

ASSIGNMENT NUMBER 2: ANALYSIS OF DECEPTIVE VISUALIZATIONS

Shweta Shekhar

CS-GY 6313 B

1 Deceptive Visualization: Global Unemployment Rate (1991-2023)

The visualization analyzed is a line chart from the World Bank that showcases global unemployment rates from 1991 to 2023 [1]. While the data is accurate, the visualization includes a subtle deceptive element related to Y-axis manipulation.

The Y-axis begins at 4%, not at 0%, which exaggerates fluctuations in the unemployment rate. By truncating the lower part of the Y-axis, the chart makes small changes in the unemployment rate appear more dramatic than they actually are.

This visualization misleads by exaggerating the perceived volatility of unemployment. Although the data itself is correct, the presentation distorts the viewer's understanding by magnifying relatively small changes in unemployment rates. A more honest approach would have been to start the Y-axis at zero, providing a clearer, more proportional view of the data.

To accurately represent the unemployment rate, the Y-axis should start at zero. This would reduce the exaggerated effect of small fluctuations and give the viewer a more realistic view of global unemployment trends. A proportional Y-axis allows viewers to see the true scale of change without exaggeration. Misleading visual exaggeration could influence public perception or policy decisions based on an incorrect understanding of the data.

Source: The visualization can be found on the World Bank's data repository: <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>.

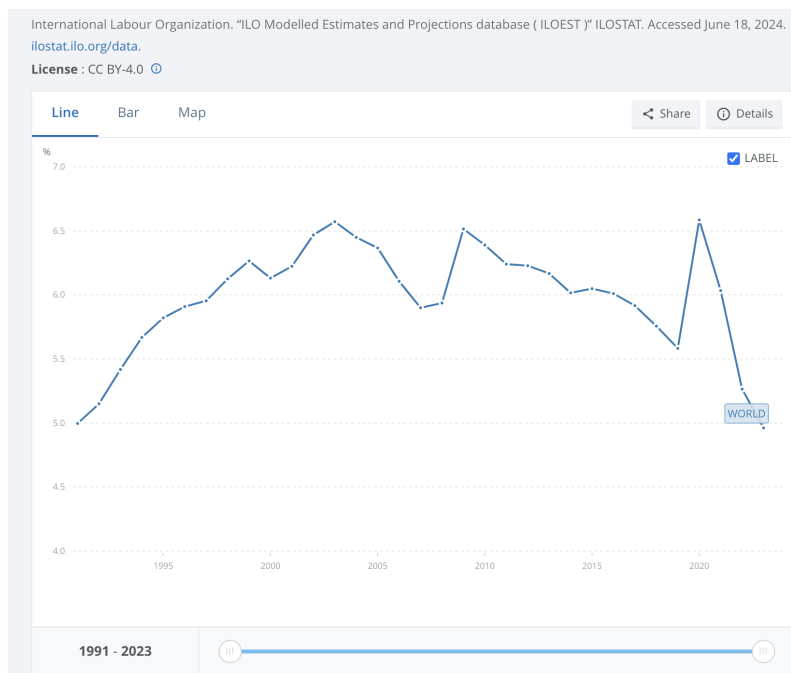


Figure 1: Global Unemployment Rate with Misleading Y-axis (1991-2023)

References

- [1] *Global Unemployment Rate (1991-2023)*. Accessed: 2024-10-16. 2024. URL: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS>.