



SYNTHESIS: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Geopolitics, Human Security and Health Equity
in An Era of Polycrises

22-27 January 2024
Bangkok, Thailand



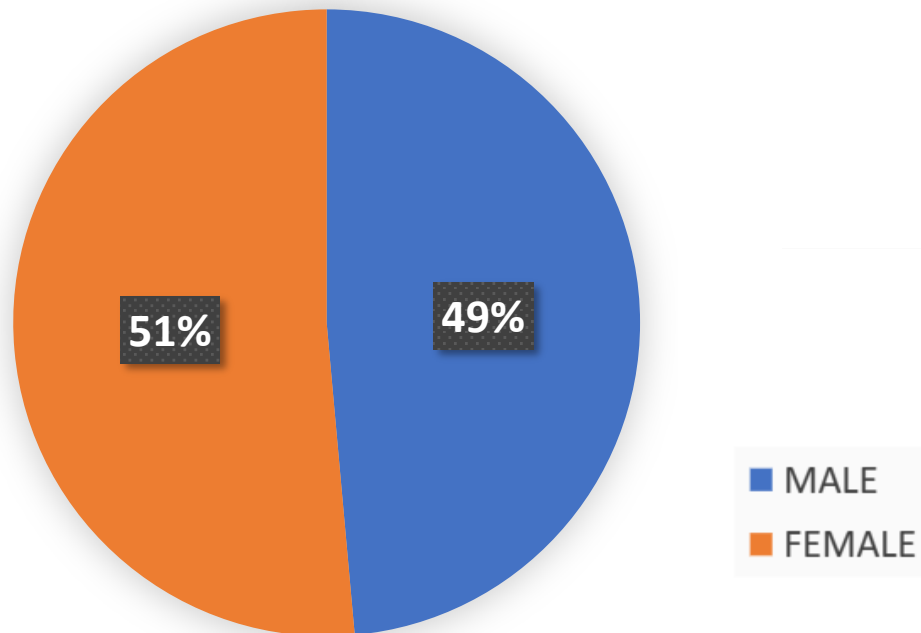
Table of Contents

- Characteristics of participants and speakers
- Synthesis and summary
 - Definition
 - Manifestations of geopolitics and its impact on health
 - Root causes
 - Solutions
- Acknowledgement
- Quotations

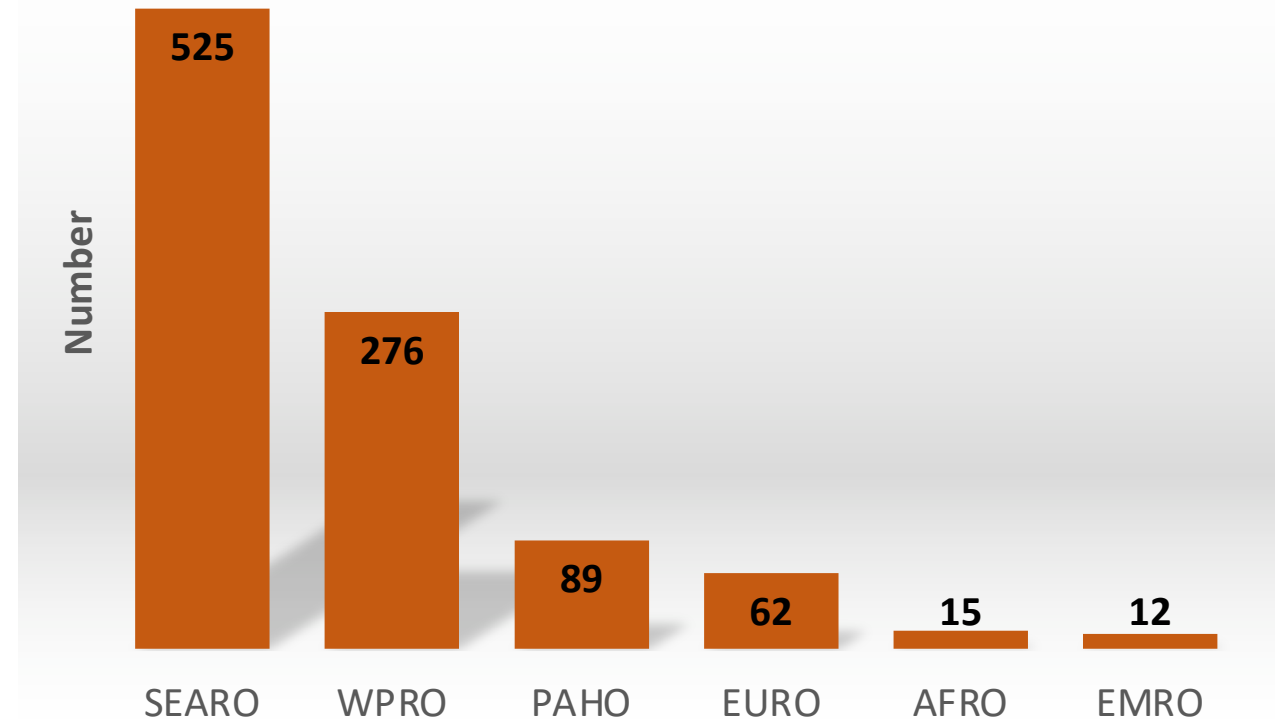


Overall Participants' profile (1)

- Total number of participants = 979
 - Speakers = 73
 - General participants = 906
- Sorted by gender (All participants)



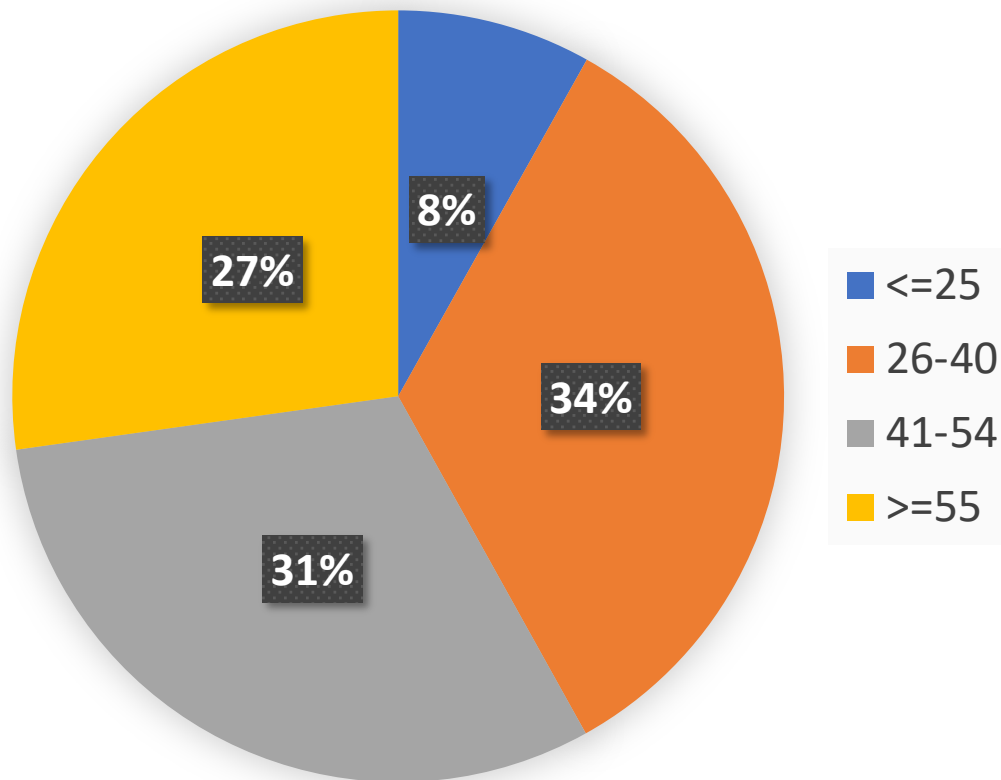
- Sorted by region



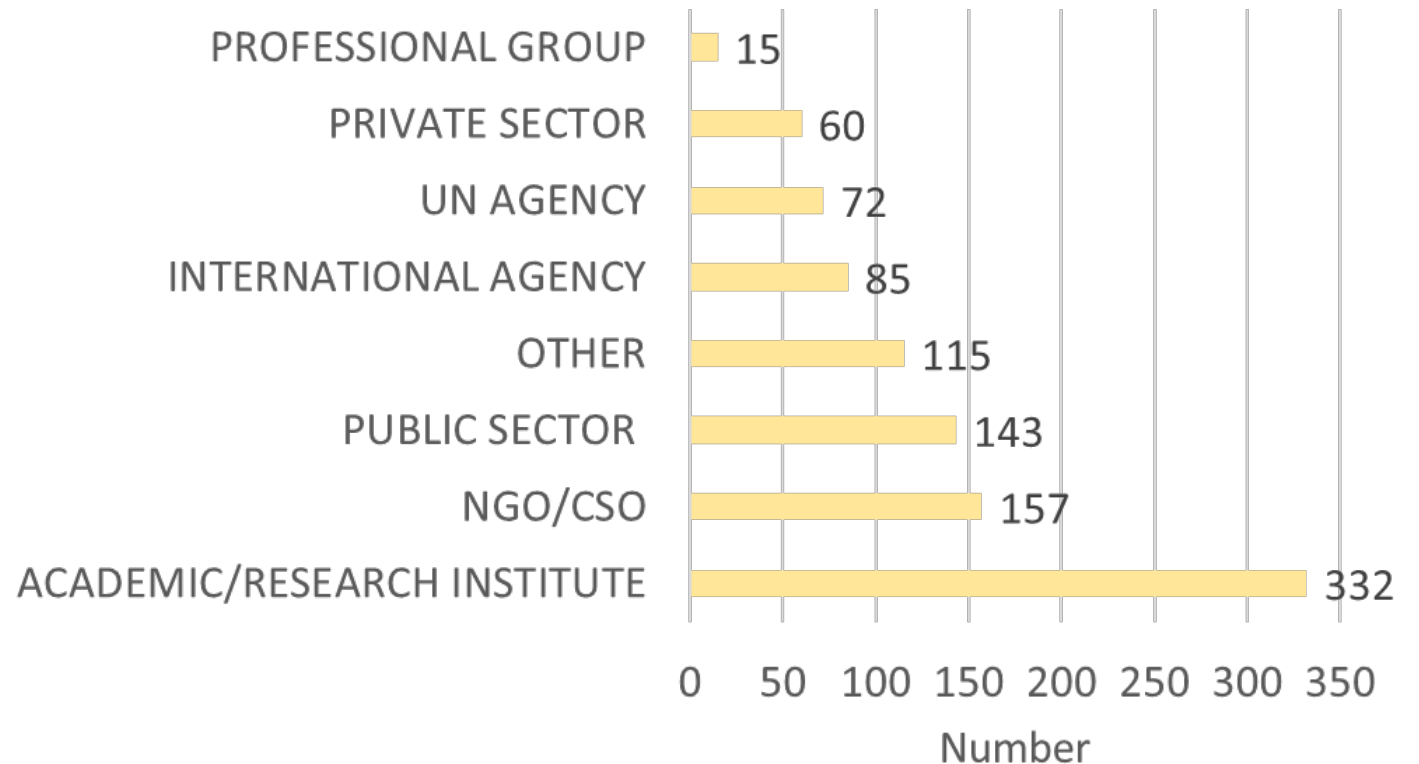


Overall Participants' profile (2)

- Sorted by age



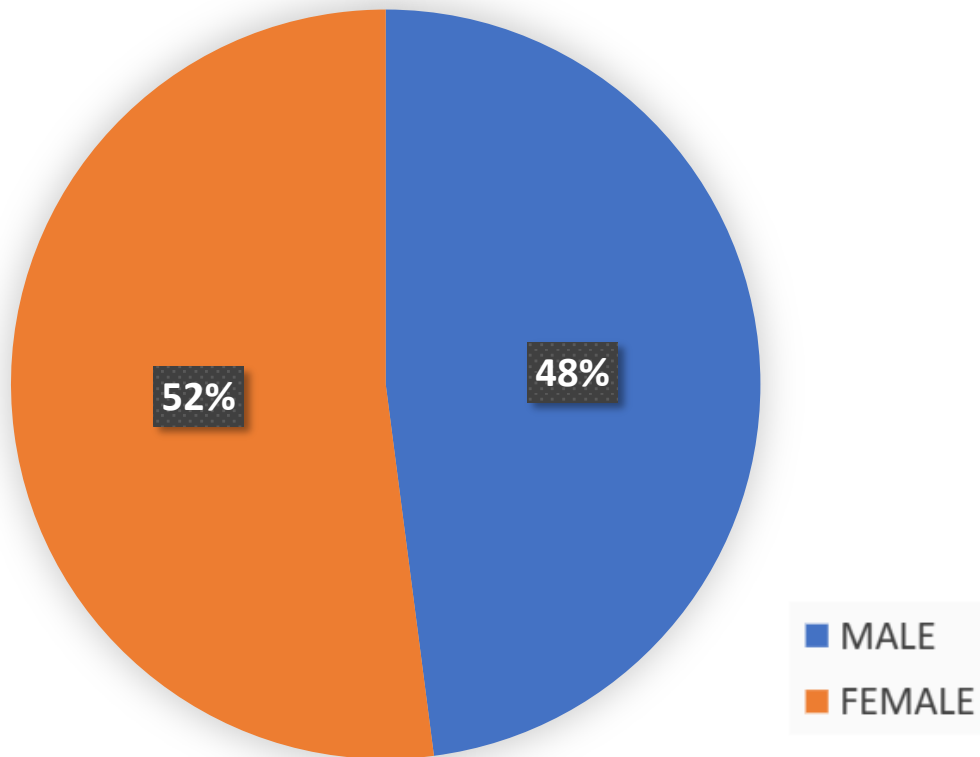
- Sorted by organization



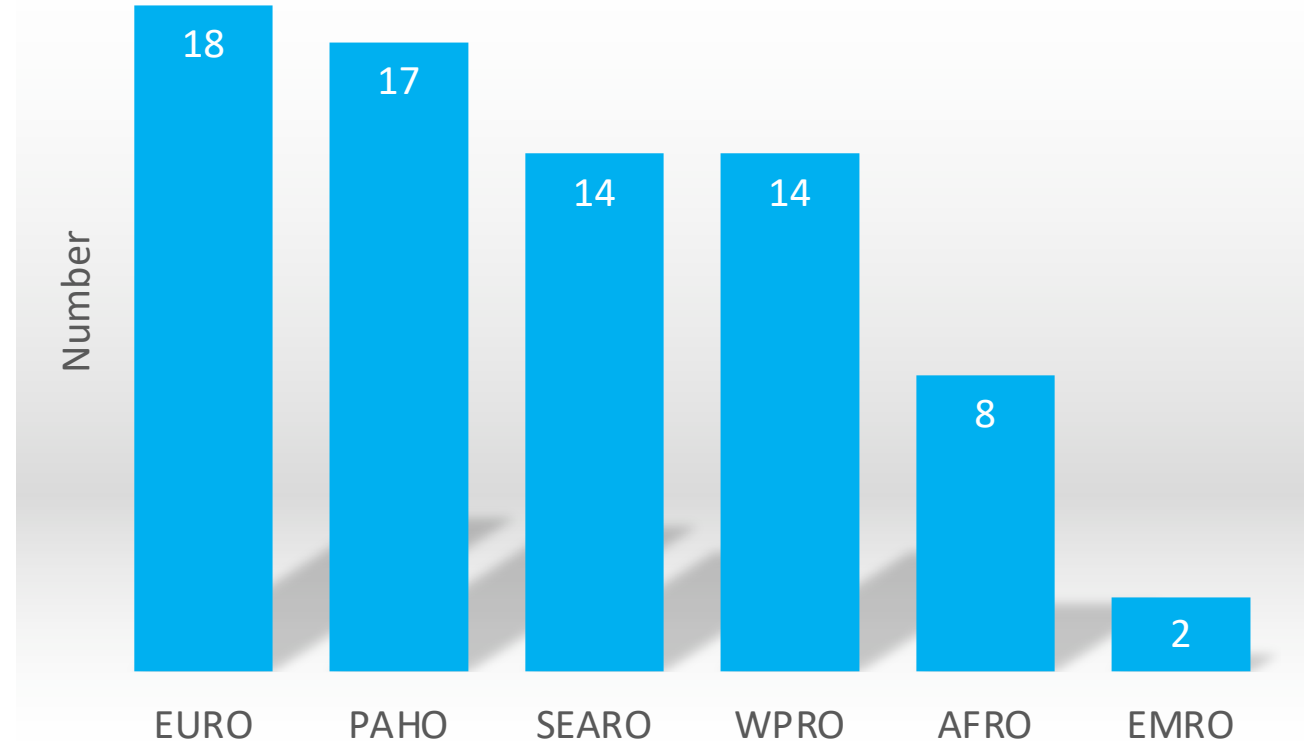


Speakers' profile (1)

- Total number of speakers = 73
- Sorted by gender



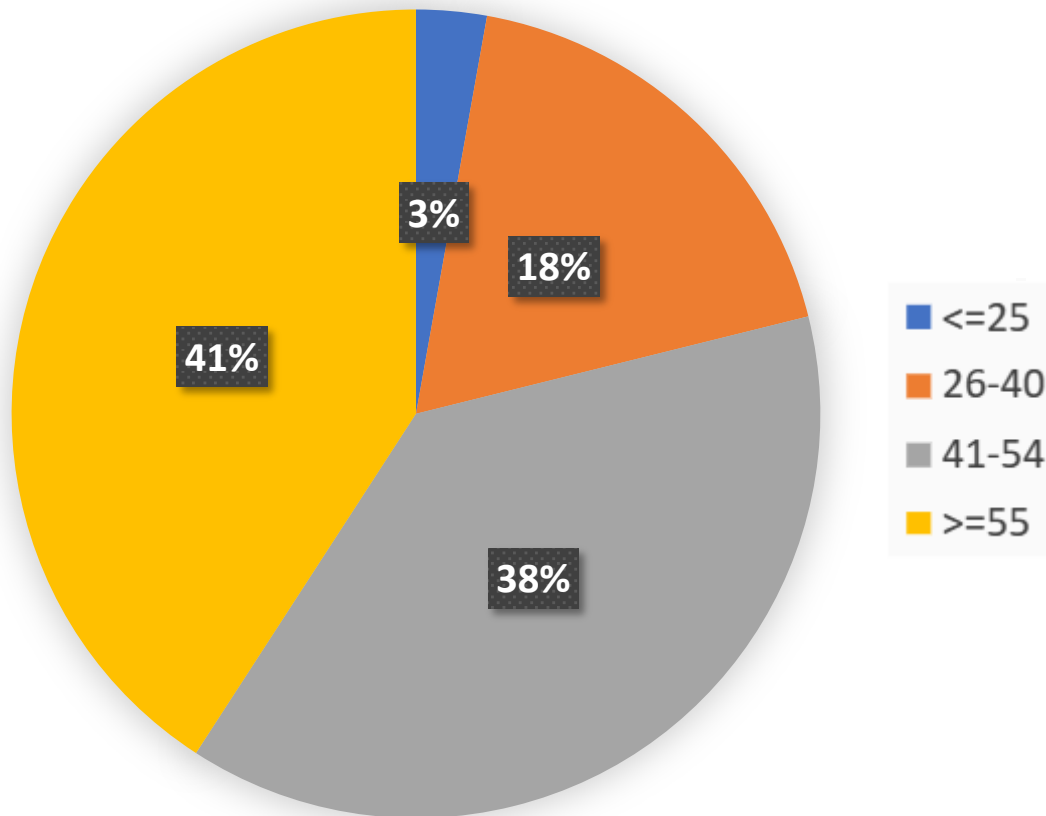
- Sorted by region



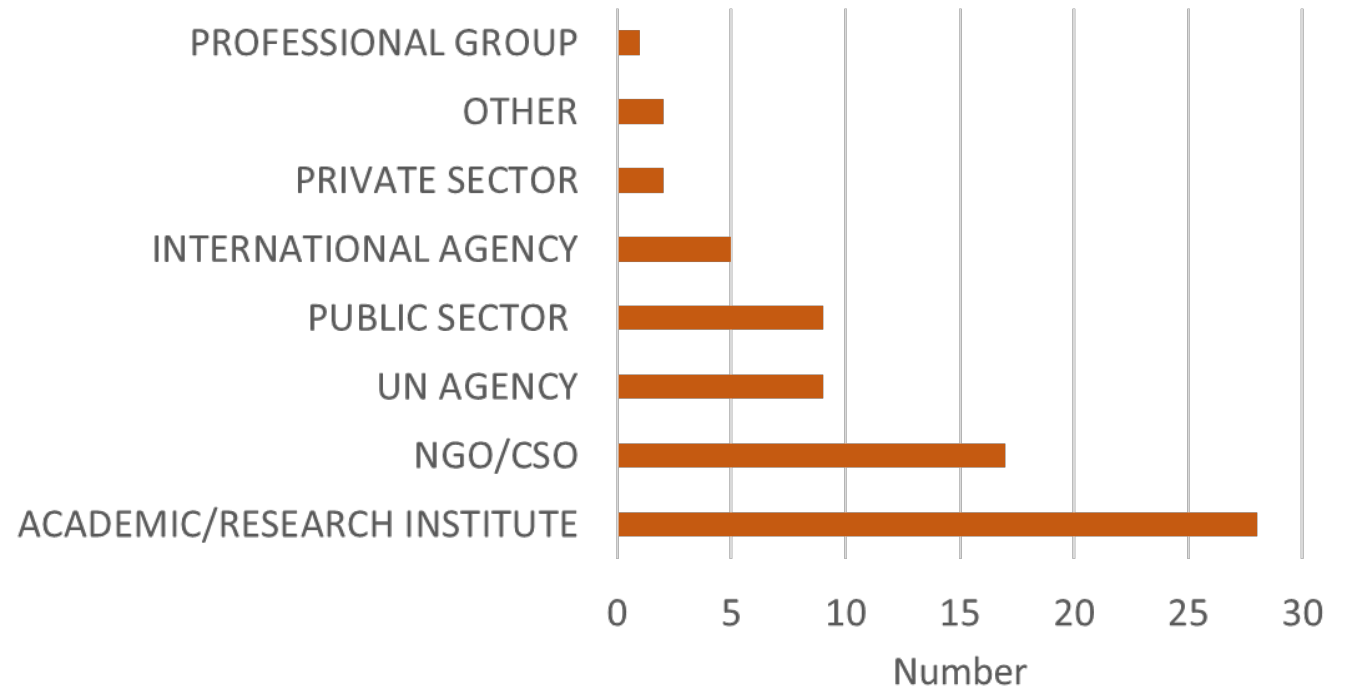


Speakers' profile (2)

- Sorted by age



- Sorted by organization





I. Definition of Geopolitics

Enquires how **nations, organizations, corporations** shape **international politics** by interacting with other nations to pursue their **national political interests** through influences e.g. economic, political, military, ideology, education or culture.

Colin F. (2010)





II. Manifestations of geopolitics and its impact on health

Impact of health attacks in the Gaza Strip

7 Oct – 5 Dec 2023



212 Attacks on Health Care



565

People killed in attacks*



732

People injured in attacks*



56

Health facilities affected

including

24 hospitals damaged



59

Ambulances affected

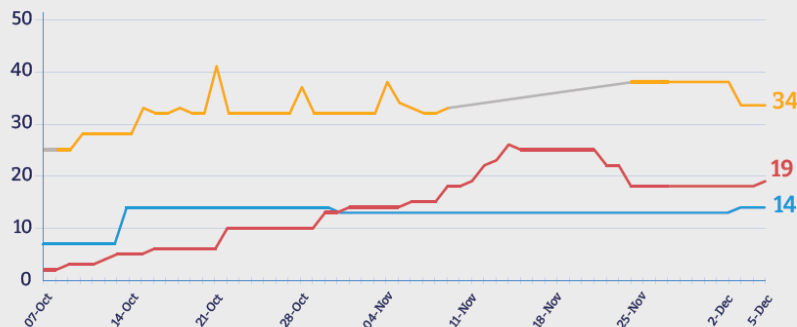
including

35 damaged

* Most of those who have been killed and injured in attacks on health care were persons internally displaced and taking shelter. The attack on Al Ahli Arab Hospital on 17 October resulted in 471 fatalities and 342 injuries, according to reports of the Ministry of Health.

Number of hospitals and PHCCs not functioning over time

— Hospitals not functioning
— UNRWA PHCCs
— MoH PHCCs
— Data not available during this period of time



Power imbalance and political conflicts¹

- Territorial disputes (Russia-Ukraine)
- Civil wars (Syria, Iraq)
- Political instability (Myanmar)

Gaza Strip armed conflict: Impacts on health care systems²

- 56 healthcare facilities affected
- 565 health staffs killed and 732 injured
- 51 out of 72 PHCs are not functioning

1 <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/mapped-where-are-the-worlds-ongoing-conflicts-today/>

2 https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/Impact_of_health_attacks_in_the_Gaza_Strip_DEC_6.pdf?ua=1

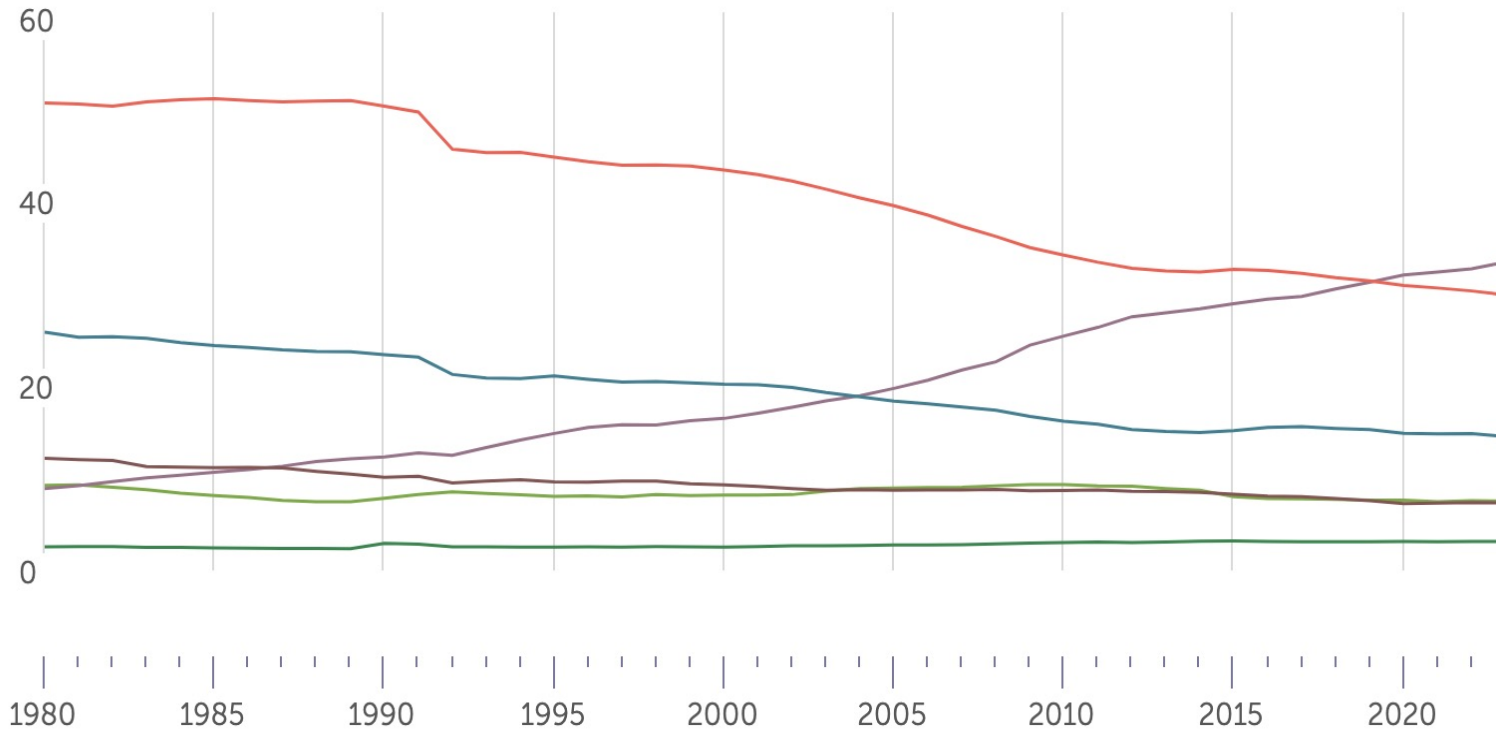


II. Manifestations of geopolitics and its impact on health

Economic imbalance – economic collaboration and sanctions

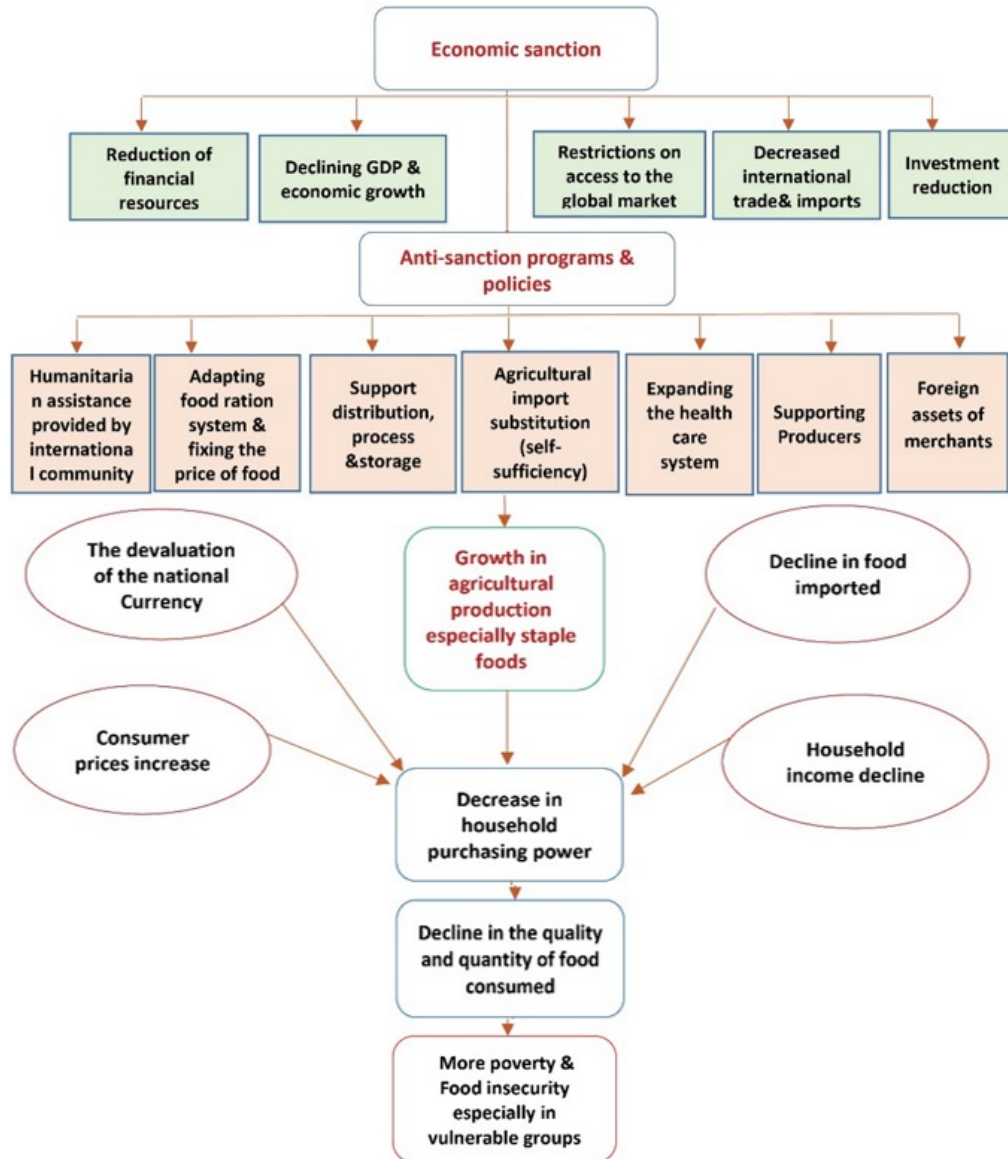
GDP by group of countries; % of world GDP

Percent of World



A group of developed countries still have a large proportion of the world GDP. However, there is an increase in trend of regional economic blocs.

Middle East and Central Asia	+≡	7.51
Emerging and Developing Asia	+≡	33.47
European Union	+≡	14.55
Major advanced economies (G7)	+≡	29.92
Sub-Saharan Africa	+≡	3.15
Latin America and the Caribbean	+≡	7.33



Impacts of economic sanction

- **Sanction consequences**
 - Deteriorating health and health systems, food and nutritional insecurity
 - Disproportionately affects the poor and vulnerable population through unemployment, food prices, and poverty.



II. Manifestations of geopolitics and its impact on health

Global governance for health

United Nations¹

- 1945 Treaty of San Francisco created United Nations after World War II
- Permanent members of UN Security Council: China, France, Russia, UK, US have power of veto which often time paralyzes UN actions.
- Security Council holds more authority than General Assembly; General Assembly can only make recommendations and resolutions

World Trade Organization^{2, 3, 4}

- WTO has important implications for health and health policy. It impedes governments' ability to regulate trade in the interest of health.
- South Africa and India proposed a waiver or suspension of IPR to WTO. Despite the support from the WHO director-general, the UK, the USA, Canada, Norway and EU opposed the TRIPS waiver request.
- The limited scope of the resolution to include vaccines only during the pandemic indicates the influence of powerful nations and industries on WTO decisions.
- Corporates use global bodies to interfere with national regulations. For instance, the baby food companies pressured Thailand's policymakers via the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) committee of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The Bretton Woods Institutions (IMF, World Bank)⁵

- Presidency of the World Bank - held by a citizen of the US (the largest shareholder)
- Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) - European national

¹ Masevski, S. (2022)

² Koivusalo, M., & Rowson, M. (2000)

³ <https://globalizationandhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12992-022-00801-z>

⁴ Bad Faith from Big Pharma, Rich Countries and the WTO Poison WTO TRIPS Waiver Negotiations

⁵ Dreher, A., & Sturm, J. E. (2012)

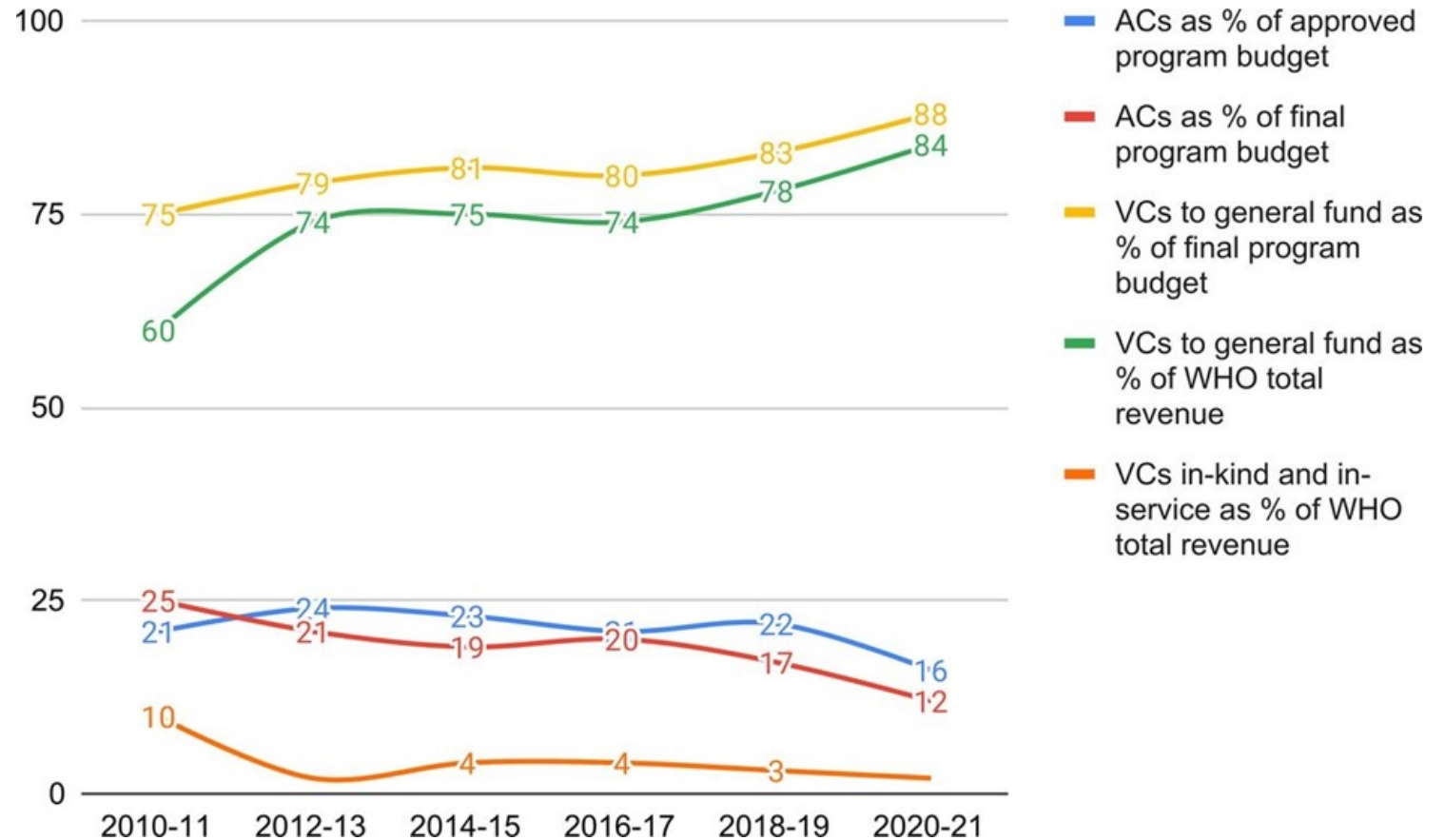


II. Manifestations of geopolitics and its impact on health

Global governance for health

World Health Organization

- Dominant role of budget from voluntary contribution by government and private foundations, impacting priorities.
- Assessed contributions from member states—reduced from 25% in 2010–11 to 12% of programme budget in 2020–21.
- Voluntary contribution increased from 75% to 88% in the same period.
- HICs and philanthropies from those countries contribute 90% of VCs in 2020.



Iwunna, O., Kennedy, J., & Harmer, A. (2023)



II. Manifestations of geopolitics and its impact on health

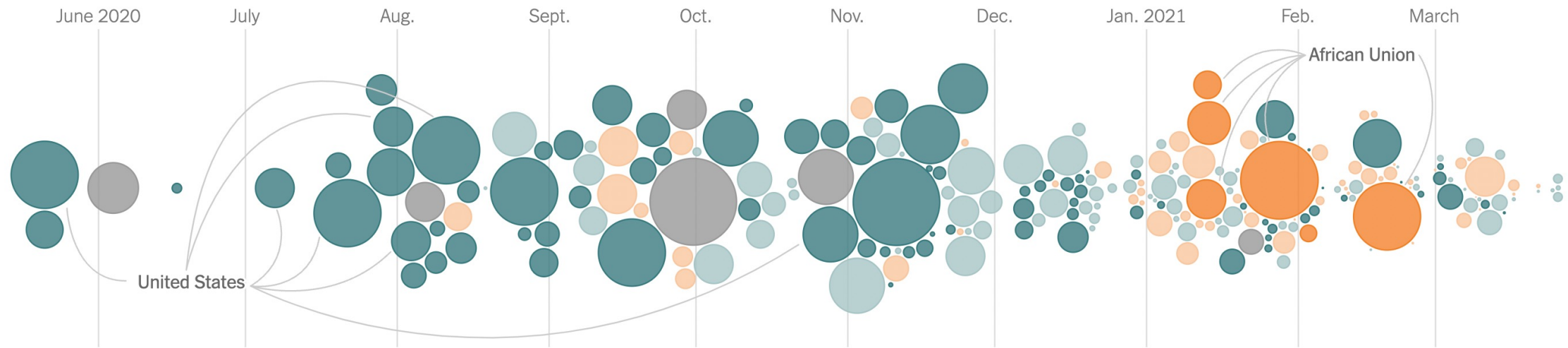
Global governance for health

COVAX - an example of power imbalance in global health governance showing vaccine nationalism deals from HIC.

Vaccine deals reached by countries and regions

Circles are sized by number of doses secured.

Income group **Low** Lower middle Upper middle High Mixed





II. Manifestations of geopolitics and its impact on health

Soft power and cultural influence

- Countries enhances global influence and shape international perception through cultural, media and ideology, and education.
- Global Soft Power index assess 8 pillars: Business & Trade, Governance, International Relations, Culture & Heritage, Media & Communication, Education & Science, People & Values, and Sustainable Future.
- Soft power is a tool powerful states to pursue, exert pressure, politically manoeuvre for national interests and global ambitions.¹

Table 1 Global Soft Power index 2023 ranking²

Rank	Country	Rank	Country
1	United States	11	Sweden
2	United Kingdom	12	Spain
3	Germany	13	Russia
4	Japan	14	Australia
5	China	15	South Korea
6	France	16	Netherlands
7	Canada	17	Norway
8	Switzerland	18	Denmark
9	Italy	19	Saudi Arabia
10	United Arab Emirates	20	Belgium

¹ Malik K. S., et al. (2021)

² <https://brandfinance.com/insights/soft-power-of-asean-nation-brands-how-does-it-matter-to-corporate-brands>



II. Manifestations of geopolitics and its impact on health

Imbalance of knowledge

- The concept of colonization, encompassing domination, subjugation, and resource exploitation, introduces three forms—colonialism, neocolonialism, and cooperative and financial colonialism
 - They impact global health programs, not reflecting local needs, and pose potential threats to the health systems of countries.
- An example is the influence of colonization on the education system.
 - These asymmetries include the structural inequalities in global health education resulting in the dominance of universities in high-income countries in global health teaching and research; the financial subsidy of those universities by students from LMICs; and contribution of brain drain from poorer to wealthier countries.
 - Significant capacity gaps in R&D between HIC and LMICs such as the authorship led by Global North, lacking viable research institutions, funds, and resources, and unfair access to research databases.



II. Manifestations of geopolitics and its impact on health

Commercial Determinants of Health (CDoH)

- CDoH are activities of corporates which can have positive or negative impacts on public health, economic systems and norm.
- Products and practices of commercial actors-notably largest transnational companies are responsible for escalating rates of avoidable ill health, planetary damage, and social and health inequity¹.
- Instrumental, structural and discursive power is employed by some private sectors to undermine public health policies that weaken their profits².

¹ Gilmore A.B., et al. (2023)

² <https://www.who.int/health-topics/commercial-determinants-of-health#tab=>



Alcohol

- Alcohol industry used political activities, emphasizes industry responsibility, advocates effectiveness of self-regulation, questions effectiveness of statutory regulation and by focusing on individual responsibility, to argue against marketing regulations¹.

Tobacco

- Tobacco industry interference is that tobacco industry employed corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities in Myanmar.
- In 2015, Japan Tobacco International (JTI) Myanmar met with the Secretary of Myanmar Investment Commission and made a small donation toward helping flood victims².

Food & agriculture

- Food industry applied corporate political activity (CPA) including promoting deregulation and shaping the evidence base on diet- and public health-related issues, framing diet and public health issues, shaping the evidence base on diet- and public health-related issues, and seeking involvement in the community³.

Energy industry (including impact on climate change)

- Greenhouse gas emissions and energy shortages simultaneously impact both physical and mental health.



III. Root causes

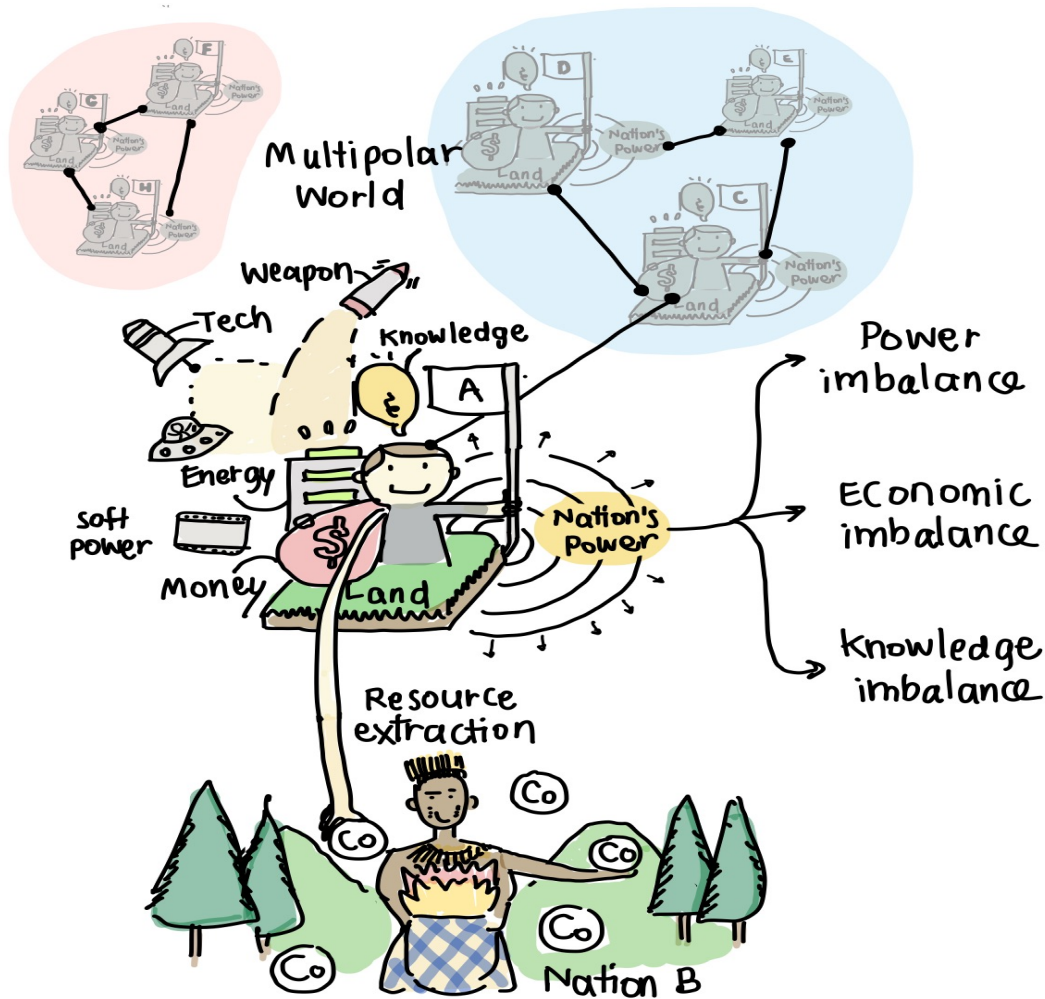
- **Corruption and Weak Governance in LMICs**
 - Vulnerability to neocolonial exploitation
 - Lack of effective institutions and transparency to address external manipulation and policy interference by corporates
- **Debt Dependency**
 - High levels of debt owed to international financial institutions or powerful nations
 - Conditions attached to loans
 - Reliance on Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Development Assistance for Health (DAH)
- **Historical Legacies**
 - Long lasting effects of colonialism on economic, social, and political structures
 - Continued imbalance in relationships shaped by historical exploitation

Addressing neocolonialism requires

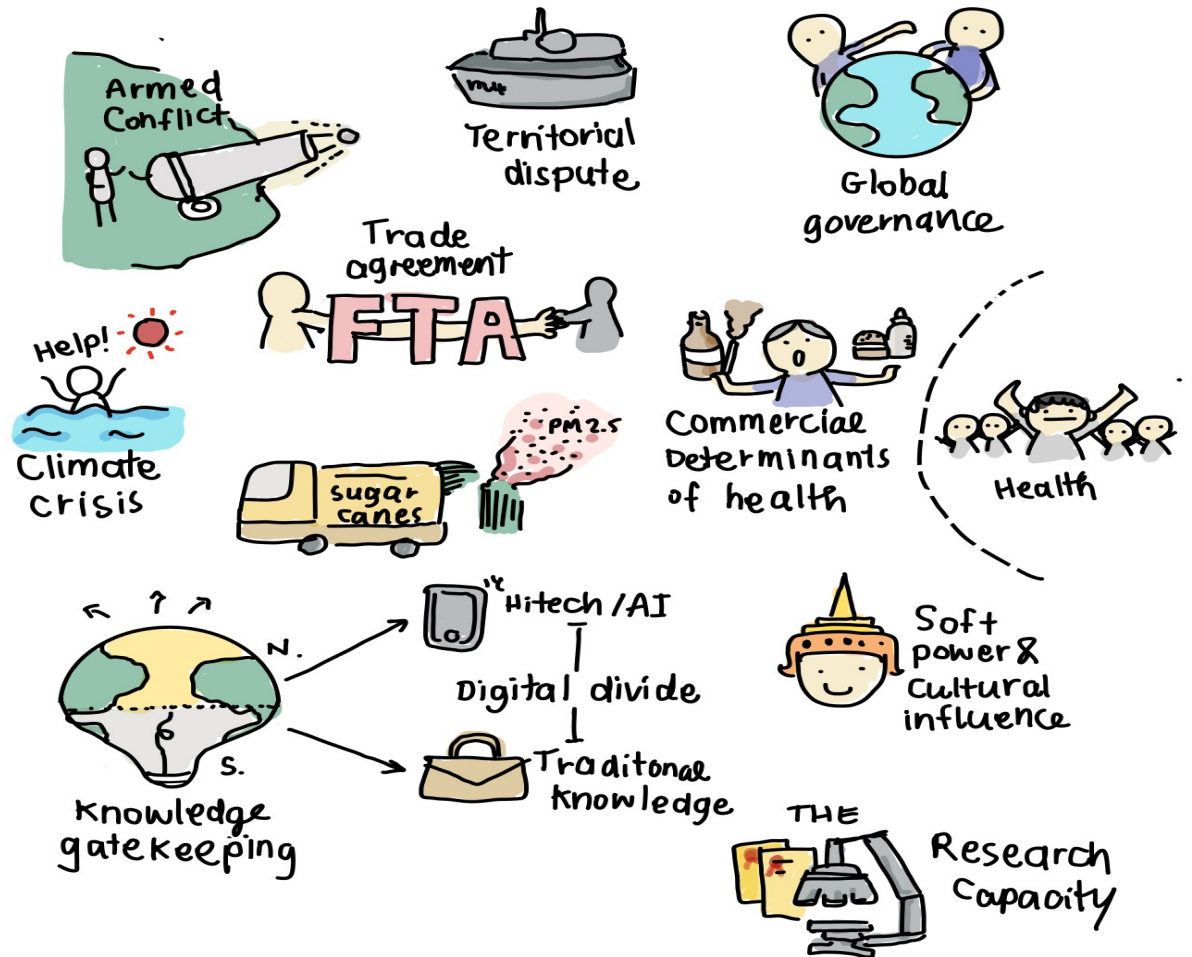
- Awareness of the emergence of neo-colonization
- Global efforts to reform economic and political systems, global health governance
- Promotion of fair trade
- Empower less developed countries to assert their sovereignty



Resource - Power



Manifestation





IV. Solutions dealing with geopolitics' impact

Power Imbalance

- 1. More Collaboration** rather than competition. Strengthen solidarity and global governance for health, involve diverse stakeholders, increase power of negotiation for health. [PL1, PS1.4, PL2, PS 2.4]
- Implement **efficient communication**, inclusivity and cross sectoral strategic partnerships, promote "Health-related metric" to monitor the effectiveness of environmental and health interventions, and combat misinformation. [PL0, PS2.2, PS 3.1]
- 3. Engage and empower local communities**, recognize their priority, ensure meaningful participation, grant local partners control over data and dissemination, strengthen the use of local knowledge and technology. [PS1.2, PL2, PS 3.1, PS 3.3]
- Advance progress towards **gender equality** and **health equity** which contribute to peace, empower **youth** through education, training, mentoring, facilitate their meaningful participation, and inclusivity in global discussions and decision-making. [PS1.5, PS2.4, PS3.4]

IV. Solutions dealing with geopolitics' impact

Knowledge Imbalance

5. Promote **decolonization of knowledge** through institutionalizing initiatives, mentorship, and community involvement. Advocate for R&D reforms prioritizing equitable partnership. Emphasize localization in national policies by building trust, enhancing local capacity, and reinforcing preventive healthcare. Propose a Pooled Partnership (mRNA hub) for collaborative knowledge sharing. Transform global university rankings to prioritize social contributions. [PS1.2, PL3, PS3.2]

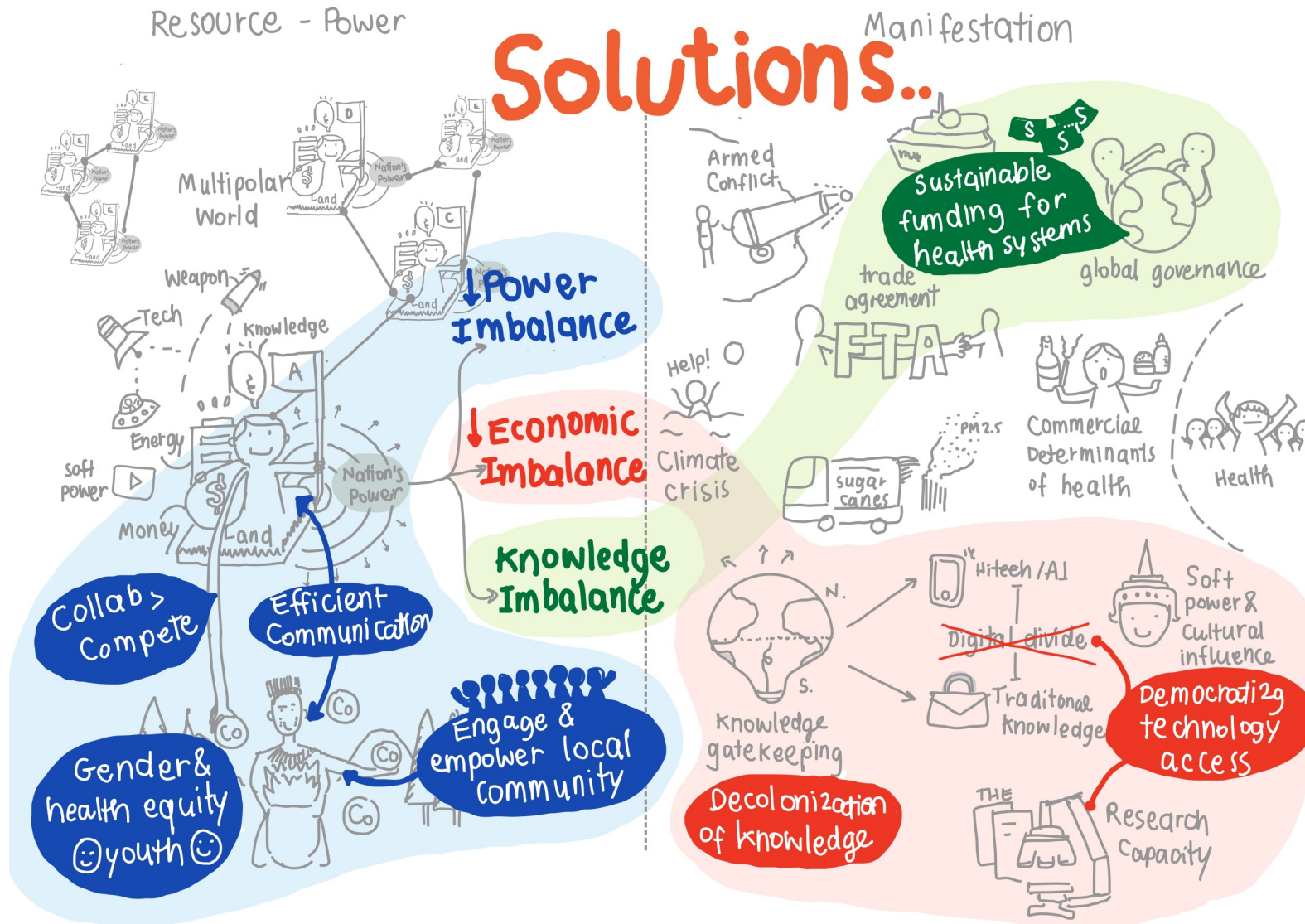
6. **Democratizing technology access** requires globally equitable sharing of benefits, knowledge, and manufacturing techniques. Essential for this is global collaborative governance, harmonizing data, regulatory standards, and fostering patient-centered technology adoption. This necessitates a robust foundation in interconnected data infrastructure, regulations, and cybersecurity for AI innovations. [PS1.1, PS1.3, PS2.3, PS3.5]



IV. Solutions dealing with geopolitics' impact

Economic Imbalance

7. Ensuring **sustainable funding for health systems**, innovative financing mechanism, including taxes, and providing at-risk capital for LMICs are essential. There is a need to increase the scale of health financing in LMICs and bolster the sustainability of **UHC**. Establishing global mechanisms that encompass fair trade agreement, co-financing, service coverage, human resources, and knowledge sharing is crucial in achieving these objectives. [PL1, PS1.1, PS3.1]



IV. Solutions dealing with geopolitics' impact

Your turn now!

Use the QR code to access the Menti quiz OR type code **4343 0075** on menti.com

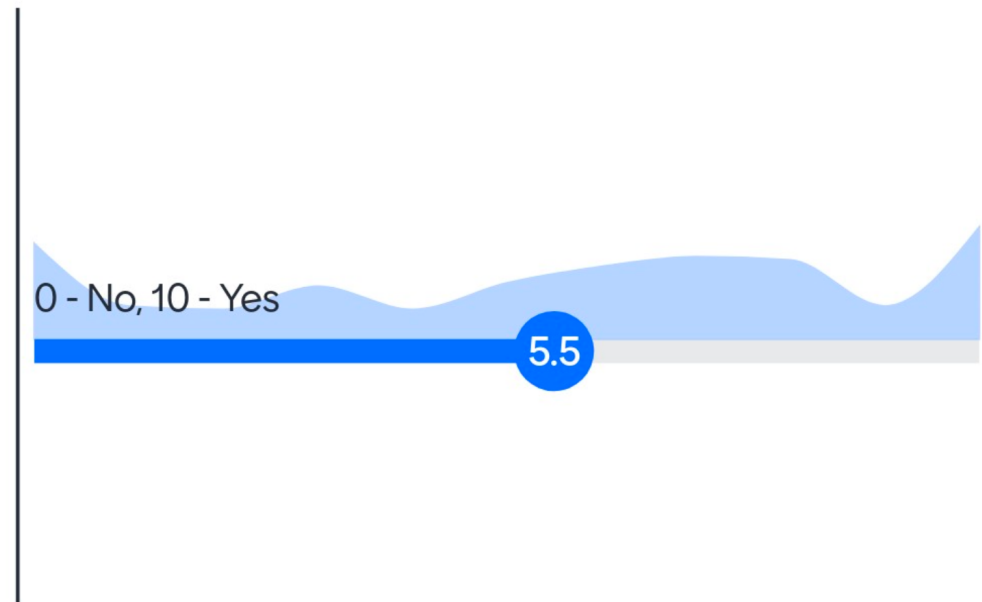




Results of Menti survey (n=205)

Mentimeter

Can we avoid World War III?

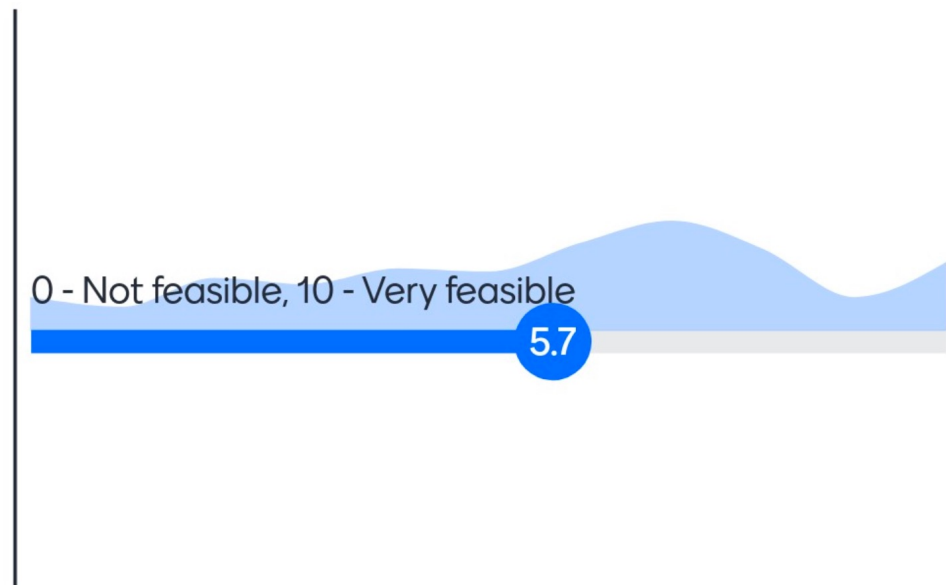




Results of Menti survey (n=201)

Mentimeter

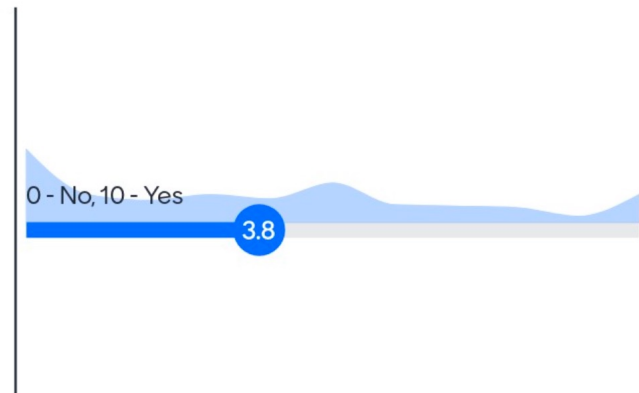
How feasible is decolonization ?



Results of Menti survey (n=202)

 Mentimeter

Can the World achieve global consensus on Pandemic Agreement by May 2024?

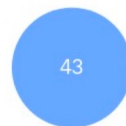


Results of Menti survey (n=202)

 Mentimeter

At the closure of PMAC 2024, where does your country belong?

On their own
boat



In a cabin on a
large ship



Acknowledgement

Rapporteurs PMAC 2024: 91 rapporteurs

6 countries

- China (1)
- Japan (6)
- Thailand (81)
- Singapore (1)
- The United Kingdom (2)

21 organizations

- Governments (22)
- NGOs (2)
- Academics (20)
- Medical student associations (46)
- Private sectors (1)



Lead Rapporteur



Viroj Tangcharoensathien



Soumya Swaminathan



Teo Yik Ying

Rapporteur Coordinator



Titiporn
Tuangratananon



Nisachol
Cettakrikul



Hathairat
Kosiyaporn



Divya
Lakhota



Rapeepong
Suphanchaimat
(Advisor)



Walaiporn
Patcharanarumol
(Advisor)

Session Rapporteur

45 Main Rapporteurs (MR) from 6 countries and 17 organizations

46 Capacity Building Rapporteurs (CBR) from 4 organizations (health professional students in Thailand)



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