

# Global Health: A Geopolitical Challenge?

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# Geopolitics - definition

Geopolitics is the study of how the projection of power (ideological, cultural, economic, or military) is effected and affected by the geographic and political landscape in which it operates.

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# What is Geopolitics dealing with?

- Mainly **economics**
- Business analytics
- Risk evaluation
- Strategic analytics
- Power relations
- Strategic spheres

# Today's Geopolitics contain

Resource Wars, Identity Conflicts

Disinformation,

Geostrategic Rivalries

Global Power Shift

Ever increasing number of non-state actors

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**POLICY 360**



**GEOPOLITICS IN THE ARTIC**

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# Today's geopolitical situation

- Did the COVID pandemic play a role?
- The decision for a pandemic treaty / convention or other instrument
- Among others, this decision is coming from the understanding that health is linked to destabilization, security, international relations, in addition to the more technical aspects of pandemics

# Is Global Health influenced by Geopolitics?

The case of the pandemic treaty

The International Negotiating Board (INB)

# The Golden Age of Global Health

- The early twenty-first century has been described as the "Golden Age of Global Health"
- Building on the HIV/AIDS crisis response dramatic funding increases and institutional developments emerged to solve health crisis
- ODA for health from 6bn to 27bn (2007) to 38bn (2015) : new importance of Public Health, but economic orthodoxy still there
- The framework convention on tobacco control (FCTC) was concluded – first ever agreement under article 19 of the WHO constitution



# Framework Convention on Tobacco (FCTC)

- The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) is the **first treaty** negotiated under the auspices of the World Health Organization.
- Based on the WHO Constitution, Article 19, that refers to conventions
- negotiated during the so-called “Grand Decade for Global Health” (1998-2008)
- with multilateralism much higher in global agenda
- strong civil society voice for a legally binding treaty
- role of private sector “firewall” approach to tobacco industry

# The FCTC process

- was somewhat straightforward
- in spite of hard stance and disagreements on many issues, countries managed to accomplish a first formal draft negotiating text (a Chair's text) already 6 months after the start of negotiations
- a final agreed draft within six negotiating sessions.
- Is considered a success : today states have ratified
- Tobacco / nicotine usage has been diminished in ...countries.

# The Pandemic Treaty Negotiations as example

- In **December 2021**, at its second-ever special session, the World Health Assembly established an intergovernmental negotiating body (INB) to draft and negotiate a convention, agreement or other international instrument
- Today, **November 8th 2023** we are now at the Seventh meeting of the INB (6-10 November 2023)
- Why then developing a new health treaty, and a second in WHO's history, raises these many questions?  
What is so different?



**“The World Together”: the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response**

# New ways of engaging and grouping by Member States

- Informal negotiations, take much larger role in promoting the formal ones;
  - this reflects **strong polarization** around complex, often geopolitical, differences around key areas such as IP, equity, access
  - multi-regional “interest” groups of Member States
  - the Group of Friends of a Pandemic Treaty, and the Group on Equity, with members from diverse WHO regions, aim at bridging widely shared goals and priorities with regional stands;
- Geopolitics influence the decisions



# Armed Conflicts around the World

- Our Rule of Law in Armed Conflict Online Portal (RULAC) classifies all situations of armed violence that amount to an armed conflict under international humanitarian law.
- Today, it monitors **more than 110 armed conflicts**
- BRICS countries raise their voice
- Powershifts in the world

# Pandemic Treaty under geopolitical tensions

- Additional influences come from the multiple **ongoing crisis**
- Attention is diverted to issues of current warlike operations
- Sens of uncertainty
- Coalitions change and become volatile
- Loss of trust in both national and international politics

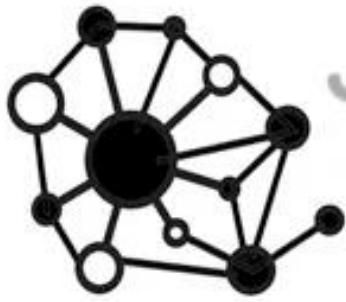




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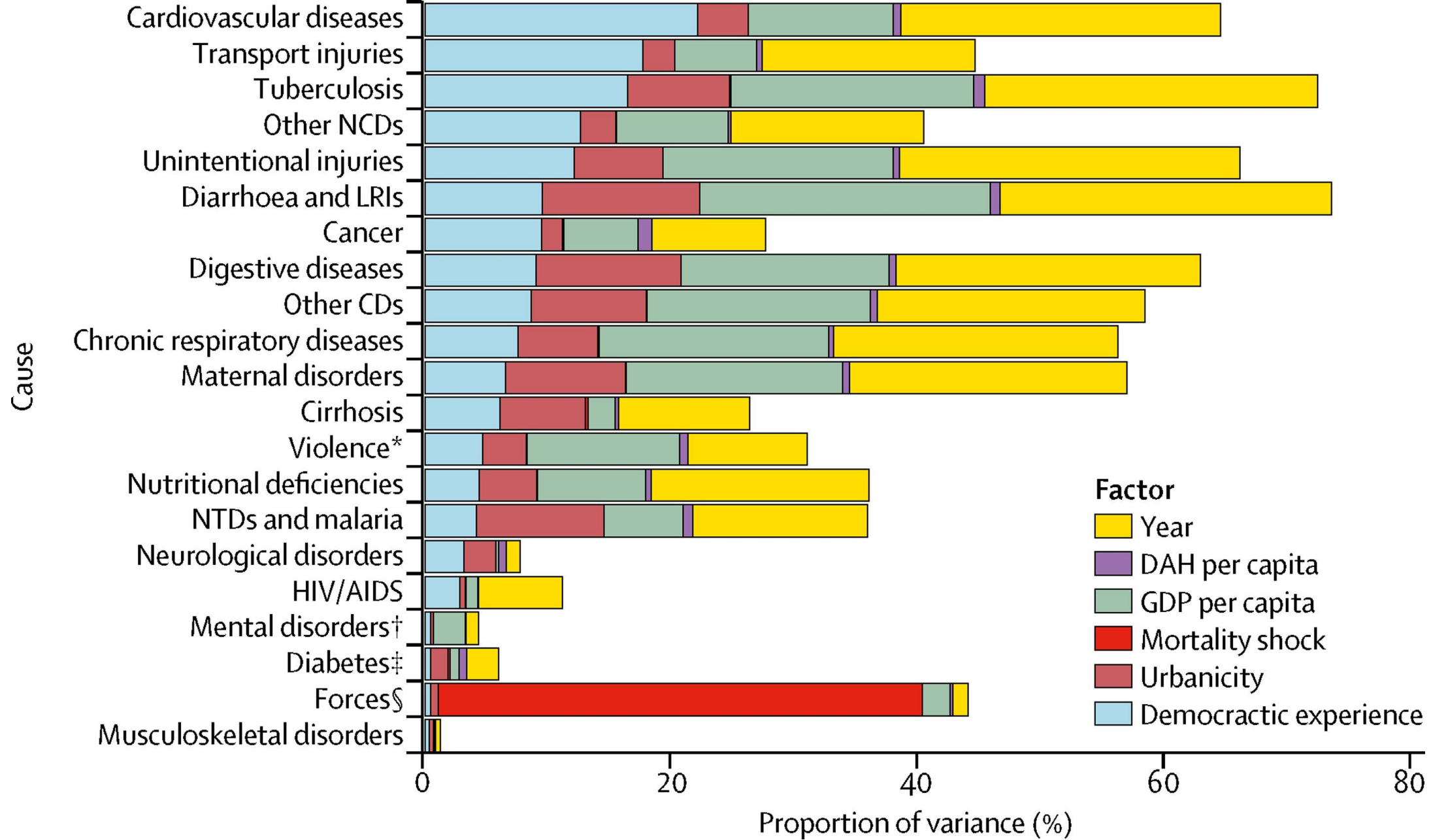
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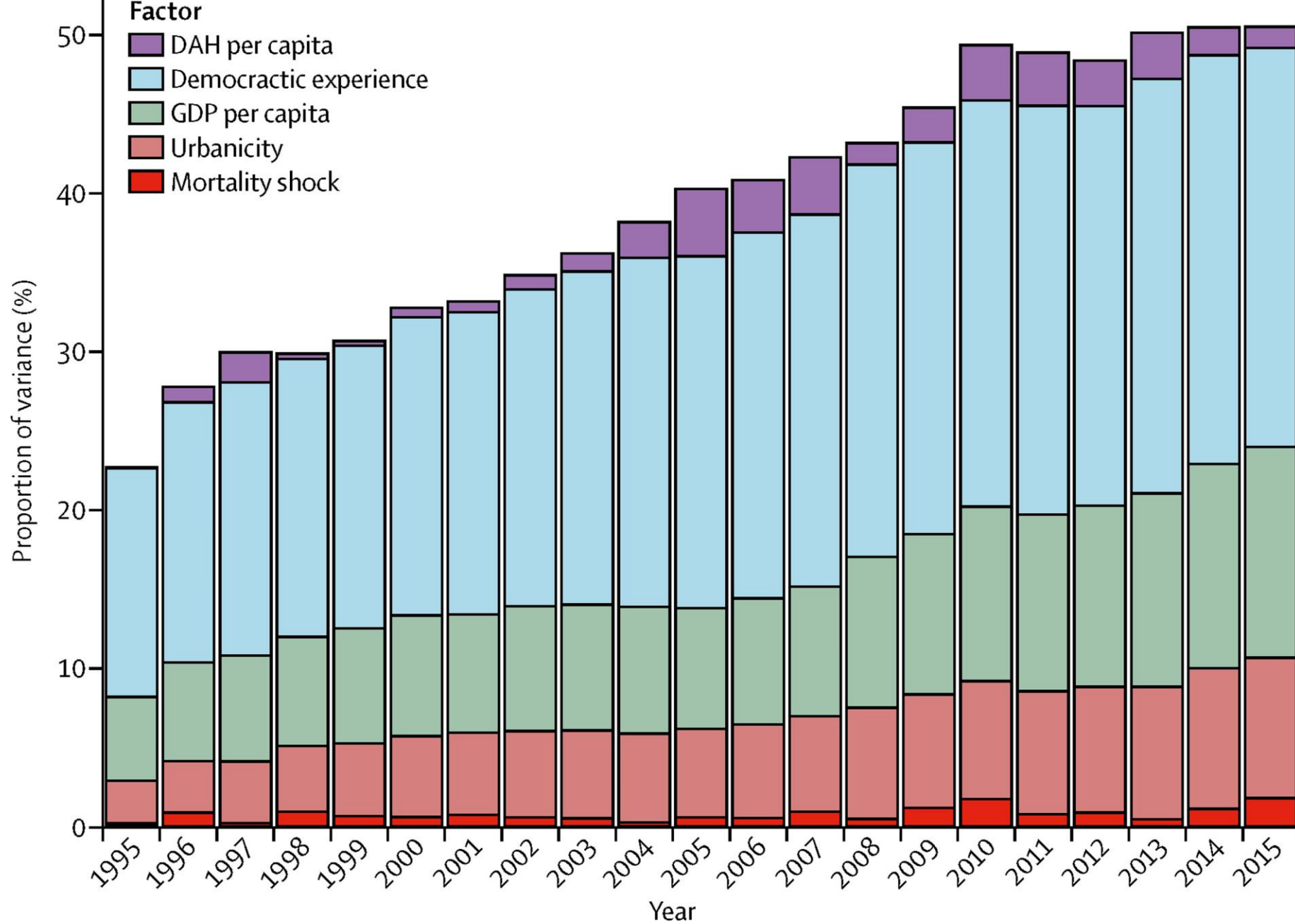


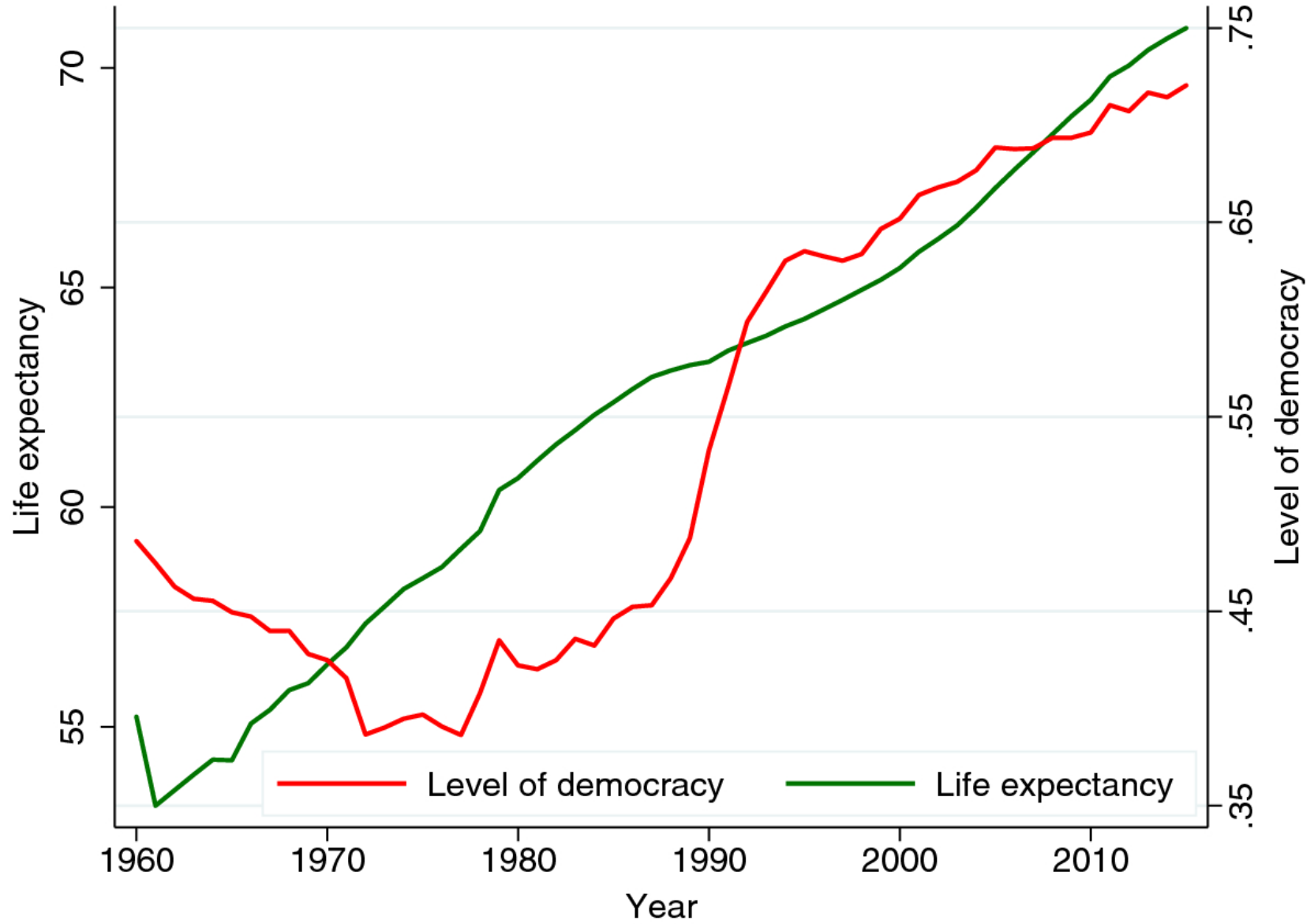
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# Crisis – polarisation – health and politics

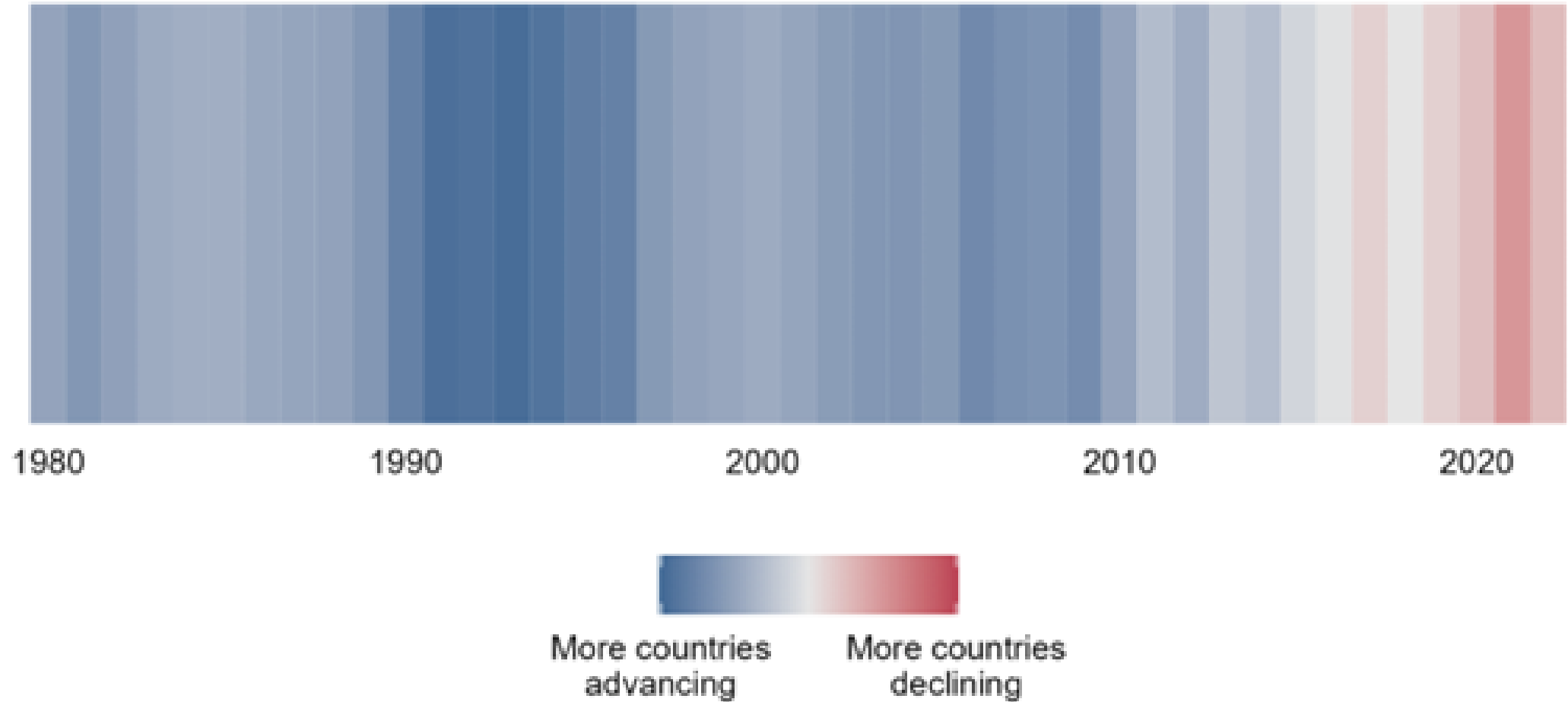
- In times of crisis with fear derived from uncertainty, volatility, ...
- Polarisation – in between nations, but also of the world community
- Political movements that favor the conflict instead of the solution
- Loss of trust as a result (we have studied with COVID)
- The battle of political systems during COVID
- What political system then favors (global) health?







Source: International IDEA, The Global State of Democracy Indices v7.1, 2023.



# Global Health as a geopolitical challenge ?

Health is interwoven into larger debates about: globalisation, development and security, sovereignty and destabilisation

The material role of democratic institutions in fostering population health is of first-order relevance

Democratic institutions both nationally and at the global level.

There is our challenge for healthy , peaceful populations

守護主權民主

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