



Human  
Development  
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Office



# Uncertain Times Divided Societies

- some findings from HDR2021/2022

Yanchun Zhang, UNDP/HDRO

Expert Group Meeting: “Rethinking social development policies and frameworks”

25 August 2023, UN/DESA, New York



- 1990: Concept and Measurement
- 1991: Financing
- 1992: Global Dimensions
- 1993: People's Participation
- 1994: Human Security
- 1995: Gender
- 1996: Economic Growth
- 1997: Poverty
- 1998: Consumption
- 1999: Globalization
- 2000: Human Rights
- 2001: New technologies
- 2002: Democracy
- 2003: MDGs
- 2004: Cultural Liberty
- 2005: Aid, trade and security
- 2006: Water
- 2007-8: Climate Change
- 2009: Human Mobility
- 2010: Pathways to Human Development
- 2011: Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for all
- 2013: The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World
- 2014: Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience
- 2015: Work for Human Development
- 2016: Human Development for Everyone
- 2018: Human Development Indices and Indicators: Statistical Update
- 2019: Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: inequalities in human development in the 21st Century
- 2020: The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene
- 2021-2: Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in Transforming World**

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# Trilogy of reports

## Human Development Report 2019

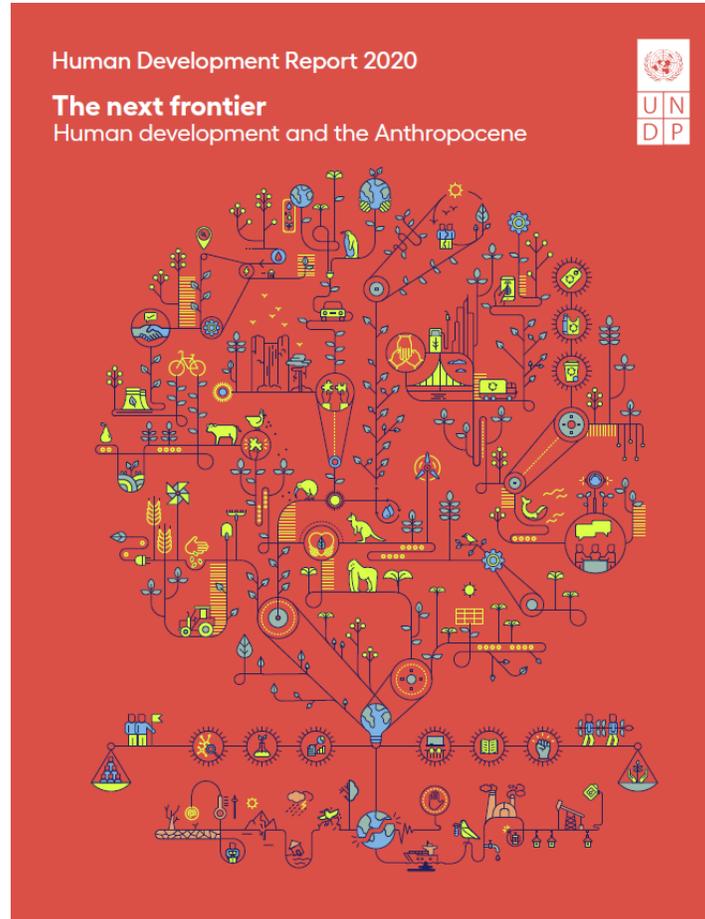


**Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today:**  
Inequalities in human development in the 21st century



## Human Development Report 2020

**The next frontier**  
Human development and the Anthropocene



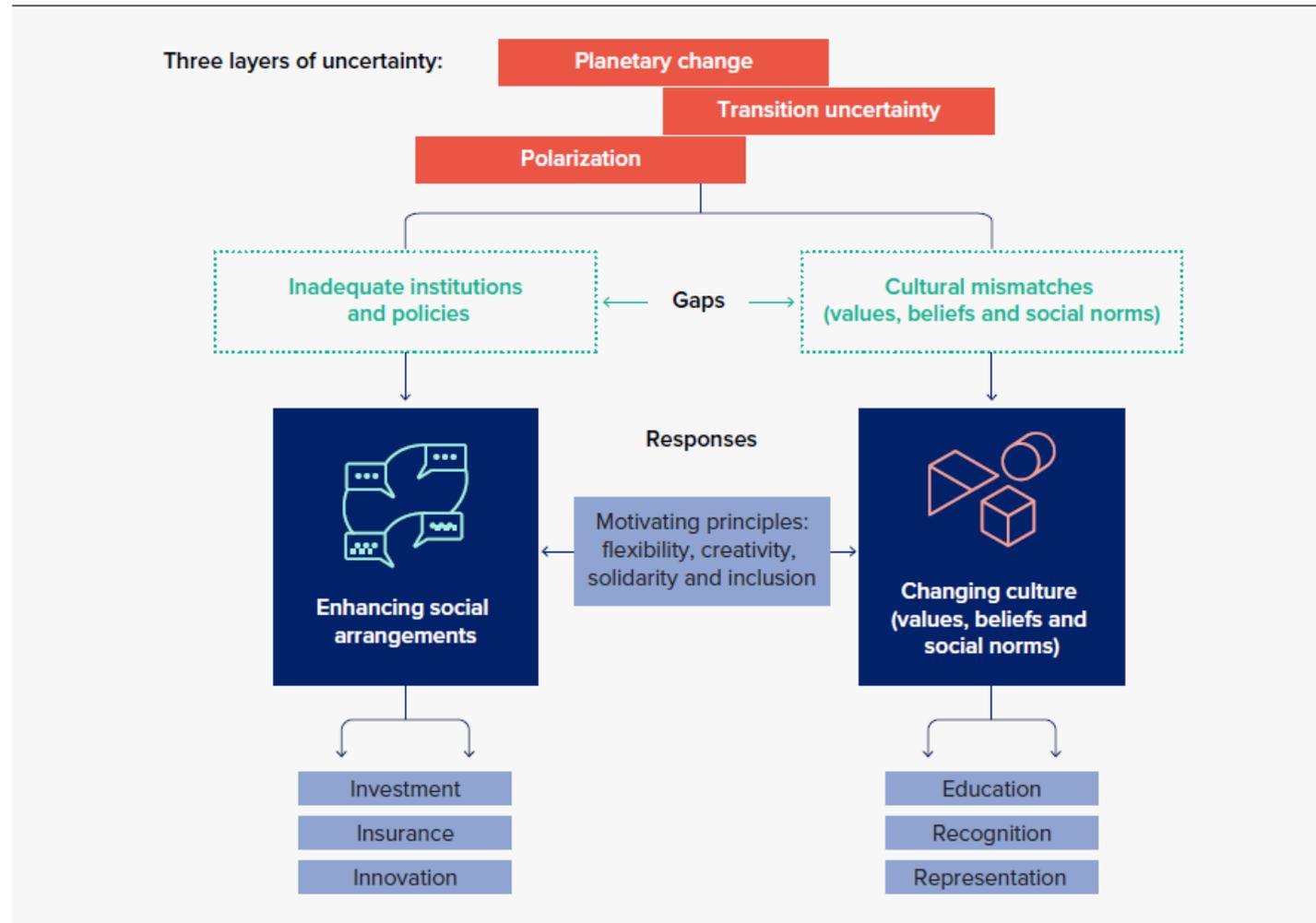
## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2021/2022



**Uncertain Times,  
Unsettled Lives:  
Shaping our Future  
in a  
Transforming World**

# HDR2021/22: a new uncertainty complex

Figure 6.1 A two-tier framework for transformation



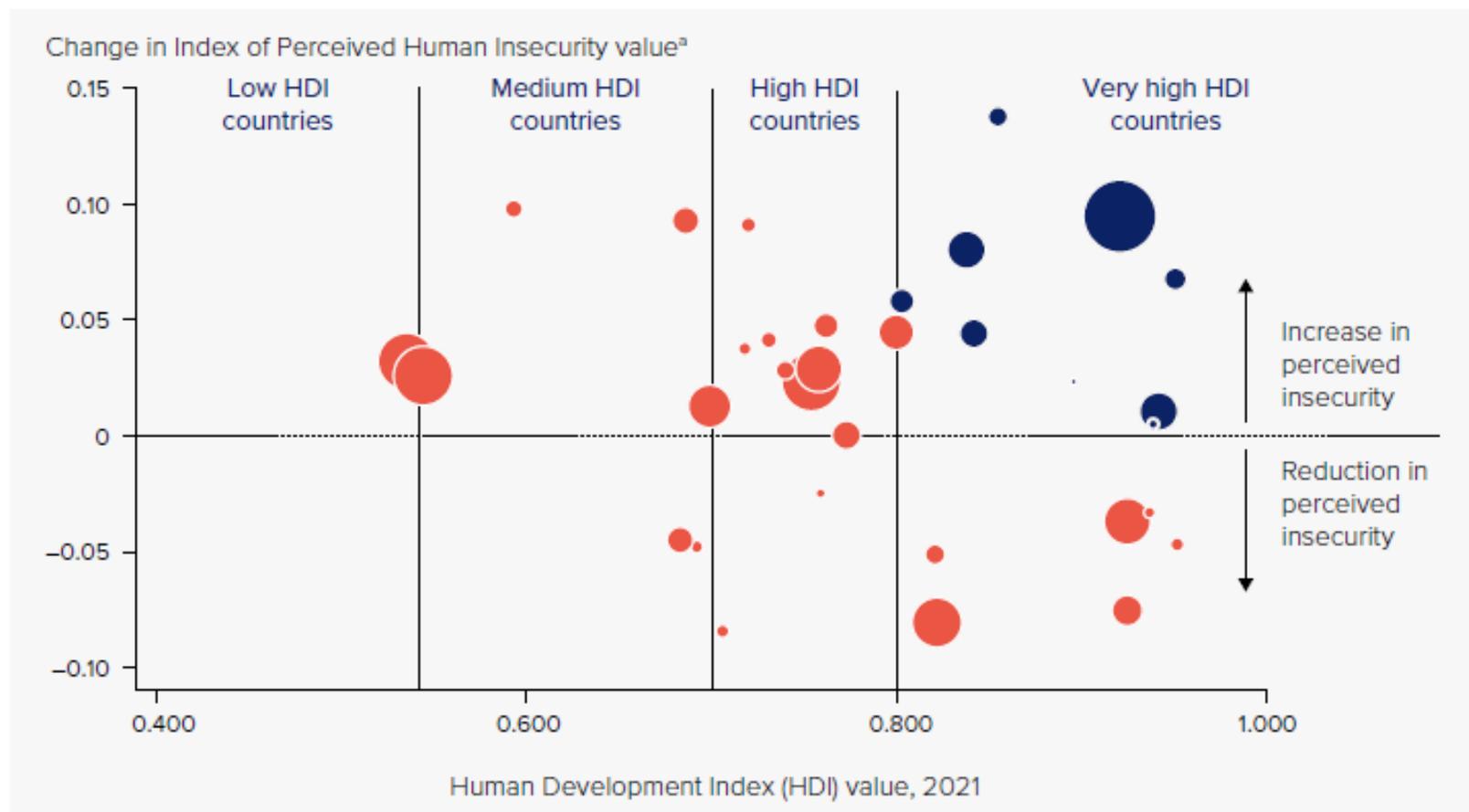
Source: Human Development Report Office.

- **Why societies fail to craft the needed collective responses?**
  - **Individual uncertainty** (proxied by **perceived human insecurity**) is putting people under stress and pulling people apart (**divided societies**).
  - Greater human insecurity is associated with
    - Diminishing agency
    - Lack of trust in others
    - More extreme political beliefs – polarization harms public deliberation in uncertain times



Even before the pandemic, more than 6 in 7 people felt insecure, and it has increased, even in very high HDI countries

**Figure 1.5** Perceived insecurity is on the rise in most countries, even in some very high Human Development Index countries



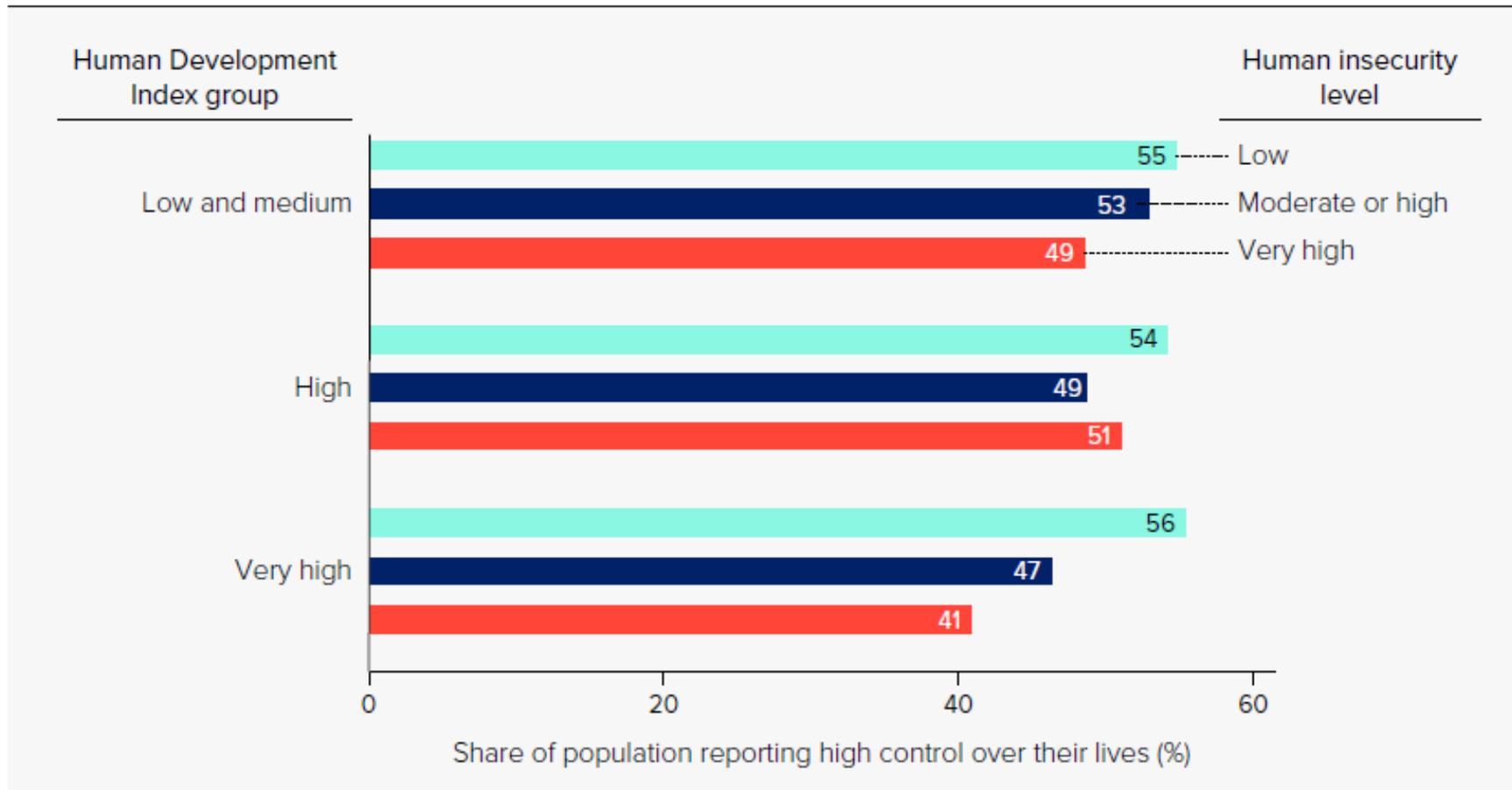
**Note:** Bubble size represents the country population.

**a.** Refers to the change between waves 6 and 7 of the World Values Survey for countries with comparable data.

**Source:** Human Development Report Office based on World Values Survey data.

# Feel insecure? Feel losing control?

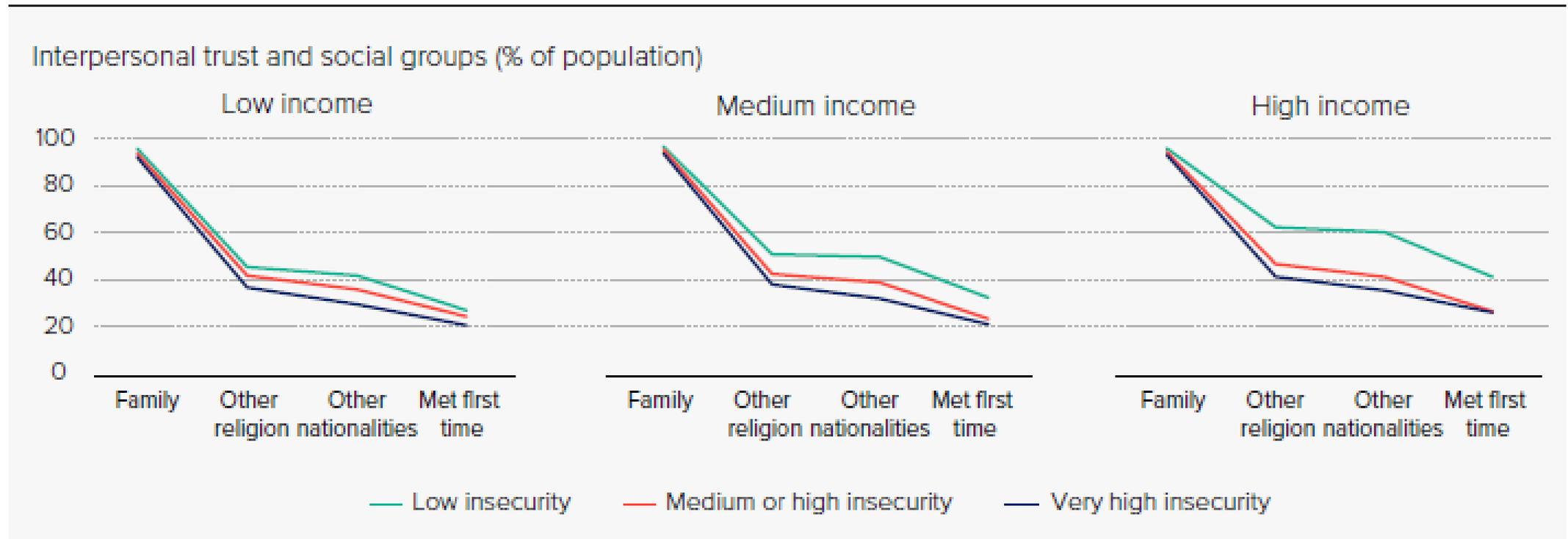
**Figure 4.1** Greater insecurity is associated with lower personal agency



**Source:** Human Development Report Office based on World Values Survey, waves 6 and 7. See Haerpfer and others (2022).

# A breakdown of trust: globally, fewer than 30 percent of people think most people can be trusted, lowest on record

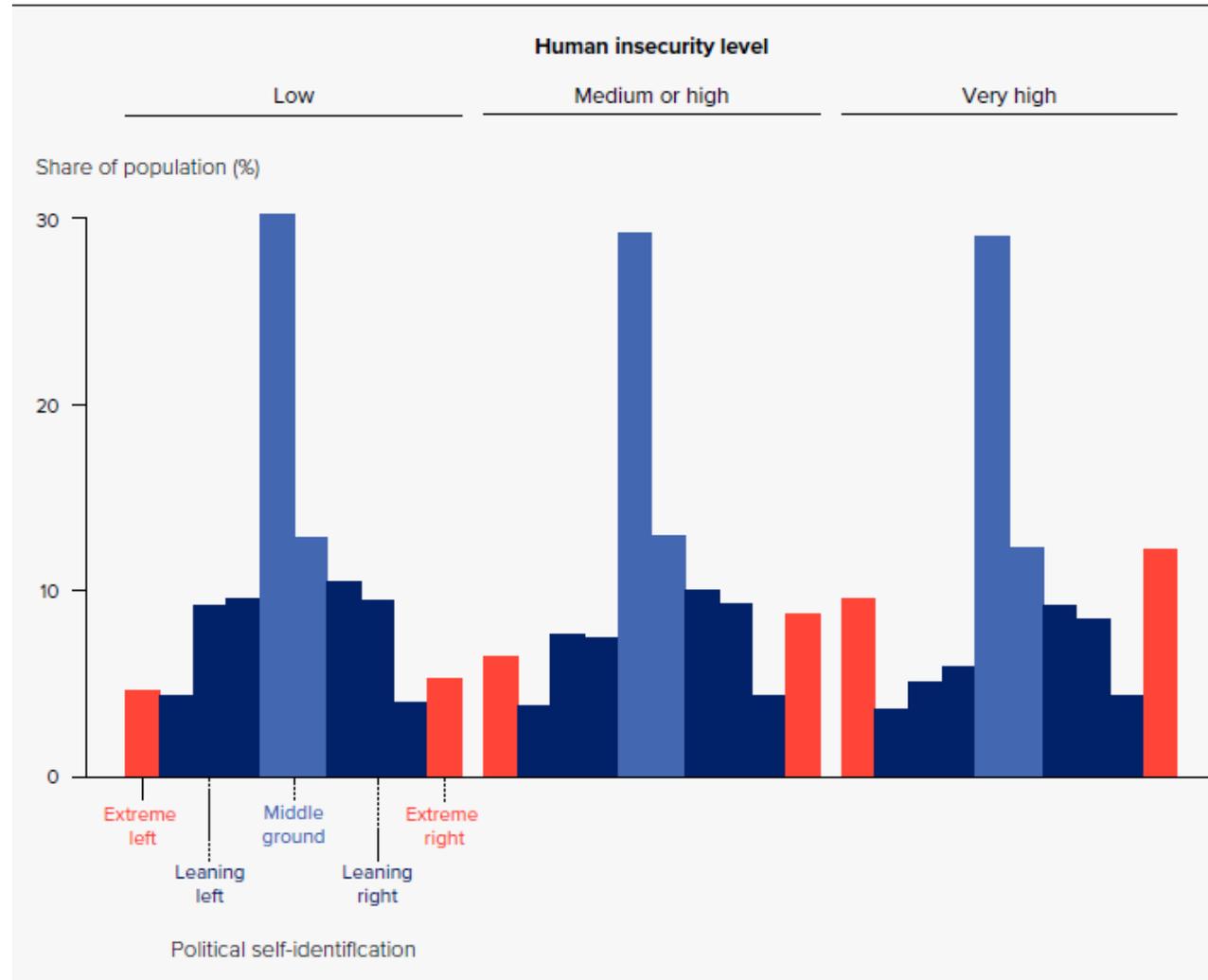
**Figure 4.2** Trust declines with social distance more steeply at lower incomes and higher insecurity



Source: Human Development Report Office based on World Values Survey, waves 6 and 7. See Haerpfer and others (2022).

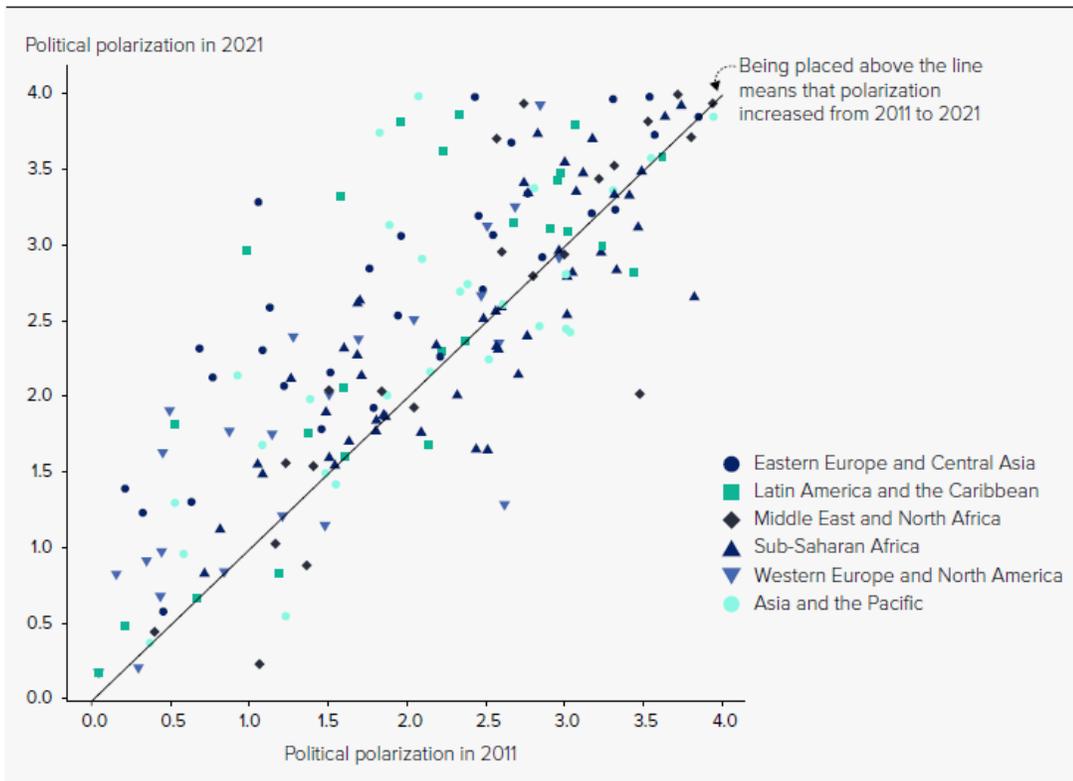
People with extreme political preferences is twice as large among very insecure

Figure 4.3 Greater insecurity is linked to political extremism



Source: Human Development Report Office based on World Values Survey, waves 6 and 7. See Haerpfer and others (2022).

Figure 1.13 Political polarization is on the rise across the world



Source: Adapted from Boese and others (2022).

## HDR2023 explores

- Why polarizations are rising;
- How polarizations can diminish the space for the imaginative, inclusive, just, and effective collective actions needed today;
- How to address governance mismatches to foster cooperation and collection actions.

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