Authoritarian Member States of the UN: Determinants of Autocratic Co-Sponsorship of Draft Resolututions as a Signal of Foreign Policy Coordination at the United Nations

Bochtler, Paul

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Arbeitspapier / working paper

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:
Bochtler, P. (2021). *Authoritarian Member States of the UN: Determinants of Autocratic Co-Sponsorship of Draft Resolututions as a Signal of Foreign Policy Coordination at the United Nations.* (Arbeitspapiere des Osteuropa-Instituts der Freien Universität Berlin, Arbeitsschwerpunkt Politik, 84). Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, Osteuropa-Institut Abt. Politik. https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-83787-6

Arbeitspapiere des Osteuropa-Instituts
Arbeitsbereich Politik

Paul Bochtler

Authoritarian Member States of the UN

Determinants of Autocratic Co-Sponsorship of Draft Resolutions as a Signal of Foreign Policy Coordination at the United Nations

84/2021

Freie Universität Berlin

Authoritarian Member States of the UN
Determinants of Autocratic Co-Sponsorship of Draft Resolutions as a Signal of Foreign Policy Coordination at the United Nations

About the author:
Paul Bochtler
Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Universität Potsdam
paulbochtler@gmail.com

Do autocracies cooperate internationally? This working paper investigates whether regime-type explains co-sponsorship patterns at the United Nations General Assembly. Co-sponsorship is a relatively costly signal of international cooperation at the UN, which is analyzed based on a novel dataset, including newly validated issue categories and co-sponsorship behavior on 14.995 draft resolutions. Theoretically, the paper unifies three strands of literature: the recent literature on autocratic regional organizations, the growing literature on foreign policy of autocratic regimes and the traditional analysis of the United Nations. The results suggest that regime-type plays a strong role in co-sponsorship behavior: democracies co-sponsor with their peers, whereas autocracies, in line with existing findings, cooperate overall less at the UN. They do, however, prefer to co-sponsor with one another over partners of other regime-types. This seems to be particularly true in issue areas where autocratic regimes could attempt to counter democratic norm-setting, such as human rights. There is mixed results concerning the effect of autocratic regional organizations on autocratic co-sponsorship. Preliminary results suggest at least some positive effect on autocracies and highlight the need for further research.

Keywords:
United Nations General Assembly; co-sponsorship behavior; authoritarianism; foreign policy; international cooperation; autocratic regional organizations.

OSTEUROPA INSTITUT

Arbeitspapier 84/2021

Abteilung Politik am Osteuropa-Institut der Freien Universität Berlin

Paul Bochtler

Authoritarian Member States of the UN: Determinants of Autocratic Co-Sponsorship of Draft Resolutions as a Signal of Foreign Policy Coordination at the United Nations

Freie Universität Berlin

Paul Bochtler (2021) Authoritarian Member States of the UN: Determinants of Autocratic Co-Sponsorship of Draft Resolutions as a Signal of Foreign Policy Coordination at the United Nations. Arbeitspapiere des Osteuropa-Instituts (Abteilung Politik) 84/2021 Freie Universität Berlin 2021.

Impressum

Arbeitspapiere des Osteuropa-Instituts, Freie Universität Berlin
Abteilung Politik

Garystraße 55
14195 Berlin

Redaktion: Alexander Libman
alexander.libman@fu-berlin.de
Lektorat/Layout: Alexander Libman

Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

1 Introduction

There is a growing sense that it is not only democracies that coordinate their foreign policy actions and export their normative views on 'good institutions', but also autocracies. Importantly, authoritarian regimes have founded regional organizations that provide financial and rhetorical support to member states (Libman & Obydenkova, 2018). Some states, such as China, have been increasingly active in the UN. Thomas Ambrosio puts it bluntly: "In short, the normative structure of the international system is changing. The democratic world must prepare itself for a new world order in which the balance between democracy and autocracy no longer clearly favors itself" (Ambrosio, 2018, p. 122).

During this year's high-level meeting, Chinese President Xi Jinping said: "*China has always been a true follower of multilateralism. It will stay actively engaged in reforming and developing the global governance system. It will firmly uphold the UN-centered international system, firmly uphold the international order underpinned by international law, and firmly defend the UN's central role in international affairs*" (CGTN, 2020). This follows years of increasing activism by China in the international playing field, including the United Nations. While the importance of the UN as a foreign policy actor and international organization with norm-setting capacity has been in decline over the past years, there is hardly any foreign policy forum or organization that rivals its scope. This makes the UN a good candidate for looking at international coordination efforts of authoritarian regimes.

Positions that states take at the United Nations (UN) have received intensive scholarly attention. In a first wave, scholars studied UN positions for the sake of themselves, in a second wave to derive foreign policy preferences of states for other research questions (Reinalda, 2013). The behavior of authoritarian regimes has also received ample attention, however, authoritarian behavior at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has not been studied as extensively.

In a recent article, Tom Ginsburg, in light of the increasing international activity of authoritarian regimes, even suggests the possible advent of 'authoritarian international law' (Ginsburg, 2020). He focuses on the regional level, but openly questions whether this type of norm setting will stay on the regional level.

Given the international weight still attached to resolutions at the UN, I posit that regional groupings of authoritarian regimes will attempt to coordinate on the international level as well. Put more general, I am interested in whether there is empirical evidence for a sort of 'authoritarian internationale'. Put more specifically, I am interested in whether the behavior of states in the UN can be linked to their possible coordination in regional organizations of authoritarian states.

In the following pages, I therefore argue that we can expect authoritarian regimes to cooperate and coordinate their actions in international organisations (IO), namely the UN. I will embed this argument in the existing literature on coordination between autocracies and argue that interaction at the UN reduces the cost of authoritarian practices for regimes. However, coordination is not cheap, which is why I argue that authoritarian regimes will only coordinate where it matters and within the realms of regional clubs, where coordination is cheaper for a variety of reasons. To provide preliminary empirical support for this assumption, I looked at a particularly strong indicator of cooperation and

coordination of states in the UNGA: the co-sponsoring of draft resolutions. Following a more descriptive analysis, I exemplified an analysis into the determinants of co-sponsorship counts between authoritarian regimes. The results show that coordination at the UN is a real possibility for autocracies and while the empirics do not unequivocally show the impact of regional organization, there is grounds for further investigations.

This research paper is divided into three main parts, Theory, Methodology and Analysis. The Theory section sketches out the theoretical foundations for what I believe to be the mechanisms that drive behavior at the UN, specifically that of authoritarian regimes. Firstly, I will present the literature on voting in the UN. Secondly, an overview of the current literature on the international politics of authoritarian rule will be given, laying out the assumptions that I am making about the central actors of my research authoritarian states, as well as the role of regional organizations. Lastly, I will formulate the causal mechanisms and hypothesis for the observed behavior at the UN. In the section Methodology I will firstly describe the novel dataset underlying this paper. I will present some basic descriptive statistics to familiarize the reader with the indicators and data, also making the process of data collection and coding of issue categories transparent. Secondly, I will lay out the methodology chosen for testing the hypothesis set out in the previous section. In the section Analysis, I will present the results of the analysis of states behavior at the UN. Each hypothesis will be tested with a variety of methods, to ensure robustness of the results. Furthermore, findings and drawbacks of the chosen methods will be discussed. The Conclusion will provide a summary of the results and an outlook into future research avenues both for the observed behavior and the novel dataset.

2 Theory

2.1 Voting in the General Assembly of the United Nations

The United Nations seem to be the natural place to look, when investigating the coordination of foreign policy actions of states–it is the largest and in terms of issues the most encompassing arena of international deliberation that exists in the world. Research on the UN has a long-standing tradition in the literature on political science and international relations. The following sections will firstly give an overview of how voting occurs at the UN, secondly plausibilize why the UN is an appropriate institution and forum to look for coordination. Thirdly, the past and current research into specifically voting behavior at the UN will be presented to contextualize the paper.

2.1.1 Voting in the UN

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the Assembly has seen the biggest change in membership in recent times from 166 in 1991, with the admission of the 15 soviet republics and some other states to 184 in 1993. Currently it counts 193 sovereign states (United Nations, 2021a).

In general, the General Assembly (GA) is driven by consensus: most votes are adopted with large majorities or directly without a vote. Only when deliberations in the committees failed to produce a compromise or states want to call for a vote to signal their opposition to a resolution publicly, a resolution is put to vote (Panke, 2013). Figure 1 displays the relation of consensus votes (blue and green), to votes that did not reach consensus and had to be voted on (red and orange). It is visible, that the amount of disputed votes, after a decline in the sessions after 61, is on the rise. On the other hand, the Figure shows neatly how the UN has a fairly stable set of recurring themes. Votes in red and green have been on the agenda of the UN in a previous session. This makes immediately clear, that voting at the UN often does not carry the most weight for voicing a preference, but instead setting the agenda does.

The resolutions debated in a session are set in the second plenary meeting (United Nations, 2020). States can propose resolutions for the agenda that are then being put up for discussion and an eventual vote. Sometimes, groups co-sponsor drafts together. Cosponsoring is costly in comparison with voting and shows a strong public positional signal (Dijkhuizen & Onderco, 2019).

Broad regional groupings are very important in the UN, where there is an African Group (the largest grouping), the Asia and the Pacific Group (second largest), the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), the Eastern European Group and the Western European and Others Group (WEOG), which notably includes states such as Australia or New Zealand. These groups are intersected with issue-based or political groupings, such as the Non-aligned movement (NAM) or the G-77 (United Nations, 2021c). Groups can be especially important, when a state has no fixed position on a certain issue and might just go along with the group (Ferdinand, 2014a).

Majority coalitions in the UN have existed from 1947 to 1960 in the form of a US-led

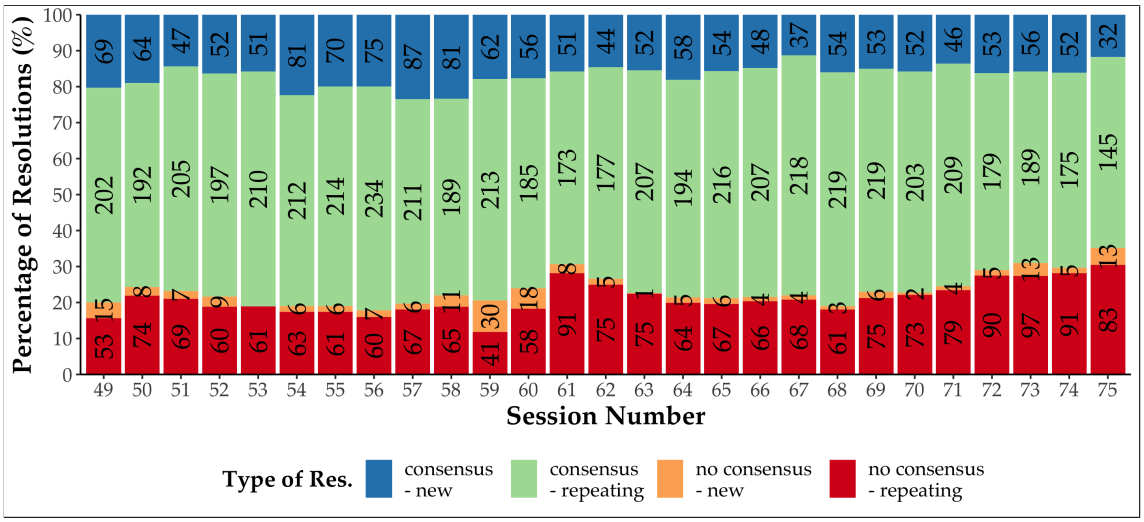

Figure 1: *Proportion of consensual votes (no contestation) versus resolutions with contestation and repeating versus new resolutions. Absolute numbers vertically in black print.*

coalition, but since 1967, following decolonization, a North-South cleavage has developed with the coalition of the global south holding a majority (Hooijmaaijers & Keukeleire, 2016; Pauls & Cranmer, 2017; Voeten, 2004).

2.1.2 Why the UN?

One might ask: so what about states behavior at the UN? Some might accuse the UN of being a "paper tiger" (Panke, 2013, p. 267). However previous research has shown that resolutions at the UN legitimize certain conduct, in some cases even spur the development of binding laws and even non-binding international law has an effect on state and non-state actors (Brazys & Panke, 2017b; Panke, 2013). The UN sets guidelines establishes fundamental norms and standards set or promoted by the UN are also shown to be transferred to regional organizations through reference or replication (Börzel & van Hüllen, 2015; Finke, forthcoming).

The UN cannot be understood to reflect exact foreign policy concerns of all states on all issues, it is a rather generalized view. Nonetheless, it is the most comprehensive set of voiced positions available to international politics scholars, both in terms of issues covered, as well as the time period over which it stretches (Kurun & Parlar Dal, 2017). Some states might take positions on issues where they have no instrumental interest, making voting more of an expressive act (Ferdinand, 2014a). Issues covered range from international peace and security, sustainable development and economic growth, decolonization, human rights to international law and disarmament, in some cases being fairly specific, while other resolutions bear a more general character (Brazys & Panke, 2017b; Jang & Chen, 2019; United Nations, 2020). Observing these positions can help gain valuable insight into foreign policy positions, change and coordination (Brazys et al., 2017; Brazys & Panke, 2017a, 2017b; Pauls & Cranmer, 2017; Smith, 2016). Brazys and Panke even argue, that due to similarity of the UN in its modus operandi, insights might be applicable to some other IOs as well (Brazys & Panke, 2017b).

This makes the UN the most interesting case of international cooperation and naturally the first place to compare states behavior globally.

2.1.3 Research on Voting Behavior in the UN

First Wave

The first wave of UN research starting in the 1950s was mainly concerned with the research of voting blocs and majorities in the UN as an indicator of ideological conflict in the international arena (Burmester & Jankowski, 2014; Hooijmaaijers & Keukeleire, 2016; Hug, 2012; Smith, 2016; Voeten, 2004). In light of these development some early research on the effect of foreign aid was developed.

This research employed a number of indices of voting cohesion between dyads of states, the first being the index of voting cohesion by Lijphart, later refactored by Hurwitz (Burmester & Jankowski, 2014; Hurwitz, 1975; Lijphart, 1963). After decades of decreased interest in this type of research, this strand did have some revival after the end of the cold-war, showing that the main conflict remains a north-south difference (Burmester & Jankowski, 2014; Voeten, 2013).

Second Wave

A second wave research shifted towards a perspective on the cohesiveness of specific groups at the UN, putting the spotlight on other organizations, mostly using behavior at the UN as a proxy for the actorness of organizations or other phenomena, starting with the European Union (EU) (Burmester & Jankowski, 2014; Dijkhuizen & Onderco, 2019; Ferdinand, 2014a, 2014b; Finke, 2020; Hooijmaaijers & Keukeleire, 2016; Hug, 2012; Hug & Lukács, 2014; Jang & Chen, 2019; Kurun & Parlar Dal, 2017; Laatikainen & Smith, 2006; Panke, 2013).

This research consequently developed measures of agreement that were used to measure group cohesiveness, rather than the agreement between single states. The most widely used is the Rix-Noury-Roland formula, an extension of the voting likeliness developed for the US-congress adapted for the three voting options at the UN (yes, no and abstain) (Hix et al., 2005; Rice, 1928). This index is attractive, partially because of its simplicity and applicability to groups. However, it is criticized for failing to account for chance-agreement. In addition, researchers oftentimes do not employ cross-sectional research designs that would be appropriate to put cohesion values of single organizations into perspective (Burmester & Jankowski, 2014; Hug, 2012). Additionally, they do not give sufficient attention to changes in agenda salience (Burmester & Jankowski, 2014; Hug, 2012).

The second wave is still ongoing, as there is still vivid research on organizations like the BRICS, the African Union (AU) and the EU, where the high consensus voting in the UN is the topic of recurring debates on the actual validity of measures of actorness through voting cohesion at the UN[1] (Ferdinand, 2014b; Hooijmaaijers & Keukeleire, 2016; Reinalda, 2013; Weiss & Daws, 2018). Burmester and Jankowski, for example, find that voting cohesiveness of EU countries mostly depends on the issue on the agenda, whether a state is temporarily or permanently in the security council, the length of UN membership and the voting position of the US (Burmester & Jankowski, 2018).

A very recent methodological innovation of the research into regional organizations

[1]Compare for example these results: 1) Ferdinand finds: "a high and now growing degree of cohesion among BRICS" (2014, p. 376), while 2) Hooijmaaijers and Keukeleire find "it is not possible to speak about a cohesive BRICS bloc in the General Assembly in 2006-2014 [...] with no tendency toward more cohesion being visible" (2016, p. 397). The two authors report even more contrary results. In one article they are reporting comparatively higher cohesion in the issue area of human rights and the other is reporting more divergence in this issue area.

of the second wave is the usage of co-sponsorship information, instead of co-voting behavior. So far, there is two papers in which it has been used to estimate more reliable cohesiveness and actorness measures of the EU (Dijkhuizen & Onderco, 2019; Finke, 2020). Dijkhuizen and Onderco find, that the BRICS form networks on issues such as economics, but not so much in other fields. However, their issue categories are limited to the ones coded by Bailey et al. who themselves remarkably write in their codebook: "**Issue codes**: These are based on searches in descriptions. They have been subjected to a rudimentary visual check but they may not be 100% accurate" (2017). I want to stress that they do not explain which keywords they use for coding these issues and that this is the data almost all of the political science and regionalism literature is using. A thorough discussion will follow with the description of the new issue coding I am employing.

Third Wave

A third wave of research made the behavior at the UN the dependent variable again and focused on the behavior of single states, including the more recent constructivist and rationalist approaches to international politics where domestic politics, like leader turnover, leaders place of education, ideological alignment of governments and a perspective of multi-level governance came to the forefront and the original literature on vote-buying in the UNGA was revived (Brazys et al., 2017; Brazys & Panke, 2017a, 2017b; Dreher & Yu, 2020; Hug, 2012; Panke et al., 2017; Smith, 2016; Woo & Chung, 2018). Diana Panke and Samuel Brazys with a series of papers almost single-handedly brought the UN back into the literature of international relations. They employ a rather broad framework of multi-level governance in which they intend to study foreign policy formation and change of states through the levels of domestic preference formation, up to regional and international aggregation and interaction. They formulate a series of push factors, such as the domestic political institutions, the norm context and state agency, and pull factors, such as the international norm environment, activities of third states and regional UN groups, as well as the salience of norms (Brazys & Panke, 2017a). Lastly, the third wave of studies have involved the usage of information on voting on the committee level. Here the literature reports a difference in behavior between EU countries and countries with a record of human rights violations (Hug & Lukács, 2014).

UN voting and autocracies

Surprisingly, systemic research into a prominent feature of domestic institutions is lacking: the effect of regime type on voting behavior at the UN.

Pauls and Cranmer made a first attempt to employ a perspective of the first wave, detecting so called affinity-communities in co-voting behavior of states and broadly linking this to regime type (among other things like international conflict). However, they lack a theory for the causal direction of the effect and actually state themselves: "there is a relationship between exposure to democracies within an affinity community and autocratic transitions to democracy, but the temporal dynamics of this relationship suggests it is reflective of changes in regime type rather than causal of it" (Pauls & Cranmer, 2017, p. 429). They suggest a sort of "exposure" effect which I find unplausible. All states are exposed to the voting behavior of all other states at the UN. Regional groupings (specified above), political groupings (G-77, etc) or regional organizations (EU, AU, etc.) actually hold fairly frequent coordination meetings at the UN and could actually be places where additional exposure takes place. The affinity communities of Pauls and Cranmer however, are completely virtual, as these affinity communities are a latent concept that they construct based on co-voting behavior. Hence, it is hard

to suppose any exposure, or "co-membership" in these "affinity communities" (Pauls & Cranmer, 2017, p. 429). This renders their affinity communities mostly descriptive. Nonetheless, the methodological approach is interesting and innovative by transferring insights from network analysis to voting behavior (Pauls & Cranmer, 2017). This research also indirectly validates the causal direction that I suspect, which is from similar regime-types to cohesive behavior at the UN.

In a conference paper Hillman and Potrafke investigate log-rolling in UN resolutions between autocratic states. They make an interesting proposition: "Repressive governments prefer that there be censure resolutions against all repressive governments other than themselves but, if they are themselves to be censured, they prefer that there be no censure resolutions at all" (Hillman & Potrafke, 2011, p. 10). Analysing a handful of resolutions where they would expect this behavior, they find that indeed authoritarian states do not vote positively on resolutions that criticize autocracies (Hillman & Potrafke, 2011). While the framework and the assumptions are very clearly spelled out, the subset of cases under which it is evaluated seems rather limited.

Finally, Daniel Finke in a yet unpublished paper[2] looks at the relationship between regime-type and cooperation at the UN (Finke, forthcoming). He measures co-sponsorship, not co-voting, as this is a much stronger signal of cooperative behavior. States need to actively engage in a discussion to co-sponsor, whereas co-voting is an automatic signal with a cheap default: voting yes with the majority or with the regional group position if one exists (Finke, forthcoming). He finds that indeed there is an increase in cooperation of non-democracies at the turn of the millenium. Democratic cooperation however is also on the rise and mixed dyads are the ones cooperating the least. He finds a particularly strong effect in the issue area of national security. Coincidentally, his conclusions lay out the preliminary idea of an effect of co-membership in regional organizations to be investigated in future research, effectively the research agenda of this paper. A shortcoming is the relatively coarse coding in issue categories that he employs. He affirms again, that: "the nexus between regime type and international cooperation has mostly been discussed with a view to democracies", justifying the present, more detailed investigation into behavior of autocracies (Finke, forthcoming, p. 4).

Conclusions

The above section has explained and described the overall process of voting and sponsoring of resolutions at the UNGA–laying out the arena in which interaction happens. It has made plausible, that studying the UN can be an appropriate proxy for studying foreign policy coordination, as it is the largest and most-encompassing forum in the international arena. At the same time, behavior at the UN can have wide-reaching consequences and it is the place where authoritarian coordination might have a big impact on the general international norm environment, such as human rights enforcement. The section also reviewed the three waves of research into behavior at the UN, the first being research into alignment and voting blocs at the UN, the second focussing on voting cohesion as a proxy for foreign policy alignment among regional organizations with some methodological innovation and the third wave, bringing domestic factors and multi-level governance into focus. This places the current research mostly in the third wave, in which there has been preliminary research on authoritarian cooperation and coordination at the UN. In previous works, however, the observed trends were descriptive or in broad terms of general cooperation. No existing research has used information on regional organizations to further support the hypothesis that observed behavior at the UN is actually coordination and not only chance agreement or ad-hoc log-rolling on single resolutions.

[2] which he kindly shared with me in its current state.

In the following section, in a similar fashion, I will lay out the current research into international cooperation of authoritarian regimes in general and with regard to regional organizations specifically.

2.2 International Politics of Authoritarian Rule

Our understanding of what constitutes a democracy has changed considerably over time. The oftentimes so-called "beacon of democracy", the United States of America, did not have true universal suffrage until the Voting Rights Act in 1965. Nonetheless, it was long before considered a democracy by many. Even more difficult is the question of what constitutes an autocracy. The following section shall contextualize the paper in the current literature on autocracies and the relation to regional organizations, as well as make the assumptions of the author explicit.

2.2.1 The Story so far - Literature on Authoritarian Regimes

Just how the definition of autocracies was informed by the definition of what constitutes a democracy, the literature of autocracies is intrinsically linked to its democratic counterpart. The latter was dominated by optimism towards inevitable transitions to democracy up until the 90s with the third wave of democratizations (Huntington, 1991). With the growing sensation that these young democracies were vulnerable to breakdowns and not all-democratic, the literature shifted from "transitology" to explaining the sometimes failing democratization and full consolidation of these regimes: "consolidology". What needed to be explained now, was the surprising resilience of autocratic elements in regimes worldwide: the birth of a "new political animal", a family of hybrid regime types (Bader et al., 2010; Merkel et al., 2003; O'Donnell, 1994; Peruzzotti, 2001; Vanderhill, 2013, p. 55).

The sprawling literature on this topic is difficult to summarise, but an important distinction lies in the domestic versus international focus of the research. One can note that early on, both independent and dependent variables of interest in the hybrid regimes remained in the domestic realm. Regime stability was explained with electoral institutions, historical pathways or economic growth (Obydenkova & Libman, 2019; Tansey, 2016). With considerable lag, since the 2010s there has been a growing interest in the effects of autocratic states external relations and foreign policy (both effects **on** and **by** autocratic regimes in the international arena). However, this literature is still not as developed as its democratic counterpart (Obydenkova & Libman, 2019). Tansey notes that the research is "relatively fragmented, and we lack a clear understanding of the different forms of international influence and the different causal mechanisms through which they operate" (Tansey, 2016, p. 3).

Literature that makes the international arena an explicit part of their research develops along different intensities of intentions behind the international dimension and different pathways for autocratic states' behavior. The proposed perspectives range from the intentional promotion of autocracy as an ideology, to unintended influences of democracy promotion, from diffusion effects that arise from pure geographical proximity, to research that supposes active cooperation between autocracies on the regional or international level (Ambrosio, 2008, 2010; Burnell & Schlumberger, 2010; Libman & Obydenkova, 2018; Obydenkova & Libman, 2019; Tansey, 2016; Tolstrup, 2015; Vanderhill, 2013; von Soest, 2015; Yakouchyk, 2019).

Intentionality

Given the various approaches to the problem, I found the framework of Oisín Tansey a convincing approach at structuring the existing literature with regard to the intentions of actors. He differentiates between active and passive influences, where the former only

includes behaviors which intentionally aim to shape the domestic politics of another state. For example, diffusion effects that solely rely on spillover effects or ties with neighboring states would stop short of being active influences and therefore not be a case of autocracy promotion or even autocracy sponsorship. For an active influence to also constitute autocratic sponsorship, an actor needs to primarily intend to bolster autocracy (excluding unintended effects of foreign aid on the stabilization of autocratic regimes). Lastly, Tansey, in line with von Soest, differentiates between an act of democracy resistance, which is not ideological in nature, but rather geopolitical, versus an ideological motivation that would actually constitute autocracy promotion (Tansey, 2016; von Soest, 2015).

Unfortunately, the realm of foreign policy is, even in european democracies, part of the well guarded arcana imperii, where it is sometimes even argued that foreign policy might not work without some degree of functional secrecy (Cross, 2018). This is made even harder in autocracies, which generally lack an aspect of accountability through public transparency (Tansey, 2016). For my research this means that the above sketched out categories remain ideal types which have to be filled with the help of observable proxy variables. A good starting point can be the stated motivations by politicians through speeches. Ambrosio, for example, quotes a speech by Russian Forein Minister Sergei Lavrov, where he stated that: "for the first time in the last decade and a half a real competitive environment has formed in the market for ideas... [in regard to]... value [systems] and development models" (Ambrosio, 2010, p. 380). Another way of imputing motivations might be through plausible causal mechanisms for observed behavior that lack alternative explanations.

As I have discussed above, behavior at the UN might constitute a relevant proxy that indicates alignment between states in their foreign policy. I will understand the co-sponsoring of resolutions that could support autocratic norms as a potential form of democracy resistance.

Pathways and Mechanisms

Furthermore, the literature provides for ample amounts of proposed mechanisms that contribute to the consolidation of authoritarian regimes in the international dimension. Tolstrup summarises five that entail both legitimacy provision as well as material support: 1. "helping incumbents signal invincibility, 2. deterring elite defection, 3. weakening the opposition, 4. dampening popular protests, and 5. countervailing pressure from foreign democracy promoters." (Tolstrup, 2015, p. 674)

While these all seem plausible, I find them partially overlapping. E.g. helping incumbents to signal invincibility seems to be a way of deterring elite defection, in a similar way to how weakening the opposition could be understood as dampening protests (Tansey, 2016; Tolstrup, 2015).

Bader et al. look at possible autocracy promotion from a slightly higher level and distinguish between the "power of example and the power of influence" (Bader et al., 2010, p. 84). Assuming an autocratic preference for similar regimes in the neighborhood that mirrors "democratic peace" arguments, they see diffusion and emulation effects, as well as the possibility for states to influence others directly.

Tansey makes his underlying rational choice assumptions more explicit, when he says, that factors that work to support autocracies are defined as all mechanisms that lessen the costs of authoritarian rule (Tansey, 2016). As seen above, some of these can be passive, such as the power of example or learning effects that cross borders through ties and linkages (Levitsky & Way, 2006; Tansey et al., 2017). Others might arise as the unintended influences of active interference, such as democracy promotion, foreign aid,

sanctions that create "rally-round-the-flag"-effects or international peacekeeping missions (Grauvogel & von Soest, 2014; Tansey et al., 2017). Tansey goes on to define two causal mechanisms that are, on the one hand, the "role of signalling and information, which work to shape the incentive structure facing incumbent autocratic elites", and on the other hand the "material impact of international sponsorship, which can shape the balance of power between the incumbents and both their domestic and international opponents" (Tansey, 2016, p. 57). Co-sponsorship of draft resolutions is definitely an act that can be understood as signalling certain policy preferences and can fall into this category of autocracy promotion, even though it borders on a smaller literature of autocratic coordination, such as articles on the dictatorial peace (Peceny et al., 2002).

Motivations

Finally, the literature discusses different motivations for autocrats to using the above specified mechanisms. Yakouchyk in a literature review finds three possible motivations, namely ideological reasons, economic reasons and the fear of contagion. I think this does a good job at summarising the literature, but overlooks the underlying reason that most authors either explicitly or implicitly name: regime survival (Yakouchyk, 2019).

Bader et al. state that in general "foreign policy choices are the effective outcome of a governments interest in domestic political survival", advancing from the realist theory of intrinsic national interests of states and taking a rational choice perspective on the phenomenon (Bader et al., 2010, p. 85). I assume that the other motivations Yakouchyk mentions are in effect a consequence of the first. Bader et al. and Tansey suppose that any regime, be it democratic or autocratic has a preference for stability in its surroundings. However if they can choose, countries prefer similar regime types around them (2010; 2016).

Tolstrup defines the motivations as: "the geopolitical and economic value attached to the incumbent leadership; and the probability that a successor institutes undesired regime change" (Tolstrup, 2015, p. 679). This adds an interesting forward-looking aspect to the uncertainty of transition outcomes.

Although many authors used the term "autocracy promotion", few actually suppose that autocracies support others to promote a regime type for the sake of a preference for the regime type itself, something that Tansey and others deem to be a very rare case (Burnell & Schlumberger, 2010; Tansey, 2016; Yakouchyk, 2019). In the case of diffusion effects that lack the intentional logic, the motivation for adopting these is to be found not so much in the sender, but in the receiver country. This can be approximated better through the perceived "effectiveness" or "appropriateness" of certain practices and norms (Ambrosio, 2010). It still follows the rational choice logic of regime survival, with regimes choosing options that are less costly (appropriate) and promise higher returns (effectiveness) (Ambrosio, 2010, p. 379). Predictors like regime similarity and linkages also heighten the likelihood of authoritarian learning and stabilization. Hence, an effect of proximity on the likelihood of supporting one another through signalling in co-sponsorship for resolutions is likely.

As can be seen, many of these motivations point to neighboring countries or directly depend on geographical proximity as an important predictor of the international behavior of autocratic regimes. It therefore becomes important to look at another aspect of international politics, the autocratic organizations that shape and constitute the regional or international realm (Obydenkova & Libman, 2019). In the following subsection, I will briefly lay out the existing literature on regional organizations and authoritarian regimes.

2.2.2 Regional Organizations and Authoritarian Regimes

The literature on regional organizations and authoritarian regimes is even younger than the general research into the international dimensions of authoritarian rule. There is consensus that "in the 2000s a process of revitalisation of regional organizations and even the creation of new regional organizations took place" (Obydenkova and Libman, 2019; Kneuer et al., 2019, p. 451). This led to an increase in studies about the relationship of regime type and regional organizations. Again, this was mostly studied in the context of democratization, led by the insight that almost "every regional organization prescribes, promotes, and protects some standards for governance at the national level" (Ambrosio, 2008; Börzel and van Hüllen, 2015, p. 3). However, authoritarian governments have increasingly adopted policies that utilize "multilateral cooperation to defend themselves against regional or global democratic trends" that might "influence broader norms" (Ambrosio, 2008, p. 1321; Ginsburg, 2020, p. 225). These behaviors have found their way into the scholarship in multiple ways.

Allison, in exploring seemingly dysfunctional and shallow forms of regional integration, argues, that "virtual regionalism" essentially consists of top-down created organizations, like the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which include plans for coordinated foreign, security and defence policy to provide "protective integration" or simply to open up the normative space to new political orders (Allison, 2008, p. 186; Russo and Stoddard, 2018).

Van den Bosch and Ambrosio add that for example Russia and China have joined forces to "block the encroachment of democratic values in their societies" and this "creates a de facto reference group, which further makes authoritarianism appear appropriate." (van den Bosch, 2020, p. 7; Ambrosio, 2018, p. 122). Another example would be China covering for autocratic regimes such as Sudan and Myanmar in international settings or incumbents in Zimbabwe and Bahrain benefitting from the involvement of regional organizations like the AU in their regimes (Ambrosio, 2010; Debre, 2020).

Hence, the research agenda around regional organizations and authoritarian regimes has evolved mostly around understanding regime security boosting effects where regional organizations or "clusters" of regimes are the mechanism, but are not studied by themselves (Allison, 2008; Ambrosio, 2008; Cottiero, forthcoming; Cottiero & Haggard, forthcoming; Debre, 2020; Ginsburg, 2020; Kneuer et al., 2019; Libman & Obydenkova, 2018; Obydenkova & Libman, 2019; Russo & Stoddard, 2018; van den Bosch, 2020).

Obydenkova and Libman were the first to also look at how regional organizations, or "non-democratic organizations" are different institutionally and in their composition from democratic ones and also investigated, for example, their actorness (Obydenkova & Libman, 2019, p. 3). Then there is some regionalist research that investigates particular regional organizations, like for example the SCO (Ambrosio, 2008).

Lastly, a rather new strand of literature looks specifically how international norms and international law change through the increasing interaction of authoritarian states in regional organization that results in the production of a growing body of "authoritarian international law" (Ginsburg, 2020).

Motivations

The above mentioned literature finds an array of reasons that could motivate autocratic leaders or states to interact regionally, however, similar to the above literature on authoritarian promotion or diffusion most of them follow a loose logic of rational choice, where

the ultimate goal is to enhace regime stability. Libman and Obydenkova specify that regional organizations allow autocrats to project legitimacy and success through usage of the established norm of regional integration, but advise that regional organizations can also function as focal points for leaders to meet, attract rents and improve their geopolitical status (Libman & Obydenkova, 2018; Obydenkova & Libman, 2019).

Kneuer et al. and Debre find that autocrats use regional cooperation as a form of improving environment stability, which helps to reduce ambitions of democracy and reduces external critique of their use of repressive means (Debre, 2020; Kneuer et al., 2019). Authoritarian states might also support similar regimes in their vicinity, as these, due to a lacking popular accountability mechanism, are easier to exploit for hegemonic countries (Kneuer et al., 2019). Hence, we can assume that this behavior is mostly related so safe-guarding their own regime stability, even more so in a world where strong ideological regimes that would act out of an ideological rationale are increasingly outliers (Ginsburg, 2020).

Mechanisms and Pathways

The main mechanisms that are thought to stabilize regimes through regional integration revolve around a redistributive mechanism and legitimacy provision (Obydenkova & Libman, 2019). Oftentimes this combines a rationalist and a constructivist perspective.

Firstly, *international legitimacy* can be channeled through the widely accepted international norm of regional integration, as well as the creation of regional identity that provides ontological security to the ruled and heightens the international status of autocratic leaders(Libman & Obydenkova, 2018; Obydenkova & Libman, 2019; Russo & Stoddard, 2018). Furthermore, the shaping of international norms that are convenient for autocrats in ways that weaken the enforcement of human rights, such as the norm on non-interference or the acceptance of shallow regional integration that does not need credible commitments can be channels of regime boosting through legitimacy and the device of internationalized authoritarian practices (Ambrosio, 2008; Ginsburg, 2020; Russo & Stoddard, 2018). In addition, the multilateral cooperation can be used to signal that there is an alternative to Western norms and delegitimization of these (Russo & Stoddard, 2018). The participation of authoritarian leaders in a multitude of international organizations that constitute the international economic environment, also enhances the chances that coordination and the conferring of legitimacy can be shaped through such structures (Obydenkova & Libman, 2019).

Secondly, there is multiple pathways for autocrats to benefit from the *redistributive function* of regional organizations. This covers economic, political and military support for ruling elites, including both material, as well as informational and ideational resources (Debre, 2020; Obydenkova & Libman, 2019). This can happen through linkages and economic integration in a sort of diffuse way, but can also be fomented by powerful authoritarian hegemons that use regional integration as a sort of transmission belt and learning room for their interests, as well as for example through the exchange between politicians in regional meetings (Kneuer et al., 2019). Regional organizations can in this way be understood as opportunity structures that enable ruling elites and constrain others, such as the domestic opposition (Debre, 2020).

In addition, there is preliminary research classifying non-democratic regional organizations into types that are differentiated through functional differences, as well as differences in their genesis and institutions. Van den Bosch, in an attempt to provide a comprehensive framework for interaction in clusters of regimes (not specifically regional organizations), specifies the use of four different patterns of mechanisms, which

are "coercive, voluntary, bounded learning and contagion", happening in four different arenas, namely the exchange of institutions, ideas, policies and administrative practices (van den Bosch, 2020, p. 1). He further elaborates that regime promotion can be active, reactionary or opportunistic, differentiating between clusters that function because of powerful hegemons following a logic of reactionary domination, ideological clusters that function through a logic of active cooperation and competition and lastly a newly defined cluster of regimes lacking a clear hegemon or ideology, that function due to a logic of opportunistic regime survival, (van den Bosch, 2020).

A recent example is the research of Cottiero et al. which shows that when leaders believe a coup might be imminent, they tend to commit to larger contributions to regional organizations (Cottiero, forthcoming; Cottiero & Haggard, forthcoming).

Simultaneously, the study of "regionness" or "actorness" of regional organizations was explored increasingly in the literature of regionalism, which in turn was informed by the literature on UN voting to study the behavior of regional organizations at the UN (Ferdinand, 2014a; Obydenkova & Libman, 2019). The vast majority of these studies however, remain at the level of agreement indices for voting behavior of a handful of democratic regional organizations like the EU.

How to define coordination?

In the previous subsections, I outlined how autocratic regimes cooperate and how the intentions and pathways are thought about in the literature. Co-sponsorship at the UN can be understood as a form of coordination and cooperation which helps autocrats stabilize their regime through e.g. the provision of legitimacy for autocracy friendly norms or as a signalling device as defined by Tansey (2016). In order to formulate sound hypotheses, in the following, I will look at coordination problems in general and how they can be solved, before applying these ideas back to autocratic regimes.

Stable coordination or cooperation in lasting coalitions has first caused perplexity among scholars who studied the US Congress. Based on pure rational choice assumptions, there was such a large amount of coalitions that politics should be a game of rapidly and ever-changing coalitions (Hall & Taylor, 1996). It turns out that institutions, in changing the way information can flow, repeated iterations of the same situations and the ability to enforce future commitments can help actors to coordinate their actions and solve collective action dilemmas.

Besides of this so-called calculus approach, institutions can also be understood in a type of cultural approach. Here, institutions provide a worldview, cognitive templates and routines which allow actors to develop patterns of coordination that might go against a rational calculus that optimizes their very own utility - e.g. their gain from an action (Hall & Taylor, 1996). Ginsburg states that ideologically motivated autocracies are in relative decline and the evidence for ideological autocracy promotion is relatively sparse, which is why I will take a more rational calculus framework perspective (Ginsburg, 2020; Tansey, 2016). I assume that actors have a set of preferences and behave "instrumentally [and strategically] so as to maximize the attainment of these preferences (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 944, annotations P.B.). I will use the terms coordination and cooperation interchangeably in the remainder of the paper, but this always refers to observed patterns in co-sponsorship between states.

Following these assumptions, I posit that there is a reward associated with coordinating behavior at the UN for autocratic states, as well as a cost.

An example for *rewards* associated with having friends at the UN was the case of South Africa, infamously lobbying against further sanctions on Zimbabwe (Debre, 2020). Although this was not a case of coordinating action between autocratic states, it is a powerful example for international cooperation at the UN. In a more systemic example, when comparing Japan and South Korea to ASEAN countries, the former are much more likely to condemn the autocratic behavior of other states than the autocratic members of ASEAN (Ferdinand, 2014a). It is also well documented that the rethoric and effects of regional organizations can provide insulation against pressure from foreign democracy promoters, help legitimize the rule of incumbent elites or even help o channel "legitimate" material or financial support (Cottiero, forthcoming; Cottiero & Haggard, forthcoming; Libman & Obydenkova, 2018; Tolstrup, 2015). The provision of regime stability of the own regime is maximizing the utility of these elites. Additionally, we know that, because of fear of contagion effects, elites will gain utility from stability in surrounding regimes, thus creating incentives to also take into account how their actions might affect the regime stability of neighbors (Bader et al., 2010).

Providing diplomatic cover on the international level of UN Resolutions could thus be a powerful way of rejecting critique against a regime that would bring benefits to affected regimes. Hillman and Potrafke think about the costs of for example human rights resolutions against autocratic regimes as "the expressive disutility of being the subject of a censure resolution [and the] indirect cost is reduced regime security because of reduced repression" (Hillman & Potrafke, 2011, p. 6). The expressive disutility is the perceived mismatch between their "benevolent" rule and the now publicized repressive behavior that they actually engage in and hence the heightend cost of repression (Hillman & Potrafke, 2011).

Tansey thinks about autocratic cooperation similarly. Firstly, there are "authoritarian practices [that] are the non-democratic strategies autocrats use to secure their rule", but secondly they need to "weigh the potential costs and benefits of their authoritarian practices (such as repression or electoral fraud) in order to ensure the gains are worth the potential backlash" (Tansey, 2016, p. 56). Hence there are clear benefits in engaging in what Tansey describes as "diplomatic sponsorship [...], efforts [that] often seek to counter the diplomatic pressure and shaming that autocratic regimes frequently receive from Western and democratic powers [...]. Diplomatic sponsorship, on the other hand, is designed to reassure and protect incumbents, rather than to pressurize or compel" (Tansey, 2016, p. 69). In his research, Tansey mostly thinks about international cues such as recognizing a government or recognition of elections, which he deems to be missing from the existing literature on autocratic sponsorship, but the systematic, frequent, recurrent and sometimes more subtle ways of cues that are visible at the UN have not yet been studied in this regard with sufficient rigor.

Besides the possible rewards for coordinating on resolutions, cooperation is associated with *costs*. Firstly, the act of developing a position is costly. States will need to inform themselves on the resolution that is presented and define their own position. Secondly, if they plan to co-sponsor the resolution (or even coordinate their voting behavior with others) they will need to invest ressources in the actual wording of a resolution, transaction costs of negotiating the wording with others and the risk that others might shirk and not honor their commitments in the end (Brazys & Panke, 2017b).

Instead of formulating my hypotheses on the domestic, regional and international level, like Panke has done, in the following I will formulate hypotheses based on the *rewards* associated with coordination on a resolution, the *costs* that come with it, the *available resources that actors control* and *control* variables that might affect the coordination behavior of states at the UN based on the reviewed literature (2013).

Conclusions

The above section has summarized the existing literature on the interaction between regional organizations or clusters of regimes and autocratic political institutions. While there is an increased research interest, the literature still lacks a coherent framework. It was shown that authoritarian states can use these regional organizations for different purposes, including to defend against regional or international trends of democratization. The research has recently shifted partially from studying regional organizations as tools of powerful states and autocracy promotion to the effects and characteristics of ROs themselves.

I have also revisited the literature on autocratic sponsorship and coordination and lined out possible intentions, mechanisms and pathways, with a focus on the regime stabilizing function of international coordination.

The literature agrees that the main reasons for autocratic regimes to use and form regional organizations (and stick to them) is the provision of legitimacy and redistribution of economic, political and military resources. The former can work through the provision of a regional identity, recognition due to the international norm of regional integration seen as something positive, geopolitical status for powerful states and international signalling of normative alternatives to "western norms". The redistribution can work through linkages, but also be pushed upon states through powerful states that use them as transmission belts. In the following section, the chosen assumptions and theoretical framework, based on the above review will be summarized and laid out in more detail.

The central overlap between the literature on autocratic cooperation and regional coordination is the autocratic coordination and lack of cooperation due to constrains on credible commitments that are imposed on autocracies. Hence it makes sense to think of the behavior at the UN as a trade-off with certain reward and costs. In the following, this logic will be further explored and I will define the actors and environment.

2.2.3 Assumptions and Theoretical Framework

In the following subsections, I want to lay out the general assumptions and the theoretical framework that will be used to construct hypothesis for state behavior at the UN. As the observed behavior is among states, the principal actors whose behavior will be researched are states. However, states are neither monolithic, nor are they entities that necessarily act rationally on their own behalf. Hence it will be necessary to also make some assumptions about the elites that control the autocratic states under observation. Furthermore, these elites are both enabled and constrained by their environment, which is not only the domestic, but also the regional and international arena. For this reason, the framework needs to take into account a complex interactive environment and will inevitably be insufficient in accounting for all factors.

Defining autocracies and their framework

As outlined above, there is multiple ways to define autocracies. Early definitions were critized for over-simplifying autocracies. It is clear that there is a multidimensional space for defining what constitutes an autocracy (Schmotz, 2019). However, any definition should be grounded in the research interest at present. In this case it would most certainly make sense to assume that different institutional configurations of domestic regimes would affect the ways in which they can cooperate and interact internationally - especially with regard to the possibility of credible commitment (Peceny et al., 2002). It would

lead to an overcomplex analysis to take into account the different types of regimes and I will posit, that the overall difference between democratic modes of action and autocratic modes of actions is the most important. Future research will have to take into account the different types of regime for the analysis of autocratic states at the UN, which is beyond my scope.

This reduces the complex political landscape to democracies and autocracies. There is multiple indices that are currently regularly updated, among them the Democracy-Dictatorship dataset by Cheibub et al., the Polity IV Index, Freedom House and the Varieties of Democracy Index. Of course all these come with certain theoretical assumptions and beliefs. Cheibub et al. formulate a few indicators for how to choose an index. The indices should: 1. "serve to address important research questions 2. can be interpreted meaningfully, and 3. are reproducible" (2010, p. 68). I posit that the Polyarchy concept of the varieties of democracy dataset fulfills these criteria for me. My main argument rests on the lacking credible commitment of autocratic regimes, which I think are well expressed through the elements of this index. It follows a multidimensional conceptualization of democracy, or rather Polyarchy, which covers both the element of elections, as well as the possibility to exert public pressure through the freedom of expression (Coppedge et al., 2021; Dahl, 1972)

Furthermore, I will use a rationalist framework to explain foreign policy choices of autocrats. In the selectorate theory of Bueno de Mesquita, the behavior of states is understood to be rooted in the domestic environment (2003). The theory is "based on the concept of homo-economicus" and "rests upon the assumption that actors, be they individuals or groups, are seeking to maximise their utility" (Bader et al., 2010, p. 85).

In the case of autocracies Bueno de Mesquita further specifies that this utility is maximized by holding onto office: "choices are motivated by the interest politicians have in holding onto office" (Bueno De Mesquita et al., 2003, p. 15). This logic extends to their actions regarding foreign policy. The ultimate goal of actions in the international or regional realm is the stability of rule. The natural question that arises is: how does a leader keep his office? This is where democracies and autocracies differ in how they will choose institutions and policies (Bader et al., 2010; Bueno De Mesquita et al., 2003; Ginsburg, 2020).

Leaders must retain the support of a sufficiently large set of people (winning coalition), that have a say in politics (selectorate). The former is called the winning set and defined as: "as a subset of the selectorate of sufficient size such that the subsets support endows the leadership with political power over the remainder of the selectorate as well as over the disenfranchised members of the society", whereas the latter's definition is: "members of the selectorate (denoted S) have a government-granted say in the selection of leaders. [... This] is not their most important or meaningful characteristic. [...] The important aspect of being in the selectorate is that membership conveys the opportunity to become a member of a winning coalition" (Bueno De Mesquita et al., 2003, p. 42, 51, annotation P.B.).

In full democracies, the selectorate is the entire population with voting-rights[3] and hence a leader has to appeal to a sufficiently large coalition of voters to gain control of the office (Shannon et al., n.d.). To stay in office, the democratic leader is incentivized to provide his rather large winning coalition with goods to retain their support.

Another important distinction to autocracies is the easy availability of information, making it difficult for democratic leaders to distribute private goods to only some supporters without loosing support of the wider coalition. Hence, democracies are likely

[3]This notably excludes young people and sometimes large parts of the population that have been disenfranchised, e.g. through incarceration.

to provide so called public goods to most people, whereas autocratic leaders rely on a smaller winning coalition from a smaller selectorate. The severely limited flow of information and smaller accountability gives more discretion in the distribution of their private goods (Ginsburg, 2020). This leads to a situation where it is "more feasible to pay off coalition members with targeted privileging policies and less necessary to be efficient in providing public goods" (Bader et al., 2010, p. 86).

As autocratic leaders have a smaller winning coalition, they are less accountable to a larger audience and will be less able to make credible commitments (Smith, 2016). As described above, this is one of the reasons for the phenomenon of "virtual regionalism", where autocratic leaders preferably engage in non-binding agreements (Allison, 2008; Libman & Obydenkova, 2018). Obydenkova and Libman outline a total of three reasons why autocracies will have difficulties with credible commitments, which are 1. the audience cost: related to the above, the assumption that the selectorate (in democracies the electorate) will punish leaders for shirking from commitments (Fearon, 1994). This mechanism does not work in autocracies. 2. if international cooperation provides public goods, democratic leaders (as opposed to autocratic ones) need to provide these to stay in office and voting them out is associated with less costs than a revolution against an autocrat. 3. domestic institutions in democratic states are thought to be more limiting and constraining in the actual decision-making process, making shifts in foreign policy less likely (Obydenkova & Libman, 2019, p. 25).

With the general framework set for autocratic states, let us advance to defining the assumptions for the other governance levels.

Defining the environment

The behavior in question entails more than just states and their elites: interaction at the UN needs to take into account influences from the regional and international level as well. Even though the assumptions about the behavior of actors follows a rational choice logic, I think that the constructivist debate offers some useful ways to think about their relation to the environment.

In using some concepts from different paradigms, I follow the idea of analytic eclecticism defined as: "any approach that seeks to extricate, translate, and selectively integrate analytic elements–concepts, logics, mechanisms, and interpretations of theories or narratives that have been developed within separate paradigms but that address related aspects of substantive problems that have both scholarly and practical significance" (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010, p. 10).

There is a need to solve both the question of "level of analysis", as well as the "agency-structure" problem (Braun et al., 2019). The agency-structure problem is the renowned framing of Wendt in asking whether actors are an ontological given and how they relate to the structures, such as norms and institutions around them (Wendt, 1987). One of the expectations that Wendt formulates for a better understanding of international politics is: "theories of international relations must have foundations in theories of **both** their principal units of analysis (state agents and system structures)" (Wendt, 1987, p. 365, emphasis P.B.). The outlined assumptions above locate the theoretical foundation for state behavior in the governing coalition and ultimately with the individual, as well as looking at choices states take on the stage of UN negotiations with effects on international norms. Hence, looking at both units is at least partially given.

Wendt goes on to state, that it is necessary to "conceptualize agents and structures as mutually constitutive yet ontologically distinct entities. Each is in some sense an effect of the other; they are 'co-determined'. This understanding of the agent-structure

relationship is made possible by conceptualizing each from the start as ontologically dependent upon the other. By conceptualizing agents in terms of the internal relations that define them as such, and by conceptualizing social structures as existing only through the medium of the agents and practices that they constitute" (Wendt, 1987, p. 360). However, this is an ideal-type approach to theory, that is hard to achieve as it inevitable implies a great amount of complexity.

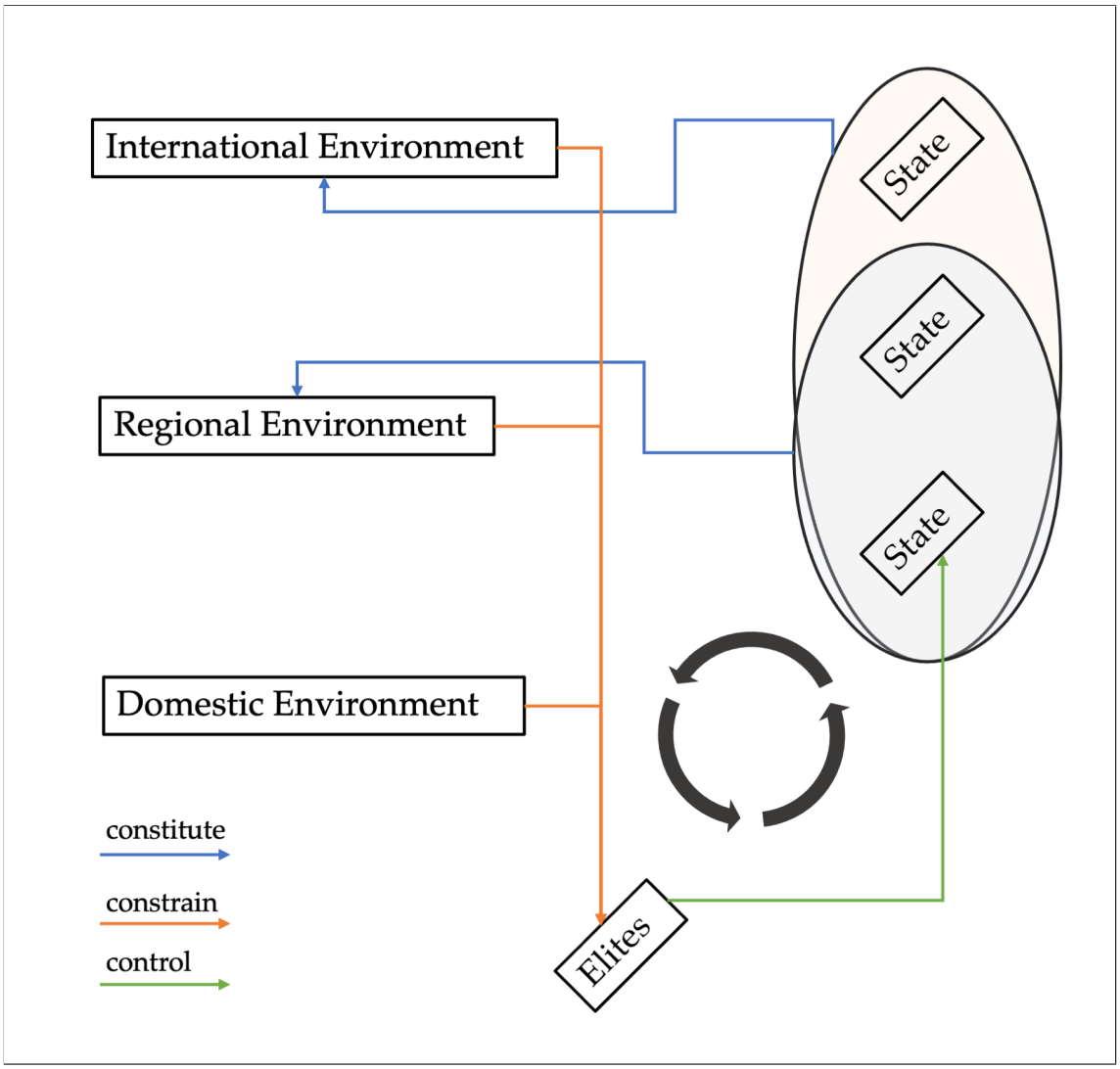

Figure 2: *A conceptualization of feedback-loops in foreign policy making. Source Author's own.*

Figure 2 shows my attempt at conceptualizing these interrelations in a decidedly general manner through *controlling, constitutive and constraining processes*. It describes a feedback loop, with emphasis on the non-domestic, where sub-groups of states, controlled by their domestic elites constitute the regional and international environment, which in turn constrains the elites in their decisions. It becomes apparent, very quickly, that the loop lacks a constitutive element for the domestic environment and the actors, in the given case, the elites, are not "generated", as Wendt puts it, but "only" constrained through the structures around them (Wendt, 1987, p. 356). In so far, this overall framework puts emphasis on the direction from the domestic to the international, while still attempting to not entirely blend out the influence of the international on the domestic. Given that the research question is on the determinants of cooperation of autocratic actors at the UN, I think this is an appropriate trade-off. This also defines my level of analysis, which lies particularly on the international interaction of states at the UN, but takes into

account causal mechanisms that are thought to play out both in the domestic nation-state environment, as well as the regional environment.

This is also leaning onto to how Brazys and Panke understand foreign policy change in their research on the UN, where they specify agency-effects, both at the domestic level (lobbying of NGOs, coalition dynamics, etc.), as well as the international level (negotiation dynamics and lobbying by multinational corporations) and the effect of polities, which are institutions and norms both at the international and national level (Brazys et al., 2017). For the above mentioned reasons of evading complexity, I refrain from taking into account additional actors such as NGOs, international bureaucracies or purely corporate actors (Braun et al., 2019). Insofar as I am more interested in foreign policy formation, rather than change, I will take into account the domestic norm environment and the international environment, but not so much changes in these environments over time, which of course constitutes a limitation of the framework.

The growing number of international and regional groupings make the study of these overlapping memberships ever more important and their effects have been shown to be significant for democratic regional organizations (Panke, 2013; Panke et al., 2017). Brazys and Panke stress again that the "multi-causality of this framework highlights the need for careful empirical work that evaluates how intervening mechanisms operate" and of which this framework can only cover a part (2017, p. 663).

Cooperation at the UN lies at the heart of this multi-level game, which a short illustration might show:

The resolution condeming human rights abuses in Iran or North Korea are recurring on the agenda of the UN, they return in almost every session. This provides elites with information on previous actions of other states. A majority of states will vote yes on these resolutions, affirming the norm of human rights. However, some states will abstain or even vote against such resolutions, which of course is frowned upon by the EU and other actors, because it goes against the norm (Börzel & van Hüllen, 2015).

Table 1: *Examples of controversial resolutions at the UN*

Title	No	Yes	States - No	States - Yes
Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	30	82	e.g. Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bolivia, China	e.g. US, EU, etc.
Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes	60	79	e.g US, EU, etc.	e.g. Belarus, North Korea, China, Myanmar, Cambodia, Russia, Venezuela
Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order	53	131	e.g US, EU, etc.	e.g. Angola, Argentina, Viet Nam, Russia, China, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bolivia, China

The resolutions in Table 1 are a selected few of the most controversial resolutions that fit into some of the above described theories where authoritarian states might help one another through coordination at the UN. The first one on the situation of human rights in Iran is a classical UN resolution, where the 'liberal' states point the finger at Iran for

continuously violating the human rights of its citizens, while some other autocracies support Iran. The second resolution is an example of authoritarian states setting norms that advance their goals. In this case, the given resolution on a new treaty on cyber crime is thought to be a threat to the freedom of expression online. The US and EU were not able to block this resolution and authoritarian states set a norm. The last resolution is another case where the topic of human rights is taken from its meaning in the 'Western Hemisphere' to a framing that is much more focussed towards economic development, something that western states are trying to evade (for sometimes questionable reasons, as this might mean they would be violating human rights themselves).[4]

There is evidence that both the EU as well as the US are closely watching some of these votes. Brazys and Panke cite an interesting cable from WikiLeaks that shows the US awareness on regional organization membership in the Third Committee (human rights resolutions happen here): "Honduras, newly a member of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), nonetheless could not have been more supportive in Third Committee votes" (Brazys & Panke, 2017a; Wikileaks, 2008). Nonetheless, Turkey consistently abstains from resolutions that aim at human rights abuses in Turkmenistan or Iran, a preference that is surely influenced by their regional environment (Kurun & Parlar Dal, 2017). A pessimistic observer might think that such a signal could be interpreted by other states and ultimately lead to a change in international norms that weaken the enforcement of human rights, providing for a feedback loop between the different levels as well as agents and structure (Ginsburg, 2020).

Defining non-democratic regional organizations

In the above literature review on regional organizations it became clear that it has often been implicit clusters of regimes, both with and without hegemonic states that were at the center of research into autocratic states. Only recently regional organizations have been taken into account explicitly (Libman & Obydenkova, 2018; Obydenkova & Libman, 2019).

As the main focus of this paper is on the behavior of states at the UN, not on regional organizations per se, I will follow Obydenkova and Libman, which define "NDROs [non-democratic regional organizations] as organizations primarily comprised of authoritarian member states (or at least having an authoritarian core country)", hereby evading a definition that relies on specific characteristica of the regional organizations itself or authoritarian gravity centers that brings with it many more assumptions (2019, p. 35, Annotations by P.B.). They exclude military alliances and only count international organizations that are not aspiring to go beyond a self-defined "region" (Obydenkova & Libman, 2019). The operationalization will be described in the section on Methodology.

Conclusion

The previous section has outlined the environment and assumption, resolving the question of level of analysis, creating a framework of interactions between the nation state and elites, the regional and international level, as well as putting the elites of autocratic states at the center of the causal mechanisms at work in the behavior of coordination at the UN. Since I am interested in autocratic behavior at the UN level, I expect the regional environment to play an important role in the formation and possible coordination of foreign policy. I posit that regional organizations are focal points for autocratic leaders.

[4] I am using the terms 'liberal' and 'western hemisphere' here very loosely, based on the common interpretation of who these states entail.

This makes them the perfect opportunity structure to lower transaction costs of negotiating new resolutions and coordinate behavior on existing ones, both through explicit communication, as well as implicit socialization effects.

In the following section, the hypothesis for the empirical analysis will be defined.

2.3 Bringing it together

In the following section I will formulate the specific hypothesis for possible patterns of co-sponsorship at the UN between autocratic states. Firstly, I will formulate two hypotheses related to the cost of coordinating at the UN. Secondly, I will formulate one hypothesis concerning the rewards of coordination. Finally, hypotheses on the available resources, as well as controls will follow.

2.3.1 The cost of coordination

In the following, I will engage with the *costs* of coordinating their actions at the UN. I posit that there is two principal components, that will affect the cost of coordination. 1. the institutional opportunity structure at the domestic level that affects the ability of regimes to engage in credible commitments, hence the costs of coordinating with other regimes and 2. the co-membership in regional organizations which affects the transaction costs of coordinating behavior.

Institutional opportunity structure - Regime Type

We have seen in the previous chapters that autocratic regimes struggle with credible commitments. There are several causal mechanisms that are thought to cause this, which I have already laid out above:

a) Autocrats do not have large audience costs when shirking. Hence they can renege cheaply on previous commitments (Fearon, 1994; Hillman & Potrafke, 2011; Obydenkova & Libman, 2019; Smith, 2016).

b) Autocratic elites cannot be disposed of cheaply (e.g. voted out) when they do not provide public goods that would result from successful international cooperation (Finke, forthcoming; Obydenkova & Libman, 2019). Even if a majority of citizens privately prefer a change of government (private preferences of citizens are against them), these preferences cannot be expressed publicly: citizens engage in so-called preference falsification (Kuran, 1989, 1995).

c) There is more veto-players and institutional checks in democratic regimes, which makes reverting a policy choice more costly (Brazys & Panke, 2017b; Hillman & Potrafke, 2011; Obydenkova & Libman, 2019).

I posit that co-sponsoring a resolution with other states is a form of commitment. States could backpedal on the resources invested in the resolution, they could withdraw their support for a resolution at a later stage or even introduce alternative resolutions or vote for alternatives. Supporting one another can be understood as a sort of "coalition", which needs commitment from multiple actors to function properly (Hillman & Potrafke, 2011, p. 2).

Hence, when comparing autocracies and democracies as dyads, Finke finds the above expected behavior to be true: ceteris paribus, autocrats cooperate less than democracies (forthcoming).

Hypothesis 1 *Democratic dyads co-sponsor more resolutions than autocratic or mixed dyads.*

When comparing mixed dyads and autocratic ones, we need to take into account that regime similarity heightens the compatibility of two interlocutors and hence reduce the cost of cooperation between two states (Ambrosio, 2008; Lai & Reiter, 2000). Bader et al.

also specify, that preference similarity, aligned incentive systems or even foreign policy preferences should make cooperation less costly (2010). Therefore I assume that all else equal, autocratic systems will have more similar value systems, incentive systems and even preference alignment, which should lead to more co-sponsorship between purely autocratic dyads.

Hypothesis 2 *Autocratic dyads co-sponsor more resolutions than mixed dyads.*

Regional Organization Membership

That non-democratic regional organizations play a role in the international politics of authoritarian rule has been shown in previous studies and the motivations and pathways have been described above (Ambrosio, 2008; Libman & Obydenkova, 2018; Obydenkova & Libman, 2019, and others). It is thus logical to assume that they will have an effect on cooperation at the UN. The aim of this study is not to provide in-depth insight into the precise causal mechanism and pathway through which regional organizations affect co-sponsorship, for this a more case-centered and qualitative research design would be necessary. Instead I will provide plausible causal mechanisms through which regional organizations are likely to influence behavior and see if there is empirical support for these hypotheses.

In theory, autocratic states should have a common interest to shield from criticism and creating an international norm environment that protects them globally. As we have seen autocracies have problems with credible commitment, hence this paper will start by looking at a sort of most-likely case of autocratic cooperation: a case of "neighbourly relations" (Bader et al., 2010, p. 82).

Ambrosio specifies a sort of "norm cascade", in which autocratic states socialization into a group of autocratic peers will enhance the similarity of values, hence making cooperation less costly (Ambrosio, 2008, p. 1323). Furthermore, these organizations can serve as focal point for autocratic elites (Libman & Obydenkova, 2018). If elites frequently meet in these settings, this could lower transaction cost, since the opportunity might be taken to dicuss such matters outside of specific meetings at the UN, which are costly to convene. Ginsburg lists the core-structures of the SCO for example, which includes meetings between foreign ministers, as well as head-of-state summits, providing for ample opportunity to discuss possible resolutions at the UN that are deemed to be important, affecting cost through the provision of cheap information (Ginsburg, 2020).

Of course not all ROs will provide for the same degree of institutionalized communication channels that greatly lower transaction cost, but most ROs will lower them. This mechanism should work even in the absence of independent supranational bureaucracies, which are seldom in autocratic ROs (Obydenkova & Libman, 2019). Hence I formulate he following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3 *Co-membership in an autocratic regional organization increases co-sponsoring in autocratic dyads behavior.*

Finally, Panke finds that ROs which have broader policy scopes in their charters/agreements will be able to recur to previous policy positions when voting on resolutions at the UN. I posit that similarly autocratic regional organizations that have a broader policy scope will have less costs when co-sponsoring common resolutions and formulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4 *Autocratic regional organizations that have a broader policy scope will have higher co-sponsoring behavior than autocratic ROs with a more narrow policy scope.*

2.3.2 The available resources

Formulating foreign policy is a costly act in itself. There is ample evidence that states with more administrative resources are better able to formulate and voice their positions. There is ample support that richer states formulate their foreign policy positions on more issues more frequently and can hence also be more successful in finding co-sponsors through lobbying with their staff at the diplomatic missions in New York (Brazys & Panke, 2017b; Panke, 2013).

Hypothesis 5 *The more administrative capacity a state posesses, the more resolutions they will co-sponsor.*

2.3.3 The rewards of coordination - Human Rights

In the following, I will engage with the *rewards* of coordinating actions at the UN. I posit that the issue area of human rights, where autocratic states run the risk of being critized by other states will be the arena where shielding themselves will bring the largest benefit.

Firstly, one can say that the founding of the UN itself was a stepping stone to the importance of human rights. In 1946, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) was created for the purpose of promoting human rights (Hug & Lukács, 2014). It was successful in introducing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, but since then it has become heavily politicized (Hug & Lukács, 2014). Kofi Annan is quoted by Hug as having said that it is the: "shame of the UN" (Hug & Lukács, 2014, p. 85). Some studies found that states who violate human rights have higher chances of being elected to the commission (Hug & Lukács, 2014).

Secondly, there is preliminary evidence, that human rights issues create important cleavages in the UN that could be driven by regime type.

An outlier in the study on the UN is a relatively new perspective on autocratic behavior in the international arena from a perspective of international law scholars (Ginsburg, 2020). He explicitly distinguishes between international law and norms coined by democracies versus the one coined by and among autocracies and finds significant differences. His result document that autocratic states, such as Cuba, China and Venezuela are sponsoring resolutions on human rights surprisingly frequently and increasingly so over time. He says: "China-sponsored resolutions seek to undermine the power of civil society, delegitimize human rights defenders, and advance Chinas goal to deflect scrutiny of its human rights record" (Ginsburg, 2020, p. 255). The evidence of this remains relatively descriptive.

There seems to be significant differences between states in the issue area of human rights. Jang, as well as Ferdinand, finds dissent in voting behavior among ASEAN and BRICS members in human rights issues, with some mixed findings by Hooijmaaijers and Keukeleire (Ferdinand, 2014a, 2014b; Hooijmaaijers & Keukeleire, 2016; Jang & Chen, 2019). Kurun and Parlar find the above described abstention of Turkey on human rights resolutions that affect their regional environment (2017). Dijkhuizen finds a growing number of co-sponsoring behavior in the area of human rights among the BRICS, even though no clear pattern in terms of regime type emerges (2019). Dreher finds significantly more cohesive voting patterns among G7 countries in the issue area of human rights, although we know that these agreement indices are somewhat flawed (2020). Finally, Hug and Lukács as well find that both the EU as well as the Organization of the Islamic Conference pull member states in their direction when it comes to voting behavior on human rights issues and polarized states when drafting resolutions (2014).

Thirdly, I want to argue that it is the issue area of human rights where autocratic states will mostly come under fire at the UN. Börzel et al. document how the commitment to human rights became more widespread in the 1990s among all types of international organizations and evolved into a type of "script" (2015, p. 126). Laatikainen cites the External Relations Council of the EU as saying: "EU priorities in human rights policy include a strong performance in and valuable contribution to the main multilateral human rights fora, the UN Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and the Third Committee of UN General Assembly (UNGA)" (2006, p. 155). Autocratic regimes are critically aware of the international norm environment and the pressure that eminates from the script of human rights.

Coordinating on human rights to engage in democracy resistance as understood by Tansey like sketched out above, would then be connected with a high payoff in terms of reduced cost of authoritarian practices (Tansey, 2016).

Hypothesis 6 *Resolutions in the issue-category of human rights will show more co-sponsoring behavior between states.*

2.3.4 Controls

Additionally, there are some control variables, that are thought to affect behavior. Membership in the UN Security Council will change rationales of states typically. The age of a regional organization, as well as the length of membership in the RO, as well as in the UN itself, are thought to increase socialization into the ROs and therefore enhance co-sponsoring behavior (Brazys & Panke, 2017b; Burmester & Jankowski, 2014; Dijkhuizen & Onderco, 2019; Panke et al., 2017). Alternatively, states could simply be sharing foreign policy alignments, through geographical proximity and linkages, which will be controlled (Ambrosio, 2008).

3 Methodology

3.1 Data

Beyond the anecdotical evidence some authors collected by hand about the UN, co-sponsorship data is only used by two authors employing the method so far with a limited set of resolutions (Dijkhuizen & Onderco, 2019; Finke, 2020). The present data to my knowledge is currently both the most up-to-date and most complete set of resolutions and draft resolutions between 1995 and 2021 that exists.

While Bailey et al. collect UN data periodically, their issue categories are limited and methodologically questionable (2017). In addition, they do not collect sponsorship behavior, which is likely to be a much more costly and clear political signal that states can send at the UN and internationally than simple co-voting patterns (for similar advances in national legislative behavior, now based on co-sponsorship of bills, see Calvo, 2014). As shown in Figure 3, I collected both the successful *and* unsuccessful draft resolution, as well as adopted resolutions starting in session 49 (1994/1995) and running up to the ongoing session 75 (2020/2021), with all the information published before April 22, 2021. Before session 55, the data cannot appropriately monitor whether draft resolutions were adopted in the GA or not, due to lacking information in the UN Library (Dag Hammarskjöld Library, 2021). It can be seen that roughly half of all drafts make it to the GA. In effect, only half the coordination that takes place behind the scenes is reflected in the final position, or co-voting patterns of states which are used by most scholars.

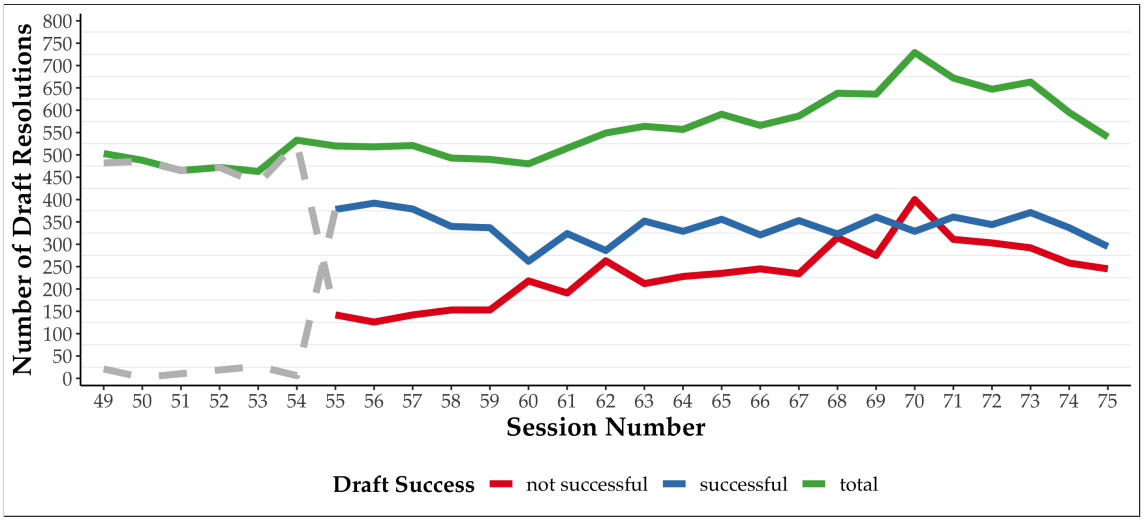

Figure 3: *Number of draft resolutions by success. Authors own calculation and data. Before session 55 the database does not consistently link successful resolutions to their drafts.*

3.1.1 Data collection

The information in the database was collected through automated parsing and scraping of approximately 50.000 UN webpages. The process was done within the ethical and

legal constraints of data collection, throttling requests to UN servers to acceptable limits and identifying the author through provision of an e-mail address in the request headers.

There are two places, the UN publishes its resolutions:

1. Quick links to full texts in the library, which only include the draft resolutions that made it to the final stage, but omit all the unsuccesful draft resolutions, hereby greatly underestimating the amount of coordination that turned out to be unseccesful but still happened.
2. Full text search in the library, which results in 34.081 draft resolutions and decisions, of which only 15.959 are actually draft resolutions and decisions from 1994 or after.

The website follows a nested logic, wherein I first executed an automated search within predefined parameters, parsed the indexed list of draft and adopted resolutions and followed links to vote results and further details on these previously collected resolution pages. The search parameters I used are documented in the script in the supplemental material. To check the completeness and correctness of the data I inspected samples from the resulting datasets of resolutions and associated information.

3.1.2 Coding of issue categories

As described previously, the existing data on behavior at the UN sorts UN resolutions in six categories, based on a loose matching of keywords to the title of a resolution. Bailey et al. themselves stress that "they have been subjected to a rudimentary visual check but they may not be 100% accurate" (Bailey et al., 2017, see Codebook).

The current coding of UN resolutions into categories thus, although frequently used, is not completely validated. For this reason, a small team at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)[1], has worked on a project that created valid and replicable issue categories for UN resolutions (Voelsen et al., 2021). The coding has been applied to resolutions, but is based on parts of the dataset on draft resolutions that I have collected for my paper. To understand how it is applicable to my dataset as well (the SWP uses only final resolutions, I include all draft resolutions), a short explanation is necessary.

The UN associates each draft resolution with a varying amount of "subject categories". There are well over 9.000 of these subject categories, however, only about 1.000 of them are frequently used for almost all resolutions. Hence, the team started associating each of these subjects with an official agenda topic for the UN plenary, iteratively refining the category scheme. This results in a total of 34 main categories, which are multidimensional. This means that each resolution can belong to any number of categories. I believe that this represents the nature of the UN better, than the one-dimensional coding that is employed by Finke through LDA-analysis of the dictionary method of Bailey et al. (2017; forthcoming). However, it also adds additional layers of complexity for the later model. The final codebook is to be found in the supplementary material.

44 resolutions did not have subject categories assigned and are excluded from the model. Another 1.156 resolutions were only relevant to UN internal affairs, such as conferences, budget organization and others that could not be coded into meaningful issue categories and were hence excluded from the sample. The remaining draft resolutions on average belonged to 2.7 issue categories with a median of two issue categories per draft resolution.

[1] Project lead Dr. Daniel Voelsen, project members Luisa Marie Boll, Rebecca Majewski and Paul Bochtler. The SWP has kindly allowed me to use these issue codes for my paper. They are now published at GESIS: https://doi.org/10.7802/2297

3.1.3 Limitations

While this is probably the most complete dataset that currently exists on UN voting behavior between 1995-2021, it comes with some limitations, that are mostly due to the limited resources at my disposition.

Firstly, the availability of data. The UN database on resolutions is apparently not complete and contains false entries. Of the above mentioned 15.959, 696 are draft *decisions*, which is another type of UN instrument and that I excluded. Another 136 are wrongly indexed *notes* and another 51 are wrongly indexed *reports*. Additionally, during the data collection for all the resolutions actually put to a vote, I found that some resolutions put to vote will make reference to a draft resolution that is not indexed with the other draft resolutions, particularly for the last 3 years (222 cases). I added these to my dataset, but I cannot be sure, whether there are more errors in the UN database. Excluding the 81 drafts, that were from the year 1994, but still belonging to session 48 (1993/1994), this leaves us with a total of 14.995 draft resolutions. The only remedy to this problem would be to manually check all the reports and agendas of all committees of the UN, something that would require immense manual labor costs and is not feasible.

Secondly, the recorded votes that are used by virtually all scholars are not all votes that are taken in the UN. In the entire reviewed literature only one paper by Hug seems to have investigated this at all and no other paper even makes this lack of data transparent in their discussions (Hug, 2012). If there is indeed a correlation between other factors, such as whether a powerful states sponsored a resolution and the fact that the resolution is recorded, the existing scholarship might be confronted with a rather serious problem (Hug, 2012).

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Case Selection

Given the previous research on the international politics of authoritarian rule, there are grounds to suspect that we can expect them to cooperate as well at the UN. Defining the UN as the arena where I am interested in international behavior follows two rationales:

1. the UN is one of the, if not the most important forum for the setting of international norms and hence a place where cooperation between autocratic states has the potential for wide-reaching effects on international politics. Therefore, it seems to me that this is a relevant case.
2. as described in subsection 2.1.2 on "Why the UN", the UN also allows us to observe behavior by almost all states of the world on a wide-ranging amount of issues, therefore results generalize better and could be transferred to other arenas more easily.

Cooperation between autocratic states is hard to measure and it is almost impossible to observe the exact causal mechanisms and processes that make it work in the background. This is due to the secretive nature of diplomacy in general, but also the intransparent processes of specifically autocratic governance.

Looking at regional organizations and their purported effects on indicators of cooperation between autocracies also constitutes, what Gerring might call a crucial case, in that these cases constitute most-likely cases (Gerring, 2008). If autocracies that are co-members of the same regional organization do not cooperate to a certain degree at the

UN, cooperation among autocracies at the UN is unlikely to be the case.

Lastly, I have set a cutoff value at session 49 (1994/1995) of the UN. This is because I am mostly interested in the cooperation between states following the rise in regional organizations in the 2000s. In addition, in 1994 the dust from the collapse of the Soviet Union had settled and the UN had more or less reached its current size, with some minor changes in membership since then (United Nations, 2021b).

3.2.2 Operationalizing definitions

Dependent Variable

Measurements of political preferences at the UN are manifold and the literature lacks a consistent standard that can be compared across studies (Hooijmaaijers & Keukeleire, 2016). Most studies use co-voting patterns and apply some kind of transformation that allows them to represent member states preferences in a low-dimensional scaled space with the most recent being item-response theory. Others aggregate them to deduce preferences of political blocs or organizations like the EU (Burmester & Jankowski, 2018; Hug & Lukács, 2014). Panke for example uses the percentage of members that share the majority preference of their regional organization (Panke, 2013).

As discussed previously, while the above measures are maybe useful for operationalizing coherency, I posit that they are unlikely to properly measure actorness or cooperation between states. This is because "co-sponsorship requires a proactive collaborative effort to promote a particular policy position and is therefore more likely to be reflective of cooperation" (Finke, forthcoming, p. 6). Additionally, as shown in the above plot, coordination happens frequently before resolutions even make it to the final stage of the General Assembly and therefore might be biased. Furthermore, the treatment of non-voting in the UN is problematic with anecdotic evidence that it is a deliberate choice, while other sources indicate that it is a meaningless signal distributed at random, hence studies treat it as abstention, fourth signal, no-vote or or as a missing value (Burmester & Jankowski, 2014; Finke, 2020). Since this behavior is disproportionately exhibited by lower income states, this likely would bias results when using co-voting indices.

Co-sponsorhip can be measured only in country-session dyads. The first step is to extract the authors of every single draft resolution. This results is 234.747 sponsorship "events" by single countries. This seems to be a large amount, however to put this into perspective, let us look at the *potential* amount of sponsorship events, which is:

$$n_{drafts} * n_{countries} = 14.994 * 193 = 2.893.842$$

This would be the number of sponsorship events, when every state would have sponsored every single resolution. To measure coordination, we are interested in co-sponsorship, which indicates whether two states sponsored a resolution *together*. The combination of unique dyads, meaning country pairs, which are possible can be calculated with the below formula (for simplicity assuming a membership of 193 across all sessions).

$$i_{dyads} = \frac{n_{countries}!}{2!(n_{countries} - 2)!} = \frac{193!}{2!(193 - 2)!} = 18.528$$

$$j_{draftresolutions} = 14.994$$

$$n_{i,j} = i * j \sim 277.808.832$$

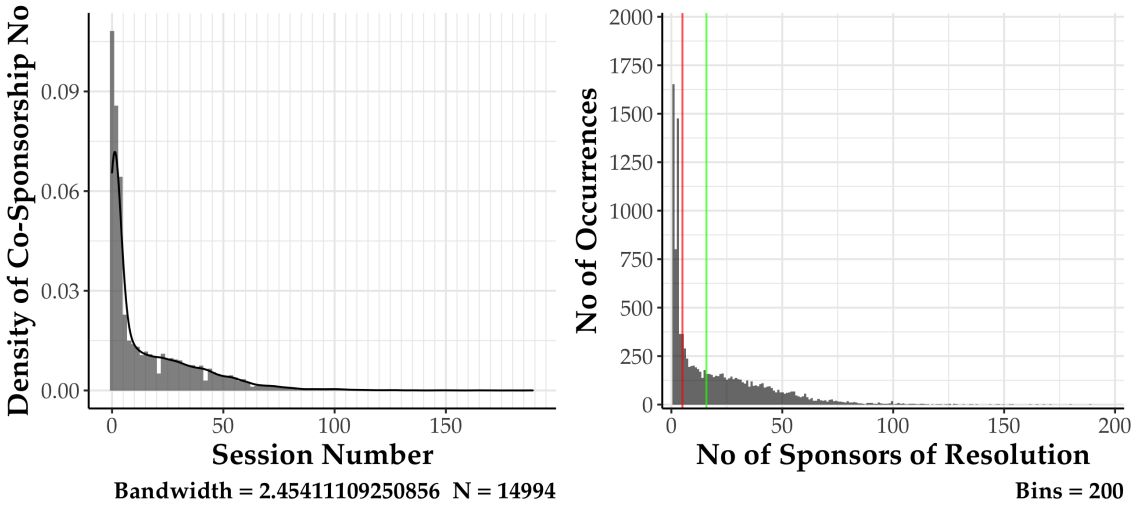

Figure 4: *Right hand side: Distribution of number of co-sponsors as a histogram, with median (red) and mean (green). Left-hand side: Kernel density estimation of the number of co-sponsors of all draft resolutions.*

There are 277 million *potential* co-sponsorship events. This is, if every state would co-sponsor every resolution with all other states. The actual number of **co-sponsoring** events, is 5.137.506. If I would decide to run a logistic regression on the probability of co-sponsorship, as some authors did for small hand-collected subsets of this data, this would imply calculating on a dependent variable of 272.671.326 zeros and 5.137.506 ones. Even though computational power has increased in the last decades, this does not seem to be feasible. Hence, I decided to sum the count of co-sponsorship by session and issue categories. This implies that I will count how many times a dyad of states co-sponsored a resolution in a given session and given issue-category.

As can be seen in Figure 4, the distribution is highly skewed, with the most frequent values being sponsorship of zero, one and two sponsoring states. On average 15.79 states are sponsoring a draft resolution, with half of all draft resolutions having 5 or more co-sponsors.

Frequently, regional groups in the UN are joint sponsors of resolutions. I could disaggregate these groups in their single memberships, which would lead to significantly more sponsorships. One of the groups that sponsors many draft resolutions is the G77, however I think that this could lead to an overestimation of coordination activity. It is relatively cheap for members of the G77 to simply free-ride on resolutions sponsored by others. Hence I am being conservative in not counting these sponsorships. The G77 sponsors by far the most resolutions, other regional groupings, like the group of Latin American states, the group of Asian states and the European Union all sponsored only one resolution.

Independent Variables

Measuring autocracy As explained in a previous section, I will be using the Polyarchy Index from the V-Dem project. I follow Finke in choosing a threshold of 0.5, which is focal because it is the minimum of the bimodal distribution of the index (Finke, forthcoming). Subsequently, country-pairs, dyads are coded into one of three categories: democratic, mixed or autocratic. A number of mostly small island states are missing from the V-Dem

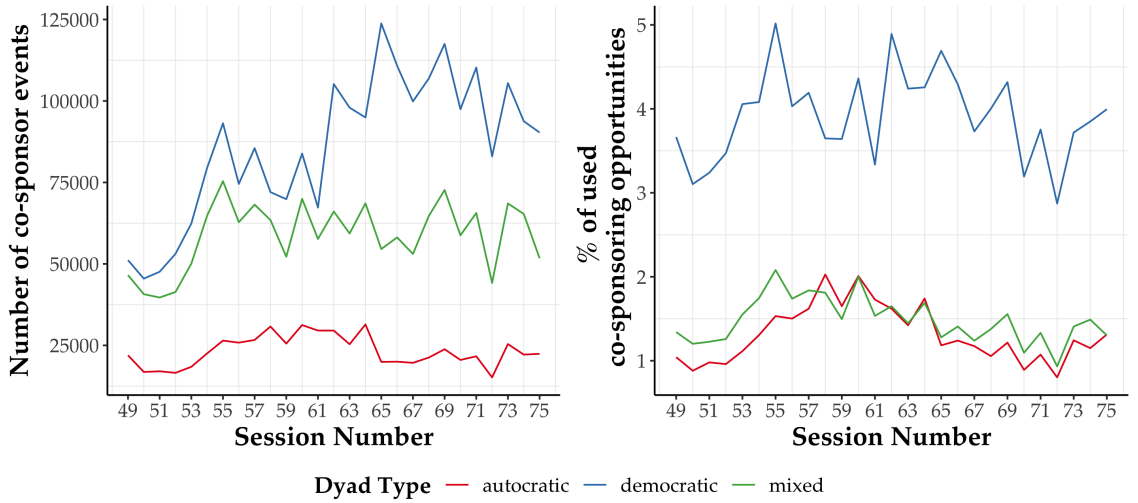

Figure 5: *Left-hand side shows the number of co-sponsor events in a given session by the type of country-diad. Right-hand side shows these in relation to the potential co-sponsorships a country could have had (as percentage) with other countries of the same dyad in a given session.*

dataset and are therefore excluded from the analysis and data [2].

In Figure 5 on the left hand, we can see the number of co-sponsoring events in a given session by type of dyad. It is clear, that autocratic co-sponsorship events are at the bottom, around 25.000 per year, whereas mixed dyads are leading with a peak of 125.000 co-sponsoring events in session 65. This, however, must be seen in relation to the total amount of possible opportunities that are open to each state. Hence I calculated the potential number of co-sponsorships for each session and regime type with a variation of the previous formula and plotted the percentage of co-sponsorhip events that were actually realized. As seen in the right-hand side graph, now democracies are clearly leading in co-sponsoring, realizing about 4-5% of the "potential opportunities" they had to co-sponsor with states of their regime type. Autocracies and mixed dyads are closely following one another at some value between 1-2% of realized opportunities.

An alternative operationalization, that would fit the argument well, would be a direct measurement of repressiveness, which autocrats might intend to make less costly, through cooperation. This is used by Cottiero and also included in the V-Dem dataset through a measure of freedom from political killings and torture by the government (Coppedge et al., 2021; Cottiero, forthcoming).

Measuring RO membership and type I assume that regional organziations play an important role in how autocracies interact at the UN, in that they lower transaction costs associated with cooperation. For the analysis, I need to choose a set of regional organizations, as well as evaluate, whether they are autocratic or not. As described by Obydenkova and Libman, the Correlates of War dataset on International Organizations is very widely adopted, but it is exactly that, a dataset of *international* organizations (Obydenkova & Libman, 2019). The most recent compilations of just regional organizations comes from Panke et al., who compiled regional organizations under the following definition: "ROs are defined as institutions (with a set of primary rules, and headquarters or a secretariat) in which at least three states cooperate with one another in more than one specific issue. Unlike in international organizations, the membership in ROs is based

[2]The excluded cases are: Andorra, Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Brunei, Dominica, Micronesia (Federated States of), Grenada, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Marshall Islands, Palau, San Marino, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Samoa, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, Tuvalu

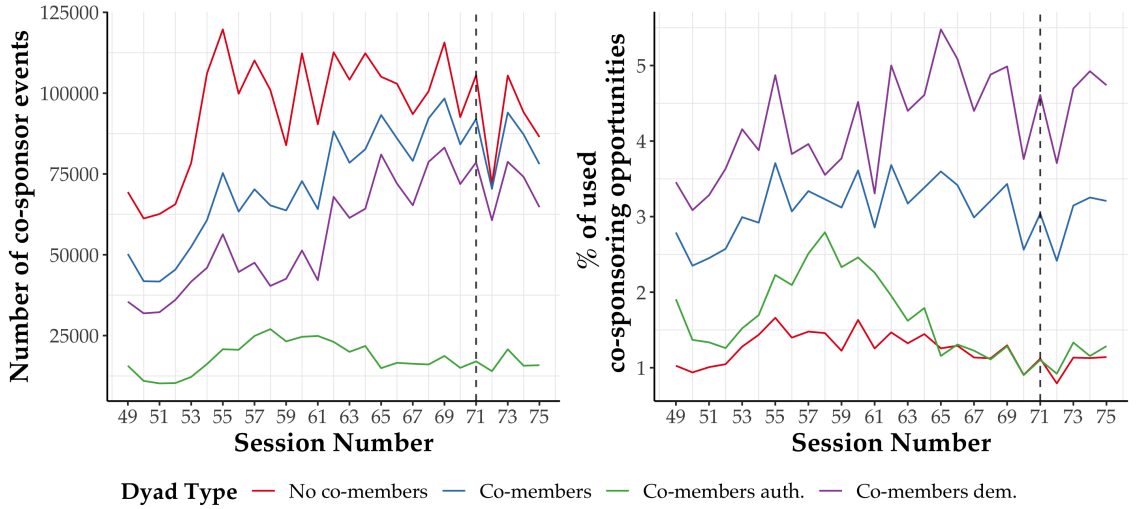

Figure 6: *Left-hand side shows the number of co-sponsor events in a given session by the type of RO-dyad. Right-hand side shows these in relation to the potential co-sponsorships a country could have had (as percentage) with other countries of the same RO-type in a given session.*

(among other criteria) on geographical criteria. Applying this definition, the ROCO datasets entails 76 ROs between the years 1945 and 2015 for which primary law sources were available" (Panke & Starkmann, 2021, p. 4).

A second question relates to the question of how to define a regional organization as autocratic. I will follow Obydenkova and Libman, in calculating the mean score of my democracy measure for the RO, as above with a threshold of 0.5 (Obydenkova & Libman, 2019). This leaves me with a set of 42 regional organizations that were autocratic at some point in time out of a total of 76 organizations [3] (Panke & Starkmann, 2019). This equals a total of 1.709 RO-years which are measured, of which 858 are autocratic, almost exactly half the measured years. The dataset by Panke runs up until 2015. Since memberships in ROs are relatively stable, I have made the assumption, that these have remained the same for the following 5 years until 2020. In Figure 6 the co-sponsor events by given RO-types can be seen. It is evident, that states that do not share membership in an RO co-sponsor the most draft resolutions. Again we have to put this into perspective. What about the potential of authoring resolutions, respectively how many states were even "available" in the given category. Adjusted for this, we can see that clearly members of democratic

[3] Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Arab League (AL), Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our Americas (ALBA), Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), African Union (AU), Bay of Bengal Initiaitve for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU), Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC), Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (CCTS), Conseil de l'Entente (CE), Communauté Economique des États de l'Afrique Centrale (CEEAC), Cental European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), Communauté économique et monétaire de l'Afrique centrale (CEMAC), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD), Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Collective Security Treaty (Organization) (CSTO), East African Community (EAC), Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), G5 du Sahel (G5S), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM), International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), Intergovernmental Authority on Develeopment (IGAD), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC), Mekong River Commission (MRC), Mano River Union (MRU), Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Southern African Customs Union (SACU), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), UN Special Program for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA)

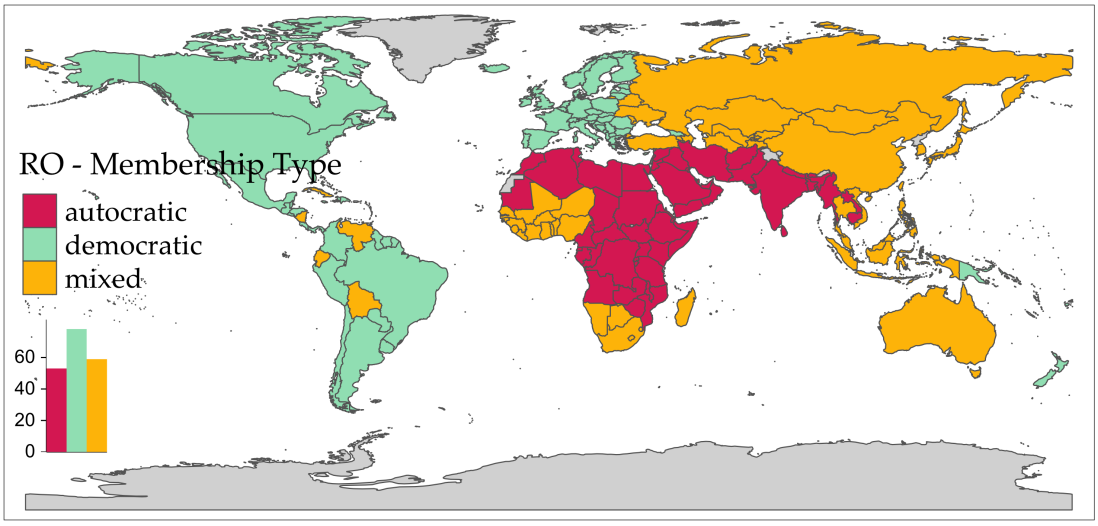

Figure 7: *Distribution of membership in regional organizations across the world.*

regional organizations co-sponsor by far the most. Autocratic co-members still sponsor a very low amount in relation to their potential partners, even though we can observe an interesting spike around session 58 (2003/2004). States that do not share any membership (the vast majority) now realize only a much lower amount of their potential resolutions.

The distribution of membership in 2015 can be seen in Figure 7. It is evident that it is Subsaharan Africa, the Middleeast and Southern Asia that count the most "pure" autocratic regional organization memberships.

The **scope of policy competences** of ROs was measured as the maximum policy scope over all issue areas, any shared RO of two states posesses and the maximum policy scope that any shared RO posesses in the area of defence and security policy, which is the closest category to international relations and closest to the issue area of human rights, that the data provides for.

Classifying issue categories It is clear, that different issues will be of differing importance to countries. I posit that authoritarian states will have more to gain from sponsoring resolutions in an area that will help them shield against democratic pressure - human rights.

In Figure 8, we can see that human rights indeed enjoy a high *relative* share of co-sponsorship percentage of both autocracies and democracies. As seen in Table 2, this is partially due to the large share of human rights related issues that the UN deals with in general. Democracies give more "attention" to human rights than autocracies, although the lines followed one another closely until session 70 (2015/2016), when autocracies started to have a decreasing share of resolutions in the area of human rights. I selected a few more issue categories which I deemed to be of interest. On the one hand, the recent spiked interest in climate change is obvious and was to be expected. The generally lower share of co-sponsorship that democracies give to this topic on the other hand is rather surprising. Lastly, another rather large share of draft resolutions is in the issue area of international peace and security, where autocracies, almost symmetrical to their lowering share in human rights have increasing relative numbers of co-sponsorships. Another topic that has divided the UN for a long time are the frequent resolutions that accuse Israel of human rights violations, which are almost exclusively sponsored by autocracies and whose sharp decline in session 72 might be the reason for the lowering overall share of human rights, as Israel/Palestine issues are often also human rights issues.

Figure 8: *Comparison of % of co-sponsorships that are dedicated to selected issue categories by regime type over time.*

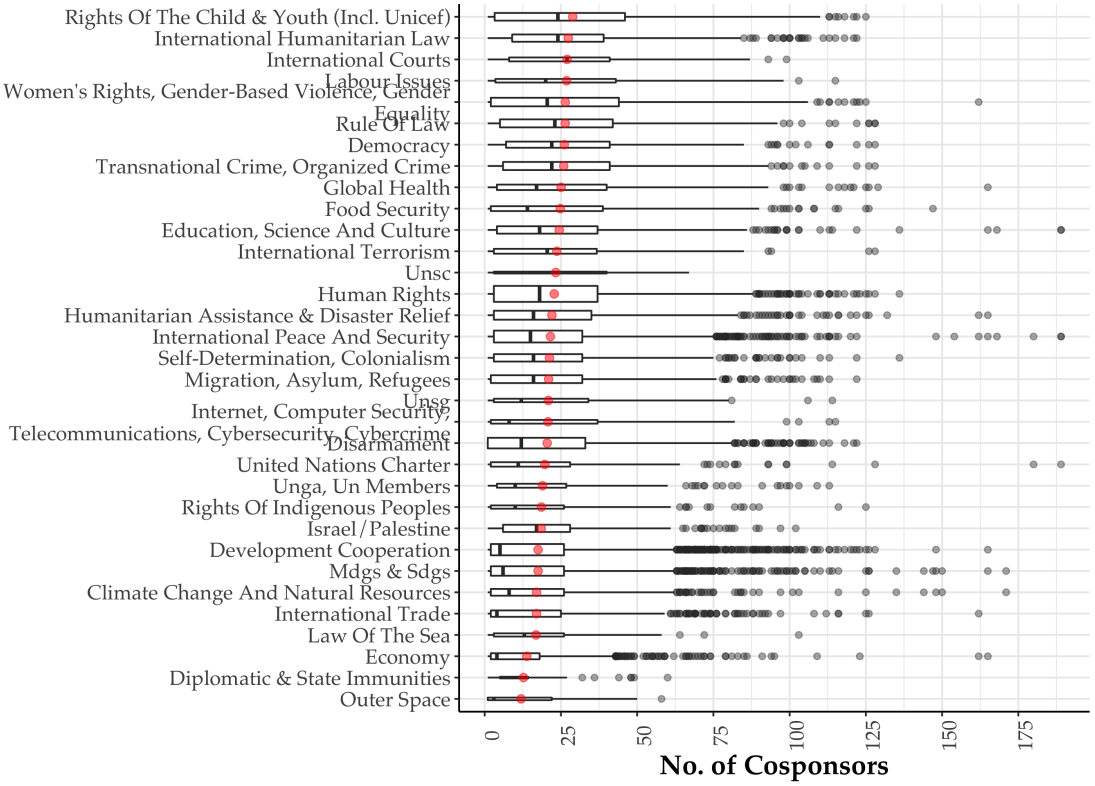

Figure 9: *Distribution of number of co-sponsors for draft resolutions. Boxplot with median middle line, 25 and 75% percentile box and 1.5 times Interquartilerange whiskers. In red the mean, which is typically biased towards the outliers.*

In Figure 9, the distribution of the number of co-sponsors of resolutions in a given issue area are shown. If we were to understand large numbers of co-sponsorship as greater consensus, then the Rights of the Child, as well as International Humanitarian Law are leading the chart. They both have median and mean values of close to 25 states sponsoring each resolution. However, this interpretation must be applied carefully, as some issues, such as outer space with the lowest mean and median around 2 and 12 co-sponsors per draft respectively, simply only attract certain niche-countries and are not necessarily less consensually agreed upon. However, typically a large number of co-sponsorships goes along with more weight and larger consensus at the GA. Development Cooperation is an interesting case with a low median of close to 2 co-sponsors per draft, but a very large number of outliers with much higher co-sponsorship numbers well above 50.

The width of the bars shows the amount of drafts in given issue categories and shows that Human Rights, Disarmament, Development Cooperation, International Peace and Security, as well as MDGs and SDGs are among the most frequent draft resolutions issues. This can also be seen in Table 2. The % Sum Difference in the Table reports the summed up, absolute percentage difference between the relative share of autocracies and democracies in the issue area. We can see, that Israel and Palestine have the highest difference, with almost no democratic dyad sponsoring resolutions in this area. Human Rights follows, but here the difference tilts towards democracies giving a higher total share of attention over all sessions. Rule of Law and Transnational Crime are also dominated by a relative dominance of democracies, but International peace and Security again is dominated by autocratic dyads. Gender is dominated by democracies, something that is often closely connected with human rights, whereas self-determination and colonialism again is mostly autocratic, with European States being careful not to let human rights be drawn into this discussion.

It is important to remember that draft resolutions are multi-dimensional, one resolution can fall into multiple issue categories, hence the sum of these numbers does not equal the total sum of draft resolutions.

Measuring state capacity For state capacity I have used the GDP data of the World Bank and imputed values forward through a time series linear regression where necessary (World Bank, 2021). I then used the sum of both states GDP.

Control variables autocracy The **geographical proximity** between states has been estimated according to a rather new method of calculating the averaged weight of distances between industrial centers estimated through light emission from satellite images (Hinz, 2017). The data is available only up to 2012. As I assume these trends to be rather stable, I have estimated a time series linear regression to impute the missing variables until 2020. A fitted vs. residual plot has been added in the annex, which looks fairly homoscedastic. For some cases I imputed the values of a previous country, e.g. there are no values for South Suden, hence I imputed the previous value for Sudan, the values for Yugoslavia for Serbia and Montenegro and in the remaining few cases where only later values were available I did not impute through a linear regression backwards, but instead simply took the previous value and extended it backwards (e.g. for East Timor).

To estimate **economic linkages** I used the Correlates of War dataset, but the data is updated only up to 2014 and since then quite some changes have happened in the world of trade so it is not possible to simpy extrapolate these values (Barbieri et al., 2009; Barbieri & Omar M. G. Keshk, 2016). Hence, I have used their source, the IMF

Table 2: *Differences in relative co-sponsorship across issues.*

Issue Category	Sum % Difference	Mostly	No. Drafts
Israel/Palestine	148.97	autocratic	898
Human Rights	108.15	democratic	4102
Rule Of Law	93.36	democratic	1007
Transnational Crime, Organized Crime	85.51	democratic	1058
International Peace And Security	83.09	autocratic	2198
Women's Rights, Gender-Based Violence, Gender Equality	74.25	democratic	1168
Self-Determination, Colonialism	68.86	autocratic	901
MDGs And SDGs	61.69	autocratic	1444
Disarmament	60.1	democratic	1523
Rights Of The Child And Youth (Incl. Unicef)	55.8	democratic	926
Education, Science And Culture	55.03	autocratic	902
Climate Change And Natural Resources	53.72	autocratic	759
Democracy	44.04	democratic	641
Humanitarian Assistance And Disaster Relief	41.84	autocratic	1284
Development Cooperation	35.72	autocratic	2045
International Humanitarian Law	30.73	democratic	892
Food Security	30.68	autocratic	399
Migration, Asylum, Refugees	29.68	autocratic	963
International Trade	23.09	autocratic	675
Labour Issues	22.71	democratic	224
Global Health	19.99	autocratic	494
United Nations Charter	18.43	autocratic	287
International Terrorism	17.86	democratic	365
Economy	16.35	autocratic	584
Unga, Un Members	14.86	autocratic	255
International Courts	14.57	democratic	249
Internet, Computer Security, Telecommunications, Cybersecurity, Cybercrime	14.38	democratic	213
Rights Of Indigenous Peoples	13.91	autocratic	173
Outer Space	11.86	autocratic	73
Unsg	8.08	democratic	192
Law Of The Sea	7.38	democratic	170
Unsc	5.31	democratic	51
Diplomatic And State Immunities	1.74	democratic	50

Notes: The *Sum % Difference* column is the sum of absolute percentage differences between the percent of cosponsorships of a given session of a given regime-type are dedicated to one issue category. E.g. if democracies dedicated 25% of their cosponsorships to human rights in session 49 and autocracies only 20%, then the absolute difference would be 5% and is summed over all sessions for all issue categories.

Direction of Trade statistics, took the maximum value of mirrored export/import values and applied a CIF-FOB rate of 8% as is suggested by the literature (Anderson & van Wincoop, 2004; Gaulier & Zignago, 2010; International Monetary Fund, 2021; rOpenSci, 2019). I have compared my estimates with the available COW data (a total of 216.706 rows were compared) and reached a correlation of >0.99. Hence I will use the COW data for historic values and extend it with my own data as explained above. Remaining missings were imputed through a moving average imputation. However, there are 56.245 of about 488.704 dyad-years, for which there is no trade data available. These will have to be excluded, which is slightly problematic, because the proportion of shared autocratic co-memberships in NDROs is 27% in the missing data, but only 19% in the non-missing data. Hence, I am excluding more autocracies than democracies, potentially adding a conservative bias.

3.2.3 Modelling the hypothesized relationships

To be tested empirically, the above formulated hypothesis must be put into a functional form that can be estimated and should help in uncovering causal relationships. In the following I will try to gradually get closer to the most appropriate model.

OLS assumptions The workhorse of statistics remains the simple linear regression, using ordinary least squares (OLS) to derive estimators of the influence of variables on an outcome. OLS has certain assumptions that need to be met so that the resulting estimations are unbiased (correct coefficients) and statements about the confidence we have in these (standard errors) are efficient. These are typically known as the Gauss-Markov assumptions (Wooldridge, 2012, p. 59). For multivariate regression these are:

1. The parameters need to have a linear relationship.
2. We need to be drawing from a random sample of independent and identically distributed observations (iid).
3. There needs to be sample variance in the explanatory variable. E.g. diversity in GDP, Regime Type or RO membership.
4. Important is the zero conditional mean assumption of the error term. Which translates for example into the fact that there cannot be unobserved (omitted) variables that have dependencies with the data.
5. There can be no perfect collinearity, e.g. factors that are multiples of others. The issue of multicollinearity is debated, as a cut-off value for how much correlation between two variables is too much is unclear (Wooldridge, 2012, p. 97).
6. The variance of errors needs to be constant, also known as Homoskedasticity.
7. A normal distribution of the dependent variable is required.

While some of these conditions are clearly met (sample variance is given), others are more challenging.

The first assumption of linearity can be relaxed to a certain degree, in that robust standard errors can account for the misspecification to a degree - the so called "agnostic" or "assumption lean" approach to regression. However, this obviously comes with the benefit of the doubt and I will be doing robustness tests for the specification (Aronow et al., 2015).

The second assumption of iid observations has been challenging for my hypothesis, as it does not allow me to control for issue categories in one large model, because the

categories are overlapping and hence not iid. Therefore, I had to run separate models for separate issue categories.

While I have tried to include as many relavant controls as possible, including theoretically sound concepts, such as the membership in the UN Security Council, there can never be certainty about omitted variables and the correct functional specifications for *true* underlying values.

While there is a priori no perfect collinearity in my model, I have included country dummies for fixed effects that sometimes have zero "1"s, because they are completely lacking in the model due to missingness of key variables like GDP, distance or trade scores. Before running the model, these variables are excluded.

The variance of errors will be checked at the modelling stage. However, this does not bias the coefficient but "only" the standard errors, which can be made robust for such underestimation (Beck & Katz, 1995; Wooldridge, 2012).

The assumption of normality is often violated, but models have been shown to asymptotically be unbiased anyways (Wooldridge, 2012).

TSCS assumptions The dataset, however, is not a cross-sectional cut across different states at the UN. The structure of the data has several layers and can be thought of as a complicated case of multi-level data.

Firstly, an observation is not a country, but a dyad. These dyads are undirected $d(i,j) = d(j,i)$ and there is no dyads between equal units of type $d(i,i)$. Secondly, each observation is not only a dyad, but a dyad in a given session of the UN t. Lastly, the outcome variable y does not measure co-sponsorship between dyads in a session, but co-sponsorship of a given dyad, in a given session, in a given issue area a. It can be thought of as $y_{d,t,a}$. As the issue categories are overlapping and resolutions count into multiple resolutions, I have divided the dataset into issue-specific sets and will omit the a in the following. A simple linear regression model would then look like the following:

$$\mathbf{Y}_{d,t,a} = \beta \mathbf{X}_{d,t,a} + u_{d,t,a} \tag{3.1}$$

In essence, however, this is a time series cross section model, which are often thought of as a special case of multilevel models, as they are hiererachically clustured in units N and points in time T and have $N \times T$ observations. In my case, this is $d \times t = 510.597$. However, the data is unbalanced, as some countries drop out (e.g. Yugoslavia ceases to exist) and others join (e.g. Serbia).

Time series models bring with them essentially two types of problems, on the one hand violations of the **cross-sectional assumptions** (homoskedasticity across units) and assumptions of assumptions related to the **dynamic aspect of time** (serial correlations, contemporaneous correlations, etc.) (Beck & Katz, 2007; Fortin-Rittberger, 2015; Wooldridge, 2012, p. 353). As long as trends are properly modelled and possible heteroscedasticity is taken into account however, the same inference procedures are asymptotically valid (Wooldridge, 2012, p. 391).

Beck and Katz in a widely cited article that became the (in)-official best practice for modelling time series recommended to deal with these problems through a three-pronged approach:

1. Assume that we can pool the variance across units (basically assuming homoscedasticity of errors).
2. Deal with possible dynamic issues with a lagged dependent variable (LDV) and

3. Calculate panel-corrected standard errors (PCSEs) (Beck & Katz, 1995, 1996; Wilson & Butler, 2007).

Time dependence While Beck and Katz are rather lean in their assumptions about what should be done about the plethora of problems associated with time series models, they do warn of the danger of unit roots. If the data displays unit roots, OLS is not appropriate. I have conducted a Lagrange-Multiplier Test which allows for tests of both the existence of serial correlation, as well as unit roots (Beck & Katz, 1996). For this I have taken a first full model, included a lag of the dependent variable among the independents and regressed the resulting residuals on the full set of independent variables, as well as the lagged resulting residuals (2 years lagged). The correlation of the residuals with the lagged residuals, as well as the significance of the t-statistic showed, that remaining serial correlation was below 1, which means there is no unit root present and the remaining serial correlation of the significant lag variable, is at a value of 0.24 (Table 12). As this does indicate serial correlation, I will test for the robustness of estimators to the inclusion of a lagged dependent variable. This would modify the above model to:

$$\mathbf{Y}_{d,t} = \phi \mathbf{Y}_{d,t-1} + \beta \mathbf{X}_{d,t} + u_{d,t} \tag{3.2}$$

Where ϕ is the estimator of the effect of the lagged effect of the dependent variable for each dyad and session. This should then generate unbiased and consistent coefficient estimates asymptotically (Achen, 2000). The standard errors nonetheless need to be corrected.

Sometimes the introduction of lagged dependent variables are squishing the effect of true causal models, when there is no theoretical sound reason to include them. Hence, I will be careful in examining the coefficients for these models (Achen, 2000).

This approach was chosen over the tranformation of the data to account for the time dependency (e.g. through filtering by the above reported coefficient of .24) in spirit of Beck and Katzs opinion on how sometimes complicated methods bring little marginal gain in accuracy, but bring us away from actually thinking about the data and underlying process. A transformation of the entire data to account for serial correlation would make the interpretation much less intuitive.

Unit heterogeneity A later paper by Wilson and Butler strongly critizices the simple best practices I just described. They investigated 195 papers in elite journals and found that 118 did not even consider testing the first assumption that Beck and Katz made - unit homogeneity (Wilson & Butler, 2007). They show, that testing for this assumption and where necessary, including fixed effects changes the outcome of eight papers they fully replicated. They also find that the test for serial correlation I have done above (even though recommended by Beck and Katz) is not done in most cases.

Hence it would be prudent to further extend the model with a test and possibly estimator of unit specific effects:

$$\mathbf{Y}_{d,t} = \phi \mathbf{Y}_{d,t-1} + \beta \mathbf{X}_{d,t} + \alpha_d + u_{d,t} \tag{3.3}$$

This brings additional complications. The model in equation 3.3 is also called a dynamic panel model and is known to have some bias, due to the lagged dependent variable together with fixed effects (FE) (Wilson & Butler, 2007). However, this effect disappears with asymptotically large t. Since I have 27 sessions and the bias is thought

to be small, I will still use this model to test for the necessity of FE and where necessary include them. This is typically done by comparing coefficients with and without FE, as well as the corresponding F-statistic (Wilson & Butler, 2007). I will report these in the analysis.

Dyadic data-specific considerations As the attentive reader might have noticed, I have included the unit specific intercepts α_d with the subscript d for dyads. While this makes intuitive sense, it is firstly computationally unfeasible to calculate a model with over 14.000 parameters and almost 400.000 observations and secondly it does not truly account for the "unit" of analysis.

Countries are present in various dyads, which makes the "unit" of analysis the country and all the dyads it is a part of. Units are hence overlapping, as each dyad is a part of several units. One possible way to account for some of this would be to follow the path of multilevel modelling, that Beck and Katz have followed later on and estimate random coefficients. These allow for partial pooling of the variance, as opposed to either full pooling as Beck and Katz proposed in 1995, or no-pooling as advocated by Wilson and Butler (Beck, 2009; Beck & Katz, 2007; Wilson & Butler, 2007). Aronow et al. try to model three-way random coefficients for country one and country two of each dyad, as well as for overall dyads for a dataset that only has well below 50.000 observations on a university high-performance computing cluster and report that the model did not converge after a week on the cluster (2015).

This speaks to the fact that: "Despite their prominence in empirical work, the properties of extant methods of estimation and inference for dyadic regression models are not fully understood" (Graham & de Paula, 2020, p. 3). For a first short overview of some of the work done in the area consult Tabord-Meehan (2019).

Aronow et al. propose a non-parametric sandwich-type robust variance estimator for linear regression, that can account for the clustering of this specific dyad-dependence. In addition to being computationally feasible (while not fast, it is at least possible to calculate), their SEs are agnostic to the parametric structure of the model. As they state that "our dyadic cluster robust estimator would be a natural complement to a fixed effects analysis", I will estimate these standard errors for some of the models to test the efficiency and consistency of standard errors.

Alternative Models Lastly, it could be suggested, to use a Poisson regression, as we are dealing with count data. This is computationally more demanding and also brings with it another set of assumptions, while OLS has been shown to be a relatively stable model that is clear-cut, even for non-negative and heteroscedastic data, that is not normally distributed, such as count data.

While Cameron and Trivedi do not directly recommend it, they say: "OLS estimates in practice give results qualitatively similar to those for Poisson and other estimators using the exponential mean" and "the most highly statistically significant regressors from OLS regression, using usual OLS output t-statistics, are in practice the most highly significant using Poisson regression" (Cameron & Trivedi, 2013, p. 102-3). Given, that the above already introduces quite some complexities, I will only use Poisson Regression representatively for one model, to test the robustness of coefficient signs.

4 Analysis & Conclusions

4.1 Analysis

In the following section, I will evaluate the evidence for every hypothesis previously made. For every subsection I will lay out the types of models used, possible robustness tests, the results and a short conclusion. Finally, a discussion of the results will follow.

Table 3: *Result Table for Hypothesis 1 & 2*

	Dependent variable: No of Co-Sponsorships					
	OLS without FE			OLS with FE		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
autocratic dyad *(vs. mixed)*	-0.278^{***}	-0.935^{***}	3.330^{***}	-0.140^{***}	3.959^{***}	3.780^{***}
	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.042)	(0.034)	(0.040)	(0.042)
democratic dyad *(vs. mixed)*	7.814^{***}	7.803^{***}	4.232^{***}	7.691^{***}	3.619^{***}	3.413^{***}
	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.041)	(0.032)	(0.039)	(0.040)
trade (M $)		97.382^{***}				66.338^{***}
		(1.571)				(1.357)
distance (km)		-0.0004^{***}				-0.0004^{***}
		(0.00000)				(0.00000)
mixed UNSC *(vs. both)*		-0.013				0.574^{***}
		(0.246)				(0.205)
no UNSC *(vs. both)*		-0.979^{***}				0.656^{***}
		(0.244)				(0.211)
Constant	3.209^{***}	7.430^{***}	-5.406^{***}	0.940^{***}	-9.976^{***}	-13.291^{***}
	(0.019)	(0.245)	(0.349)	(0.071)	(0.343)	(0.588)
Fixed effects	No	No	Unit	Time	Unit/Time	Unit/Time
Observations	387,746	368,858	387,746	387,746	387,746	368,858
Adjusted R^2	0.147	0.200	0.386	0.191	0.435	0.456
F Statistic	$33{,}469.150^{***}$	$15{,}347.160^{***}$	$1{,}411.753^{***}$	$3{,}277.471^{***}$	$1{,}500.706^{***}$	$1{,}522.801^{***}$
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

4.1.1 Regime Type

Hypothesis 1 and 2 specified, that while democratic dyads are expected to co-sponsor the most resolutions, I expect authoritarian dyads to sponsor more than mixed dyads. This is because similar value systems, incentive systems and in some cases preference alignment will be higher among autocracies than in mixed dyads.

Models To test these hypotheses, I run a simple model as in equation 3.1 both with controls and without (Model 1 and 2 in Table 3), as well as fixed effects models as in equation 3.2 both for unit and time fixed effects with and without controls (Model 3-6 in Table 3). A model with a lagged dependent variable as specified in equation 3.3 and dyadic-dependence robust standard errors is reported in the Appendix in Table 14.

Results There are mixed results from the regression tables. Firstly, the coefficients are not stable across the different specifications and change both in size and direction. In the models without fixed effects, democratic dyads are highly more likely to co-sponsor resolutions (about 8 resolutions more than mixed dyads all things equal). Autocratic regimes are expected to co-sponsor less resolutions than even mixed dyads. This supports hypothesis 1, but not 2.

In the models that include most importantly unit effects, the effect is drastically different. Autocratic regimes now co-sponsor about 4 resolutions more than mixed dyads, with democratic regimes even authoring slightly less. Which one is the correctly specified model?

Changes in coefficients are frequent when introducing fixed effects to a model (Wilson & Butler, 2007). Introducing fixed effects reduces the effect of time-invariant variables across units and reduces this to the variation "within" one unit. While in typical panel models this introduces the problem that explanatory indicators such as regime type become invalidated due to their invariant nature across time, this is not the case here.

As this is a complex multilevel structure, I will outline the structure of the dataset and explain what constitutes a unit and why I am actually interested in the within effects of these units and also why regime type actually varies a lot within each unit.

Table 4: *Sample from dataset to explain grouping structure of fixed effects units*

Session	iso_RUS	iso_CHN	iso_BGD	iso_USA	regime_type	dyad	n
54	1	1	0	0	autocratic	CHN-RUS	5
54	1	0	1	0	mixed	BGD-RUS	6
54	0	0	1	1	democratic	BGD-USA	3
57	0	1	1	0	autocratic	BGD-CHN	16

Table 4 is a small sample from the dataset. It shows four sample units, which are grouped in countries. Typically, fixed effects are introduced via three sets of fixed effects. In this sample, fixed effects would be introduced for every single dyad (e.g. CHN-RUS, BGD-RUS, etc.). However, this would introduce over 18.000 dummies to the model and even more importantly would not be theoretically sound. Clearly, the heterogeneity we expect stems from certain countries and not just their unique combinations. Hence, some researchers add two more sets of fixed effects (e.g. one dummy each for author-1 in row 1, China and author-2 in row 1, Russia) (Finke, forthcoming). This can lead to unusual specifications, as in this variant the order of countries in the dyad matters.

I have solved this in a new way, by assigning new variables, that take the value of one, if a country is present in the dyad. This ignores dyad-specific effects, but allows for overlapping units. In the presented sample, there are 4 units. The first one includes every row that contains Russia (marked by iso_RUS = 1, row 1 & 2). The second one would include every row that contains China (row 1 and 4). As can be seen from the example of the unit iso_BGD (unit Bangladesh would be row 2,3 and 4), the regime type combination across dyads differs **within** units. This is *also* due to changes in regime

across time, but mostly because each unit contains a match between every possible country combinations, automatically introducing variance in the combination of regimes. Bangladesh additionally co-sponsored in autocratic combinations, as it became autocratic in 2002.

A problem is the loss of dyad specific effects, however, introducing these would eliminate all the within unit variation that is not time-variant and of interest, regime type would be stable across each unit (dyad). It is important to remember, that regime type here is not the regime type of the unit, but of the combination of dyads (both autocratic, both democratic, mixed). Additionally, it could be critized that now the dynamic change of countries from democracies to autocracy and vice versa explains a portion of the variation. I think this is not true, as the time-fixed effects will constrain the shown effects to within time-unit effects for each panel.

Table 5: *Mean of co-sponsorship events across units that shows heterogeneity.*

Unit	Regime Type	$\overline{n}$
Bangladesh	mixed	3.97
Bangladesh	autocratic	6.09
Bangladesh	democratic	3.84
China	mixed	2.79
China	autocratic	4.03
Russia	mixed	3.90
Russia	autocratic	3.13

Leaving out the fixed effects does not seem to be an option, as a Breusch-Pagan test shows significant heteroscedasticity in both the base and control model and the fixed effect coefficients are both individually and collectively highly significant (see Table 16 in the Appendix). Figure 16 in the Appendix shows the heterogeneous distribution of co-sponsorship events across some randomly selected units. It also supports the assumption that fixed unit and time effects would be the correctly specified model. Table 5 shows the mean distribution of co-sponsors across different units, with three examples selected here.

This effectively means that now it is the relative importance of dyad-regime types in each unit and not the absolute number of co-sponsorships across dyad-regime types that is taken into account. Whereas the first model correctly identified that democratic dyads co-sponsor more resolutions overall, the model with fixed effects zooms in on the effect of regime type within single units. Here, when faced with the choice, autocratic states are more likely to co-sponsor with other autocracies, than with democracies (mixed dyads). I am saying autocratic states because democratic states cannot possibly be in a dyad that is completely autocratic, in the same way autocratic states cannot be in a dyad, that is classified as democratic. Hence the unit-specific effects that some units simply co-sponsor more across all dyads are blended out here.

Robustness The effects are unchanged in direction when introducing a lagged dependent variable, however the substantive effect is reduced. This implies that while the effect in general is robust, autocratic dyads are more likely to co-sponsor than mixed dyads, the substantive effect is biased upward by the serial correlation. Hence, while generally confirming the effect, the interpretation of the substantive marginal impact (how many resolutions do autocratic dyads sponsor more across all units) needs to be taken with care. Finally, I also calculated the robust standard errors (SE) for dyad-dependence developed by Aronow et al. (2015), reported in Table 14. The effect of the control variables trade and membership in the United Security Council becomes insignificant, but all other variables

remain statistically significant at the 0.01 level, even though the SE increase by an order of magnitude or more.

Conclusion While not entirely robust in substance to different model specifications, Hypothesis 1 can be confirmed, whereas Hypothesis 2 is partially confirmed, but the substantive effect is not entirely safe to interpret, which is why I omit the analysis of predicted values here. Fixed effects were found to be justifiably included and the results with FE are robust to controls, dynamic panel specifications and robust standard errors for dyad-dependence.

4.1.2 Regional Organization Membership

Hypothesis 3 and 4 specified, that co-membership in an autocratic regional organization should increase the co-sponsorship between autocratic states. Regional Organizations are thought to make the process of coordination and cooperation less costly. In addition, regional organizations that have a broader policy scope are thought to increase the likelihood of cooperation, as states will already have invested the cost of coordinating their positions.

Models for Hypothesis 3 & 4 Like for the previous hypothesis, I have modelled both the regression with and without fixed effects (Equations 3.1 and 3.2). In the appendix, the regression with a lagged dependent variable is reported (Equation 3.3). The controls are not reported anymore to reduce visual complexity. TO account for the effect of RO membership in *autocratic* regimes, the hypothesis is modelled through an interaction term between the co-membership in autocratic, democratic or mixed ROs, and the regime type of the dyad.

Results for Hypothesis 3 As in the previous section, the introduction of FE changes the results of the regressions. The relationship entails an interaction term, so all terms must be taken into account when interpreting the results.

Co-membership in only autocratic regional organizations (Co-RO autocratic) is negative in Model 1 & 2 (compared to the baseline of mixed co-membership in both autocratic and democratic regional organizations simultaneously). Co-membership in democratic ROs has a positive impact. The joint memberhip of an autocratic dyad with Co-RO autocratic is positive in all models and the effect actually diminishes in the models with FE.

In Model 2, the joint effect of all terms together for autocratic dyads, with joint membership in an autocratic regional organization is positive in the simple model without FE and controls with $-0.534 - 0.355 + 2.052 = 1.163$. This implies about one resolutions more as the baseline of a mixed dyad with joint memberhip in both autocratic and democratic regional organizations (the omitted term in the regression). The introduction of FE changes this equation in Model 4 to $1.660 + 0.597 + 0.776 = 3.033$. Which changes the interpretation to three resolutions more than the baseline of a mixed dyad with joint memberhip in both autocratic and democratic regional organizations.

The average marginal effect for these variables needs to be computed to understand the interaction term properly, as the coefficients in interaction terms cannot be simply summed up for the marginal effect as in the previous simpler models.

Hence, I have calculated the average marginal effect of changes in the co-variates of interest over different values in the real data. As robust standard errors are not

Table 6: *Result table for hypotheses 3 & 4*

	Dependent variable: No of Co-Sponsorships			
	OLS without FE		OLS with FE	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Constant	-1.228^{***}	-1.972^{***}	-14.219^{***}	-15.049^{***}
	(0.160)	(0.270)	(0.337)	(0.544)
autocratic dyad *(vs. mixed)*	-0.567^{***}	-0.534^{**}	1.442^{***}	1.660^{***}
	(0.216)	(0.220)	(0.186)	(0.189)
democratic dyad	-0.264	0.029	-0.610^{***}	-0.430^{*}
	(0.253)	(0.260)	(0.216)	(0.221)
Co-RO autocratic (*vs. Co-RO mixed*)	-1.052^{***}	-0.355^{**}	0.885^{***}	0.597^{***}
	(0.153)	(0.157)	(0.132)	(0.135)
Co-RO democratic	3.457^{***}	3.779^{***}	-0.352^{**}	-0.624^{***}
	(0.159)	(0.162)	(0.137)	(0.140)
Co-RO none	3.979^{***}	4.942^{***}	2.401^{***}	1.025^{***}
	(0.161)	(0.165)	(0.141)	(0.148)
autocratic dyad Co-RO autocratic *(vs. mixed dyad, mixed Co-RO*)	2.093^{***}	2.052^{***}	1.005^{***}	0.776^{***}
	(0.226)	(0.231)	(0.193)	(0.197)
democratic dyad Co-RO autocratic	-0.196	-0.473	-0.638^{***}	-0.748^{***}
	(0.286)	(0.296)	(0.243)	(0.250)
autocratic dyad Co-RO democratic	-1.370^{***}	-1.274^{***}	-1.004^{***}	-0.987^{***}
	(0.316)	(0.322)	(0.269)	(0.273)
democratic dyad Co-RO democratic	17.263^{***}	16.754^{***}	13.797^{***}	13.521^{***}
	(0.263)	(0.270)	(0.224)	(0.229)
autocratic dyad Co-RO none	0.193	0.175	1.741^{***}	1.732^{***}
	(0.219)	(0.223)	(0.187)	(0.190)
democratic dyad Co-RO no	4.092^{***}	3.904^{***}	1.686^{***}	1.608^{***}
	(0.255)	(0.262)	(0.217)	(0.222)
Policyscope	-0.010^{***}	-0.012^{***}	0.020^{***}	0.019^{***}
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Security Scope	0.332^{***}	0.356^{***}	0.143^{***}	0.134^{***}
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Fixed effects	No	No	Unit/Time	Unit/Time
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	387,746	368,858	387,746	368,858
Adjusted R^2	0.383	0.385	0.563	0.568
F Statistic	$18{,}548.150^{***}$	$13{,}600.400^{***}$	$2{,}378.694^{***}$	$2{,}269.368^{***}$

Note: Co-RO = Co-membership in RO *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

computationally feasible to obtain for this calculation, I have bootstrapped the confidence intervals, by taking the .95 and .05 percentile and using the resulting range of 90% of the effect as the confidence intervals. This was done through sampling with replacement 100 times with the complete data on the full Model 4 from the Regression Table 6.

Figure 10 shows the substantive impact of the co-membership in regional organizations, depending on the regime type. It is instantly visible that when both states are democratic (middle panel: democratic dyad), the effect of also having a joint membership in a democratic regional organization on co-sponsorship is quite large. It increases the average number of co-sponsored resolutions by about 13, compared to a democratic dyad, that shares both memberships in autocratic **and** democratic regional organizations. For democratic dyads, the memberhip in autocratic regional organizations does not increase the number of co-sponsorship, democratic dyads actually co-sponsor more, if they do not share any co-membership.

Furthermore, confirming my hypothesis, it is also visible that when two autocratic states interact, a joint membership in an autocratic regional organization has a positive impact different from null - although quite small, at about 1 resolution more. Joint membership in democratic regional organizations actually dampen the co-sponsoring activities of purely autocratic dyads, whereas no shared membership actually increases the co-sponsoring of resolutions even more. This would speak against the hypothesis that autocratic ROs support co-sponsorship.

The right-most panel shows the effect that co-memberships in ROs have in mixed dyads. It becomes visible that co-memberships in *democratic* regional organizations really only helps democratic regime dyads, the effect is negative in the other panels. Mixed dyads however can profit slightly from no and autocratic co-memberships.

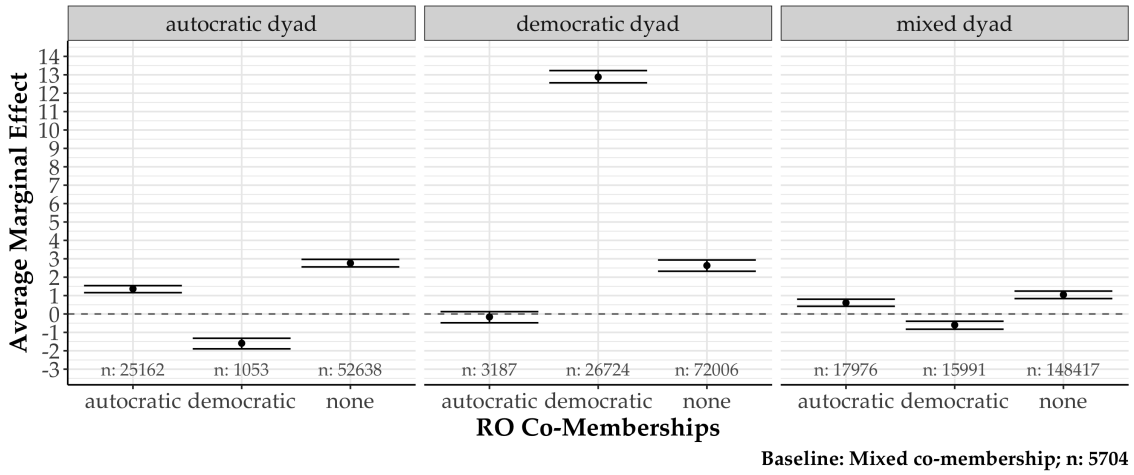

Figure 10: *Average Marginal Effect of the Co-membership type of a dyad, over different values of dyad regime types. The confidence intervals were obtained from 100 bootstrapped samples with replacement of the full Model 6 in 6 and show 90% of the samples in the distribution. In the plot reported are also the absolute occurences of each combination of co-variates.*

The flipside of this effect, would be the differing substantive impacts of the dyad regime type across different regional organizational shared memberships. Here it becomes clear that autocratic dyads sponsor more resolutions in comparison to mixed dyads in any type of co-variate constellation (effect of autocratic dyad in all panels). In line with Hypothesis 2, from the previous section. Interestingly, the effect is slightly more pronounced, when autocratic dyads are not in any regional organization, even in comparison with co-memberships in autocratic organizations. This would imply that, while there is a positive effect for cooperation of co-membership in autocratic regional organizations, not sharing

any regional organizational memberships actually does not hinder autocratic cooperation at the UN.

The left-most and the third panel show that democratic dyads are unlikely to co-sponsor when they share a regional organization co-membership that is non-democratic or mixed. This is an interesting finding showing the strength of democratic regional organizations.

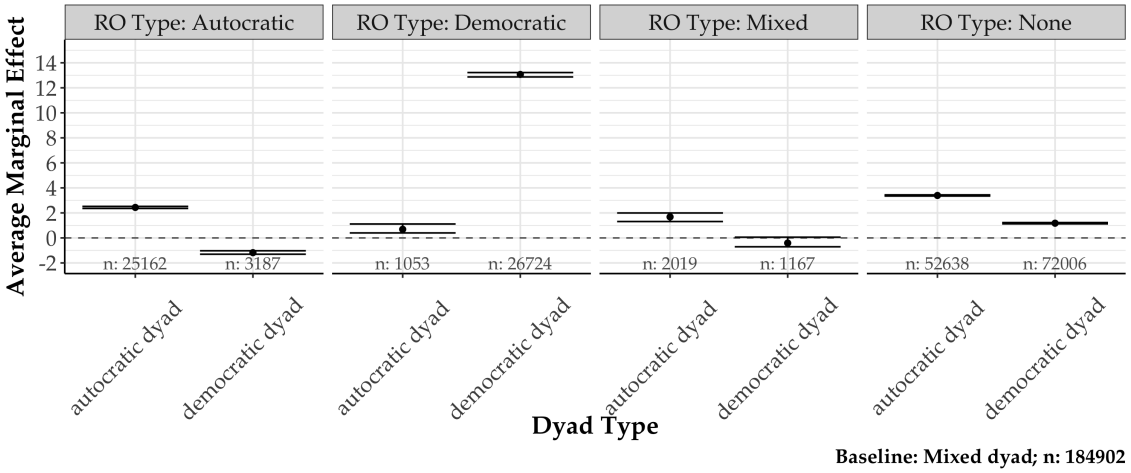

Figure 11: *Average Marginal Effect of regime type in dyad, over different values of co-membership types in dyad. The confidence intervals were obtained from 100 bootstrapped samples with replacement of the full Model 6 in 6 and show 90% of the samples in the distribution. In the plot reported are also the absolute occurences of each combination of co-variates.*

Results for Hypothesis 4 Hypothesis 4 specified that the effect of co-membership in regional organizations would increase with the policy scope of these organizations. This is the case, as can be seen in Table 6 in Model 1 - 4. While the evidence for the overall policy scope to increase the co-sponsorship behavior is mixed (without FE it is small and negative), this effect is positive in the model with FE and twice as large. Policy Scope ranges from 0 - 203 points. The effect of the security policy scope is more unequivocal, with positive coefficients for all models, although diminishing with FE.

While the hypothesis was tested through the inclusion of general terms, I have also run a model with interaction effects for both co-variates and bootstrapped the resulting fitted values across the values of the maximum policy scope. Figure 12 shows the effect across different types of co-memberships in regional organizations with the strongest effect for democratic regimes. The effect for co-memberships in autocratic regional organizations is existent, but quite small in comparison (from 13.1 to about 14.7 co-sponsored resolutions). Visible here is a limitation of OLS in predicting non-negative count data: the prediction for co-memberships in democratic organizations is negative in the beginning. In principle, this confirms the hypothesis, as increasing policy competences increase the co-sponsorship also for autocratic ROs. The comparison with democratic regional organizations shows the strong limitations of this effect.

Robustness Again, Table 17 reports the results of a Breusch-Pagan test and the fixed effects coefficients are significant individually and collectively. Indicating that the coefficients of the fixed effects model are the correct specification with the same rationale as in Hypotheses 1 & 2. In the appendix, I report the results of the dynamic panel model, as well as the dyad-dependence robust standard errors, which in this case change the results. The lagged dependent variable changes the size, but not direction of most

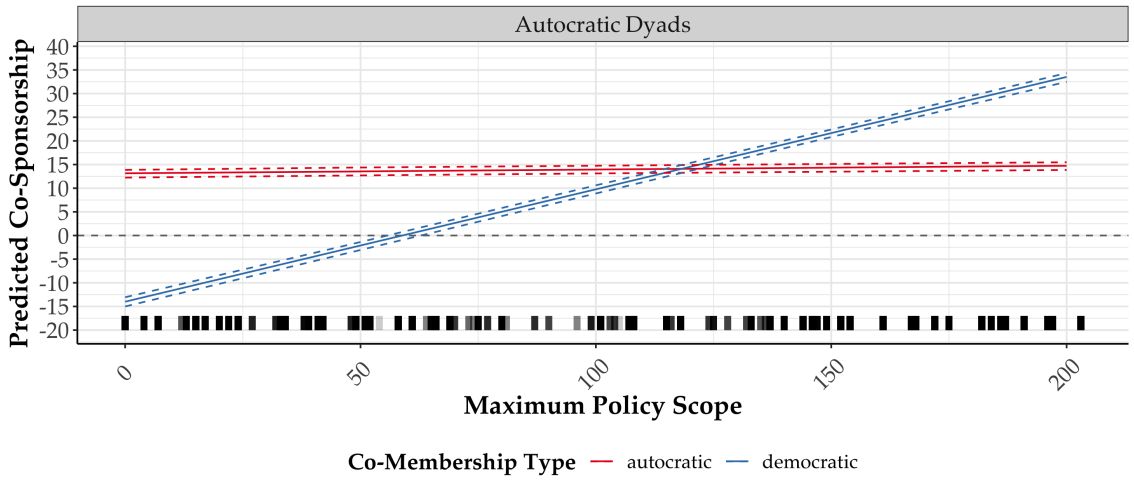

Figure 12: *Average Predicted Co-Sponsorships of regime types in dyad, over different values of maximum policy scopes of regional organizations. The confidence intervals were obtained from 100 bootstrapped samples with replacement of the full Model 6 in 6 and show 90% of the samples in the distribution. In the plot reported is also the distribution of the value of the maximum policy scope in the real data as bars on the bottom.*

coefficients. I have still calculated AMEs, because otherwise the substantive effect of the interaction would not have been interpretable. With the dyad-depenedent standard errors, almost all of the coefficients become insignificant. Remaining significant is the coefficient for autocratic regimes, as well as the interaction between democratic dyads and democratic co-memberships and the positive effect for autocratic dyads that do not share memberhsip in an RO. In addition, I report the results from a quasi-poisson regression in Table 11 for the fully specified model, which shows the exponentiated coefficients which point in the same direction as in the OLS models (numbers larger than 1 indicate an increase, smaller than 1 are multiplicative decrease). Both in Figure 11 and 10, I reported the total number of observations for each combination of co-variates, to make the basis of these coefficients more transparent. As there is quite few autocratic dyads that share a membership in a democratic regional organization and vice versa, the impact of these coefficients must be taken with care to avoid severe interpolation (Hainmueller et al., 2018).

Conclusion The evidence for hypothesis 4 is pretty clear. Increasing policy competences increase the effect of co-membership also for autocratic organizations. Confirming previous studies. Nonetheless, the effect is far larger on democratic regional organizations and is insignificant with proper standard errors. Hypothesis 3 produced mixed results. While the coefficients are positive and indicate an effect of autocratic co-membership, the marginal effects across the real values in the data is mixed. While there is an effect of autocratic regional organizations for autocratic dyads, the effect of no co-membership is even larger. This is further supported by the insignificance of the former with robust standard errors, whereas no co-membership remains significant at the .05 level. This would indicate that while the influence of autocratic ROs is visible, it is, as of yet, not so impactful in the field of foreign policy or international relations at the UN.

4.1.3 State capacity

Co-sponsoring a resolution requires resources to dedicate to the coordination meetings. Hence, increased state capacity should increase, among other diplomatic activities, co-

sponsorship.

Models for Hypothesis 5 As the previous hypotheses already included extensive tests for different specifications, I have omitted these here and just include the full model based on Equation 3.2 with fixed effects, however I only report the coefficient for the GDP, as the other coefficients do not change drastically and have been reported above.

Table 7: *Result table for hypothesis 5*

	Dependent variable: No of Co-Sponsorship	
	n	
	(1)	(2)
ln(GDP)	-1.422^{***}	
	(0.018)	
GDP (Trillion USD)		0.594^{***}
		(0.031)
GDP^2		-0.028^{***}
		(0.001)
Fixed effects	Unit/Time	Unit/Time
Full Model	Yes	Yes
Observations	360,367	360,367
Adjusted R^2	0.577	0.570
F Statistic	$2{,}309.251^{***}$	$2{,}237.697^{***}$
Note: Omitted most coefficients for simplicity		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Results As Table 7 reports, the coefficient of GDP is negative for the full model. This implies that a higher GDP leads to less co-sponsoring among regimes. This is a somewhat surprising finding, as there is extensive research on the necessity of resources to engage in meaningful cooperation at the UN.

Hence, I instead specified GDP as a quadratic term, supposing that it could have a decreasing impact, the larger GDP gets. Which fits neatly into the sometimes proposed assumption that larger superpowers might simply not need the UN or multilateralism to attain their goals.

In Figure 13 I report the predicted values for different values of GDP. The red line shows the logarithmic specification showing the plummeting predicted co-sponsorships as GDP increases. The blue line shows the quadratic term. It seems that the quadratic term, with an inverted u-shape is a much better fit, showing the increasing capabilities with more GDP and the diminishing effect with further increases in state capacities. Since there is barely any values beyond China and the US at the very highest level, I have not interpolated the predicted values for the entire range.

Conclusion Hypothesis 5 cannot be confirmed as previously discussed. Increasing GDP does not lead to more co-sponsorship. To the contrary, it diminished co-sponsorship. A more interesting relationship has been revealed instead: while initial increases in state capacity could lead to increased diplomatic activity, at the further end at levels of superpowers, there is an upper ceiling to diplomatic capacity or even diminished multilateralism.

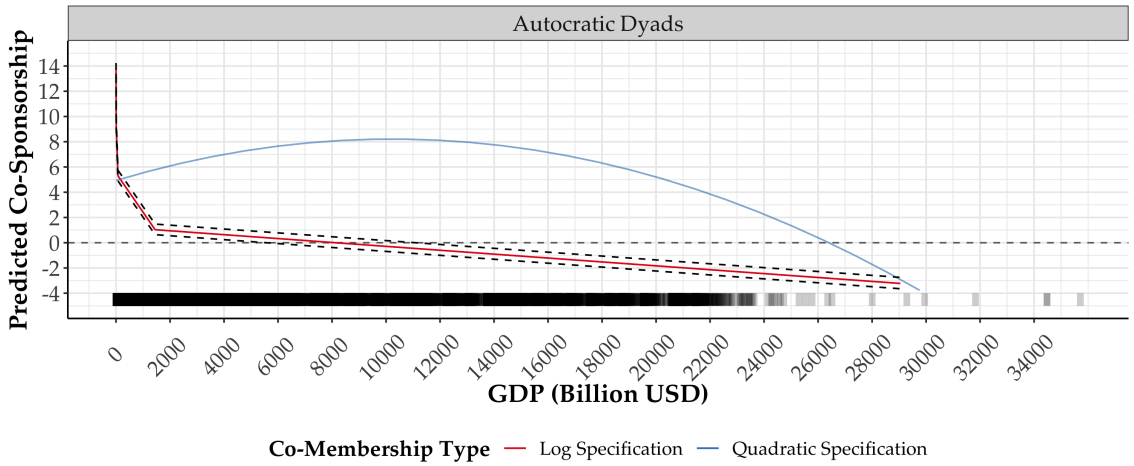

Figure 13: *Average Predicted Co-Sponsorships of regime types in autocratic dyad, over different values of GDP. The confidence intervals were obtained from 100 bootstrapped samples with replacement and show 90% of the samples in the distribution. In the plot reported is also the distribution of the value of GDP in the real data as bars on the bottom.*

4.1.4 Human Rights

Hypothesis 6 stated that all else equal, autocratic states should be more likely to co-sponsor when the issue at stake is in the realms of human rights. This was thought to be because this issue area allows for the greatest payoff in terms of push-back against democracies.

Models for Hypothesis 6 As explained in the Section Methodology, the overlapping issue categories violate the assumption of iid assumptions and hence cannot be fit with a single model. All the previous models however, have used only the data on co-sponsoring in the human rights category, confirming my hypothesis for the limited case of human rights (as seen in the number of observations around 360.000). The full data has 16 million observations. For hypothesis 6, I have fitted separate models, including all variables so far discussed with fixed effects on each dataset of the issue categories separately. Next, I have calculated the average marginal effect of co-membership in autocratic organizations for autocratic dyads in each model (See left most panel, left most coefficient for comparison in Figure 10). The resulting table is the ranking of the size of this coefficient for each category.

Results Table 8 shows: Human Rights is among the issue categories with the largest positive average marginal effect for autocratic co-memberships in regional organizations. Due to the nature of this comparison by generating these coefficients through entirely separate models, a valid comparison between the sizes of the effect cannot really be made. It is indicative as well, that the more co-sponsorship there is in a dataset, the larger the effects can potentially be. For this reason I have also reported the total co-sponsorship in this issue category. Comparing the total number of co-sponsorship in an issue category with the ranking of average marginal effects does not confirm a one to one relationship between totals and coefficients, indicating that there is something that does make human rights a more attractive co-sponsoring issue category, also for autocratic regimes in regional organization.

The results calls to attention the interesting category of development cooperation, which has a relatively high total co-sponsorship number, but very low coefficient for

AME	Issue Category	Total Co-Sponsorship
2.11	Israel/Palestine	260101.00
1.44	human rights	2279553.00
1.24	international peace and security	1280836.00
1.19	international humanitarian law	610314.00
0.62	self-determination, colonialism	444085.00
0.56	rule of law	732851.00
0.52	migration, asylum, refugees	493014.00
0.52	rights of the child & youth (incl. UNICEF)	818492.00
0.43	humanitarian assistance & disaster relief	735969.00
0.42	womens rights, gender-based violence, gender equality	904789.00
0.27	international courts	162137.00
0.22	transnational crime, organized crime	706713.00
0.20	democracy	410908.00
0.16	United Nations Charter	182694.00
0.08	development cooperation	1006155.00
0.06	education, science and culture	608425.00
0.06	UNSC	30082.00
0.04	UNSG	101529.00
0.03	diplomatic & state immunities	9210.00
0.02	MDGs & SDGs	702608.00
0.02	international terrorism	216969.00
0.02	law of the sea	49679.00
0.01	disarmament	975077.00
-0.01	labour issues	153433.00
-0.03	rights of indigenous peoples	84190.00
-0.03	UNGA, UN members	123666.00
-0.06	outer space	20409.00
-0.07	food security	302515.00
-0.11	global health	356142.00
-0.13	internet, computer security, telecommunications, cybersecurity, cybercrime	124553.00
-0.17	climate change and natural resources	319426.00
-0.18	economy	202391.00
-0.25	international trade	318211.0

Table 8: *Average Marginal Effect of Co-Membership in Autocratic RO, calculated for each issue category separately.*

autocratic ROs. As a large share of autocratic states are located in the so-called global south, I would have expected a stronger effect here, simply for reasons of preference alignment. Similarly for colonialism, which indeed is among the top 5. Also interesting is the effect for resolutions related to Israel/Palestine, which might be entirely driven by member states of the Arab League.

Something I found surprising is the low coefficient for international terrorism. Given the focus of some regional organizations on security issues (namely the SCO), framing potential separatists as terrorists, I would have expected an increased activity here.

Conclusion Human Rights certainly is at the top of the list, when it comes to co-sponsorship at the UN. That is no different for autocratic regional organizations. However, the evidence is merely descriptive and of limited comparative nature.

4.1.5 Limitations

Research on autocratic regimes, their actions and even more their underlying motivations is a difficult endeavour. Furthermore, this difficulty has been compounded by the challenge of modelling trends and effects across a large and heterogeneous sample of countries. While the sheer amount of data available at the UN can be insightful, it also brings its challenges, both methodologically and theoretically.

A first caveat to the above results is, that the causal relationship between co-sponsorship and the coordination activities in regional organizations is far from clear. I am confident that co-sponsorship is a strong and reliable indicator of cooperation, as it is far more costly than simple co-voting, which is far too often used as an indicator of agreement internationally. However, the connection between states cooperating at the UN and their joint membership in regional organizations is loose. There is the looming danger of an omitted variable that is related both to their joint membership and to the co-sponsoring behavior, e.g. a common identity, a common threat, historic peculiarities, such as with the Israel/Palestine resolutions. While I have tried to control for the most obvious ones, such as distance (mind the regional in **regional** organization) and trade, there are plenty of factors that cannot be controlled for in such a large-n design.

A second caveat are limitations in the operationalization of the variables used in the data. There is a large covariance between regime type and type of regional organizations, as both rely on the same definition: democracy indices for nation states. It would be interesting to see whether the effect holds up, if a definition of regional organizations were used, that is based on characteristics of the organization, rather than its members. At worst, there is an endogenous relationship and I simply included the effect of autocratic states twice. Similarly, a different definition of autocracy would be interesting. As the theoretical assumptions rest heavily on the fact that autocratic regimes will violate human rights to a degree, this could be made explicit through the use of an autocracy measure that is based on violations of human rights. For example the political terror scale that measures terror of states against their citizens could be used.

A third caveat is the limited attention given to different types of autocratic regimes. As studies on dictatorial peace have shown, there is a large theoretical gain when thinking about dyads of states not only as autocratic, mixed and democratic, but specifically about the types of credible commitments and constraints given to different types of regime types (such as personalist, or military regimes) (Peceny et al., 2002). It might well be that some of the more interesting dynamics would lie in a model that only looks at autocracies and compares the differing impact of dyadic combinations of autocratic regime types. This would allow for a much more fine-grained theoretical reasoning, as to how credible commitment might be possible for different institutional configurations. This takes up the discussion of the unit of analysis in 2, where I discussed the problem of taking certain actors as given. In this case a limitation of a differentiation between different types of autocratic institutions.

4.2 Conclusion

Research into the behavior of states at the UN has a longstanding tradition. Still, a systematic and detailed perspective on autocratic states behavior has been missing. Given that there is growing evidence of autocratic international coordination and cooperation in different fora, it seems natural to put these claims to test. The UN is a good candidate for investigating this claim as it is the most important forum for setting international norms and allows us to compare the behavior of almost every single state in the world.

Previous research at the UN can be classified into three waves, which have investigated the majority blocs at the UN, the cohesiveness of specific groups at the UN and lastly brought domestic politics in to look at international behavior. Giving importance to the institutions in the domestic environment, such as the autocracy/democracy distinction locates this investigation in the third wave. The empirical and theoretical scope and approach of this paper differs in that it employs the full set of draft resolutions and looks at co-sponsorship, as opposed to co-voting behavior.

In order to conceptualize how autocratic regimes could come to cooperate at the UN, the intentionality, motivations and mechanisms discussed in the literature on autocratic international cooperation were critically reviewed and it was found, that co-sponsorship at the UN could fit into the category of democratic resistance. Imputing motivations and intentionality to autocratic actors is difficult in a research design that covers a large cross-section, hence I would caution to understand co-sponsorship as intentional autocracy sponsorship. It is rather an opportunity to engage in signalling internationally that could enhance regime stability for elites at home. The difference to previous literature is that I am transferring the insights on diplomatic sponsorship to an area where we can see frequent, transparent and recurring interactions between autocratic regimes.

This literature was brought together with the nascent interest in the characteristics of regional organizations, both democratic and autocratic. While previous attempts to think about autocratic cooperation at the UN have thought about ad-hoc log-rolling coalitions or simply described certain trends, I posited that it is important to make cooperation plausible through a mechanism that allows autocratic regimes to overcome their problems with credible commitment. Given the previous findings on the effectiveness of autocratic regional organizations and their effect for legitimacy provision and redistribution, it seemed plausible that they could function as clubs that lower the transaction cost of cooperating at the UN.

In addition, I combined these theories with rational choice assumptions about utility maximization. In light of the previous literature on cooperation at the UN, I posited that elites will maximize the rewards associated with cooperation by co-sponsoring in the area of human rights. The issue category of human rights is the place where they will be challenged the most by democratic regimes and can resist these attempts by deflecting through own draft resolutions.

To test the hypotheses I employed a novel dataset that entails all draft resolutions at the UN after 1994/1995 and counted dyad-session co-sponsorship counts for all issue categories. This is to date the most complete dataset on co-sponsorship at the UN. In addition, a team at the SWP has developed a new issue coding that provides more detailed and curated issue categories for these resolutions whose use for research could be demonstrated in this paper. Due to its size and the type of data there were methodological challenges in properly modelling the hypothesized relationships. Ultimately, OLS with fixed effects and a number of specifications for testing the robustness of findings was chosen.

The results have shown, that human rights is one of the top issue categories at the UN for all types of regimes. More importantly, the effect of autocratic regional organizations is also the second largest in this issue area. The only larger one is in the issue area of Israel/Palestine, which is often a subset of human rights. This reinforces the impression that the UN is an important norm setting forum for human rights and makes it even more daunting that autocratic regimes are using this avenue for cooperation. Furthermore, democratic regimes are indeed by far the most likely to co-sponsor resolutions in the area of human rights, but autocratic regimes do co-sponsor more than mixed dyads. However, the effect is not entirely clear and potentially biased due to some serial correlation. This fits well into existing theories, where the effect of autocratic cooperation is thought to be present, but theoretically it is ambivalent. Autocracies indeed struggle with credible commitment, also at the UN level, but this research has shown, that they are capable of systematic cooperation at the highest international level.

While I have cautioned against the interpretation of this as ideological autocratic sponsorship, the ramifications of this findings are clear - the liberal script and human rights are no longer uncontested in international relations and might be challenged more systematically in the future.

Additionally, the effect of autocratic regional organizations has been shown. While it does not compare to the effect co-membership in democratic regional organizations has on democratic dyads, autocratic dyads have a heightened co-sponsorship when sharing membership in regional organizations. This finding shows that regional organizations could possibly be used as focal points for policies that go beyond the regional. However, this finding is clearly limited, in that there is no direct evidence that coordination happened in this forum, as discussed in the limitations.

Nonetheless, the effect of *no* membership increases the size of co-sponsorship between autocratic dyads even more, putting the the actual impact of regional organization into question. Additionally, the effect of the maximum policy scope that a RO posesses was thought to make coordination between co-members easier. While this effect is significant and positive indeed, the marginal effect again does not compare to the marginal effect this has on democratic ROs. This finding supports the thesis of 'virtual regionalism', agreements between autocracies are mere lip-service with little impact on actual policy coordination. Again, this conclusion is to be seen with the caution, that of course the effect of the policy scope of a RO is only mediated, when looking at international instead of regional politics. It is indicative however that regional organizations do have an impact, but not necessarily through official channels of policy competences and buereaucracies of ROs.

Lastly, state capacity was thought to increase co-sponsorship, as states would need significant resources to engage in such diplomatic activities. Here an interesting finding came to light, suggesting that the relationship between capacitites and diplomatic activity is not linear. There is a diminishing effect of capacity on international activities in that very capable states might actually engage less in multilateral formats when they can, due to their heightend capabilities achieve their goals outside of these formats.

This paper has gone beyond existing research both theoretically, through the inclusion of a plausible mechanism of coordination through regional organizations, as well as a novel dataset to test this empirically. Nonetheless, there is still a large gap in fully understanding both the mechanisms, but also the impact of international coordination of autocratic regimes. Especially the evidence on hypothesis 4 showed that some of these mechanisms might be even more informal than previously anticipated.

While it is unlikely that diplomats at the UN would freely talk about their efforts to undermine the international human rights regime, on the basis of this first demonstration

of an effect on co-sponsorship, a plausible next step would be to conduct interviews at the UN and follow up on the coordination efforts on the floor in New York. A mixed-methods design would make the case for actual cooperation through regional organizations substantially stronger. Another possible step that could preceed such an investigation could be an analysis of text corpora in the UN for references to regional organizations, or statements of regional organizations on proceedings at the UN.

Finally, giving more attention to these effects at the UN is a promising avenue with important conclusions to be drawn for the orientation of future foreign policy to counter possible interventions of autocratic regimes in this regard. Understanding the mechanisms that drive this cooperation would be key to finding a fitting answer to this trend.

Bibliography

Achen, C. H. (2000). Why Lagged Dependent Variables Can Suppress the Explanatory Power of Other Independent Variables. *Annual Meeting of the Political Methodology Section of the American Political Science Association*, 42.

Allison, R. (2008). Virtual regionalism, regional structures and regime security in Central Asia. *Central Asian Survey*, *27*(2), 185–202.

Ambrosio, T. (2008). Catching the 'Shanghai Spirit': How the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Promotes Authoritarian Norms in Central Asia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, *60*(8), 1321–1344.

Ambrosio, T. (2010). Constructing a Framework of Authoritarian Diffusion: Concepts, Dynamics, and Future Research: Framework of Authoritarian Diffusion. *International Studies Perspectives*, *11*(4), 375–392.

Ambrosio, T. (2018). Authoritarian Norms in a Changing International System. *Politics and Governance*, *6*(2), 120–123.

Anderson, J. E., & van Wincoop, E. (2004). Trade Costs. *Journal of Economic Literature*, *42*(3), 691–751.

Aronow, P. M., Samii, C., & Assenova, V. A. (2015). ClusterRobust Variance Estimation for Dyadic Data. *Political Analysis*, *23*(4), 564–577.

Bader, J., Grävingholt, J., & Kästner, A. (2010). Would autocracies promote autocracy? A political economy perspective on regime-type export in regional neighbourhoods. *Contemporary Politics*, *16*(1), 81–100.

Bailey, M. A., Strezhnev, A., & Voeten, E. (2017). Estimating Dynamic State Preferences from United Nations Voting Data. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *61*(2), 430–456.

Barbieri, K., Keshk, O. M., & Pollins, B. M. (2009). Trading Data: Evaluating our Assumptions and Coding Rules. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, *26*(5), 471–491.

Barbieri, K., & Omar M. G. Keshk. (2016). *Correlates of War Project Trade Data Set Codebook, Version 4.0* (tech. rep.).

Beck, N. (2009). Time-Series Cross-Section Methods. In J. M. Box-Steffensmeier, H. E. Brady, & D. Collier (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford University Press.

Beck, N., & Katz, J. N. (1995). What to do (and not to do) with Time-Series Cross-Section Data. *The American Political Science Review*, *89*(3), 634–647.

Beck, N., & Katz, J. N. (1996). Nuisance vs. Substance: Specifying and Estimating Time-Series-Cross-Section Models. *Political Analysis*, *6*, 1–36.

Beck, N., & Katz, J. N. (2007). Random Coefficient Models for Time-SeriesCross-Section Data: Monte Carlo Experiments. *Political Analysis*, *15*(2), 182–195.

Börzel, T. A., & van Hüllen, V. (Eds.). (2015). *Governance Transfer by Regional Organizations*. Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Braun, B., Schindler, S., & Wille, T. (2019). Rethinking agency in International Relations: Performativity, performances and actor-networks. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, *22*(4), 787–807.

Brazys, S., Kaarbo, J., & Panke, D. (2017). Foreign policy change and international norms: A conceptual framework. *International Politics*, *54*(6), 659–668.

Brazys, S., & Panke, D. (2017a). Push and pull forces in the UNGA: Analyzing foreign policy change in the context of international norms. *International Politics*, *54*(6), 760–774.

Brazys, S., & Panke, D. (2017b). Why do states change positions in the United Nations General Assembly? *International Political Science Review*, *38*(1), 70–84.

Bueno De Mesquita, B., Smith, A., Siverson, R. M., & Morrow, J. D. (2003). *The Logic of Political Survival*. MIT Press.

Burmester, N., & Jankowski, M. (2014). Reassessing the European Union in the United Nations General Assembly. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *21*(10), 1491–1508.

Burmester, N., & Jankowski, M. (2018). One voice or different choice? Vote defection of European Union member states in the United Nations General Assembly. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *20*(3), 652–673.

Burnell, P., & Schlumberger, O. (2010). Promoting democracy promoting autocracy? International politics and national political regimes. *Contemporary Politics*, *16*(1), 1–15.

Calvo, E. (2014). *Legislator success in fragmented congresses in Argentina: Plurality cartels, minority presidents, and lawmaking*. Cambridge University Press.

Cameron, A. C., & Trivedi, P. K. (2013). *Regression analysis of count data* (Second edition). Cambridge University Press.

CGTN. (2020). Full text: Xi Jinping's speech at the General Debate of the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Cheibub, J. A., Gandhi, J., & Vreeland, J. R. (2010). Democracy and dictatorship revisited. *Public Choice*, *143*(1-2), 67–101.

Coppedge, M., Gerring, J., Knutsen, C. H., Lindberg, S. I., Teorell, J., Alizada, N., Altman, D., Bernhard, M., Cornell, A., Fish, M. S., Gastaldi, L., Gjerløw, H., Glynn, A., Hicken, A., Hindle, G., Ilchenko, N., Krusell, J., Lührmann, A., Maerz, S. F., … Ziblatt, D. (2021). V-dem country-year dataset v11.1.

Cottiero, C. (forthcoming). Cooperation in the Shadow of Crisis: Regional Organizations and Coup Risk, 48.

Cottiero, C., & Haggard, S. (forthcoming). Stabilizing Authoritarian Rule: The Role of International Institutions, 62.

Cross, M. K. D. (2018). Secrecy and the making of CFSP. *West European Politics*, *41*(4), 914–932.

Dag Hammarskjöld Library. (2021). United Nations Digital Library. Retrieved April 23, 2021, from https://www.un.org/en/library

Dahl, R. A. (1972). *Polyarchy: Participation and opposition* (26. print). Yale Univ. Press OCLC: 552161375.

Debre, M. J. (2020). The dark side of regionalism: How regional organizations help authoritarian regimes to boost survival. *Democratization*, 1–20.

Dijkhuizen, F., & Onderco, M. (2019). Sponsorship behaviour of the BRICS in the United Nations General Assembly. *Third World Quarterly*, *40*(11), 2035–2051.

Dreher, A., & Yu, S. (2020). The Alma Mater effect: Does foreign education of political leaders influence UNGA voting? *Public Choice*, *185*(1-2), 45–64.

Fearon, J. D. (1994). Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes. *American Political Science Review*, *88*(3), 577–592.

Ferdinand, P. (2014a). Foreign Policy Convergence in Pacific Asia: The Evidence from Voting in the UN General Assembly. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *16*(4), 662–679.

Ferdinand, P. (2014b). Rising powers at the UN: An analysis of the voting behaviour of BRICS in the General Assembly. *Third World Quarterly*, *35*(3), 376–391.

Finke, D. (2020). EU enlargement and foreign policy coordination: More powerful, but less cohesive? *The Review of International Organizations*, *15*(1), 189–210.

Finke, D. (forthcoming). Regime Type and Co-Sponsorship in the UN General Assembly. *International Interactions*, 32.

Fortin-Rittberger, J. (2015). The SAGE handbook of regression analysis and causal inference. In H. Best & C. Wolf (Eds.). SAGE.

Gaulier, G., & Zignago, S. (2010). BACI: International Trade Database at the Product-Level (the 1994-2007 Version). *SSRN Electronic Journal*.

Gerring, J. (2008). Case Selection for Case-Study Analysis: Qualitative and Quantitative Techniques. In J. M. Box-Steffensmeier, H. E. Brady, & D. Collier (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford University Press
OCLC: 171110015.

Ginsburg, T. (2020). Authoritarian International Law? *American Journal of International Law*, *114*(2), 221–260.

Graham, B., & de Paula, A. (Eds.). (2020). *The econometric analysis of network data*. Elsevier.

Grauvogel, J., & von Soest, C. (2014). Claims to legitimacy count: Why sanctions fail to instigate democratisation in authoritarian regimes: Claims to legitimacy count. *European Journal of Political Research*, *53*(4), 635–653.

Hainmueller, J., Mummolo, J., & Xu, Y. (2018). *How Much Should We Trust Estimates from Multiplicative Interaction Models? Simple Tools to Improve Empirical Practice* (SSRN Scholarly Paper No. ID 2739221). Social Science Research Network. Rochester, NY.

Hall, P. A., & Taylor, R. C. R. (1996). Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms*. *Political Studies*, *44*(5), 936–957.

Hillman, A. L., & Potrafke, N. (2011). Voting in the absence of ethical restraint: Decoys and dissonance in the United Nations. *Political Economy of International Organization*, 41.

Hinz, J. (2017). *The view from space: Theory-based time-varying distances in the gravity model* (Annual Conference 2017 (Vienna): Alternative Structures for Money and Banking). Verein f%c3%bcr Socialpolitik / German Economic Association. https://EconPapers.repec.org/RePEc:zbw:vfsc17:168270

Hix, S., Noury, A., & Roland, G. (2005). Power to the Parties: Cohesion and Competition in the European Parliament, 19792001. *British Journal of Political Science*, *35*(2), 209–234.

Hooijmaaijers, B., & Keukeleire, S. (2016). Voting Cohesion of the BRICS Countries in the UN General Assembly, 2006-2014: A BRICS Too Far? *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, *22*(3), 389–408.

Hug, S. (2012). What's in a vote? *American Political Science Association*, 26.

Hug, S., & Lukács, R. (2014). Preferences or blocs? Voting in the United Nations Human Rights Council. *The Review of International Organizations*, *9*(1), 83–106.

Huntington, S. P. (1991). *The third wave: Democratization in the late twentieth century*. University of Oklahoma Press.

Hurwitz, L. (1975). The Eec in the United Nations: The Voting Behaviour of Eight Countries, 19481973. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *13*(3), 224–243.

International Monetary Fund. (2021). Direction of Trade Statistics. Retrieved April 5, 2021, from https://data.imf.org/

Jang, J., & Chen, Y.-c. (2019). Divergence amid Consensus in Southeast Asian Foreign Policy: Roll Call Voting Analysis across International Issues in the United Nations General Assembly (19912018). *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, *46*(2-3), 47–62.

Kneuer, M., Demmelhuber, T., Peresson, R., & Zumbrägel, T. (2019). Playing the regional card: Why and how authoritarian gravity centres exploit regional organisations. *Third World Quarterly*, *40*(3), 451–470.

Kuran, T. (1989). Sparks and Prairie Fires: A Theory of Unanticipated Political Revolution. *Public Choice*, *61*(1), 41–74.

Kuran, T. (1995). *Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification*. Harvard University press.

Kurun, A. M., & Parlar Dal, E. (2017). An Analysis of Turkey's and BRICS' Voting Cohesion in the UN General Assembly during 20022014. *Global Policy*, *8*(2), 191–201.

Laatikainen, K. V., & Smith, K. E. (Eds.). (2006). *The European Union at the United Nations: Intersecting multilateralisms*. Palgrave Macmillan
OCLC: ocm62325081.

Lai, B., & Reiter, D. (2000). Democracy, Political Similarity, and International Alliances, 1816-1992. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *44*(2), 203–227.

Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2006). Linkage versus Leverage. Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change. *Comparative Politics*, *38*(4), 379.

Libman, A., & Obydenkova, A. V. (2018). Understanding Authoritarian Regionalism. *Journal of Democracy*, *29*(4), 151–165.

Lijphart, A. (1963). The Analysis of Bloc Voting in the General Assembly: A Critique and a Proposal. *American Political Science Review*, *57*(4), 902–917.

Merkel, W., Puhle, H.-J., Croissant, A., Eicher, C., & Thiery, P. (2003). *Defekte Demokratie Band 1: Theorie*. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Obydenkova, A. V., & Libman, A. (2019). *Authoritarian Regionalism in the World of International Organizations: Global Perspective and the Eurasian Enigma* (First). Oxford University Press.

O'Donnell, G. (1994). Delegative Democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, *5*(1), 55–70.

Panke, D. (2013). Regional Power Revisited: How to Explain Differences in Coherency and Success of Regional Organizations in the United Nations General Assembly. *International Negotiation*, *18*(2), 265–291.

Panke, D., Lang, S., & Wiedemann, A. (2017). State and regional actors in complex governance systems: Exploring dynamics of international negotiations. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *19*(1), 91–112.

Panke, D., & Starkmann, A. (2019). Regional Organizations' Competencies (ROCO) (V1).

Panke, D., & Starkmann, A. (2021). Trajectories of regional cooperation: A comparative analysis. *Comparative European Politics*, *19*(1), 1–25.

Pauls, S. D., & Cranmer, S. J. (2017). Affinity communities in United Nations voting: Implications for democracy, cooperation, and conflict. *Physica A: Statistical Mechanics and its Applications*, *484*, 428–439.

Peceny, M., Beer, C. C., & Sanchez-Terry, S. (2002). Dictatorial Peace? *American Political Science Review*, *96*(1), 15–26.

Peruzzotti, E. (2001). The Nature of the New Argentine Democracy. The Delegative Democracy Argument Revisited. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, *33*(01), 133–155.

Reinalda, B. (Ed.). (2013). *Routledge handbook of international organization*. Routledge.

Rice, S. A. (1928). *Quantitative Methods in Politics*. A.A. Knopf.

rOpenSci. (2019). Open Trade Statistics. Retrieved May 3, 2021, from https://ropensci.org/blog/2019/05/09/tradestatistics/

Russo, A., & Stoddard, E. (2018). Why do Authoritarian Leaders do Regionalism? Ontological Security and Eurasian Regional Cooperation. *The International Spectator*, *53*(3), 20–37.

Schmotz, A. (2019). Hybrid Regimes. In W. Merkel, R. Kollmorgen, & H.-J. Wagener (Eds.), *The Handbook of Political, Social, and Economic Transformation* (First, pp. 521–525). Oxford University Press.

Shannon, S., Uggen, C., & Larson, R. (n.d.). 6 Million Lost Voters: State-Level Estimates of Felony Disenfranchisement, 2016. Retrieved April 11, 2021, from https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/6-million-lost-voters-state-level-estimates-felony-disenfranchisement-2016/

Sil, R., & Katzenstein, P. J. (2010). *Beyond paradigms: Analytic eclecticism in the study of world politics*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Smith, A. (2016). Leader Turnover, Institutions, and Voting at the UN General Assembly. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *60*(1), 143–163.

Tabord-Meehan, M. (2019). Inference With Dyadic Data: Asymptotic Behavior of the Dyadic-Robust t -Statistic. *Journal of Business & Economic Statistics*, *37*(4), 671–680.

Tansey, O. (2016). *The international politics of authoritarian rule* (First edition). Oxford University Press
OCLC: ocn958945370.

Tansey, O., Koehler, K., & Schmotz, A. (2017). Ties to the Rest: Autocratic Linkages and Regime Survival. *Comparative Political Studies*, *50*(9), 1221–1254.

Tolstrup, J. (2015). Black knights and elections in authoritarian regimes: Why and how Russia supports authoritarian incumbents in post-Soviet states: Black knights and elections in authoritarian regimes. *European Journal of Political Research*, *54*(4), 673–690.

United Nations. (2020). Allocation of agenda items for the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly.

United Nations. (2021a). Growth in United Nations membership. Retrieved April 3, 2021, from https://www.un.org/en/about-us/growth-in-un-membership

United Nations. (2021b). Growth in United Nations membership. Retrieved April 25, 2021, from https://www.un.org/en/about-us/growth-in-un-membership

United Nations. (2021c). Regional groups of Member States | Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. Retrieved April 3, 2021, from https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/regional-groups

van den Bosch, J. (2020). Introducing Regime Cluster Theory: Framing Regional Diffusion Dynamics of Democratization and Autocracy Promotion. *International Journal of Political Theory*, *4*(1), 1–32.

Vanderhill, R. (2013). *Promoting authoritarianism abroad*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Voelsen, D., Bochtler, P., & Majewski, R. (2021). United Nations General Assembly Resolutions: Voting Data and Issue Categories.

Voeten, E. (2013). Data and analyses of voting in the United Nations General Assembly. In B. Reinalda (Ed.), *Routledge handbook of international organization* (pp. 54–66). Routledge.

Voeten, E. (2004). Resisting the Lonely Superpower: Responses of States in the United Nations to U.S. Dominance. *The Journal of Politics*, *66*(3), 729–754.

von Soest, C. (2015). Democracy prevention: The international collaboration of authoritarian regimes: The international collaboration of authoritarian regimes. *European Journal of Political Research*, *54*(4), 623–638.

Weiss, T. G., & Daws, S. (Eds.). (2018). *The Oxford handbook on the United Nations* (Second edition). Oxford University Press
OCLC: on1024297023.

Wendt, A. E. (1987). The agent-structure problem in international relations theory. *International Organization*, *41*(3), 335–370.

Wikileaks. (2008). *Unga: Western Hemisphere Delegations* (Wikileaks Public Library of US Diplomacy 08USUNNEWYORK1197_a). United Nations (New York).

Wilson, S. E., & Butler, D. M. (2007). A Lot More to Do: The Sensitivity of Time-Series Cross-Section Analyses to Simple Alternative Specifications. *Political Analysis*, *15*(2), 101–123.

Woo, B., & Chung, E. (2018). Aid for Vote? United Nations General Assembly Voting and American Aid Allocation. *Political Studies*, *66*(4), 1002–1026.

Wooldridge, J. M. (2012). Introductory Econometrics: A Modern Approach, 910.

World Bank. (2021). World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files. Retrieved April 5, 2021, from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD

Yakouchyk, K. (2019). Beyond Autocracy Promotion: A Review. *Political Studies Review*, *17*(2), 147–160.

A Appendix

A.1 Descriptives

Variable	Levels	n	%	∑%
Dyad Regime Type	mixed	189258	50.0	50.0
	autocratic	83693	22.1	72.1
	democratic	105698	27.9	100.0
	all	378649	100.0	
Regional Organization Co-Membership	mixed	5738	1.5	1.5
	autocratic	47094	12.4	14.0
	democratic	43777	11.6	25.5
	none	282040	74.5	100.0
	all	378649	100.0	
UNSC	both	1216	0.3	0.3
	mixed	42648	11.3	11.6
	none	334785	88.4	100.0
	all	378649	100.0	
Session	49	13530	3.6	3.6
	50	13530	3.6	7.1
	51	13530	3.6	10.7
	52	13530	3.6	14.3
	53	13530	3.6	17.8
	54	13530	3.6	21.4
	55	13530	3.6	25.0
	56	13530	3.6	28.6
	57	13861	3.7	32.2
	58	13861	3.7	35.9
	59	13861	3.7	39.5
	60	14196	3.8	43.3
	61	14196	3.8	47.0
	62	14196	3.8	50.8
	63	14196	3.8	54.5
	64	14196	3.8	58.3
	65	14196	3.8	62.0
	66	14365	3.8	65.8
	67	14365	3.8	69.6
	68	14365	3.8	73.4
	69	14365	3.8	77.2
	70	14365	3.8	81.0
	71	14365	3.8	84.8
	72	14365	3.8	88.6
	73	14365	3.8	92.4
	74	14365	3.8	96.2
	75	14365	3.8	99.9
	all	378649	99.9	

Table 9: *Descriptive Statistics of Nominal Variables*

Variable	n	Min	q_1	$\tilde{x}$	$\bar{x}$	q_3	Max	s	IQR	#NA
Distance (km)	378649	3.9	3972.0	6.724900e+03	7.29470e+03	1.018600e+04	1.970940e+04	4.316200e+03	6.214000e+03	0
Policyscope	378649	0.0	0.0	0.000000e+00	3.16000e+01	1.300000e+01	2.030000e+02	6.060000e+01	1.300000e+01	0
Security Policy Scope	378649	0.0	0.0	0.000000e+00	5.00000e+00	0.000000e+00	2.900000e+01	9.600000e+00	0.000000e+00	0
GDP	378649	179831578.3	29422442647.5	1.162976e+11	6.59337e+11	4.357962e+11	3.571316e+13	1.937783e+12	4.063737e+11	0
trade (M $)	360367	0.0	0.0	2.300000e+00	8.46400e+02	5.370000e+01	6.558082e+05	9.079600e+03	5.360000e+01	18282

Table 10: *Descriptive Statistics of Continuous Variables*

A.2 Robustness

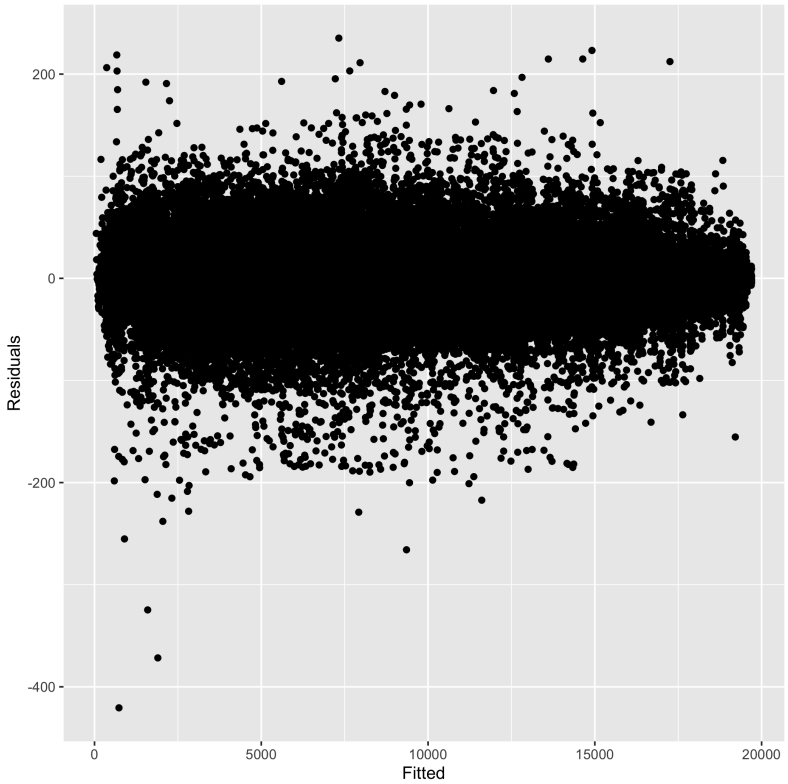

Figure 14: *Fitted vs. Residual Plot for imputation of geographical proximity models.*

Table 11: *Robustness Test with Poisson Model*

	Dependent variable:No of Co-Sponsorships
	e^{β}
Constant	0.012
	(0.211)
autocratic dyad *(vs. mixed)*	1.445***
	(0.026)
democratic dyad	0.946***
	(0.029)
Co-RO autocratic (*vs. Co-RO mixed*)	1.169***
	(0.019)
Co-RO democratic	0.690***
	(0.018)
Co-RO none	0.585***
	(0.020)
Policyscope	0.999***
	(0.0001)
Security Scope	1.026***
	(0.001)
GDP	1.000***
	(0.000)
I(GDP ∗GDP)	1.000***
	(0.000)
autocratic dyad Co-RO autocratic *(vs. mixed dyad, mixed Co-RO*)	1.119***
	(0.028)
democratic dyad Co-RO autocratic	0.864***
	(0.035)
autocratic dyad Co-RO democratic	0.756***
	(0.036)
democratic dyad Co-RO democratic	1.487***
	(0.029)
autocratic dyad Co-RO none	1.293***
	(0.026)
democratic dyad Co-RO no	1.327***
	(0.029)
Fixed effects	Unit/Time
Controls	Yes
Observations	360,367
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

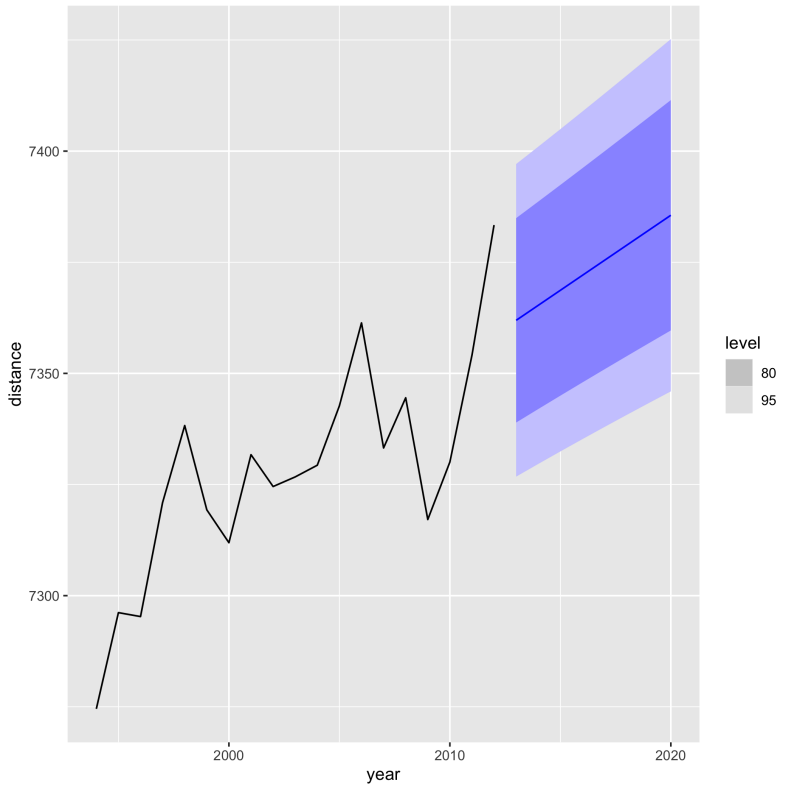

Figure 15: *Example imputation of geographical proximity of USA and DEU from (Hinz, 2017)*

estimate	statistic	p.value	parameter	conf.low	conf.high	method	alternative
0.24	136.15	0.00	300860	0.24	0.24	Pearson's product-moment correlation	two.sided

Table 12: *Unit Root Test and Serial Correlation for Hypothesis 1 and 2*

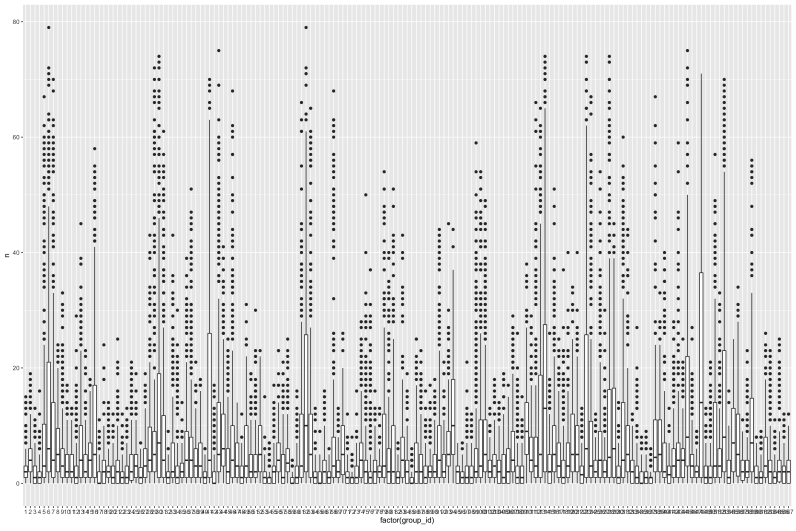

Figure 16: *Boxplots showing the distribution of co-sponsorship events across some randomly selected units in the dataset to illustrate the large heterogeneity across units.*

Table 13: *LM-test for serial correlation statistics. All other independent variables are omitted from output to simplify results*

	Dependent variable:
	No Co-Sponsorships in given area
lag_n	-0.052^{***}
	(0.001)
lag_resid	0.269^{***}
	(0.002)
Other Variables	*omitted*
Constant	-0.832^{***}
	(0.226)
Observations	300,862
R^2	0.064
Adjusted R^2	0.064
Residual Std. Error	4.204 (df = 300841)
F Statistic	$1{,}030.557^{***}$ (df = 20; 300841)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 14: *Dynamic Panel Model to test for serial correlation for Hypothesis 1 and robust standard errors*

	Dependent variable:	
	n	
	LDV	Robust SE
Constant	-1.617^{***}	-13.291^{***}
	(0.402)	(2.052)
autocratic dyad *(vs. mixed)*	0.608^{***}	3.780^{***}
	(0.028)	(0.746)
democratic dyad	1.174^{***}	3.413^{***}
	(0.027)	(0.762)
trade (M USD)	12.544^{***}	66.338
	(0.849)	(54.023)
distance	-0.0001^{***}	-0.0004^{***}
	(0.00000)	(0.0001)
mixed UNSC	0.421^{***}	0.574
	(0.132)	(0.576)
no UNSC	0.632^{***}	0.656
	(0.136)	(0.695)
n_{t-1}	0.814^{***}	
	(0.001)	
Fixed effects	No	Unit/Time
Observations	341,004	368,858
Adjusted R^2	0.803	0.456
F Statistic	$6{,}891.357^{***}$	$1{,}522.801^{***}$
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table 15: *Dynamic Panel Model to test for serial correlation for Hypothesis 3 and 4 and robust standard errors*

	Dependent variable: No of Co-Sponsorships	
	n	
	LDV	Robust SE
Constant	-3.224^{***}	-15.049^{***}
	(0.406)	(3.164)
autocratic dyad *(vs. mixed)*	0.202	1.660^{*}
	(0.131)	(0.936)
democratic dyad	0.242	-0.430
	(0.152)	(1.044)
Co-RO autocratic (*vs. Co-RO mixed*)	0.280^{***}	0.597
	(0.094)	(0.822)
Co-RO democratic	-0.180^{*}	-0.624
	(0.097)	(1.182)
Co-RO none	0.335^{***}	1.025
	(0.103)	(1.618)
Policyscope	0.004^{***}	0.019
	(0.001)	(0.026)
Security Scope	0.049^{***}	0.134
	(0.004)	(0.118)
n_{t-1}	0.750^{***}	
	(0.001)	
autocratic dyad Co-RO autocratic *(vs. mixed dyad, mixed Co-RO*)	0.217	0.776
	(0.136)	(0.810)
democratic dyad Co-RO autocratic	-0.248	-0.748
	(0.171)	(0.929)
autocratic dyad Co-RO democratic	-0.126	-0.987
	(0.195)	(1.176)
democratic dyad Co-RO democratic	4.371^{***}	13.521^{***}
	(0.158)	(2.268)
autocratic dyad Co-RO none	0.533^{***}	1.732^{**}
	(0.132)	(0.772)
democratic dyad Co-RO no	0.396^{***}	1.608^{*}
	(0.152)	(0.895)
Fixed effects	Unit/Time	Unit/Time
Observations	341,004	368,858
Adjusted R^2	0.812	0.568
F Statistic	$6{,}919.554^{***}$	$2{,}269.368^{***}$
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

	statistic	p.value	parameter	method	model
1	33777.00	0.00	2.00	studentized Breusch-Pagan test	Base model no FE
2	51222.29	0.00	6.00	studentized Breusch-Pagan test	Control model no FE

Table 16: *Breusch-Pagan test for Hypotheses 1 & 2*

	statistic	p.value	parameter	method	model
1	81028.05	0.00	13.00	studentized Breusch-Pagan test	Base model no FE
2	77980.14	0.00	17.00	studentized Breusch-Pagan test	Control model no FE

Table 17: *Breusch-Pagan test for Hypothesis 3 & 4*

	statistic	p.value	parameter	method	model
1	81717.64	0.00	8.00	studentized Breusch-Pagan test	Base model no FE
2	77834.82	0.00	12.00	studentized Breusch-Pagan test	Control model no FE

Table 18: *Breusch-Pagan test for Hypothesis 5*