

Autocrats in the United Nations General Assembly: A Test of the Decoy Voting Hypothesis

Martin Mosler

Imprint:

ifo Working Papers

Publisher and distributor: ifo Institute – Leibniz Institute for Economic Research at the University of Munich

Poschingerstr. 5, 81679 Munich, Germany

Telephone +49(0)89 9224 0, Telefax +49(0)89 985369, email ifo@ifo.de

www.ifo.de

An electronic version of the paper may be downloaded from the ifo website:

www.ifo.de

Autocrats in the United Nations General Assembly: A Test of the Decoy Voting Hypothesis

Abstract

I empirically examine whether autocratic governments use decoy voting in the United Nations General Assembly to hide repressive behavior of their regimes. Previous research has identified the State of Israel as a unique decoy. My sample includes votes on all 4,878 contested resolutions involving Israel between 1950 and 2018. The vote agreement rate of fully autocratic regimes with Israel is on average 3.2 percentage points or 18 percent of a standard deviation lower than among fully democratic governments for Israel- and Palestinian issues-related resolutions. The effect is more pronounced for resolutions that primarily deal with the State of Israel, with an estimated decline in voting alignment of 3.6 percentage points or 20 percent of a standard deviation. The results are consistent with the hypothesis that autocratic governments use resolutions against the only Jewish-majority state to fill the voting agenda and deflect attention from their regimes.

JEL Code: F53, D72, D74

Keywords: United Nations; autocracy; ethics of governance; decoy; political alignment; Israel

Martin Mosler
ifo Institute – Leibniz Institute for
Economic Research
at the University of Munich
Poschingerstr. 5
81679 Munich, Germany
Phone: +49-89-9224-1282
mosler@ifo.de

This paper has been accepted for publication in the European Journal of Political Economy.

Declarations of interest: none.

1. Introduction

There is evidence of pervasive corruption and rent seeking in countries with autocratic governments (Abed and Gupta 2002; Mbaku and Kimenyi 2015; Liu and Peng 2015; Jetter and Parmeter 2018; Gründler and Potrafke 2019; Aidt et al. 2020). Further evidence has shown that unethical behavior in autocratic government extends to the personal behavior of representatives of autocracies in the United Nations (Fisman and Miguel 2007, 2010). I empirically examine whether unethical behavior is transposed to voting in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

In principle, unethical behavior is not expected in the United Nations (UN). The stated purpose of the UN is to sustain peaceful relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights according to Article 1 of the UN Charter. Member states of the UNGA unanimously adopted resolution A/RES/67/1, which states that all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the state itself, are accountable to just, fair and equitable laws and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. Countries' governments have publicly reaffirmed their commitment to disavow discrimination many times.

Yet, empirical evidence points to a special place for Israel in UNGA voting. Since 1950, the first full year in which the State of Israel participated in voting at the UNGA, around one out of five of all contested resolutions was related to Israel. More than nine out of ten of these resolutions entailed criticism or blame. Then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan obliquely addressed the "long-standing anomaly that kept Israel from participating fully and equally in the work of the organization" (United Nations 2005).

In previous research, Becker et al. (2015) found that some two-thirds of UNGA resolutions between 1990 and 2015 that named a country related to Israel, almost invariably in the context of criticism. They showed that data on human-rights violations were inconsistent with the observed voting to criticize or blame Israel. To explain the voting pattern, they proposed

the decoy voting hypothesis that autocracies use UNGA voting as a façade to hide their repression of their peoples. The façade is facilitated by using voting to criticize Israel as a decoy to fill the voting agenda to deflect attention from their regimes. Autocratic governments that have repressed their citizens and committed atrocities faced limited resolutions or no resolutions at all, suggesting effectiveness of decoy voting.

In this paper, I empirically examine the decoy voting hypothesis. I test whether authoritarian governments are less likely in UNGA voting to be politically aligned with the State of Israel than democracies. A measure of political alignment is the vote agreement rate in the UNGA, that is, the share of resolutions on which countries voted in the same or a similar way with either yes, no, or abstain. Voting alignment with the United States has been used to examine vote buying (Kegley and Hook 1991, Kim and Russett 1996, Kuziemko and Werker 2006, Dreher et al. 2008, Chung and Woo 2018, Adhikari 2018, Dreher et al. 2018), changes in leadership (Dreher and Jensen 2013), intelligence cooperation (Cordell 2019), and foreign policy shifts under US president Donald Trump (Mosler and Potrafke 2020). Regarding political alignment with Israel, research has shown that autocratic countries were more likely than democracies to vote in favor of the UNGA resolutions on the Goldstone Report¹ which were critical towards Israel (Hillman and Potrafke 2015).

My sample includes votes on all 4,878 UNGA resolutions in which Israel participated between 1950 and 2018. Of the resolutions, 957 deal with Israel and/or Palestinian issues including related missions by the United Nations. On Israel- and Palestinian issues-related resolutions, the average vote agreement rate of fully autocratic regimes is 3.2 percentage points or 18 percent of a standard deviation lower than the vote agreement rate of fully democratic governments. 404 UNGA resolutions deal primarily with the State of Israel. Autocratic regimes

¹ After military actions of Israel in Hamas-controlled Gaza in late-2008 and early-2009 to end missile attacks on Israeli civilians, the United Nations Human Rights Council initiated a report on the war. The Goldstone Report focused on accusations against Israel. It also proposed a principle that could criminalize self-defense against state-supported terror that could be applied to the actions of any country. The UNGA voted on two resolutions that were supportive of the Goldstone Report.

were 3.6 percentage points or 20 percent of a standard deviation less likely to vote in line with Israel on these resolutions compared to democracies. Autocrats require repressive behavior for regime security. My results support the hypothesis that autocracies use UNGA decoy voting to deflect attention from their repressive behavior toward their citizens.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: section 2 describes the theoretical and institutional background concerning a potential voting bias against Israel by autocratic regimes; data and descriptive statistics are presented in section 3; section 4 details the empirical specification; the results are presented in section 5; section 6 deals with robustness tests; and section 7 concludes.

2. Theory and institutional background

Becker et al. (2015) propose a model of expressive behavior to explain voting of autocratic regimes in the UNGA. Non-decisive expressive behavior applies because UNGA resolutions are non-binding. In the model, autocrats choose a level of repression to maximize the sum of expressive utility and net material benefit, the latter being the sum of gross material benefit from regime security minus the cost of repression. At the United Nations General Assembly, delegations can criticize other governments through resolutions. If a government chooses to criticize an autocratic regime, the autocratic ruler suffers a loss of expressive utility through a loss of esteem. Said esteem decreases with the size of the majority that votes in support of the resolution. If a resolution criticizes another government, however, an autocratic ruler has higher expressive utility increasing with the size of the voting bloc for the resolution from deflecting international attention from his or her own actions.

Becker et al. (2015) assume that the probability that a resolution that criticizes an autocratic ruler is put up for a vote increases with the degree of repression by the autocratic regime and decreases with the level of repressions applied by all other governments. With simultaneous and independent voting, an autocratic government does not vote for a resolution that criticizes

itself but votes for any resolution that criticizes any other government. The Nash equilibrium without voting discipline is thus a “tragedy of the commons” in which autocratic governments criticize one other. This non-cooperative equilibrium can be avoided by cooperating on voting on resolutions. A credible logrolling agreement among autocracies decreases the likelihood of any autocratic government being criticized in a UNGA resolution. Logrolling is possible because voting outcomes on UNGA resolutions are publicly published at the country-level. A coalition is stable if the disutility from being criticized by other governments is greater than the expressive utility derived from criticizing other governments of the voting bloc. With a stable logrolling coalition in place, no autocratic government is criticized. To derive utility from criticizing another government, a decoy is chosen as a Schelling focal point. Applying the model to UNGA voting, Becker et al. (2015) identify the State of Israel as the unique decoy.

The history of Israel at the United Nations makes the only Jewish-majority state a natural decoy. The UNGA passed resolution A/RES/181 on 29 November 1947 that provided for the creation of separate Jewish and Arab states in the part of Mandatory Palestine that remained after the United Kingdom had unilaterally created Transjordan in 1921. Israel accepted the resolution, while the Arab states did not, whereupon Israel’s War of Independence ensued.² The UNGA approved the admission of the State of Israel into the United Nations on 11 May 1949. Resolution A/RES/273 passed with 37 delegations voting in favor, 12 voting against and 9 abstentions. Countries voting in opposition were almost all governed by autocratic regimes. Initial resentment against Israel was present to be exploited in choice of a voting decoy as the number of autocratic regimes that were UNGA members increased in the post-colonial era. The State of Israel has experienced ongoing discrimination at the UNGA. For example, since the establishment of the United Nations Regional Groups in the 1960s, which are geopolitical blocs

² Shortly after the vote on resolution A/RES/181, fighting broke out. In an attempt to stop the fighting, resolution A/RES/186 was passed on 14 May 1948. On the same day, David Ben-Gurion, the prime minister of Israel, announced the foundation of the modern state of Israel in a declaration of independence, which in turn set off the first Arab-Israeli War in which seven Arab armies confronted the new state.

for voting and personnel decisions at the UNGA, Israel's entry into the Asian and the Pacific Group was blocked by autocratic states. Specific resolutions³ and official UN documents⁴ discriminated against Israel.

The puzzle is that many countries with autocratic regimes do not have a historical tradition of anti-Semitism. It is unlikely that autocratic rulers themselves have had personal (negative) relationships or experiences with Jews. The bias against the Jewish-majority nation can also not be ascribed to a general diplomatic denial of the State of Israel. As of October 2020, 162 out of the 193 UNGA member countries (84 percent) had de-jure recognized Israel and established official diplomatic relations. Some of the remaining countries have acknowledged other indications of Israeli sovereignty or have had trade relations. The decoy voting model addresses autocratic voting in the UNGA when autocratic rulers have no "personal" or strategic reason to single out Israel as the focus or Schelling point for criticism.

3. Data and descriptive statistics

To empirically test the decoy voting hypothesis, I examine whether autocratic governments are less likely to vote in line with Israel in the UNGA than governments of democratic countries. I use resolution-specific data from Voeten (2013) on voting outcomes of the UNGA for the period from January 1950 to December 2018. My sample includes all 4,878 contested resolutions in the UNGA on which Israel voted⁵. I identify all contested UNGA resolutions that deal with Israel and/or with Palestinian issues including missions by the United Nations related to Israel

³ On 14 December 1973, UNGA resolution A/RES/3151 condemned the "unholy alliance between apartheid in Southern Africa and Zionism". Shortly thereafter in late-1975, UNGA resolution A/RES/3379 even called Zionism "a form of racism and racial discrimination". On 19 October 1983, a letter signed by 50 mostly autocratic countries questioned the credentials of Israel and tried to expel the Jewish-majority state from the UNGA. The related resolution A/RES/38/180 called for a suspension of all diplomatic and economic relationships with Israel, a demand reaffirmed by resolutions put forward every year until 1988

⁴ Official UN documents from 1974 onwards name territories captured by Israel on the course of the Six-Day War as "Occupied Arab Territories" or "Occupied Palestinian Territories", while no such phrase was used before 1967 during the Jordanian occupation of the West Bank and Egypt's occupation of Gaza.

⁵ I do not consider votes on paragraphs or amendments.

or Palestinian issues⁶. As of 2018, 957 resolutions are in this category. Out of these identified resolutions, 873 resolutions or 91.2 percent have criticized Israel. 404 resolutions have primarily dealt with the State of Israel (and not primarily with Palestinian issues and/or related UN missions) with 387 resolutions or 95.8 percent entailing criticism towards Israel.

To measure political alignment with Israel at the UNGA, I follow related studies (Thacker 1999, Dreher and Sturm 2012, Mosler and Potrafke 2020) and set the vote agreement rate between a country and Israel equal to 1 if both countries voted the same, equal to 0.5 if Israel voted “yes” or “no” and the other delegation voted “abstain” (and vice versa), and equal to 0 if Israel voted “yes” and the other delegation voted “no” (and vice versa). Vote agreement rates with Israel were on average above 70 percent for the first two decades after the country had joined the United Nations. Despite heightened tensions due to military confrontations, the General Assembly was relatively little concerned with Israel or Palestinian issues: only one out of thirty contested UNGA resolutions in the 1950s and 1960s dealt primarily with the Middle East conflict. Matters changed afterwards, however: the average vote agreement rate has constantly decreased since the 1970s and has been below 40 percent during the last decade. Major trends correlate with the declining average vote agreement rate since the 1970s:

First, the absolute and relative number of UNGA resolutions dealing with Israel and Palestinian issues has increased since the 1970s. Compared to the first two decades combined, the UNGA voted on six times more Israel- and Palestinian issues-related resolutions during the 1970s and even 20 times more resolutions during the 1980s. Overall, more than one out of five contested resolutions between 1970 and 2018 dealt directly or indirectly with the Jewish-majority nation.

⁶ Resolutions at the UNGA with contested votes about UN missions have covered the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), a subsidiary body of the UNGA, and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) whose funding is regularly approved by the UNGA. Numerous other UN agencies, funds and programs have been active especially in the West Bank and Gaza. They were not considered because the UNGA either decided about their general (and not only Israel- or Palestinian issues-related) operations or program funding, or because UN organs other than the UNGA, such as the UN Security Council, were concerned with their activities.

Second, the content of such resolutions has changed. Initially, Israel and Palestinian issues-related resolutions mainly addressed temporary events, including the so-called Suez Crisis in 1956 and the Six-Day War in 1967. During the last decades, however, tabled resolutions mostly dealt with recurring issues, such as the status of Jerusalem, continuation of UN missions or assistance to Palestinian people. The general tenor and content of such repeated resolutions has varied little over time.

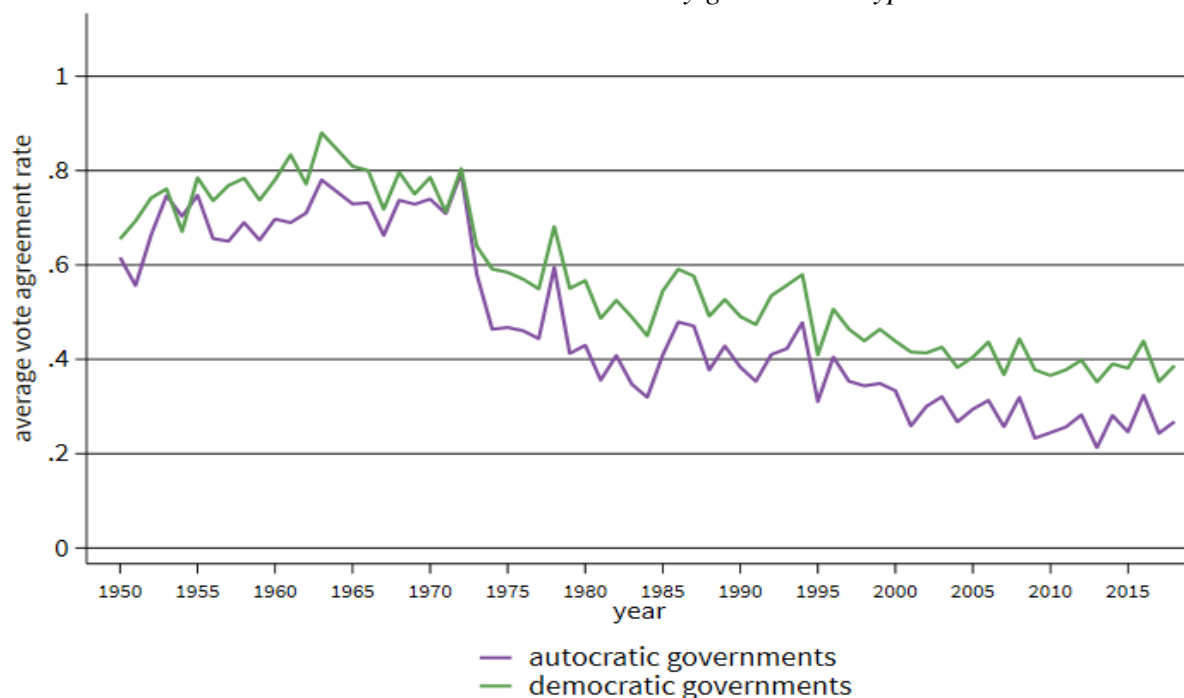
Third, the UNGA has become dominated by autocratic regimes. I classify government types as democratic or autocratic using Gründler and Krieger (2019)'s dichotomous democracy index. On average, about two thirds of UNGA member states during the 1950s and 1960s were democratic. The political composition of the UNGA has turned afterwards, however: on average, more than half of all country delegations since 1970 have represented autocratic regimes.

Political alignment with Israel is closely linked to a country's government type. Since the State of Israel joined the United Nations, democratic countries maintained a higher political alignment with Israel than autocratic regimes.⁷ Among the countries with the highest vote agreement rates with Israel have been the United States, Canada, Australia and The Federal Republic of Germany, i.e. democracies of high integrity. Highly autocratic regimes such as Turkmenistan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea and Cuba, on the other hand, have had low vote agreement rates with Israel. On average, the difference in vote agreement rates between both government types has been 10.5 percentage points since the State of Israel joined the United Nations. This voting gap widened over time, however, from 7.3 percentage points before 1970 to 11.3 percentage points afterwards. Put differently, the difference in vote agreement rates with Israel by government type is positively correlated with the absolute and relative number of Israel- and Palestinian issues-related resolutions. Figure 1 shows the vote

⁷ The absolute levels of average vote agreements rates with Israel of some democratic countries, especially in Europe, are still rather low. Potential explanations could be an ideological disapproval of the State of Israel based on supersession (Longenecker 2007) or anti-Semite tendencies (Voigtländer and Voth 2012; Hillman 2013).

agreement rate with Israel in the UNGA for autocratic and democratic governments according to the dichotomous version of Gründler and Krieger's (2019)'s democracy variable.

Figure 1. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for votes on all contested resolutions between 1950 and 2018 by government type



Source: Voeten (2013), Gründler and Krieger (2019), own calculations

The history of the United Nations provides many case studies that anecdotally support the link between autocracy and political alignment with the State of Israel. Several delegations changed their voting alignment with Israel when their countries transited from Eastern Bloc-styled authoritarian regimes to rather Western-type democracies, for example. Compared to the Cold War era, Poland and Romania doubled their vote agreement rate with the State of Israel since 1990 for resolutions covering Israel and Palestinian issues, and Hungary even tripled its rate. Uruguay voted in line with Israel in 2 out of 3 resolutions covering Middle Eastern issues before its coup d'état in 1973. During the following right-wing military dictatorship until 1985 the rate dropped by almost 50 percent, only to (at least partially) recover again in the first years

after democracy was re-established. Diplomatic ties between Cambodia and Israel were completely cut when the autocratic Khmer Rouge took power, and only restored once the UN-led transitional authority in Cambodia had sponsored the first general elections in 1993.

4. Empirical specification

I estimate the following baseline panel model to examine whether autocratic governments are indeed less likely to vote in line with Israel at the UNGA than democratic governments, controlling for possibly confounding factors:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta * Autocracy_{it} + \sum_l \gamma_l X_{itl} + \mu_i + \eta_t + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where Y as the dependent variable measures whether country i in year t voted in line with Israel. Political alignment is defined as the yearly average of a country's vote agreement rate with the State of Israel for contested UNGA resolutions (Voeten 2013). *Autocracy* determines the degree of autocracy of a country's government. It is measured using the democracy index by Gründler and Krieger (2019) who apply support vector machines, i.e. data-driven machine learning algorithms designed for pattern recognition, to classify a country's government type⁸. I use the continuous version of the index and mirror the variable: it assumes the value zero if a country's government is considered fully democratic and takes the value one if the government is fully autocratic⁹. I expect that the higher the level of autocracy, the lower the political alignment with Israel. X_{itl} is a vector which contains $l = 1, \dots, 12$ control variables. To account for the economic development of a country, I include the chained purchasing power parities corrected growth of output-side real GDP and real GDP per capita in logarithmic terms according to Feenstra et al. (2015). In accordance with related studies (Dreher and Jensen 2013, Smith 2016), I control for the population size in logarithmic terms using data from Feenstra et al. (2015). The share of the

⁸ See Gründler and Krieger (2016) for a detailed description of the estimation procedure. For sensitivity analyses regarding conceptual and methodological changes in the measure of democracy, and an application of the index, see Gründler and Krieger (2018).

⁹ Spain between 1986 and 1988 and The Republic of Korea in 1996 have the lowest autocracy scores of almost 0. Gambia in 1965 and Iraq in 2003 have the highest autocracy score of 1.

Jewish population relative to the total population is included as a proxy for a country's cultural affinity to Israel. Maoz and Henderson (2013) provide data on the Jewish population at 5-year intervals for the period from 1950 to 2010; the share of Jews is linearly approximated for the years between two data points¹⁰. States of the Arab League have boycotted Israel and were involved in several military conflicts. I include a dummy variable that takes the value one if a country was a member of the Arab League and zero otherwise. Five countries have had an exceptionally high average vote agreement rate with Israel of at least 70 percent for resolutions dealing primarily with the Jewish-majority country: the United States, Palau, Nauru, the Marshall Islands and Micronesia. I include a dummy variable that is one for each of these country delegations and zero otherwise.¹¹ Voeten (2013) provides dummy variables that have the value one if a resolution deals with recurring topics, namely the Middle East, economic development, disarmament, human rights, nuclear proliferation and colonialism. I calculate the country-specific share of votes on each topic relative to the number of votes on all contested UNGA resolutions in each year and include the six topic-share variables as control variables. μ denotes country-fixed and η denotes year-fixed effects. ε represents the error term. To address the issue of potential serial autocorrelation, I use Newey-West standard errors. Following the approach of Greene (2018), I set the lag length of the Newey-West standard errors to two.

The summary statistics of all variables are shown in the Appendix Table A1.

5. Results

Table 1 shows the regression results for the yearly average agreement rate between Israel and other UNGA member countries for resolutions concerning Israel, Palestinian issues or related UN missions for the period 1950 to 2018. If a government type switches from fully democratic

¹⁰ There is no data available on the Jewish population after 2010. For the years 2011 until 2018, I assume that the share of the Jewish population in each country remains constant at the 2010 value.

¹¹ On average for Israel- and Palestinian issues-related resolutions, the countries with the next highest vote agreement rates with Israel are South Sudan (49 percent), Canada (44 percent), The Federal Republic of Germany (42 percent) and Australia (39 percent).

to fully autocratic, the regime is less likely to vote in line with Israel. All coefficient estimates for the autocracy variable are negative and statistically significant at the one percent-level. If fixed effects are excluded [column (2)], the coefficient estimate indicates a decrease in vote agreement rates by 6.7 percentage points. With year- and country-fixed effects included, the absolute value of the point estimate decreases to 3.2 percentage points or 18 percent of a standard deviation [column (4)]. The estimated coefficients of the control variables all display the expected signs.

Table 2 shows the results if the dependent variable includes only resolutions that primarily deal with the State of Israel but do not deal with Palestinian issues or related UN missions. The results suggest that autocratic regimes are even less likely to vote in line with Israel than democratic governments when the State of Israel is directly addressed. The point estimates of the autocracy variable are negative and statistically significant at the one percent-level. With year-fixed effects in column (3), the point estimate of the autocracy variable indicates a decrease in vote agreement rates by 8.5 percentage points. When country-fixed effects are included, the estimated coefficient indicates that fully autocratic regimes are 3.6 percentage points or 20 percent of a standard deviation less likely to vote in line with Israel than fully democratic governments (column [4]).

Table 1. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on Israel- and Palestinian issues-related UNGA resolutions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Continuous autocracy index	-0.0670*** (0.0071)	-0.0666*** (0.0084)	-0.0744*** (0.0082)	-0.0317*** (0.0111)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0196*** (0.0023)	0.0203*** (0.0022)	0.0075 (0.0081)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0003 (0.0002)	-0.0001 (0.0002)	0.0002 (0.0001)
Logarithm of population		-0.0026* (0.0014)	-0.0018 (0.0013)	0.0614*** (0.0161)
Share of Jewish population		6.1406*** (1.3878)	5.8238*** (1.3153)	-3.9192 (2.6741)
Member of Arab league		-0.0792*** (0.0067)	-0.0757*** (0.0067)	0.0665 (0.0421)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.4358*** (0.0686)	0.4376*** (0.0660)	0.1247 (0.1159)
Constant	0.1632*** (0.0049)	0.2129*** (0.0322)	0.1028 (0.7463)	0.6669 (0.7743)
Topic-share variables included? ^{a.}	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	8,405	6,261	6,261	6,261
Countries	185	167	167	167
Adjusted R ²	0.0227	0.3810	0.4878	0.6089

Newey-West standard errors with a lag length of two are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.
Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Table 2. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on State of Israel-related UNGA resolutions (excluding Palestinian issues and related UN missions)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Continuous autocracy index	-0.0925*** (0.0073)	-0.0827*** (0.0094)	-0.0846*** (0.0095)	-0.0359*** (0.0126)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0172*** (0.0025)	0.0186*** (0.0025)	0.0119 (0.0094)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0002 (0.0002)	-0.0001 (0.0002)	0.0001 (0.0002)
Logarithm of population		-0.0042*** (0.0016)	-0.0038** (0.0015)	0.0991*** (0.0183)
Share of Jewish population		6.8080*** (1.5185)	6.5724*** (1.4876)	-2.8709 (3.0171)
Member of Arab league		-0.0911*** (0.0070)	-0.0913*** (0.0075)	0.0567 (0.0439)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.4336*** (0.0671)	0.4372*** (0.0654)	-0.2978** (0.1325)
Constant	0.1576*** (0.0050)	0.1785*** (0.0348)	0.4138 (0.8364)	0.7242 (0.7725)
Topic-share variables included? ^{a.}	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	7,763	6,040	6,040	6,040
Countries	185	167	167	167
Adjusted R ²	0.0436	0.3469	0.3942	0.5523

Newey-West standard errors with a lag length of two are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.

Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

6. Robustness tests

Government ideology may well relate to political alignment with Israel.¹² I use government ideology data by Cruz et al. (2018), which is available until 2017, and self-compile data for the year 2018 to construct two dummy variables: the first variable has the value one if a country's chief executive is leftwing (and 0 otherwise), the second variable has the value one if the chief executive is rightwing (and 0 otherwise). I use the baseline specification and add both ideology variables as additional controls¹³. The coefficient estimates for left-wing governments do not turn out to be statistically significant. The coefficient estimate for right-wing governments is statistically significant at a one percent-level once the country- and year-fixed effects are included in column (4). Right-wing governments are 2.8 percentage points more likely to vote in line with Israel than center governments for resolutions involving Israel or Palestinian issues. For the sub-sample of resolutions that primarily deal with the State of Israel, right-wing governments are 3.7 percentage points more likely to vote in line with Israel once all control variables are included. Inferences regarding autocratic regimes do not change.

To examine whether the results depend on the classification of regime types, I replace the autocracy variable in the baseline model with alternative measures. First, I use the binary indicator by Gründler and Krieger (2019) instead of the continuous measure. For (rather) democratic countries the dummy variable has the value zero, for (rather) autocratic regimes it takes the value one. The variable does not turn out to be statistically significant once all fixed-effects are included in column (4). For all other specifications, however, the point estimates remain negative and statistically significant at a one percent-level. Second, I use the dichotomous democracy variable from the dataset of regime types by Bjornskov and Rode (2019) and mirror it: the dummy variable has the value zero if a country held free and fair elections with a peaceful

¹² On how government ideology relates to political alignment with individual countries such as the United States and China see, for example, Potrafke (2009), Strüver (2016) and Mosler and Potrafke (2020).

¹³ A center government serves as the reference category.

turnover of legislative and executive offices, otherwise the dummy variable takes the value one. All point estimates are negative and statistically significant. Third, I mirror the Revised Combined Polity score derived from the Polity IV Project by Gurr et al. (2018) and use it as an alternative autocracy measure. Values range between -10 (fully democratic) and 10 (fully autocratic). The estimated coefficients are negative and statistically significant in columns (1) to (3). The point estimates remain negative, but do not turn out to be statistically significant once all fixed effects are included in column (4). Moreover, I replace the autocracy measure by the Institutionalized Autocracy score of Gurr et al. (2018) which ranges from 0 (not autocratic) to 10 (fully autocratic). Inferences regarding autocracy and political alignment with Israel do not change.

I test whether my results are biased by ‘voting noise’ in my dependent variable, which may result from a shifting thematic focus in the UNGA over time. I replace the measure for political alignment in the baseline specification with the absolute difference in ideal points between Israel and UNGA member countries for the period 1950 to 2018 according to Bailey et al. (2017). Ideal points only include voting results on UNGA resolutions that are identical over time. They are calculated for each country on a yearly basis and take a US-led liberal order as a reference point. Because the measure is less sensitive to the political zeitgeist of the UNGA agenda, it captures changes in foreign policy standpoints on recurring issues.¹⁴ A higher absolute difference in ideal points indicates a lower political alignment between a country and Israel. Again, the empirical results suggest that the regime type matters: All point estimates of the autocracy variable are positive and statistically significant at a one percent-level. When country- and year-fixed effects are included in column (4), the coefficient estimate equals 0.34 or

¹⁴ Note that in the sub-sample which only includes resolutions on the State of Israel, the general tenor of the resolutions also changes little over time.

33 percent of a standard deviation, which implies that for resolutions that are thematically consistent over time, autocracies are also less likely to vote in line with Israel than democratic governments.

Finally, I investigate whether the negative correlation between the level of autocracy and voting in line with Israel depends on the choice of standard errors. I re-estimate my baseline model using either standard errors clustered at the country-level or the jackknife resampling method for standard error computation instead of Newey-West standard errors. Inferences do not change.

7. Conclusion

It is fair to say that voting in the United Nations General Assembly has extensively revolved around a small Middle Eastern country: the State of Israel. About one out of five of all contested resolutions between 1950 and 2018 was related to Israel, and nine out of ten of these resolutions entailed criticism of the only Jewish-majority state. My empirical results show that political institutions are related to the preoccupation of the United Nations with Israel. Examining all resolutions that involve Israel and/or Palestinian issues, the average vote agreement rate with the State of Israel among fully autocratic regimes is 3.2 percentage points or 18 percent of a standard deviation lower than among fully democratic governments. The difference in voting behavior is more pronounced for resolutions that directly deal with the State of Israel, excluding Palestinian issues or related missions by the United Nations, with an estimated decline in voting alignment of 3.6 percentage points or 20 percent of a standard deviation. The results are consistent with the proposal that autocratic governments in the United Nations General Assembly have used Israel as a decoy to deflect attention from their behavior and to avoid criticism of their regimes.

References

- Abed, G., Gupta, S. (Eds.), 2002. Governance, Corruption, and Economic Performance. International Monetary Fund, Washington DC.
- Adhikari, B., 2019. United Nations General Assembly voting and foreign aid bypass. *International Politics* 56(4), 514-535.
- Aidt, T., Hillman, A. L., Liu Q., 2020. Who takes bribes and how much? Evidence from the China Corruption Conviction Databank. *World Development* 133 (September) 104985.
- 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.
- Becker, R. N., Hillman, A. L., Potrafke, N., Schwemmer, A. H., 2015. The preoccupation of the United Nations with Israel: Evidence and theory. *The Review of International Organizations* 10(4), 413-437.
- Bjornskov, C., Rode, M., 2019. Regime types and regime change: A new dataset on democracy, coups, and political institutions. *The Review of International Organizations* 14, 1-21.
- Chung, E., Woo, B., 2018. Aid for vote? United Nations General Assembly voting and American aid allocation. *Political Studies* 66(4), 1002-1026.
- Cordell, R., 2019. Security-civil liberties trade-offs: international cooperation in extraordinary rendition. *International Interactions* 45(2), 369-400.
- Cruz, C., Scartascini, C., Keefer, P., 2018. The database of political institutions 2017 (DPI2017). Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, Washington DC.
- Dreher, A., Nunnenkamp, P., Thiele, R., 2008. Does US aid buy UN General Assembly votes? A disaggregated analysis. *Public Choice* 136(1-2), 139-164.

Dreher, A., Sturm, J. E., 2012. Do the IMF and the World Bank influence voting in the UN General Assembly? *Public Choice* 151(1-2), 363-397.

Dreher, A., Jensen, N. M., 2013. Country or leader? Political change and UN General Assembly voting. *European Journal of Political Economy* 29, 183-196.

Feenstra, R. C., Inklaar, R., Timmer, M. P., 2015. The next generation of the Penn World Table. *American Economic Review* 105(10), 3150-82. (Data updated in September 2019.)

Fisman, R., Miguel, E., 2007. Corruption, norms, and legal enforcement: Evidence from diplomatic parking tickets. *Journal of Political Economy* 115(6), 1020-1048.

Fisman, R., Miguel, E., 2010. *Economic Gangsters: Corruption, Violence, and the Poverty of Nations*. Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ.

Greene, W. H., 2018. *Econometric Analysis*, eight ed. Pearson Education, London.

Gründler, K., Krieger, T., 2016. Democracy and growth: Evidence from a machine learning indicator. *European Journal of Political Economy* 45, 85-107.

Gründler, K., Krieger, T., 2018. Machine Learning Indices, Political Institutions, and Economic Development. CESifo Working Paper 6930.

Gründler, K., Krieger, T., 2019. Should we care (more) about data aggregation? Evidence from Democracy Indices. CESifo Working Paper 7480.

Gründler, K., Potrafke, N., 2019. Corruption and economic growth: New empirical evidence. *European Journal of Political Economy* 60, 101810.

Gurr, T. R., Marshall, M. G., Jaggers, K., 2018. *Polity IV project: Political regime characteristics and transitions, 1800-2018*. Center for Systemic Peace, Vienna VA.

Hillman, A. L., 2013. Economic and behavioral foundations of prejudice. In: Small, C. A. (ed.), *Global Antisemitism: A crisis of modernity*. Nijhoff Publishers, Leiden, pp. 51-67.

Hillman, A. L., Potrafke, N., 2015. The UN Goldstone Report and retraction: An empirical investigation. *Public Choice* 163(3-4), 247-266.

Jetter, M., Parmeter, C. F., 2018. Sorting through global corruption determinants: Institutions and education matter – not culture. *World Development* 109, 279-294.

Kegley Jr, C. W., Hook, S. W., 1991. US foreign aid and UN voting: Did Reagan's linkage strategy buy deference or defiance? *International Studies Quarterly* 35(3), 295-312.

Kim, S. Y., Russett, B., 1996. The new politics of voting alignments in the United Nations General Assembly. *International Organization* 50(4), 629-652.

Kuziemko, I., Werker, E., 2006. How much is a seat on the Security Council worth? Foreign aid and bribery at the United Nations. *Journal of Political Economy* 114(5), 905-930.

Longenecker, B., 2007. On Israel's God and God's Israel: Assessing supersessionism in Paul. *The Journal of Theological Studies* 58(1), 26-44.

Liu, Q., Peng, Y. 2015. Corruption in college admissions examinations in China. *International Journal of Educational Development* 41(1), 104-111.

Maoz, Z., Henderson, E. A., 2013. The world religion dataset, 1945–2010: Logic, estimates, and trends. *International Interactions* 39(3), 265-291.

Mbaku, J. M., Kimenyi, M. S., 2015. Rents and development failure in Africa. In Congleton, R.D., Hillman, A. L. (Eds.), *Companion to Political Economy of Rent Seeking*. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham UK, pp. 371-394.

Mosler, M., Potrafke, N., 2020. International political alignment during the Trump presidency: Voting at the UN General Assembly. *International Interactions* 46(3), 1-17.

Potrafke, N., 2009. Does government ideology influence political alignment with the US? An empirical analysis of voting in the UN General Assembly. *The Review of International Organizations* 4(3), 245-268.

Smith, A., 2016. Leader turnover, institutions, and voting at the UN General Assembly. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60(1), 143-163.

Strüver, G., 2016. What friends are made of: Bilateral linkages and domestic drivers of foreign policy alignment with China. *Foreign Policy Analysis* 12(2), 170-191.

Thacker, S. C., 1999. The high politics of IMF lending. *World Politics* 52(1), 38-75.

United Nations, 2005. Secretary-General's remarks at dinner hosted by H.E. Mr. Moshe Katsav, President of the State of Israel. Statement on 15 March 2005. Office of the United Nations Secretary-General, New York.

Voeten, E., 2013. Data and analyses of voting in the United Nations General Assembly. In: Reinalda, B. (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of International Organization*. Routledge, London, pp. 80-92. (Data updated in April 2020)

Voigtländer, N., Voth, H. J., 2012. Persecution perpetuated: The medieval origins of anti-Semitic violence in Nazi Germany. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 127(3), 1339-1392.

Appendix

Table A1. Summary Statistics, 1950-2018 without Israel

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
UNGA vote agreement rate with Israel, Israel- and Palestinian issues-related resolutions	8,405	0.13	0.18	0.00	1.00
UNGA vote agreement rate with Israel, only State of Israel-related resolutions	8,049	0.11	0.18	0.00	1.00
Mirrored democracy index, continuous, Gründler and Krieger (2019)	8,405	0.47	0.41	0.00	1.00
Logarithm of real GDP per capita	7,472	8.68	1.18	5.37	12.44
Growth of real GDP	7,421	4.35	9.43	-71.10	116.16
Logarithm of population	7,472	1.86	1.84	-3.20	7.20
Share of Jewish population relative to total population	6,951	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04
Member of Arab league	8,405	0.12	0.32	0.00	1.00
US and Pacific islands delegation	8,405	0.01	0.08	0.00	1.00
Share of topic resolutions, Middle East	8,405	0.21	0.08	0.02	0.38
Share of topic resolutions, economic development	8,405	0.12	0.06	0.00	0.40
Share of topic resolutions, disarmament	8,405	0.21	0.07	0.00	0.35
Share of topic resolutions, nuclear proliferation	8,405	0.15	0.05	0.00	0.24
Share of topic resolutions, colonialism	8,405	0.17	0.06	0.00	0.37
Share of topic resolutions, human rights	8,405	0.22	0.09	0.00	0.37
Mirrored democracy index, dichotomous, Gründler and Krieger (2019)	8,405	0.47	0.50	0.00	1.00
Mirrored democracy index, Bjornskov and Rode (2019)	8,631	0.52	0.50	0.00	1.00
Autocracy index, Gurr et al. (2018)	7,459	3.17	3.52	0.00	10.00
Mirrored Revised Combined Polity score, Gurr et al. (2018)	7,675	-1.24	7.37	-10.00	10.00
Left-wing government	4,014	0.54	0.50	0.00	1.00
Right-wing government	4,014	0.34	0.47	0.00	1.00
Absolute difference of ideal points with Israel	9,552	2.15	1.04	0.00	4.94

Table A2. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on Israel- and Palestinian issues-related UNGA resolutions, robustness test: government ideology

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Autocracy	-0.0925*** (0.0098)	-0.0675*** (0.0122)	-0.0732*** (0.0125)	-0.1044*** (0.0156)
Left-wing government	-0.0143 (0.0106)	-0.0125 (0.0091)	-0.0128 (0.0089)	-0.0056 (0.0094)
Right-wing government	0.0329*** (0.0114)	0.0127 (0.0093)	0.0109 (0.0092)	0.0282*** (0.0097)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0363*** (0.0030)	0.0375*** (0.0030)	0.0036 (0.0138)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0009*** (0.0003)	-0.0005** (0.0003)	-0.0000 (0.0002)
Logarithm of population		0.0013 (0.0016)	0.0017 (0.0016)	0.1649*** (0.0282)
Share of Jewish population		4.7358*** (1.3005)	4.2397*** (1.3171)	-6.9500*** (2.1081)
Member of Arab league		-0.0678*** (0.0103)	-0.0654*** (0.0109)	-0.0423 (0.0808)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.5425*** (0.0466)	0.5496*** (0.0476)	-0.1672** (0.0745)
Constant	0.1564*** (0.0088)	0.2696*** (0.0414)	-5.0608*** (1.7041)	-3.1804 (2.0187)
Topic-share variables included? ^{a.}	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	4,014	2,996	2,996	2,996
Countries	138	125	125	125
Adjusted R ²	0.1150	0.4737	0.5060	0.6716

Newey-West standard errors with a lag length of two are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.
Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Table A3. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on State of Israel-related UNGA resolutions (excluding Palestinian issues and related UN missions), robustness test: government ideology

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Autocracy	-0.1177*** (0.0101)	-0.0756*** (0.0141)	-0.0767*** (0.0144)	-0.1005*** (0.0182)
Left-wing government	-0.0141 (0.0105)	-0.0138 (0.0104)	-0.0149 (0.0103)	-0.0013 (0.0113)
Right-wing government	0.0382*** (0.0113)	0.0187* (0.0106)	0.0162 (0.0106)	0.0370*** (0.0116)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0353*** (0.0034)	0.0369*** (0.0034)	0.0039 (0.0149)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0006** (0.0003)	-0.0005 (0.0003)	0.0001 (0.0003)
Logarithm of population		-0.0005 (0.0018)	-0.0003 (0.0018)	0.2065*** (0.0317)
Share of Jewish population		4.9243*** (1.2702)	4.4398*** (1.2983)	-6.4740** (2.5315)
Member of Arab league		-0.0828*** (0.0112)	-0.0816*** (0.0120)	-0.0634 (0.1369)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.5186*** (0.0501)	0.5264*** (0.0507)	-0.4879** (0.2215)
Constant	0.1506*** (0.0085)	0.1045** (0.0501)	-3.6988* (2.0912)	1.9677 (14.1556)
Topic-share variables included? ^{a.}	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	3,974	2,966	2,966	2,966
Countries	137	124	124	124
Adjusted R ²	0.1150	0.4737	0.5060	0.6716

Newey-West standard errors with a lag length of two are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.
Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Table A4. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on Israel- and Palestinian issues-related UNGA resolutions, robustness test: mirrored dichotomous democracy variable by Gründler and Krieger (2019)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Autocracy	-0.0448*** (0.0058)	-0.0379*** (0.0063)	-0.0427*** (0.0061)	-0.0123 (0.0077)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0239*** (0.0023)	0.0249*** (0.0022)	0.0074 (0.0080)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0003* (0.0002)	-0.0002 (0.0002)	0.0002 (0.0001)
Logarithm of population		-0.0023* (0.0014)	-0.0015 (0.0013)	0.0618*** (0.0162)
Share of Jewish population		6.4546*** (1.3900)	6.1900*** (1.3181)	-3.9062 (2.6640)
Member of Arab league		-0.0910*** (0.0065)	-0.0886*** (0.0065)	0.0683 (0.0420)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.4286*** (0.0685)	0.4295*** (0.0659)	0.1212 (0.1732)
Constant	0.1525*** (0.0044)	0.1632*** (0.0313)	0.1379 (0.7057)	0.6871 (0.7990)
Topic-share variables included? ^{a.}	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	8,405	6,261	6,261	6,261
Countries	185	167	167	167
Adjusted R ²	0.0150	0.3754	0.4811	0.6081

Newey-West standard errors with a lag length of two are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.
Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Table A5. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on State of Israel-related UNGA resolutions (excluding Palestinian issues and related UN missions), robustness test: mirrored dichotomous democracy variable by Gründler and Krieger (2019)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Autocracy	-0.0646*** (0.0060)	-0.0472*** (0.0071)	-0.0482*** (0.0072)	-0.0144 (0.0089)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0224*** (0.0025)	0.0238*** (0.0025)	0.0117 (0.0093)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0003 (0.0002)	-0.0002 (0.0002)	0.0001 (0.0002)
Logarithm of population		-0.0038** (0.0016)	-0.0035** (0.0015)	0.0992*** (0.0185)
Share of Jewish population		7.1915*** (1.5227)	6.9926*** (1.4922)	-2.8450 (3.0108)
Member of Arab league		-0.1057*** (0.0068)	-0.1062*** (0.0072)	0.0587 (0.0437)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.4250*** (0.0669)	0.4281*** (0.0652)	-0.2989 (.)
Constant	0.1443*** (0.0044)	0.1163*** (0.0336)	0.4096 (0.3214)	0.7367 (0.6965)
Topic-share variables included? ^{a.}	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	8,049	6,039	6,039	6,039
Countries	185	167	167	167
Adjusted R ²	0.0313	0.3388	0.3858	0.5513

Newey-West standard errors with a lag length of two are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.
Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Table A6. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on Israel- and Palestinian issues-related UNGA resolutions, robustness test: mirrored democracy variable by Bjornskov and Rode (2019)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Autocracy	-0.0809*** (0.0063)	-0.0474*** (0.0065)	-0.0518*** (0.0062)	-0.0180** (0.0087)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0215*** (0.0023)	0.0224*** (0.0022)	0.0070 (0.0080)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0003* (0.0002)	-0.0002 (0.0002)	0.0002 (0.0001)
Logarithm of population		-0.0024* (0.0014)	-0.0016 (0.0013)	0.0640*** (0.0160)
Share of Jewish population		6.4172*** (1.3956)	6.1775*** (1.3246)	-3.9216 (2.6580)
Member of Arab league		-0.0844*** (0.0064)	-0.0820*** (0.0065)	0.0693* (0.0418)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.4287*** (0.0684)	0.4291*** (0.0658)	0.9426*** (0.1724)
Constant	0.1803*** (0.0053)	0.1863*** (0.0320)	1.0344* (0.5884)	0.0339 (0.7371)
Topic-share variables included? ^{a.}	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	8,633	6,284	6,284	6,284
Countries	193	168	168	168
Adjusted R ²	0.0431	0.3795	0.4855	0.6084

Newey-West standard errors with a lag length of two are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.
Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Table A7. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on State of Israel-related UNGA resolutions (excluding Palestinian issues and related UN missions), robustness test: mirrored democracy variable by Bjornskov and Rode (2019)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Autocracy	-0.0990*** (0.0065)	-0.0592*** (0.0073)	-0.0607*** (0.0072)	-0.0201** (0.0098)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0193*** (0.0026)	0.0206*** (0.0026)	0.0112 (0.0093)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0002 (0.0002)	-0.0002 (0.0002)	0.0001 (0.0002)
Logarithm of population		-0.0039** (0.0016)	-0.0035** (0.0015)	0.1020*** (0.0183)
Share of Jewish population		7.1430*** (1.5273)	6.9468*** (1.4964)	-2.8564 (3.0023)
Member of Arab league		-0.0974*** (0.0068)	-0.0975*** (0.0072)	0.0599 (0.0435)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.4252*** (0.0668)	0.4284*** (0.0650)	-0.3229 (.)
Constant	0.1730*** (0.0055)	0.1469*** (0.0345)	0.4406 (0.6530)	1.1646 (.)
Topic-share variables included? ^{a.}	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	8,269	6,062	6,062	6,062
Countries	193	168	168	168
Adjusted R ²	0.0630	0.3446	0.3923	0.5517

Newey-West standard errors with a lag length of two are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.
Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Table A8. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on Israel- and Palestinian issues-related UNGA resolutions, robustness test: mirrored Revised Combined Polity score by Gurr et al. (2018)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Autocracy	-0.0043*** (0.0004)	-0.0029*** (0.0005)	-0.0033*** (0.0005)	-0.0011 (0.0007)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0221*** (0.0024)	0.0225*** (0.0023)	0.0032 (0.0084)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0004** (0.0002)	-0.0003 (0.0002)	0.0001 (0.0002)
Logarithm of population		-0.0054*** (0.0017)	-0.0048*** (0.0016)	0.0448*** (0.0163)
Share of Jewish population		6.5086*** (1.4040)	6.2695*** (1.3298)	-3.8304 (2.8031)
Member of Arab league		-0.0873*** (0.0074)	-0.0835*** (0.0074)	0.0674 (0.0421)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.4349*** (0.0682)	0.4358*** (0.0655)	0.6209*** (0.1369)
Constant	0.1257*** (0.0030)	0.1576*** (0.0320)	-0.0090 (0.4288)	-0.3008 (0.4150)
Topic-share variables included? ^{a.}	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	7,675	5,676	5,676	5,676
Countries	169	151	151	151
Adjusted R ²	0.0296	0.3855	0.4906	0.6131

Newey-West standard errors with a lag length of two are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.
Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Table A9. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on State of Israel-related UNGA resolutions (excluding Palestinian issues and related UN missions), robustness test: mirrored Revised Combined Polity score by Gurr et al. (2018)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Autocracy	-0.0053*** (0.0004)	-0.0033*** (0.0006)	-0.0034*** (0.0006)	-0.0011 (0.0008)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0208*** (0.0026)	0.0219*** (0.0026)	0.0041 (0.0097)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0003* (0.0002)	-0.0003 (0.0002)	0.0000 (0.0002)
Logarithm of population		-0.0060*** (0.0018)	-0.0057*** (0.0018)	0.0755*** (0.0184)
Share of Jewish population		7.2110*** (1.5435)	7.0252*** (1.5059)	-2.7480 (3.1661)
Member of Arab league		-0.1024*** (0.0079)	-0.1012*** (0.0082)	0.0556 (0.0440)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.4300*** (0.0664)	0.4333*** (0.0646)	0.2126 (0.1514)
Constant	0.1056*** (0.0031)	0.1020*** (0.0346)	1.1347*** (0.2946)	1.3089 (.)
Topic-share variables included? ^{a.}	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	7,356	5,482	5,482	5,482
Countries	169	151	151	151
Adjusted R ²	0.0470	0.3475	0.3936	0.5587

Newey-West standard errors with a lag length of two are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.
Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Table A10. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on Israel- and Palestinian issues-related UNGA resolutions, robustness test: Institutionalized Autocracy score by Gurr et al. (2018)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Autocracy	-0.0067*** (0.0009)	-0.0050*** (0.0011)	-0.0059*** (0.0011)	-0.0023* (0.0014)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0266*** (0.0023)	0.0277*** (0.0022)	0.0045 (0.0086)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0005** (0.0002)	-0.0003 (0.0002)	0.0002 (0.0002)
Logarithm of population		-0.0051*** (0.0017)	-0.0045*** (0.0016)	0.0441*** (0.0165)
Share of Jewish population		6.2375*** (1.3584)	5.9486*** (1.2770)	-4.9087* (2.6849)
Member of Arab league		-0.0928*** (0.0077)	-0.0882*** (0.0076)	0.0684 (0.0423)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.4395*** (0.0677)	0.4410*** (0.0650)	0.6183*** (0.1340)
Constant	0.1524*** (0.0046)	0.1411*** (0.0328)	0.0893 (0.4179)	-0.2379 (0.5409)
Topic-share variables included? ^a	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	7,459	5,523	5,523	5,523
Countries	168	150	150	150
Adjusted R ²	0.0165	0.3907	0.4978	0.6234

Newey-West standard errors with a lag length of two are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.
Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Table A11. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on State of Israel-related UNGA resolutions (excluding Palestinian issues and related UN missions), robustness test: Institutionalized Autocracy score by Gurr et al. (2018)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Autocracy	-0.0092*** (0.0009)	-0.0058*** (0.0012)	-0.0063*** (0.0012)	-0.0024 (0.0015)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0257*** (0.0025)	0.0269*** (0.0025)	0.0051 (0.0099)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0004* (0.0002)	-0.0004* (0.0002)	0.0001 (0.0002)
Logarithm of population		-0.0055*** (0.0018)	-0.0052*** (0.0018)	0.0742*** (0.0187)
Share of Jewish population		6.6637*** (1.4010)	6.4841*** (1.3798)	-4.4309 (2.9244)
Member of Arab league		-0.1069*** (0.0081)	-0.1054*** (0.0084)	0.0568 (0.0441)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.4409*** (0.0645)	0.4436*** (0.0631)	0.6104*** (0.0873)
Constant	0.1418*** (0.0046)	0.0854** (0.0353)	-0.3138 (0.2879)	-0.6173 (0.8548)
Topic-share variables included? ^{a.}	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	7,163	5,345	5,345	5,345
Countries	167	150	150	150
Adjusted R ²	0.0317	0.3517	0.3972	0.5655

Newey-West standard errors with a lag length of two are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.
Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Table A12. Robustness test: absolute difference of ideal points between Israel and UNGA member countries for votes on all contested UNGA resolutions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Autocracy	0.6466*** (0.0406)	0.5238*** (0.0415)	0.5480*** (0.0399)	0.3383*** (0.0478)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		-0.2384*** (0.0130)	-0.2440*** (0.0123)	-0.0601** (0.0279)
Growth of real GDP		0.0048*** (0.0009)	0.0038*** (0.0008)	0.0004 (0.0006)
Logarithm of population		-0.0285*** (0.0073)	-0.0290*** (0.0069)	1.2509*** (0.0898)
Share of Jewish population		-10.9983* (5.9508)	-9.2906 (5.7017)	38.4174*** (8.7494)
Member of Arab league		0.6246*** (0.0379)	0.6139*** (0.0363)	-0.2325 (0.1514)
US and Pacific islands delegation		-0.0399 (0.2603)	-0.0660 (0.2664)	0.7795** (0.3041)
Constant	1.8312*** (0.0245)	2.2893*** (0.1360)	1.5267*** (0.2828)	-8.6217*** (0.7330)
Topic-share variables included? ^{a.}	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	9,552	7,126	7,126	7,126
Countries	185	168	167	167
Adjusted R ²	0.0654	0.5873	0.6468	0.8045

Newey-West standard errors with a lag length of two are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.
Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Table A13. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on Israel- and Palestinian issues-related UNGA resolutions, robustness test: standard errors clustered at country-level

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Autocracy	-0.0670*** (0.0199)	-0.0666*** (0.0164)	-0.0744*** (0.0169)	-0.0317 (0.0217)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0196*** (0.0046)	0.0203*** (0.0046)	0.0075 (0.0130)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0003 (0.0002)	-0.0001 (0.0002)	0.0002 (0.0002)
Logarithm of population		-0.0026 (0.0028)	-0.0018 (0.0029)	0.0614** (0.0286)
Share of Jewish population		6.1406* (3.1850)	5.8238* (3.2393)	-3.9192 (7.4050)
Member of Arab league		-0.0792*** (0.0114)	-0.0757*** (0.0115)	0.0665 (0.0493)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.4358*** (0.0759)	0.4376*** (0.0768)	0.1247 (0.3483)
Constant	0.1632*** (0.0149)	0.2129*** (0.0472)	0.1028 (0.7618)	0.6669 (0.6860)
Topic-share variables included? ^{a.}	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	8,405	6,261	6,261	6,261
Countries	185	167	167	167
Adjusted R ²	0.0227	0.3810	0.4878	0.6089

Standard errors clustered at country-level are in brackets. * ** *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.

Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Table A14. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on State of Israel-related UNGA resolutions (excluding Palestinian issues and related UN missions), robustness test: standard errors clustered at country-level

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Autocracy	-0.0925*** (0.0193)	-0.0827*** (0.0186)	-0.0846*** (0.0194)	-0.0359 (0.0246)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0172*** (0.0049)	0.0186*** (0.0050)	0.0119 (0.0147)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0002 (0.0002)	-0.0001 (0.0002)	0.0001 (0.0002)
Logarithm of population		-0.0042 (0.0031)	-0.0038 (0.0031)	0.0991*** (0.0318)
Share of Jewish population		6.8080* (3.6004)	6.5724* (3.6531)	-2.8709 (7.7717)
Member of Arab league		-0.0911*** (0.0131)	-0.0913*** (0.0135)	0.0567 (0.0585)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.4336*** (0.0839)	0.4372*** (0.0849)	-0.2978 (0.3640)
Constant	0.1576*** (0.0141)	0.1785*** (0.0520)	0.4138 (0.2824)	0.7242** (0.3110)
Topic-share variables included? ^{a.}	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	8,049	6,039	6,039	6,039
Countries	185	167	167	167
Adjusted R ²	0.0436	0.3469	0.3942	0.5523

*Standard errors clustered at country-level are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.*

Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Table A15. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on Israel- and Palestinian issues-related UNGA resolutions, robustness test: Jackknife standard errors

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Continuous autocracy index	-0.0670*** (0.0048)	-0.0666*** (0.0060)	-0.0744*** (0.0056)	-0.0317*** (0.0081)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0196*** (0.0016)	0.0203*** (0.0015)	0.0075 (0.0062)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0003* (0.0002)	-0.0001 (0.0002)	0.0002 (0.0001)
Logarithm of population		-0.0026*** (0.0010)	-0.0018* (0.0009)	0.0614*** (0.0125)
Share of Jewish population		6.1406*** (0.9731)	5.8238*** (0.8664)	-3.9192** (1.9329)
Member of Arab league		-0.0792*** (0.0047)	-0.0757*** (0.0046)	0.0665* (0.0384)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.4358*** (0.0483)	0.4376*** (0.0446)	0.2832*** (0.0945)
Constant	0.1632*** (0.0032)	0.2129*** (0.0276)	0.5815 (2.3147)	0.4241 (2.0104)
Topic-share variables included? ^{a.}	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	8,405	6,261	6,261	6,261
Countries	185	167	167	167
Adjusted R ²	0.0227	0.3810	0.4878	0.6089

Jackknife standard errors are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.

Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Table A16. Yearly average agreement rate between Israel and UNGA member countries for contested votes on State of Israel-related UNGA resolutions (excluding Palestinian issues and related UN missions), robustness test: Jackknife standard errors

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Continuous autocracy index	-0.0925*** (0.0048)	-0.0827*** (0.0065)	-0.0846*** (0.0065)	-0.0359*** (0.0092)
Logarithm of real GDP per capita		0.0172*** (0.0017)	0.0186*** (0.0017)	0.0119 (0.0071)
Growth of real GDP		-0.0002 (0.0002)	-0.0001 (0.0002)	0.0001 (0.0002)
Logarithm of population		-0.0042*** (0.0011)	-0.0038*** (0.0010)	0.0991*** (0.0138)
Share of Jewish population		6.8080*** (1.0073)	6.5724*** (0.9622)	-2.8709 (2.1435)
Member of Arab league		-0.0911*** (0.0048)	-0.0913*** (0.0051)	0.0567 (0.0409)
US and Pacific islands delegation		0.4336*** (0.0455)	0.4372*** (0.0438)	0.0083 (0.1043)
Constant	0.1576*** (0.0031)	0.1785*** (0.0280)	-0.1621 (2.5021)	-0.1536 (2.4676)
Topic-share variables included? ^a	X	✓	✓	✓
Year-fixed effects included?	X	X	✓	✓
Country-fixed effects included?	X	X	X	✓
Observations	8,049	6,039	6,039	6,039
Countries	185	167	167	167
Adjusted R ²	0.0436	0.3469	0.3942	0.5523

*Jackknife standard errors are in brackets. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at 10, 5, 1 percent level.*

Note a.: The resolution topics are Middle Eastern, economic development, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, colonialism and human rights issues.

Funding

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.