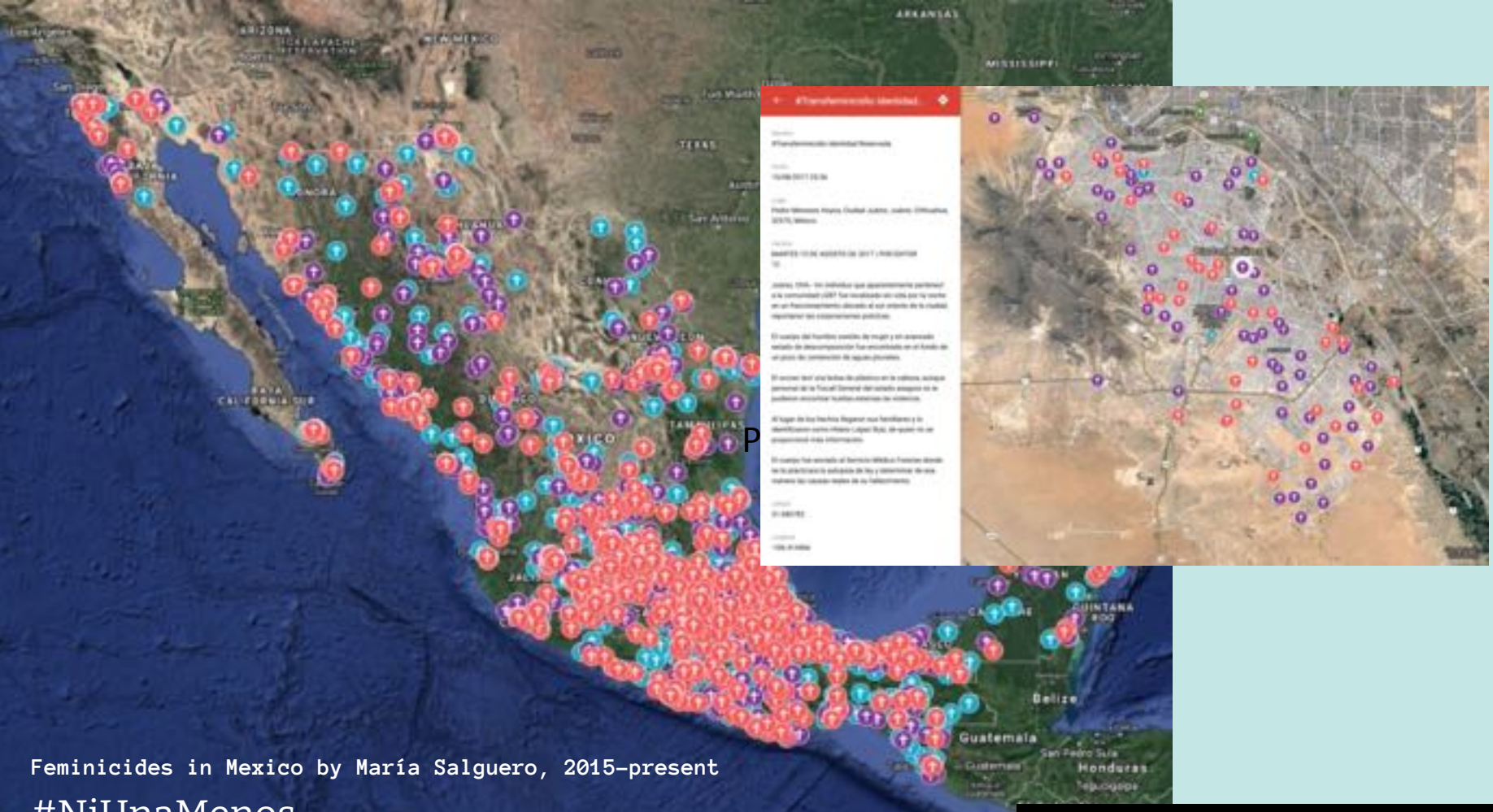
An Incomplete List of Missing Data Sets

This list will always be incomplete, and is designed to be illustrative rather t
from the perspective of the U.S, though the complete list of datasets featur

- ~~Civilians killed in encounters with police or law enforcement agencies~~ [
- Sales and prices in the art world (and relationships between artists and
- People excluded from public housing because of criminal records
- Trans people killed or injured in instances of hate crime (note: existing
- Poverty and employment statistics that include people who are behind
- Muslim mosques/communities surveilled by the FBI/CIA
- Mobility for older adults with physical disabilities or cognitive impairme
- LGBT older adults discriminated against in housing
- Undocumented immigrants currently incarcerated and/or underpaid
- Undocumented immigrants for whom prosecutorial discretion has beer
- Measurements for global web users that take into account shared devi
- Firm statistics on how often police arrest women for making false rape
- Master database that details if/which Americans are registered to vote
- Total number of local and state police departments using stingray phon
- How much Spotify pays each of its artists per play of song
-

The Library of Missing Datasets by Mimi Onuoha, 2016.

Principle: Examine Power



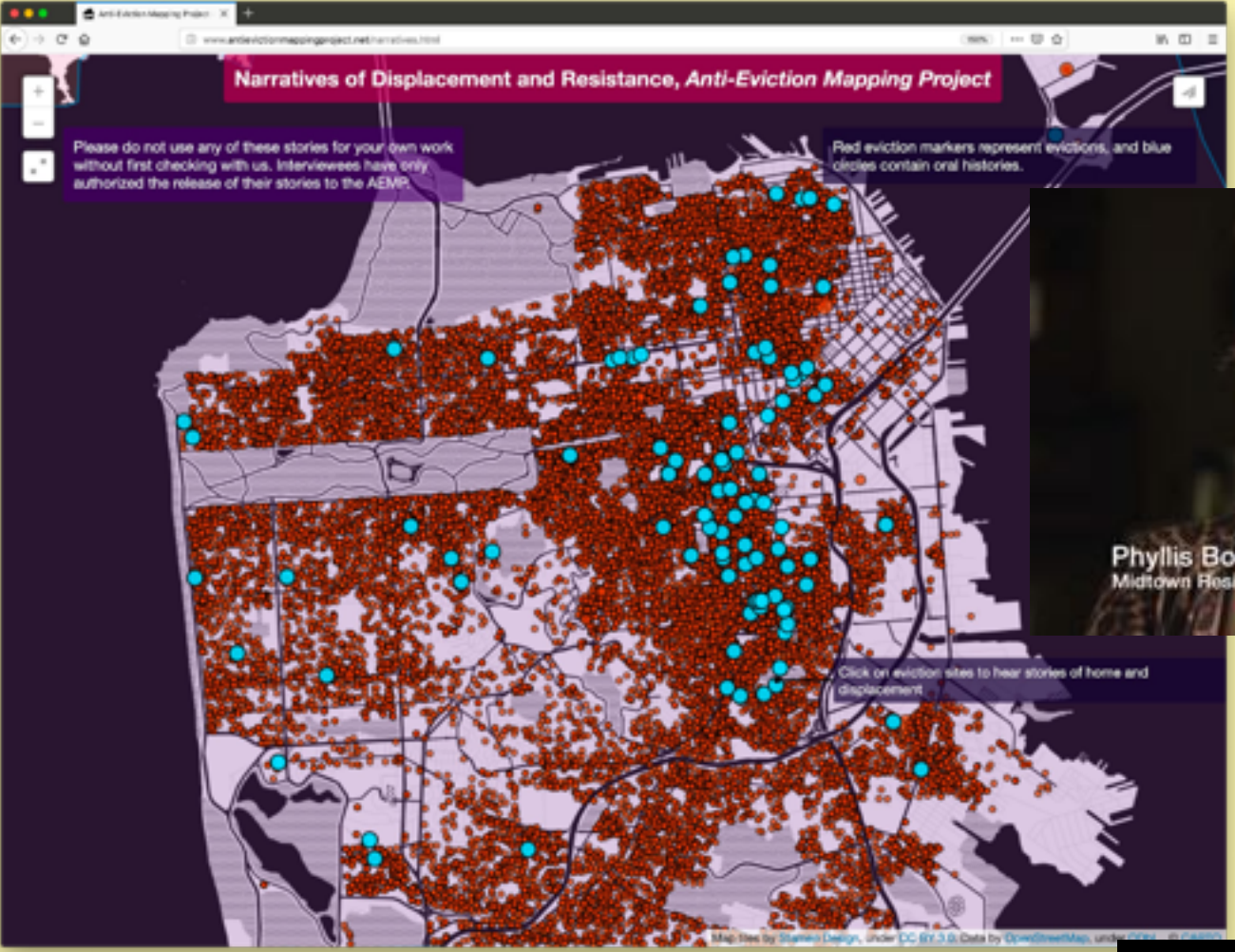
Feminicides in Mexico by María Salguero, 2015–present

#NiUnaMenos

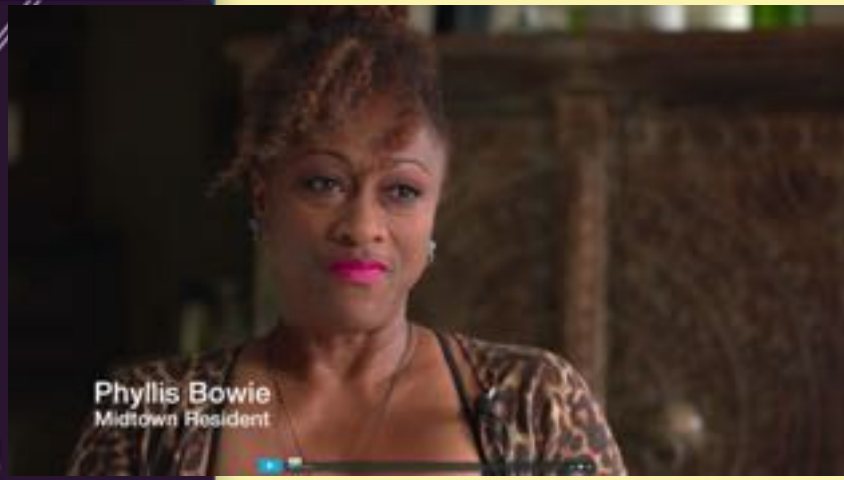
Principle: Challenge Power

COVID19 & Counterdata (US)

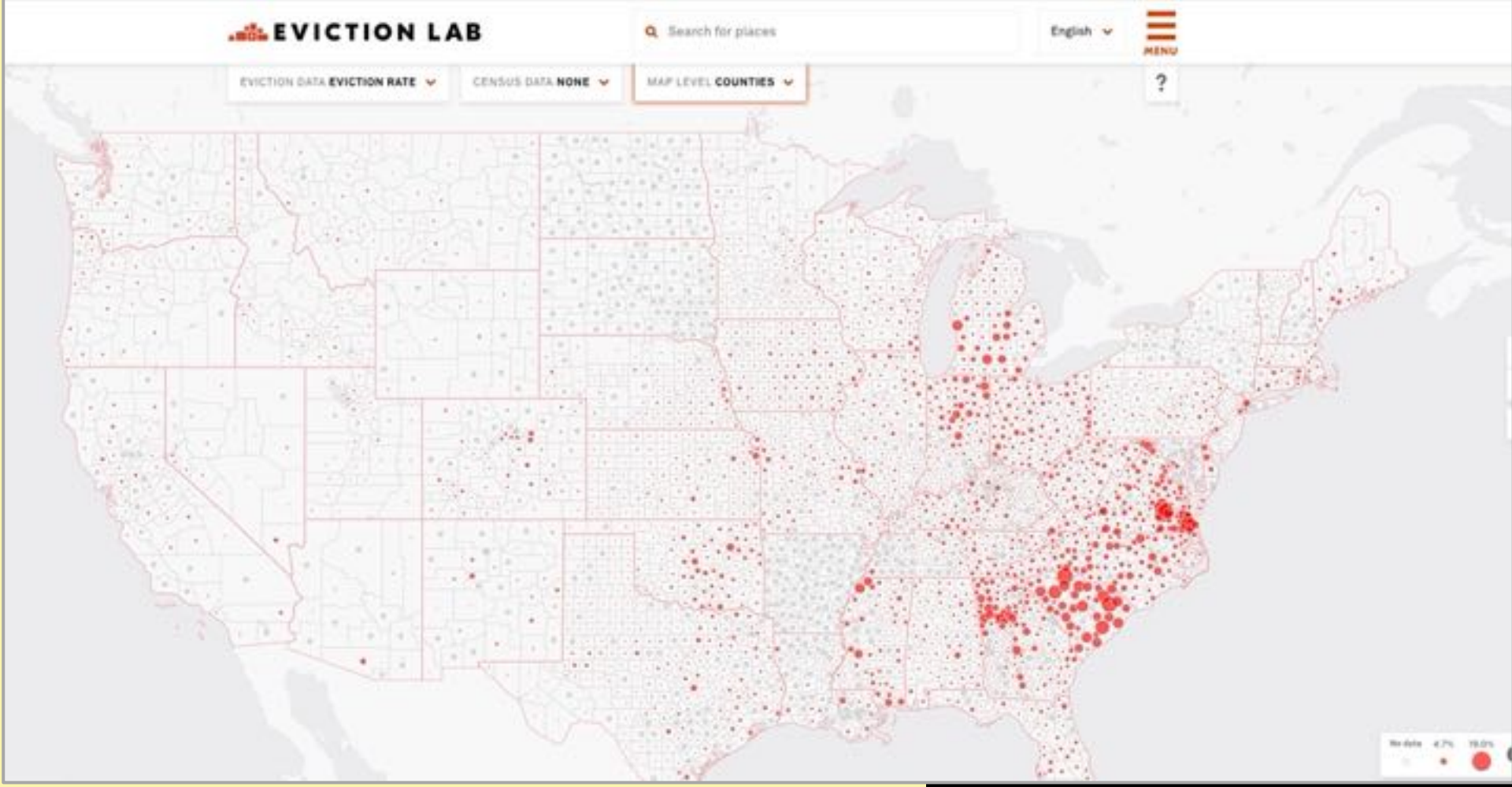
- **NYT Case Tracker**
- **The COVID Tracking Project**
- **Data for Black Lives** - cataloguing which states and counties are releasing data by race/ethnicity
- **Solutions Journalism Network** - Covid data by race/ethnicity at the state level
- **COVID-19 risk assessment in Indian Country -** (Rudolph Rÿser)
- **Note: Sex/gender data are missing from all these efforts!**



The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, 2013 – present



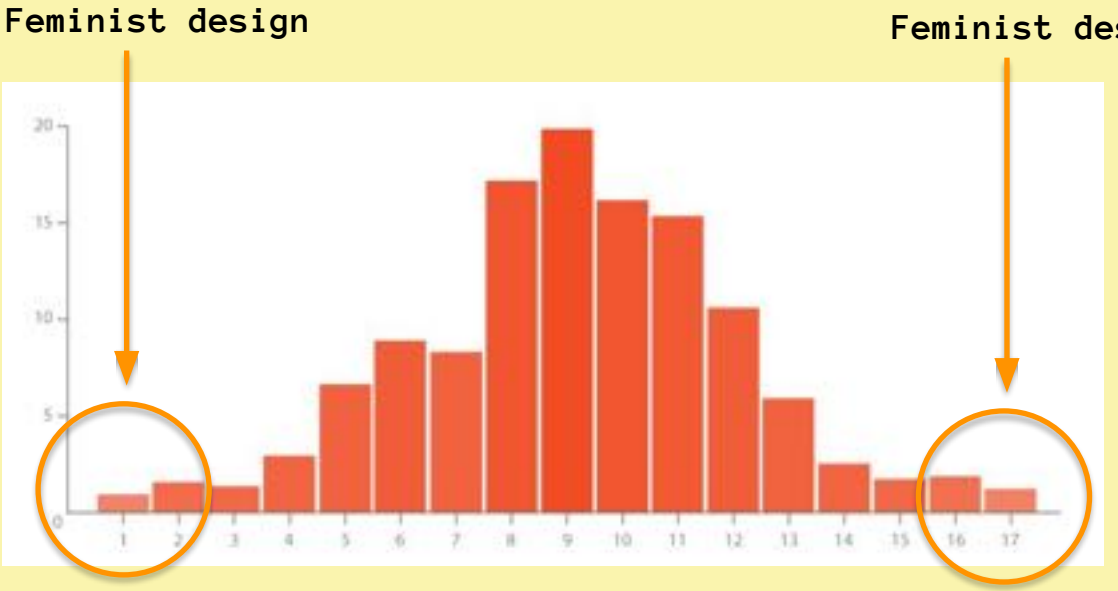
Principle: Embrace Pluralism



The Eviction Lab, Princeton University

Principle: Embrace Pluralism

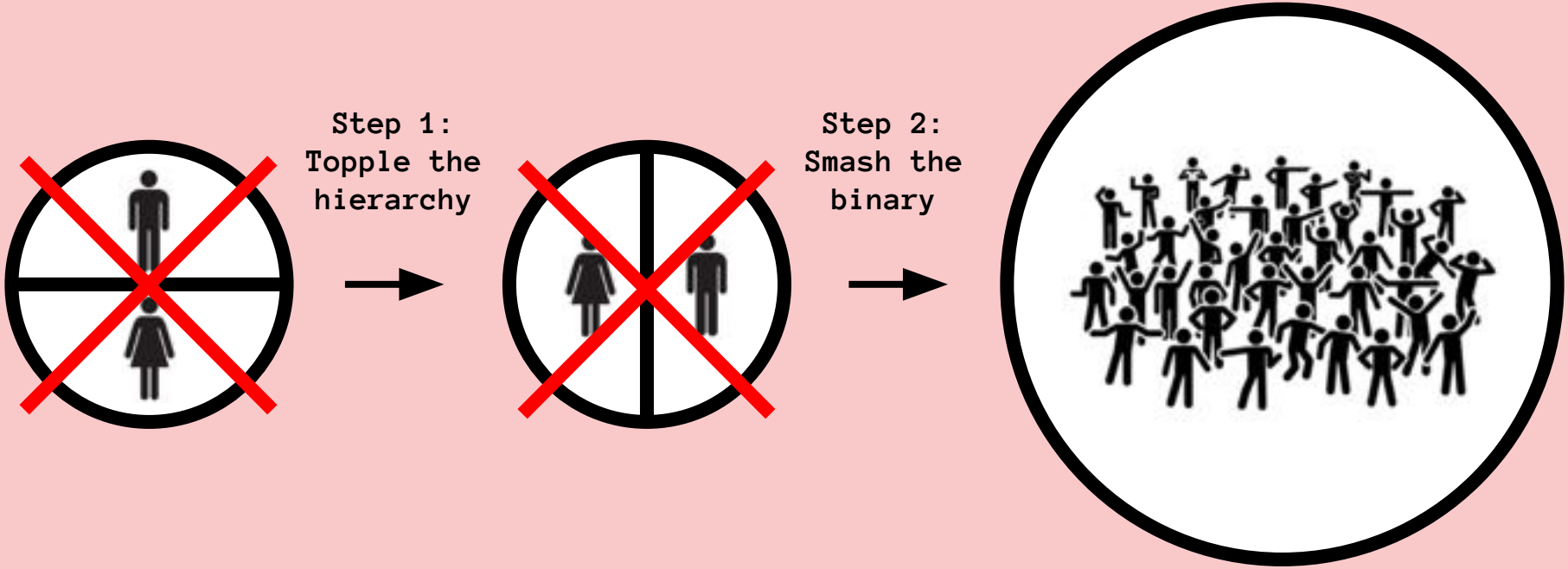
Participatory process for data science: Feminist design prioritizes the participation of people who have been most marginalized by the system



We center the voices of those who are directly impacted by the outcomes of the design process. – Design Justice Network

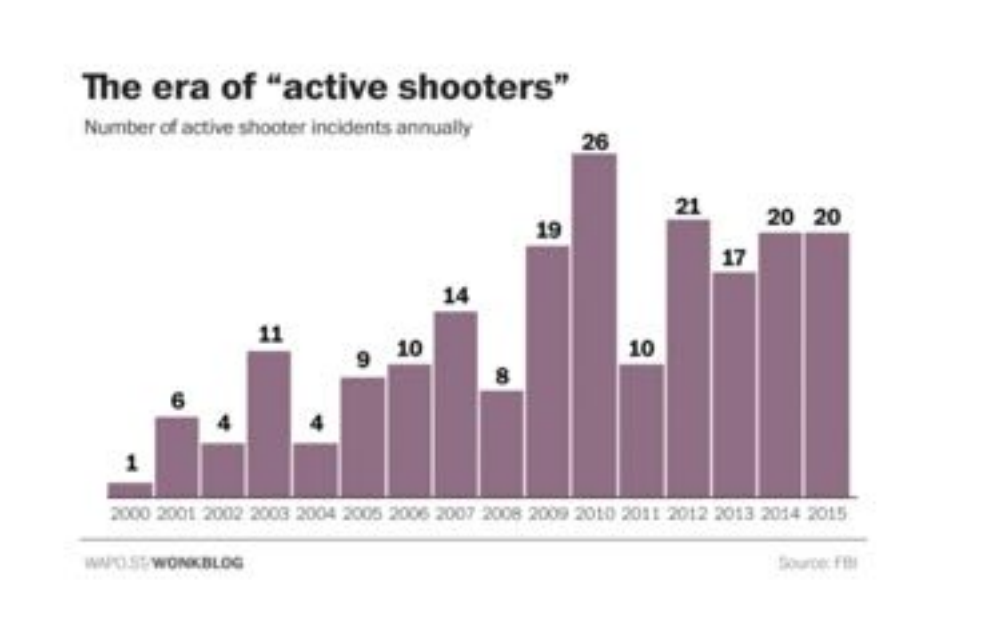
Principle: Embrace Pluralism

How to dismantle binary structures of power in two basic steps:



Principle: Rethink Binaries and Hierarchies

Data visualizations have an aura of objectivity

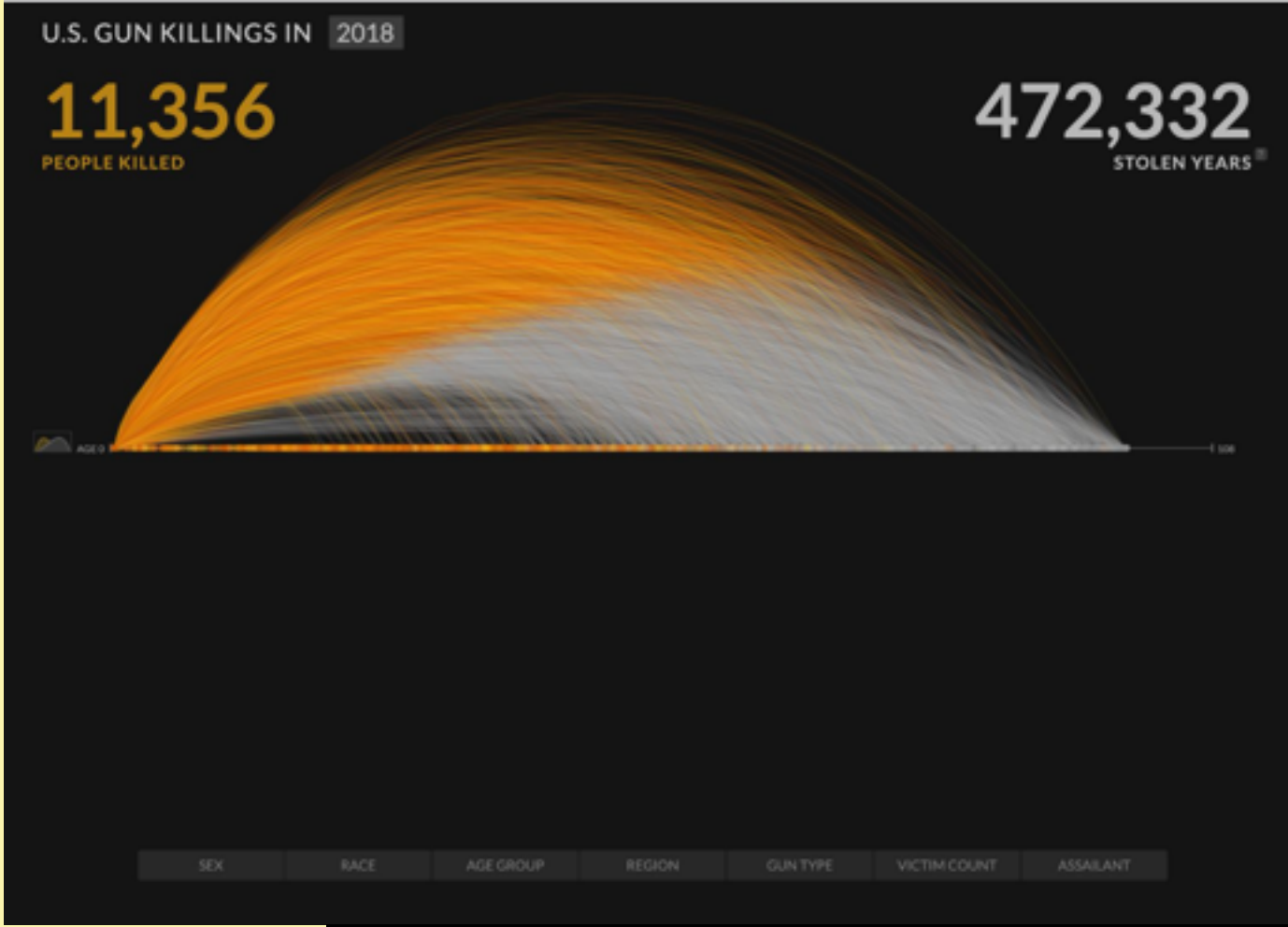


"We focus on four conventions which imbue visualisations with a sense of objectivity, transparency and facticity. These include: a) two-dimensional viewpoints; b) clean layouts; c) geometric shapes and lines; d) the inclusion of data sources."

From Helen Kennedy, Rosemary Lucy Hill, Giorgia Aiello, and William Allen. (2016) The work that visualisation conventions do. Information, Communication and Society, 19 (6). pp. 715–735. ISSN 1369–118X

Principle: Elevate Emotion and Embodiment

U.S. Gun Deaths, by
Periscopic (2013–2018)
http://guns.periscopic.com



Principle: Elevate Emotion and Embodiment

Q. when do you make data science feminist?

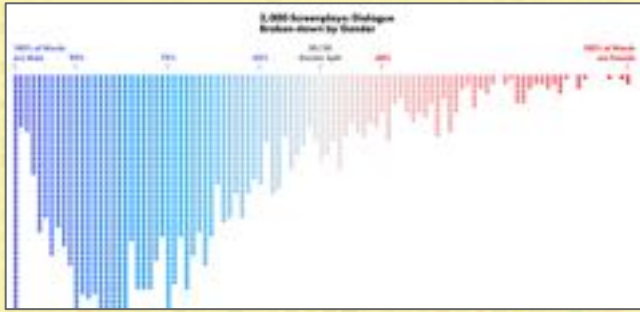
A. all the time and everywhere in the pipeline

Data Feminism requires an expanded definition of data science

Seeing through the Human Reporting Bias:
Visual Classifiers from Noisy Human-Centric Labels

Ishan Misra[1] * C. Lawrence Zitnick[2] Margaret Mitchell[3] Ross Girshick[4]
[1]Carnegie Mellon University [2]Microsoft Research [3]Facebook AI Research

Abstract



What You Can Do

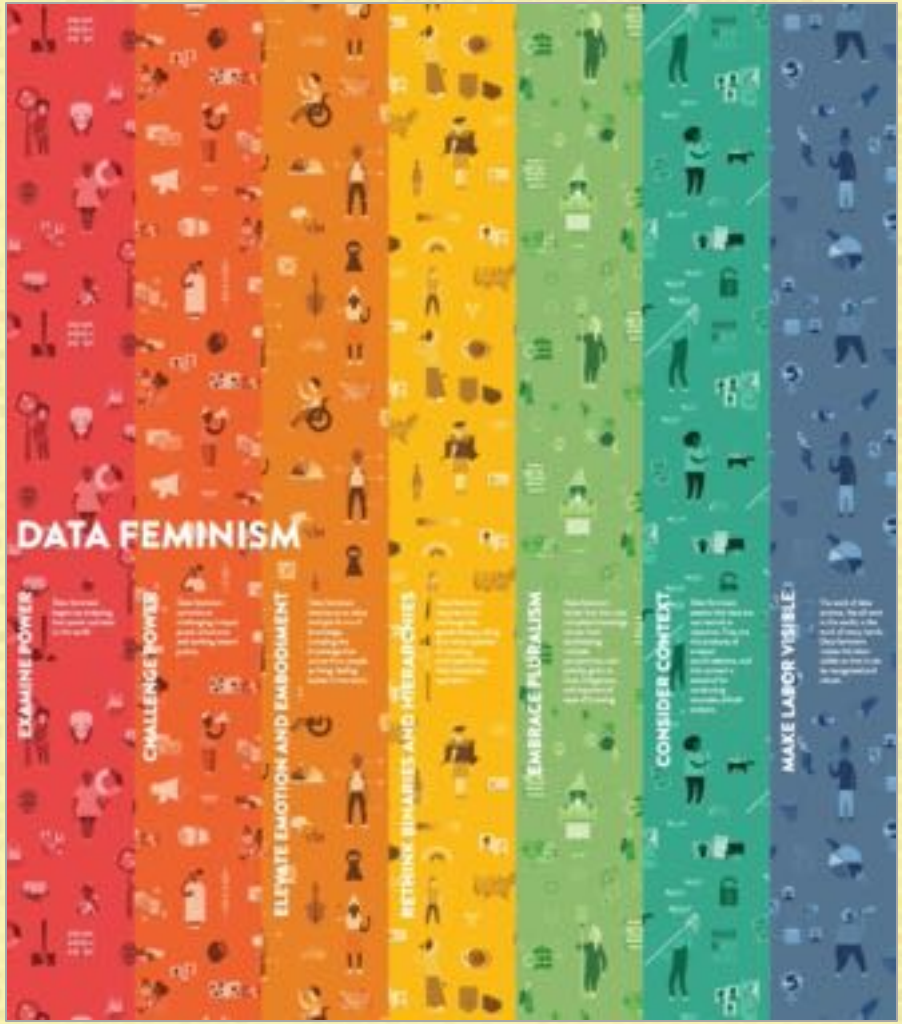
Examine power – Do work that interrogates and exposes sexism, racism, and other forces in data and in the world.

Challenge power – Collect counterdata, introduce new communities to data and digital tools, use data to advocate for equity at your workplace/institution.

Elevate emotion & embodiment – Experiment with creative forms of data presentation and communication (quilts, sculptures, murals, VR)

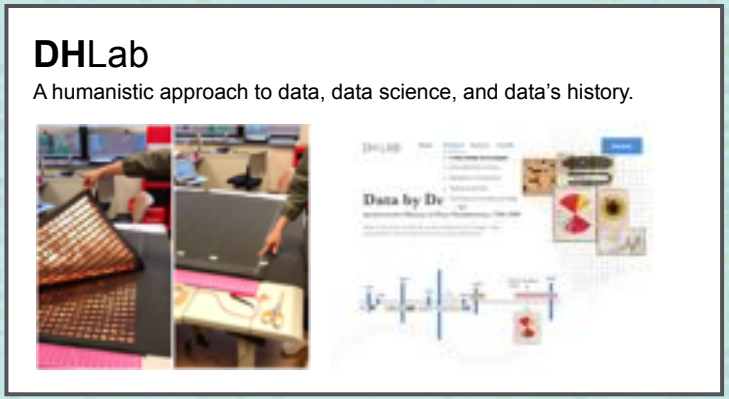
Embrace pluralism – Include more people in data projects – impacted communities, especially. Center the work of minoritized people and follow their leadership.

Make labor visible – Make sure you credit your data sources and research support staff, make your process transparent, and reflect on your own identity.



Data Feminism infographics – free downloads in 5 languages at: http://bit.ly/datafeminisminfographics

thanks & be in touch!
More info about the book at: datafeminism.io



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