

# HEALTH OR TRADE? A CRITIQUE OF CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO GLOBAL HEALTH DIPLOMACY

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## ABSTRACT

*This article offers a three-pronged critique of contemporary approaches to “global health diplomacy”. The author argues that while the related concepts of “global health governance” and “globalization of public health” aptly captures the dynamic governance landscape of public health in an inter-dependent world, “global health diplomacy” remains an omnibus concept that merely re-invents the wheel of age-old international health cooperation between nation-states. While the author identified three limbs of this critique, the article focused on the third limb, and argues that the major drivers of global of health diplomacy are the developments at the World Trade Organization (WTO) that impact markedly on public health globally. Focusing on three agreements enforced by the WTO – TRIPS, SPS and GATS, the author argues that that exponents of global health diplomacy should think of the relevant*

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*policy toolbox that brings health and foreign policy into a symbiotic and harmonious relationship. Anything short of this will continue to subject public health to trade, and the WTO will emerge as the undisputed norm-setting center not only for trade but health issues as well.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Global Health Diplomacy, Global Health Governance, Globalization of Public Health, Westphalian governance, SARS, WHO, WTO, SPS Agreement, Food Safety, Public Health, TRIPS, GATS, Migration of Health Professionals, Anti-retroviral Drugs, HIV/AIDS*