A stylized world map is the background of the cover. The continents are filled with various patterns: North America has a purple and white wavy pattern; South America has a yellow and white wavy pattern; Europe and Africa have a dense orange dot pattern; Asia and Australia have a red dot pattern. Large, semi-transparent red circles of varying sizes are scattered across the map. The title is centered over the map in large, bold, black, sans-serif capital letters.

THE
STATE
OF THE
WORLD
ATLAS



TENTH EDITION

DAN SMITH

PENGUIN BOOKS
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Contents

7 Introduction

13 Who we are

- States of the world • Population • Life expectancy
- Women and men • Ethnicity and diversity • Religious beliefs
- Literacy and education • Urbanization

65 Rights and respect

- Political systems
- Religious rights
- Human rights abuses
- Children's rights
- Women's rights
- LGBTQ+ rights
- Minorities
- Freedom

167 Health of the planet

- Planetary boundaries • Biodiversity loss • Water resources
- Waste • Oceans • Energy • A changing climate
- Combating climate change • A greening world

198 Sources

95 War and peace

- War this century
- Warlords, ganglords, and militia
- Military muscle
- Mass destruction
- Casualties of war
- Terrorism
- Refugees
- Keeping the peace
- The new front line

41 Wealth and poverty

- Income
- Inequality
- Quality of life
- Transnationals
- Banks
- Corruption
- Debt
- How the money's made

133 Health of the people

- Pandemics
- Malnutrition
- Obesity
- Smoking
- Cancer
- HIV/AIDS
- Mental health
- Water and sanitation
- Living with disease

207 Index

Introduction

The first step in trying to understand the state of the world is to recognize the simple yet not-so-simple fact that the world is always changing.

Big or small, sudden or slowly building, soon over or with a lasting impact, alterations in the situation and condition of the world and its people are constant.

A lot of that change is progress of one sort or another. Some of what we sometimes call progress is of little worth or merit – useless technological baubles that are modish for a while. And some of it when seen in larger context is downright dangerous – a contribution to global heating or the crisis of air pollution. But in even larger context, human progress is real. More people live longer, healthier lives than ever. Fewer live in extreme poverty than 20 or 30 years ago. The store of human knowledge continues to enlarge. Human rights are respected now in a way that was not dreamed of 200 years ago. And in the first two decades of the 21st century, warfare has taken far fewer human lives than it did in the first two decades of the 20th.

Amid multiple world problems – and perhaps especially writing in 2020 as we wonder what the full effects of the Covid-19 pandemic will be – the point is worth stressing. Human

progress has been real over the last century and a half, despite world wars, despite colonialism, despite environmental crises. It has been real and because of that we know that further progress is possible.

It is important to hang onto that because it is also true that a lot of the change we experience is not progress at all. If progress is a journey, it is not about rolling along a smooth path or gliding through space. It is more like lurching in and out of massive potholes in the road or, if you prefer the space metaphor, from one big astral collision to another, juddering all the while under the impact of an unending, randomized shower of meteorites. One thing that matters in trying to understand the state of the world and gauge its progress or regress at any time is to distinguish between the big collisions and the meteorites.

▪

The past 30 years – the passage of time normally associated with one human generation – has seen four big moments of change, approximately once a decade. The first came in the years 1989 to 1991, as the Cold War between East and West, between the USSR and its allies on the one side, and the USA and its much richer and larger alliance on the other, came to an end. Not

only did the confrontation between the USSR and USA terminate but so also the USSR itself. As the 1990s began, the world order changed, along with the possibilities for what the United Nations could do. Agreements were reached to dismantle tens of thousands of nuclear weapons, military spending started to fall, and the number of countries with a functioning democracy grew throughout the decade. It was not by any means painless. The transition to democracy is often fraught with danger and the first half of the 1990s saw an increase in the number of armed conflicts.

The second big change came in 2001 in the shape of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in New York and Washington, DC. The peace dividend of the 1990s started to look less peaceful, the long war in Afghanistan that had begun with the Soviet invasion in December 1979 took on a new form as the USA and its allies intervened, and at the same time headed towards war on and then in Iraq.

The third change was the financial crash of 2008 to 2009, which became a general economic crisis in 2009 and 2010. The depth of the crash was different in different countries; economic output recovered but in many of the richer countries in the world, the sense of economic well-being that marked most of the previous two decades has gone for good.

And the fourth big change has come with the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 – not just the pandemic itself but the economic impact associated with it. At the time of completing this atlas in mid-2020, it is not possible to know what the full impact will be. Though we live in an age that wants instant everything, it remains true that historical significance can only be gauged once the event is well in the past. And even then it is an art rather than a

science to understand what it all meant. Nonetheless, the economic impact of the Covid-19 lockdowns – the crash in production, consumption, trade and travel – even though in some aspects recovery may also be equally dramatic, seems likely to be profound and long-lasting.

▪

These events have had a dramatic and lasting impact (or will do in the case of the current pandemic) not simply because of their sheer weight as big events, but also because they interact with other, slower-moving combinations of events. These are the unfolding trends that form the backdrop to the immediate drama. Here we encounter issues such as climate change and today's many-sided environmental crisis. Here is rising inequality in most countries over the past 40-plus years, demographic developments including both population growth – and, more important than the global numbers, where it is concentrated – and urbanization. We see economic growth and seemingly unending technological innovation. And relations between people change, with something closer to gender equality in many countries, with greater acceptance of the rights of LGBTQ+ people, with assumptions about freedoms and responsibilities altering, and with contestation about the rights of different races and ethnic and religious groups within a country.

This atlas offers snapshots of all this. Not one snapshot of the state of the world but, rather, a series of snapshots of diverse aspects of the state of the world as it changes. It captures the big moments and the background trends. It does not and cannot – and does not want to try to – say everything about every, or indeed any, topic. The information here is not the whole story. The treatment of the issue is as an introduction, pointing out a door that, if opened, could be the way towards getting fuller knowledge.

In 2015, the United Nations agreed a potentially era-defining programme – Agenda

2030, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). If achieved, they could mark the next phase in human progress. Thinking about this agenda in terms of the journey of human progress, I see it as the process of navigating a safe route, increasing the ability to avoid the big collisions, and staying on course despite all the impediments. Under the headline goals there are 169 targets to achieve by 2030. This is human progress as it

The Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Agenda 2030

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

could be, towards a better world that is not just imaginable but practicable. In this atlas, I group the issues covered by the SDGs under the heading of five big challenges that face humanity, challenges we must rise to if we are to thrive.

Having looked at who we are – some of the basics of demography, diversity, and dwelling place – the five challenges that confront humanity form the substance of this atlas. They are the production and distribution of wealth and poverty; human rights and the respect with which ordinary people are treated by those in power; the question of war and peace; the health of the people; and the health of the planet.

These are distinct but linked challenges. The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are not the same for all. Not surprisingly, wealth, privilege and power offer more effective protection to some than is available to all. The same is true of the effects of climate change and many other aspects of environmental deterioration. Throughout the industrial age, rich factory owners managed to live well away from the part of the city their factories polluted. There is no health or environmental issue that is purely about physiological health or how things are in nature. The source of the problem, how it is defined, the allocation of resources to address it are all shaped by how society is governed. Social inequalities and lack of respect for human rights often mean there is no way to express grievances except through anger, to which power responds through repression. That explosive mixture can quickly generate political instability and open armed conflict. The socially destabilising effects of climate change and environmental crisis only add to those pressures.

“Cooperation is the new realism”

Recent years have seen a distinct decline in how well these challenges are addressed. This is the tenth edition of this atlas. For the ninth in 2013, summing it up, I had a relatively positive assessment on rights and respect, partly because democracy was growing, as well as on war and peace, and on health. But any progress on wealth and poverty was marred by growing inequalities and damage to the natural environment. So on three of the five challenges, the record, while not perfect, was not bad; on the other two, the record was clearly deficient. Since then, while the statistics of democracy remain good, its quality is weaker in many countries. Worse, geopolitics have turned toxic, the number of armed conflicts has increased, and the scale of military preparations now is back to Cold War levels. And on the health front, there is the pandemic.

So there is more bad news than a few years ago. But the tools for improvement are available. The UN's Agenda 2030 and the SDGs themselves demonstrate that. We can see it in the snapshots in this atlas when we look at peace operations, at advances in healthcare, at the possibilities for reshaping economic functioning so the natural environment is better respected. Further, in some places, the tools are in use. We can see them in initiatives to build peace and support neighbours in highly diverse local communities; in small-scale environmental protection projects and some initiatives that

are pretty large scale; in choices some people are making to live lives and to run businesses in ways that are more in tune with the rhythms of nature.

One characteristic of world politics today is a visibly declining appetite for international cooperation among the biggest players and many of the smaller ones. That is the severest single difficulty to overcome so the work of improvement and progress can resume in good order. None of the challenges and problems depicted in this atlas can be successfully addressed by any state acting alone. Not even the biggest, the richest, or the most populous. Going it alone is a fantasy; cooperation is the new realism.

If we face the bad news, perhaps we will see that it is not so bad. There are so many other things happening. And that should be a spur to action, to take the decisions that are needed to stem the rise of inequality, ensure our rights are respected, expand the world's zone of peace again, keep improving public health and prepare better against the next pandemic, and put our relationship with nature onto a healthier footing. And above all, to start working together to those ends.

■

Finally, my thanks to those who make this book possible but don't get on the title page. In the Myriad team, Jannet King has once again been the editor for this tenth edition in the series, assiduous and sharp yet kindly. The cartography and visuals are the work of Clare Shepherd and of Isabelle Lewis, within the design framework established by Corinne Pearlman. All this happens under the inspiring and supportive leadership of Candida Lacey. The research assistance,

which means all the hard work, was done by Jakob Faller.

It was a semi-surreal experience to complete the work on this edition in the midst of the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, even if doing it in the lockdown-lite of Sweden rather than the full-on isolation of many other countries. What helped keep me sane in that was family – Åsa, Felix and Bob close at hand, and further away in two homes in one city, Jake, Jess, Josie and Jed, and Rebecca, Marcus and Zac. My thanks and love to you all whether you knew how much you were helping or not.

Dan Smith
Stockholm
June 2020

Who we are

What is the name of our age?
It continues to be the age of
more, most, and never before.

There are more people, living
in more countries, and more
of us living in cities, than at
any time. And along with that
come things never before
experienced, so much so that
the idea of “the new normal”
has become the defining
cliché of our time.

New – the consequences of
climate change.

New – the loss of biodiversity
and of land quality.

New – the acidification of the
oceans.

New – the crisis of air pollution.

New – plastic garbage
covering the ocean.

New – our dependence on
cyberspace, and with
it vulnerability to its
failure.

New – the cycle of pandemics
from SARS to MERS to
Covid-19.

New – the combination of all
of the above.

It is only just over 200 years
ago – less than a blink of
an eye in the timescale of
the planet, and not much
more in the timescale of
human beings – that the
world’s population passed
the 1 billion mark. Today,
there are just under 8 billion
of us. Despite signs of
deceleration in the rate of
growth, world population is
still projected to increase by
another 2 billion people to
around 10 billion by 2050.
By then, towns and cities are
expected to hold just over
two-thirds of humanity.

There has never been
demographic change on such
a huge scale. The movement
from the countryside to
the cities in the industrial
revolution two centuries
ago has nothing on this.
Nor has migration from
Europe to the American
New World between the

mid-19th century and the
early 20th century – just 30
million people. Compared to
that, the increase in the global
population so far this century
is almost 100 million every
year, and urban population
growth is even faster.

Because there are more of
us, we inevitably consume
more of everything. But
technological advance means
that we also consume
massively more per person.
Our population, eight times
that of 200 years ago,
produces over 50 times the
economic output, and uses
more than 60 times as much
water and 75 times as much
energy.

The figures testify to the
creativity unleashed through
the Industrial Revolution.
They should also encourage
us to ask: For how long can
we continue?

States of the world



Sovereignty

Effective independence gained by existing states

before 11 November 1918

11 November 1918 – 23 October 1945

24 October 1945 – 8 November 1989

9 November 1989 – 30 September 2019

not a sovereign state (affiliation)



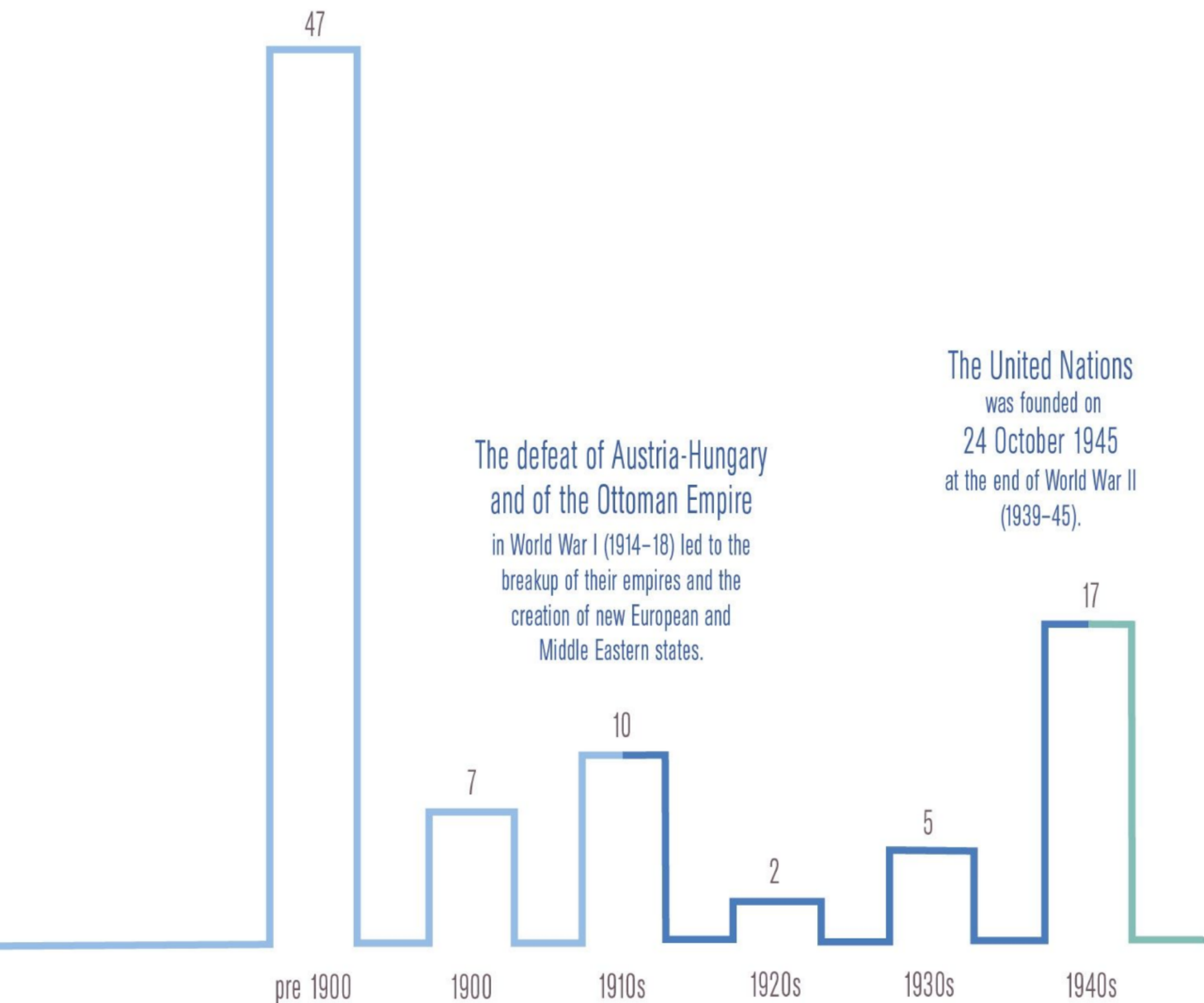
- GUAM (USA)
- NORTHERN MARIANA IS. (USA)
- MICRONESIA, FED. ST. OF
- MARSHALL ISLANDS
- PALAU
- NAURU
- KIRIBATI
- TUVALU
- TOKELAU
- AMERICAN SAMOA (USA)
- SAMOA
- WALLIS & FUTUNA IS. (Fr)
- VANUATU
- FIJI
- COOK IS. (NZ)
- NIUE (NZ)
- TONGA
- NEW CALEDONIA (Fr)
- NORFOLK IS. (Aus)
- FRENCH POLYNESIA (Fr)
- PITCAIRN IS. (UK)

State formation

Number of states gaining effective independence in each decade including states that no longer exist as of September 2019

- before 11 November 1918
- 11 November 1918 – 23 October 1945
- 24 October 1945 – 8 November 1989
- 9 November 1989 – 30 September 2019

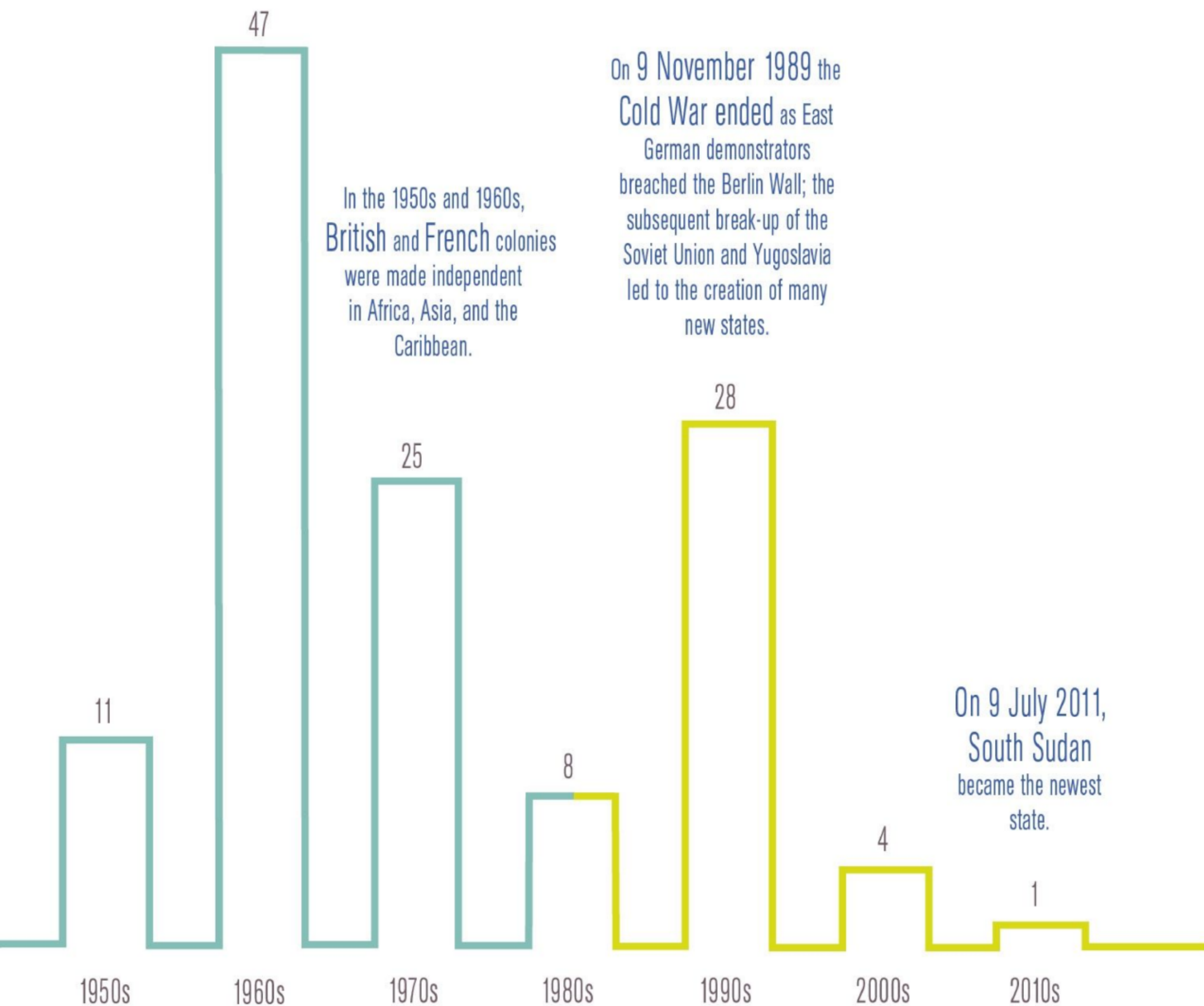
Some of our sense of who we are comes from where we were born and grew up – our countries, most of which are quite recent creations. In 1945, the United Nations was founded by just 51 states, some of which were not fully independent at the time (and the defeated states in World War II were initially excluded). Today, the UN has 193 member states.



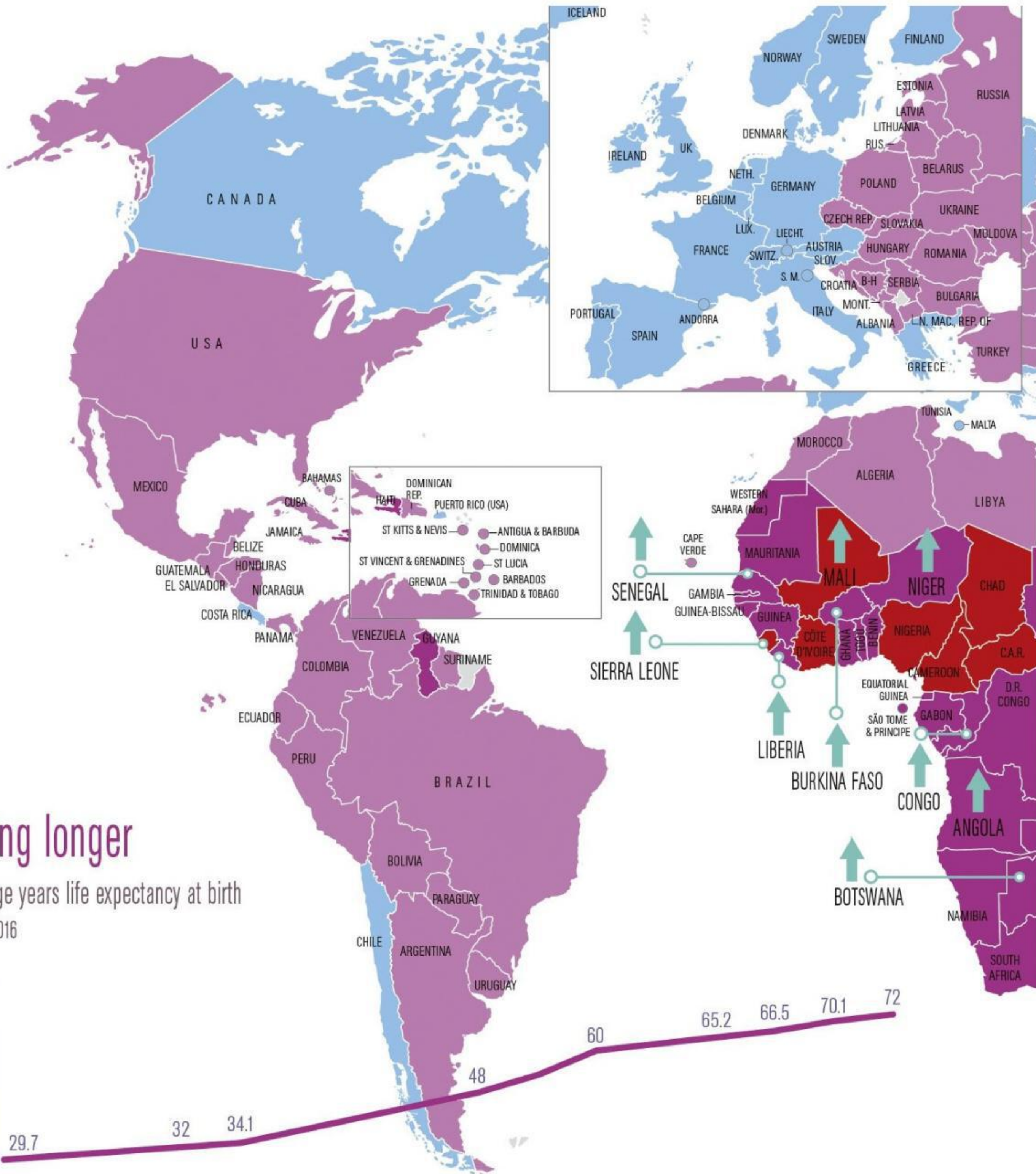
Over the past century, states have won, lost, and regained independence, divided and (re-)unified, often but not always against a background of war and bloodshed.

Some have become formally independent before achieving real independence; with others, it has been the other way round.

On other pages, this atlas shows many ways – economic, environmental, political – in which independent states do not have full sovereignty in the modern world – yet the evidence is clear that sovereignty is a highly desirable political commodity. The age of forming new states is not yet over.

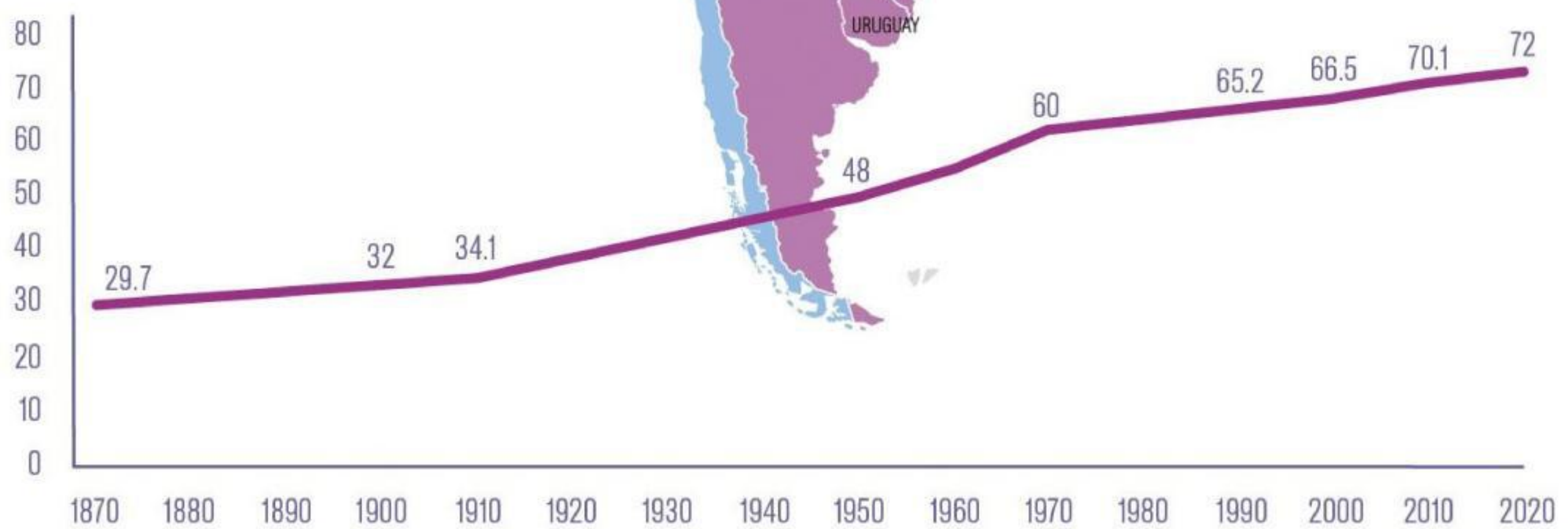


Life expectancy



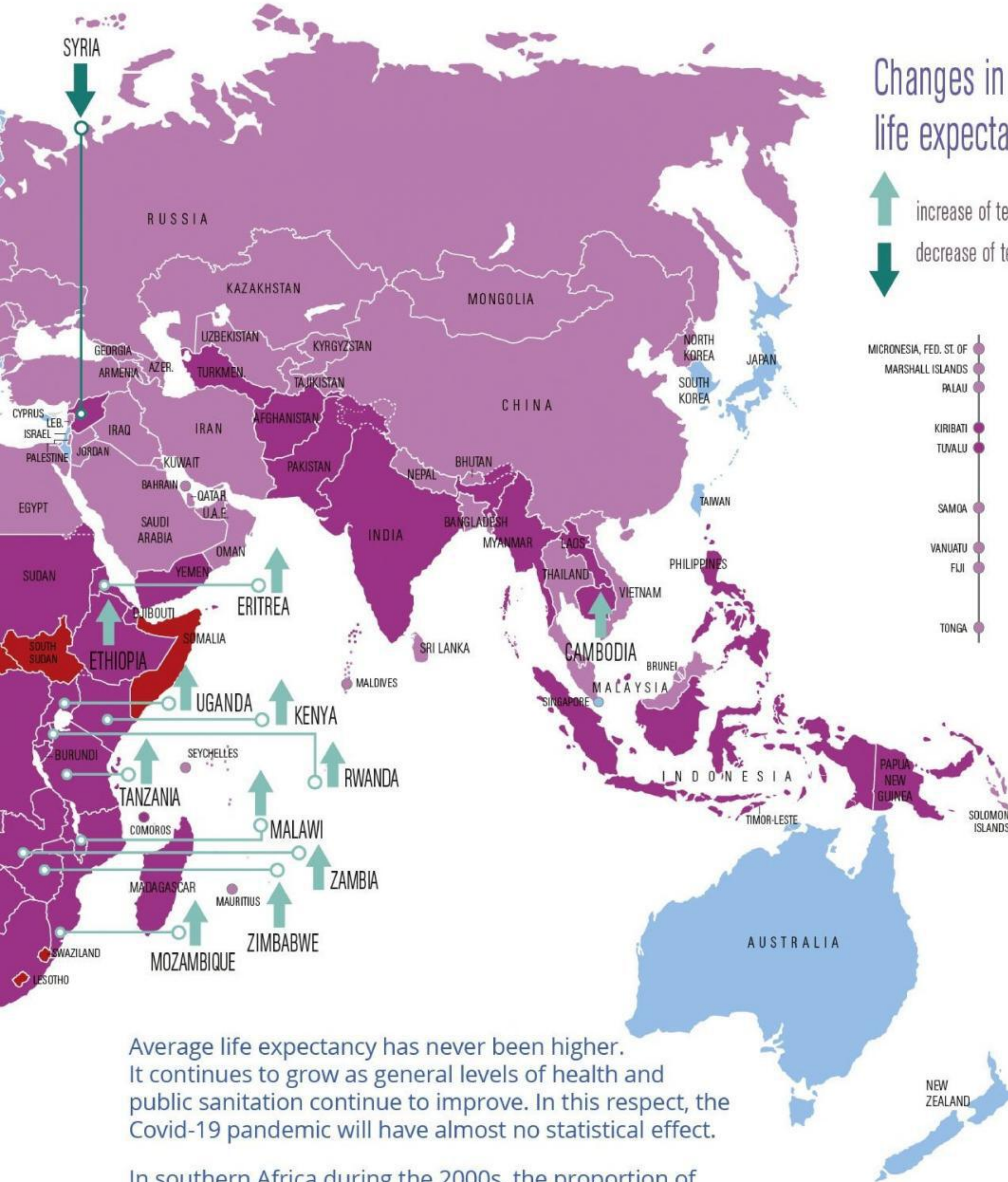
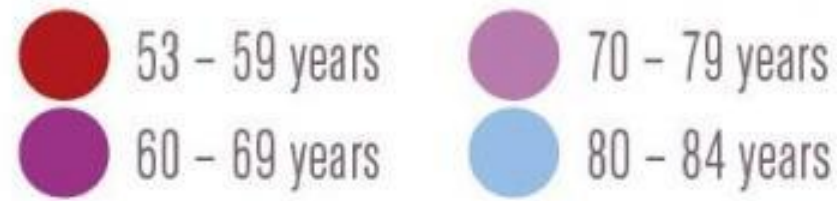
Living longer

Average years life expectancy at birth
1870-2016



Life expectancy at birth

2016



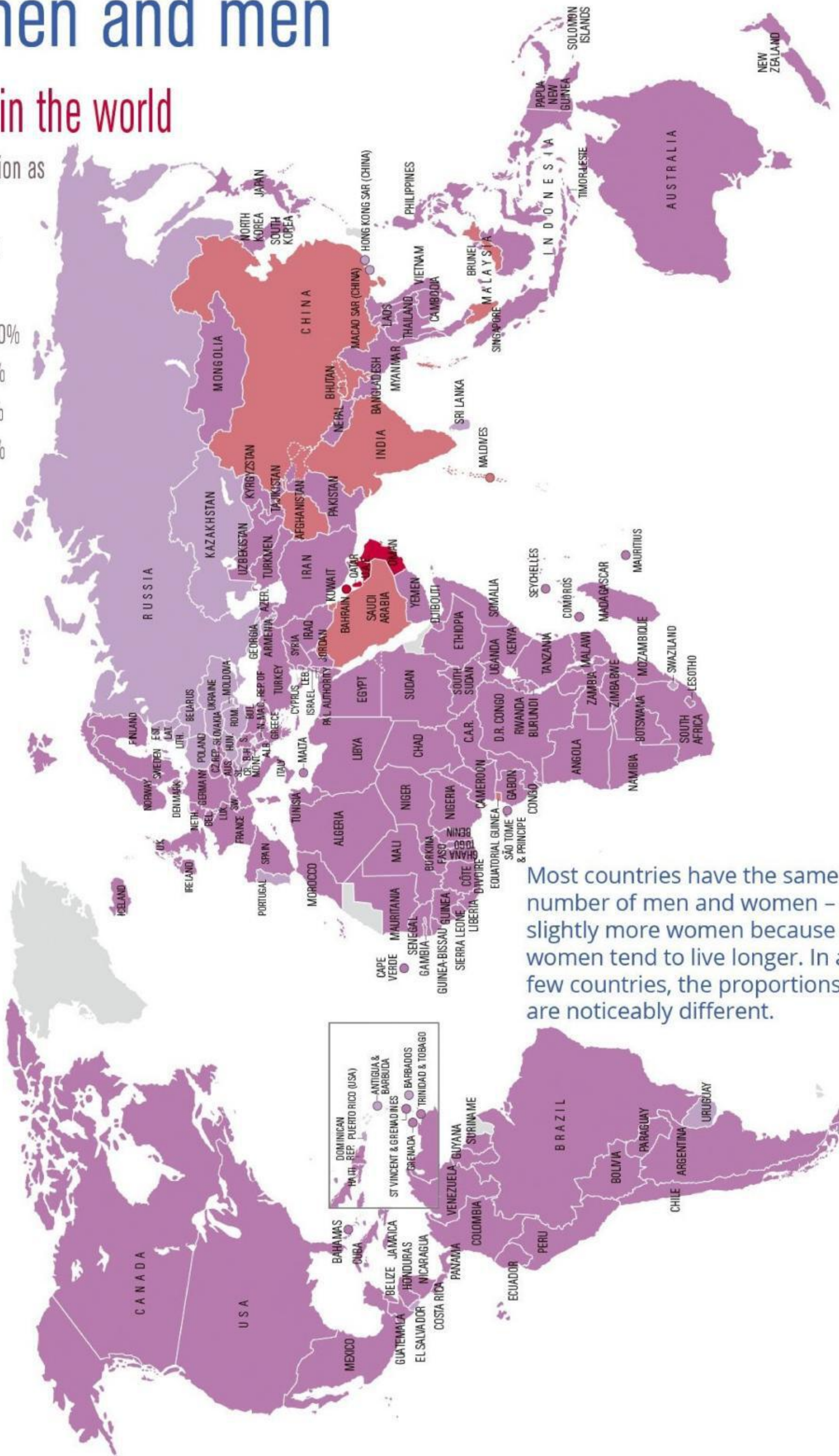
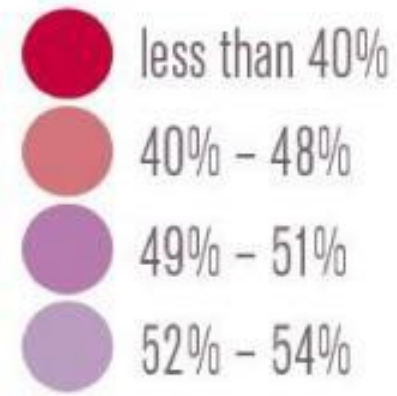
Average life expectancy has never been higher. It continues to grow as general levels of health and public sanitation continue to improve. In this respect, the Covid-19 pandemic will have almost no statistical effect.

In southern Africa during the 2000s, the proportion of the population infected by HIV/AIDS was up to 30 times the world average. This combined with other diseases to reduce average life expectancy in the region, but drug treatments for HIV/AIDS and public health campaigns have had a noticeable positive impact in recent years.

Women and men

Women in the world

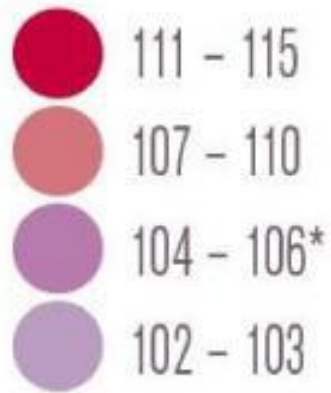
Female population as percentage of total population
2018



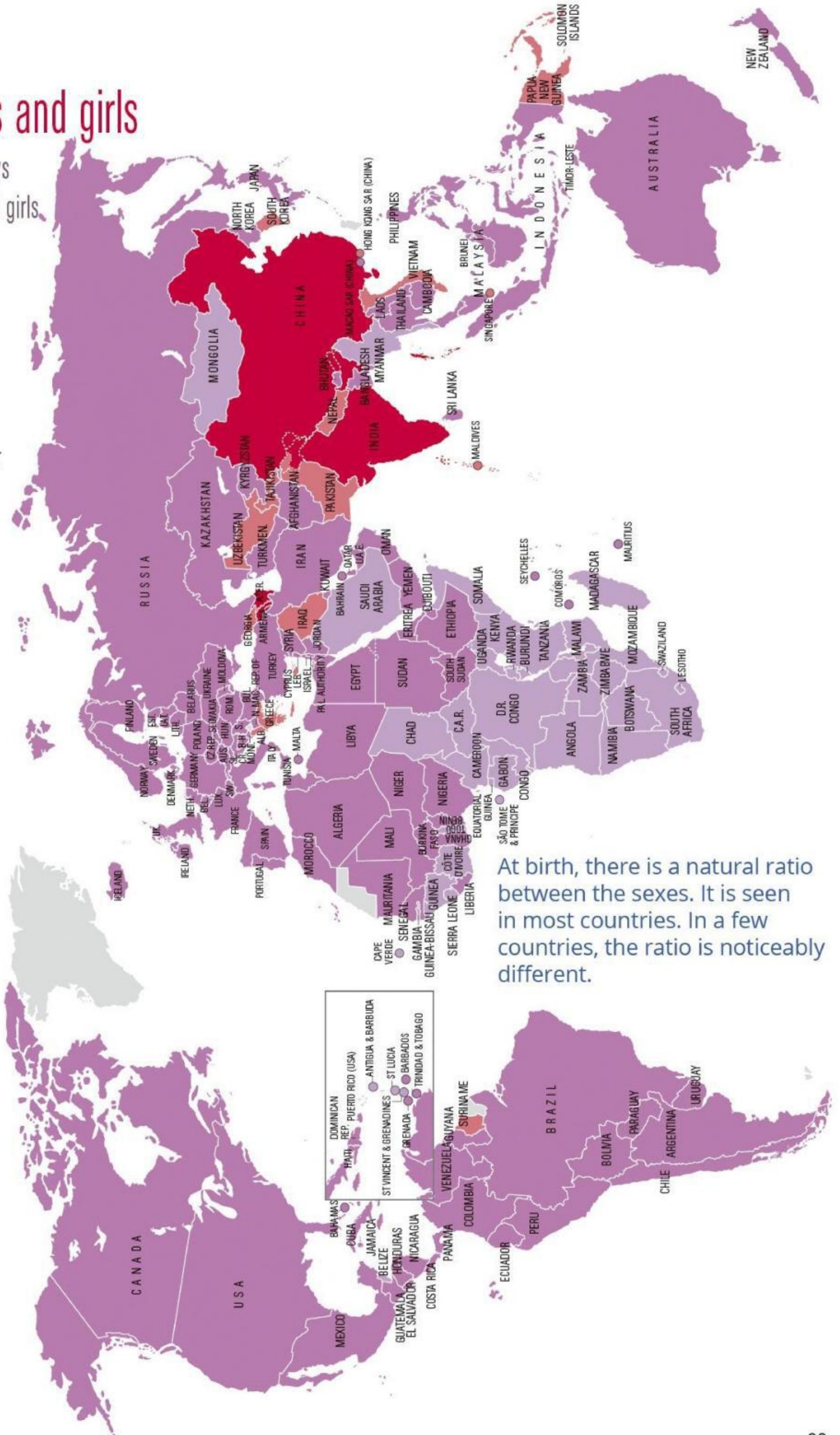
Most countries have the same number of men and women - or slightly more women because women tend to live longer. In a few countries, the proportions are noticeably different.

Baby boys and girls

The number of boys born for every 100 girls, 2017



* the natural ratio is for 105 boys born per 100 girls.



At birth, there is a natural ratio between the sexes. It is seen in most countries. In a few countries, the ratio is noticeably different.



image

not

available

Index

3D printing 132

Afghanistan, war in 98

African Union, peacekeeping 125

air pollution 167

anti-retroviral therapy (ART) 155

armed forces 107

artificial intelligence (AI) 131

banks 52–53

biodiversity, loss of [13](#), 167, 170–75, 184–85

birth registration 78–79

Buddhism 28–30

cancer 133, 148–51

factors impacting on 142, 149

in men 150

in women 151

carbon dioxide, emissions 48, 188–89

in atmosphere 190

casualties of war [7](#), 112–15

chemical weapons 110–11

children

as labourers 80

as soldiers 102–03

at risk 76–77, 78–79, 80–81

cancer in 149

orphaned by AIDS 152–53

rights of 78–81

Christianity 28–30

climate change [13](#), 138, 168, 169, 188–89

Paris Agreement on (2015) 192

Cold War [7](#), [17](#), 95, 97, 108

conservation measures 167

corruption 54–59

Covid-19 [7](#), [8](#), [10](#), [13](#), [21](#), 41, 54, 65, 107, 133, 134–35

cyber attacks [13](#), 128–29

D.R. Congo, war in 99

death penalty 74–75

debt

government 41, 60

household 41, 61

deforestation 172, 173

democracy [8](#), 65, 68–69

disability-affected life years 164–65

divestment from fossil fuels 194–95

Ebola 134

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), peacekeeping 125

economic growth 41, 42

economic sectors 62–63

education 34–35, 81

energy use 186–87

ethnic minorities [8](#), [24–25](#)

European Union (EU), peacekeeping 125

financial crash 2008–2009 [8](#), 41, 43, 47

food banks 136

food shortages 139

Freedom House Index 92–93

Gender Inequality Index 82–83

gender pay gap 44

Gini index 44–45

Great Green Wall Initiative 197

green initiatives 174–75, 196–97

greenhouse gases

commitments to reduction 192, 194–95

emissions of 188–89, 190
reduction in 192, 193, 196

gross national income 42–43, 48–49, 50–51, 52–53

H1N1 134

Hinduism 28–30

HIV/AIDS [21](#), 152–55

treatment 154–55

travel bans 152–53

Human Development Index 48–49

human rights [7](#), 65, 78, 86–87, 88–89
abuses of 72–73, 74–74, 76–77, 80, 90–91

Iraq, war in 98

Islam 28–30

Judaism 28–30

land-system change 168, 169

languages, official 27

LGBTQ+

rights [8](#), 86–87

adoption rights 86–87

in military 88–89

life expectancy [7](#), [20–21](#)

literacy, adult 32–33

malnutrition 136–39

marine protected areas 184–85

mega-cities 36–39

men

common cancers in 150

ratio to women [22–23](#)

smoking by 144–45

suicide among 158

mental health 156–59
provisions of 156–57

MERS 134

migrants 26

military spending [8](#), 104–05, 106