Propaganda maps are those that use cartography to persuade the map reader into feeling a certain way. A good propaganda map never lies to accomplish this, but rather presents data in a certain way and uses design elements to appeal to the reader’s emotions.

When German forces marched into Poland in 1939, the world was shocked. To combat the notion that Germany was an “aggressor nation” supporters published a propaganda map comparing their conquest of Poland to the fact that Great Britain had spent the last few centuries conquering the world and “owned” about ¼ of the world’s land.

![Propaganda Map Example](image)

This is brilliant from a propaganda standpoint because it leaves out the nuance of the situation and artfully uses whitespace to prove a point. The map says nothing of the holocaust or the atrocities we associate with World War II, but it doesn’t actually lie about anything. Further, the way the cartographer stacked all of Britain’s colonial holdings gives a clear comparison to how much land each nation had conquered. Now don’t get me wrong! This map does not mean the Nazis were behaving like any other European nation at the time. Looking back on history we can see the flaws with this map and this reasoning, but you can see how in 1939 this map presented some moral ambiguity into the initial debate over how the world would deal with Adolf Hitler.
The map below is a more modern example. It was developed by Kharita, a self-described “collaborative initiative of Lebanese, Palestinian and other activists” (kharita.wordpress.com). As such, we can easily guess that this map of the “Israeli Assault on Gaza” will have an anti-Israeli stance. Even if the map reader doesn’t know who produced the map, it is full of clues about its purpose. Look at the map and list at least five things that suggest it is trying to persuade the reader into a certain stance on the Palestine/Israel conflict.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.
GAZA STRIP COMPARED TO METROPOLITAN AREAS

Population / km²
- >3500
- 2500-3500
- <2500
- New York (809 km²)
- Paris (7,500 km²)
- Beirut (628 km²)
- Gaza Strip (500 km²)

"There are no ‘safe’ places in Gaza for civilians to seek shelter (...). strikes are virtually sure to kill and injure civilians."
- Amnesty International

FACT BOX

Background:
- Of the 1.5 million residents of Gaza, two thirds are refugees or descendants of refugees from 1948
- Israel invaded Gaza in 1956 and continues to control airspace, land and water resources to this day
- The Israeli blockade on Gaza has been ongoing since June 2007
- In 2007, 80 percent of households in Gaza lived below the poverty line

In attacks since Dec. 27, the Israeli army has:
- Targeted medical personnel, aid workers and media workers
- Used white phosphorus in military operations in densely populated areas of Gaza (absolutely prohibited according to IHL)
- Denied access to independent observers, including journalists and human rights monitors
- Blocked medical and humanitarian aid

Sources: Amnesty International, BIC, B'Tselem, City of Gaza, Economist

ISRAELI ASSAULT ON GAZA

MAP OF BOMBING INTENSITY & CASUALTIES

Number of casualties - range samples:
- 1-50
- 50-100
- 200-300

from 27/12/2008
until 16/01/2009

Developed by Rosemary Lejenas. All text to circulate
Data is based on reports by B'Tselem.org
Daily updates available on B'Tselem.wordpress.org
Contact: info@b'tselem.org
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Applying the techniques

Today we will see how we can make two completely different maps using the same data. You will make one map that shows that lung cancer among white males in California is high compared to the rest of the US. For your second map, while using the same data you will show the opposite, i.e. California has relatively low lung cancer rates among white males. Because we are interested in persuading the map reader, your maps should use some techniques as mentioned above. Don’t be afraid to use bold colors, bold text, whitespace, etc. to make sure you get your point across.

Don’t forget the importance of font choice! There is a big difference between CANCER and cancer!!!

The process

1. Open up the cancer.mxd from your geog222_maps folder. You should simply see a feature class representing the 50 states in a dull color and sad coordinate system/projection.

2. Add the table “lung_cancer” from geog222.gdb. Open it in ArcMap and you will see a mess of mysterious fields…
3. The data are lung cancer statistics from the National Cancer Institute in 2010, and use the following codes:

Column heading format: [V] [RG] [T] [A], where:
- \( V \) = variable: \( R, C, LB, \) or \( UB \) (\( R = \) Mortality rate per 100,000 persons, \( C = \) the actual count of deaths)
- \( RG \) = race / gender: \( BM, BF, WM, WF \) (\( B = \) black, \( W = \) white, \( F = \) female, \( M = \) male)
- \( T \) = calendar time: 5094, 5069, 7094, and the 9 5-year periods 5054 through 9094
- \( A \) = age group: blank (all ages), 019, 2049, 5074, 75+

Example: \( RBM70942049 = \) rate for black males ages 20-49 for the time period 1970-1994

4. Using the table provided symbolize the data for **White Males between 1990-94**. You should use the “count” for one map and the “rate” for another. In doing so, you will wind up with two very different maps, yet you never changed the data. This is how we can persuade people with maps; we never lie, but we show what helps our argument and hide what doesn’t…

5. Make sure that you are conscious of your purpose and the map reader you are trying to reach. Imagine a lawsuit being put forth by health activists in California to sue the tobacco industry for a disproportionate amount of lung cancer deaths. You can make one map to support the lawsuit, and another to help disprove the notion, i.e. California has relatively low rates compared to the rest of the nation.

Below, you will see two examples. These are not the only way to make these maps, but they should provide you with ideas as to how to use style and statistics to persuade people with maps. Think about some of the emotional triggers each one plays upon. Remember that all choices for color, projection, font, etc. were deliberate. As you complete your maps, also think about which one is a better depiction of the truth. *Will such an exercise help you question the maps you see from now on?*