NORDICOM

GUIDELINES FOR FIGURES

Figures include charts, graphs, images, illustrations, and so forth. Figures should only be used if they are crucial for clarification or understanding, that is, if there is added value in the visual presentation.

Providing figures to Nordicom in editable format increases our ability to produce consistent and correct publications of high quality. Though our instructions stress the importance of editable figures, we understand this is not always an option when working in software such as SPSS and Stata to create charts, graphs, scatterplots, and so on.

Nordicom reserves the right to edit figures to conform to our templates and standards, therefore, figures submitted in non-editable format must strictly adhere to these guidelines. You may use the checklist at the end of these guidelines to ensure all requirements are met.

Contents

UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

Nordic Council of Ministers

Titles, captions, and sources

Titles, captions (comments), and sources should be included in the body text of the submission, not with the figure itself. Include the relevant information in the following manner within the manuscript:

Figure 1 *Short and concise title of figure 1 (unit, if applicable)*

[Figure 1 here]

Comments: Present any general clarifying or supplementary text here, including the underlying data source (e.g., *N*-values, survey questions, response scales, etc.). Do not repeat the title or surrounding text. There is no need to include information that is easily understood from the figure.

[a] Use superscript lowercase letters for specific notes relating to a specific element in the figure. Label the element with a corresponding letter. [b] Subsequent notes continue in line.

* Use asterisks to indicate probability (*p* values) ** Subsequent notes continue in line.

Source: Include the source or sources, including if it was compiled by the author.

Titles should be informative, as brief as possible, and written in a consistent manner (additional details or information should be included in the comments below the figure). If there is only one unit of measurement in the entire figure, it should be included within parentheses at the end of the title. Below is an example of a figure title that is too long and contains unnecessary information:

Figure 1 *Map showing the male dominance in government roles in countries participating in the study during the period 2005–2015 (percentage of men in roles)*

Below is an example of the above title with unnecessary information deleted and explanatory information moved to the comments below the figure:

Figure 1 *Male dominance in government roles, 2005–2015 (per cent)*

Comments: *n* = 57 countries and 3,857 individuals. Grey areas indicate countries not participating in the study. As indicated by the colour legend, the darker the shading, the higher the percentage of men in government roles.

Spelling and capitalisation

All text within the figure should be in British English with "s" endings (e.g., organise, globalisation, realising, analyse).

British spelling also uses "-our" endings and "double-l" endings (e.g., labour, colour, cancelled, travelling).

Nordicom style guidelines stipulate that "per cent" is spelled with two words. Within the figure itself, "%" should be used. Other abbreviations may also be used within figures (e.g., &, min., max., etc.).

Use sentence case capitalisation (capitalise the first word and proper nouns only) in the axis labels and titles. For example:

- "Populist parties in parliament", *not* "Populist Parties in Parliament"
- "Television viewers in Sweden", *not* "Television Viewers in Sweden"

Font

If you have access to Avenir and Sabon fonts, use Avenir for axis titles and labels, and use Sabon within the main figure. Otherwise, use Arial for axis titles and labels, and use Times New Roman within the main figure.

All text within the figure should be clearly readable; the optimum size font is 8–12 points.

Instead of minimising the font size, present information in the comments below the figure or in the body text. For instance, in a scatterplot where many countries are included, you may focus on a few typical cases, some outliers, and some most interesting cases. Other countries may be discussed in the body text with reference to these. For example:

"As illustrated in Figure 6, Finland is an interesting case where the representation of women in parliament is high despite the fact that their share in the work force is relatively low. Other countries resembling Finland are Portugal, Malta, and Peru. An example of an opposite case is the US – here, women make up a large share of the work force while they remain largely unrepresented in the congress. The same can be said about China, Russia, and…"
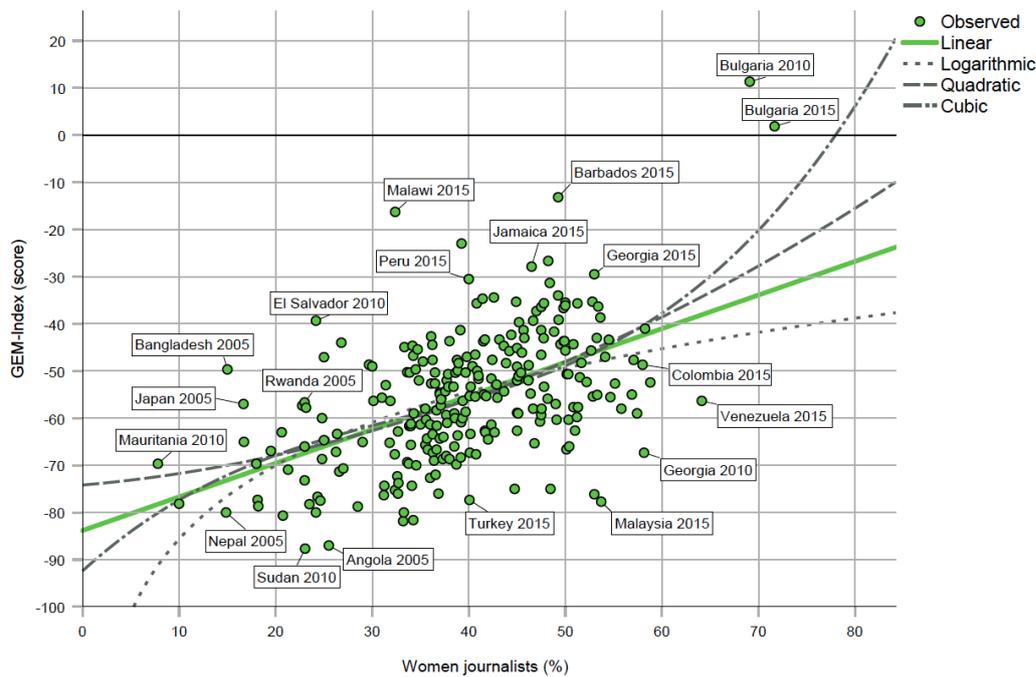
Axis titles and labels

The independent variable should be on the x-axis (horizontal) and the dependent variable should be on the y-axis (vertical).

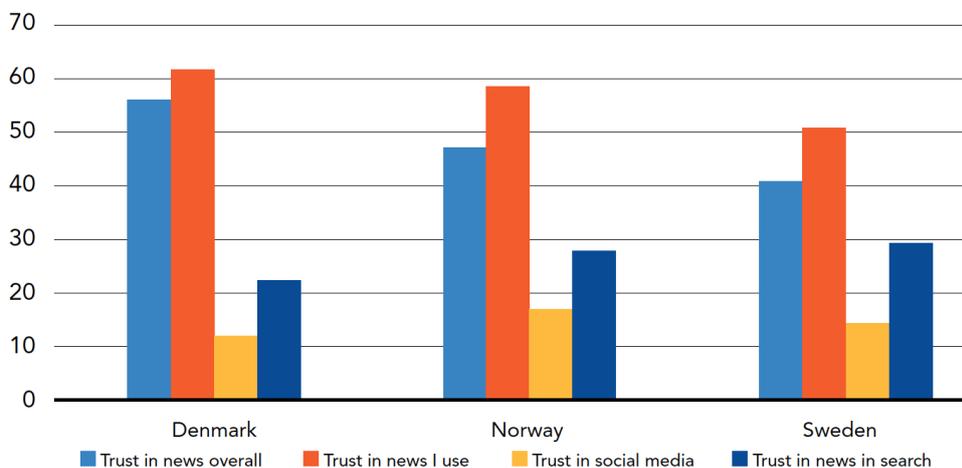Ensure there is an easily understood scale with proper units

Units should only be included directly in the figure if there are two (or more) *different* units. If there are different units, axis titles should present the variables followed by the units in parentheses (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 *The relationship between women journalists and the GEM-I*

If there is only one unit of measurement, it should be indicated in the *title* rather than in the figure (see Figure 3).

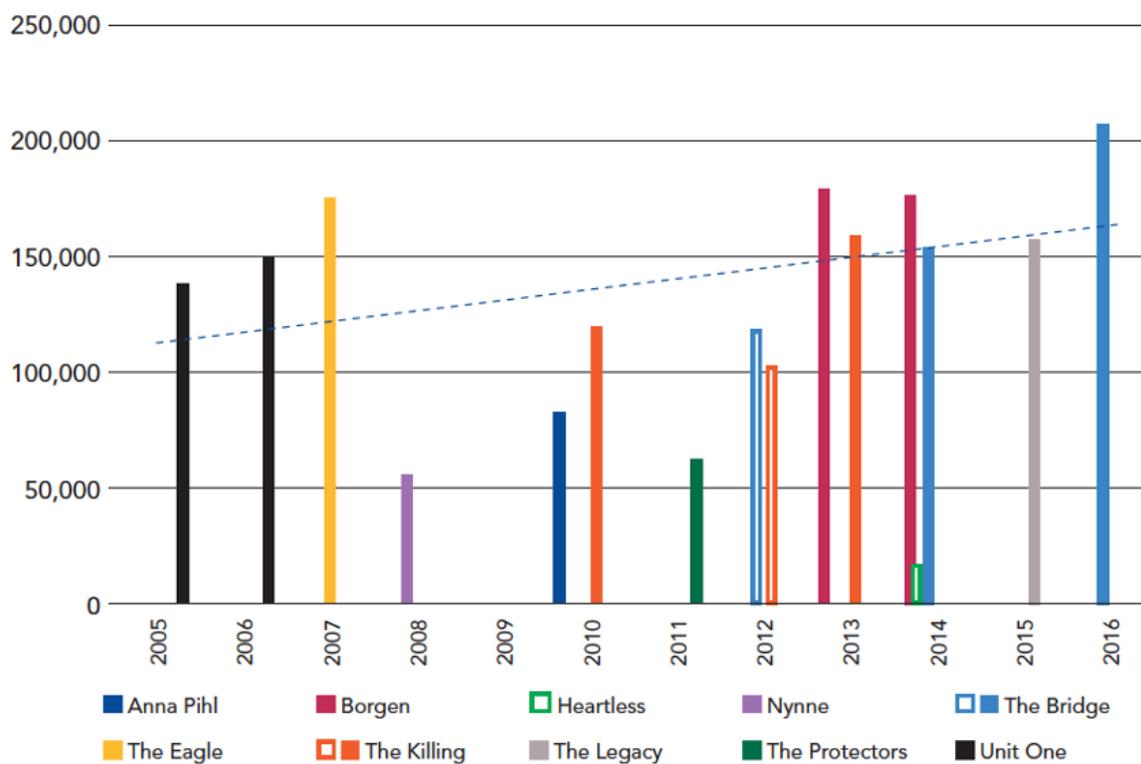***Figure 3*** *Trust in news and social media (per cent)*

Composition

A good visualisation is easy to understand, so do not include information that is not perfectly clear. It is often possible to present supplementary information in the body text or a table, and in some cases, two simpler figures can replace an overly complex model.

Place explanations for colours near the visualisation, as in Figure 4. Avoid placing text directly on the graphic unless absolutely necessary, as it is often difficult to read. Make the colour box as large or slightly larger than the text that explains what a colour represents.

Figure 4 *Danish Drama on SBS, 2005–2016 (average audience per first-run episode)*
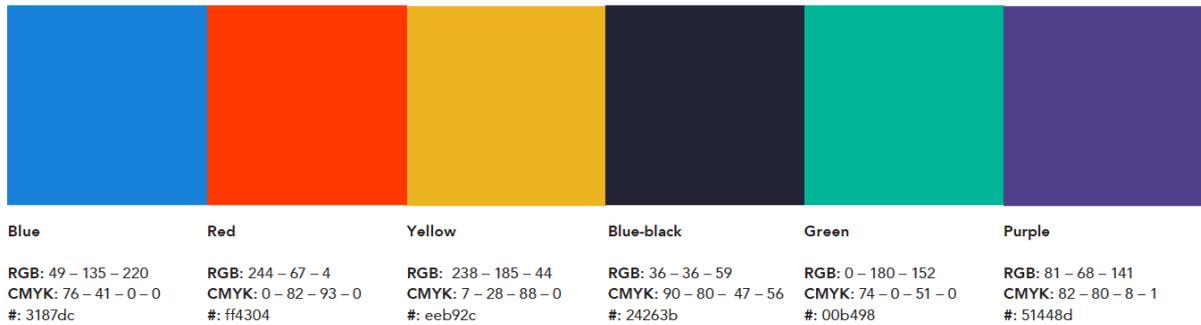

Comments: Unfilled bars indicate audiences for programmes broadcast on the SBS 2 digital channel, which commenced service in 2009.
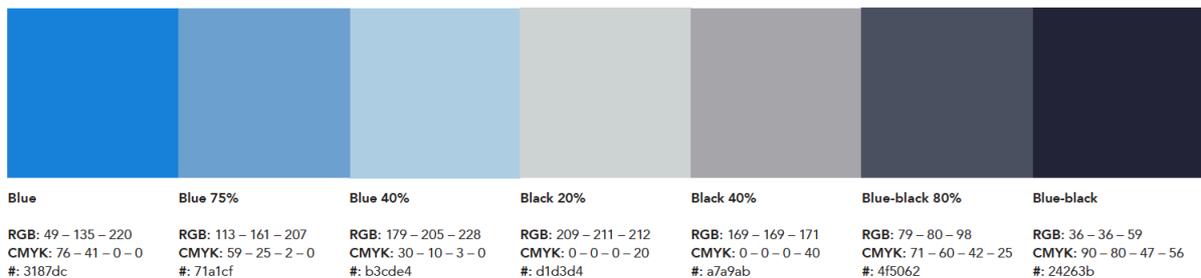
Source: OzTAM, 2016

Accessible use of colour

Colours should have adequate contrast to be understood not only by readers with colour-deficient vision, but also to be discernible if printed in greyscale. Please utilise the following colour palette when possible. Prioritise using the blue colour first.

Blue	Red	Yellow	Blue-black	Green	Purple
RGB: 49 – 135 – 220	**RGB:** 244 – 67 – 4	**RGB:** 238 – 185 – 44	**RGB:** 36 – 36 – 59	**RGB:** 0 – 180 – 152	**RGB:** 81 – 68 – 141
CMYK: 76 – 41 – 0 – 0	**CMYK:** 0 – 82 – 93 – 0	**CMYK:** 7 – 28 – 88 – 0	**CMYK:** 90 – 80 – 47 – 56	**CMYK:** 74 – 0 – 51 – 0	**CMYK:** 82 – 80 – 8 – 1
#: 3187dc	**#:** ff4304	**#:** eeb92c	**#:** 24263b	**#:** 00b498	**#:** 51448d

If you wish to have a more toned-down visualisation, refer to the following colour palette:

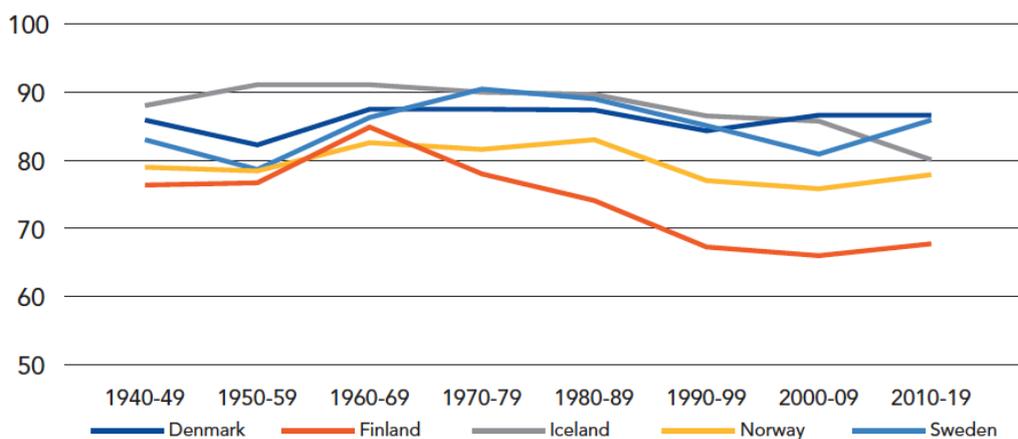| Blue	Blue 75%	Blue 40%	Black 20%	Black 40%	Blue-black 80%	Blue-black
RGB: 49 – 135 – 220	**RGB:** 113 – 161 – 207	**RGB:** 179 – 205 – 228	**RGB:** 209 – 211 – 212	**RGB:** 169 – 169 – 171	**RGB:** 79 – 80 – 98	**RGB:** 36 – 36 – 59
CMYK: 76 – 41 – 0 – 0	**CMYK:** 59 – 25 – 2 – 0	**CMYK:** 30 – 10 – 3 – 0	**CMYK:** 0 – 0 – 0 – 20	**CMYK:** 0 – 0 – 0 – 40	**CMYK:** 71 – 60 – 42 – 25	**CMYK:** 90 – 80 – 47 – 56
#: 3187dc	**#:** 71a1cf	**#:** b3cde4	**#:** d1d3d4	**#:** a7a9ab	**#:** 4f5062	**#:** 24263b

For line charts, the stronger colours should be used:

For example, in Figure 5, note how the stronger colours are more easily distinguished than the blues and greys.

Figure 5 *Voter turnouts in national elections (per cent)*

File size and submission

Submitted files should include only the figure itself. Each figure should be submitted in an individual, separate file, clearly labelled with author's last name and figure number.

Scanned graphics in TIFF format should have a minimum resolution of 1200 dpi.

Photos or drawings should be in TIFF format with a minimum resolution of 300 dpi.

Photos combined with line drawings, lettering, or colour diagrams, for example, should be saved as TIFF with a minimum resolution of 600 dpi.

Charts, graphs, and so forth should be provided in editable format if possible.

Alternative text descriptions

In order for your figures to be accessible to people of all abilities and disabilities, provide an alternative text description for each figure. You may download our instructions for writing alternative text descriptions from the Instructions for authors web page.

Contact

If you have questions or concerns, please contact the manuscript editor at kristin.clay@nordicom.gu.se

Submission checklist

Please check the following before your final submission.

☐ Files include individual figures only and do not include titles, captions, comments, or sources (this information is included in the body text of the manuscript).

☐ British spelling with "s" endings is used.

☐ Sentence case capitalisation is used.

☐ Avenir and Sabon – or Arial and Times New Roman – fonts are used within figures.

☐ Font size is between 8–12. Any font size under 8 has been approved by a Nordicom editor.

☐ Units are included in the axis titles only if there are different units.

☐ Figures adhere to the size and resolution requirements.

☐ An alternative text description (alt text) is provided for each figure.