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Russia's Global Anti-Nazism Campaign: Seeking Support in International Organizations

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Abstract

How do autocrats try to win over other member states and gain support for their counternorms? Rather than directly opposing liberal values, autocrats may resort to subtler tactics that make it difficult for others not to support their norm-based initiatives. Russia, a prominent authoritarian regime, has centered its international efforts on enhancing the salience and universality of combating Nazism. Because of linkages between Nazism and racial discrimination, Russia has been able to attract allies in countries sensitive to colonial legacies and apartheid by making opposition to its initiatives morally unacceptable. These tactics were widely employed during the Cold War, but they have returned in force. This paper offers a systematic study of Soviet and Russian anti-Nazi initiatives from 1946 to 2022. It provides an empirical analysis of the factors behind support for international resolutions combating Nazism, examines the discursive coalition around this norm in the United Nations, and compares Russia's efforts across other international organizations (IOs). The findings show how authoritarian regimes project norms and have important implications for our understanding of ideology in international relations.

Keywords: Dictatorships in IOs; ideology; counternorms; Russia; United Nations; text-as-data

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Introduction

States pursue status and power in international politics (Renshon, 2017; Paul, Larson, and Wohlforth, 2014). To that aim, states also try to persuade others about the attractiveness of their values, ideology, and norms (Voeten, 2021). Yet when considering the backdrop of international cooperation, autocratic regimes are on the back foot. Because global international organizations (IOs) tend to bear the mantle of democratic values, their ideals are often inconsistent with the norms promoted in autocracies (Dukalskis and Patane, 2019; Voeten, 2021). Some of the world's most prominent IOs are also multilateral ones, comprising of democratic and authoritarian members. In the court of global opinion, democracies are widely assumed to be at an advantage, as they are able to rely on universalistic norms (Nye, 2004). In turn, autocracies question the legitimacy and universality of such norms (Dixon, 2017), all while working on persuading others to instead accept their norms—or counternorms—as legitimate (Acharya, 2011; Ambrosio, 2008; Cooley, 2015; Paris, 2020).

How do dictatorships advance, validate, and gain support for their counternorms? Which counternorms are more likely to be accepted by a diverse group of states, including democracies with which autocracies may have little in common? I propose—and elaborate in more detail in a section that follows—that autocratic actors will be more successful in their norm-based initiatives when they advance potentially universalist norms, over which they can also credibly claim issue ownership, and which are costly to oppose on moral grounds. Furthermore, their initiatives will be more successful in IOs that are dominated by members—regardless of regime type—that already accept the high moral standing of such norms, and/or—more specifically—by other autocratic members that tend to support the initiatives of peer autocrats in an emerging voting block (Voeten 2021).

Specifically, this paper examines the politics of Russia's international anti-Nazi campaign over time and across IOs. When Vladimir Putin claimed in 2022 that he had launched an invasion of Ukraine in order to de-Nazify it,[1] his words were met with a degree of shock and ridicule. While anti-Nazism and related historical frames have long been employed domestically for legitimation (e.g., Cottiero et al., 2015), Russia's consistent international strategy to advance anti-Nazi initiatives has largely gone unnoticed to date. Yet, as early as 2000 Russia sponsored a resolution (55/82) against ethnic exclusiveness, "in particular, neo-Nazism" at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), and in September that same year its representative lambasted his country's opponents for carrying "bacillus of national superiority," so that "fighters against

[1] See February 21, 2022, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828.

fascism are put behind bars while former fascists find favour with the authorities" (A/55/PV.20, 8).[2] With time, such fervor has only increased: In 2018, or 73 years since the defeat of Nazism, Russia's foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, devoted three paragraphs of his UNGA address to an ideological framework centered on combating Nazism, warning that "not only has the vaccine against the Nazi plague been weakened, but a rising campaign to rewrite history and whitewash war criminals and their associates is emerging" (A/73/PV.12, 48). Lavrov then urged for a vote in favor of a resolution on the inadmissibility of Nazi glorification.

Why has Russia turned to combat Nazism in the IOs, and was it successful in persuading others to support its campaign? This paper marshals qualitative and quantitative evidence to demonstrate that a strategic campaign about the central role of Russia against Nazism has become the cornerstone of the country's ideological search to reaffirm its status since the early 2000s, across the IOs. The Russian Federation has made consistent efforts toward advancing this norm as a moral ideal in order to ensure its own prestige in the world system. The determined focus on—and rather skillful diplomacy to place it center stage and then rally international support for—various initiatives was not unsuccessful, particularly in the UNGA where 21 resolutions related to Nazism were supported in the post-Cold War period alone.

I argue that Russia was able to persuade the majority of other states to support its anti-Nazi resolutions and declarations because they were linked with broader anti-racism initiatives. As a result, Russia was able to affirm its international standing in—and receive support from the Global South—and, on many occasions, force its Western opponents into taking morally difficult positions: They could only oppose Russian initiatives by also opposing an anti-Nazism norm. Furthermore, while these tactics have come to be widely and successfully employed during the post-Cold War period, even during the Cold War—from the mid-1960s in particular—the Soviet Union has relied on anti-Nazism to attract support (Dudziak, 2011).

This paper contributes to several strands of literature. Persuasion to support, or acquiesce to one's values and norms is related to the literature on the pursuit of status and reputation in the context of international cooperation (Paul, Larson, and Wohlforth, 2014; Renshon, 2017), particularly in relation to the ability to persuade and attract others based on values and norms (Nye, 2004). The second is the role of ideas and norms in global governance (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993; Cooley, 2005; Voeten, 2021), particularly in relation to how autocratic actors advance their standing in the IOs (Lipps and Jacob, 2023; McLean, 2023).

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[2] The full text of A/55/PV.20 and other resolutions and UN documents referred herein can be sourced from the U.N. Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS).

To the extent that existing research focuses on the relationship between autocracies and norms, it has largely centered on rhetorical adaptation (Dixon, 2017) or through the lens of the autocratic contestation of an international norm in service of masking domestic noncompliance (Buzas, 2018). The autocratic promotion of their own norms, or counternorms (Acharya, 2011; Cooley, 2015; Paris, 2020), particularly through rhetoric and other tactics in IOs, is less well understood. I demonstrate that autocrats can repurpose an existing normative consensus, such as that against racial discrimination (Buzas, 2021), to advance their own norms while placing liberal actors into a socially disadvantageous position at the same time. While states, and autocratic states specifically, rely on material—economic or military—strategies to advance their standing (Renshon, 2017, 54), their nonmaterial strategies, such as persuading the global community as to the universality of their own norms, are important too; such strategies are complementary to material strategies, as demonstrated by Russia's anti-Nazi campaign.

Below, I outline the theoretical foundations and introduce the hypotheses to be tested. Because ideological clashes over status and power in IOs occur through rhetoric and resolutions, I rely on a mixed-methods approach. It includes the study of anti-Nazism in the UNGA, statistical analyses of support for anti-Nazi resolutions, and text analyses to study discursive frames related to anti-Nazism. Drawing from original text corpora, I also assess Russia's rhetoric across several IOs, as well as the degree of support across different IOs.

Theoretical Foundations: Autocrats, Ideology, and Normative Action in IOs

States seek to improve their position on existing power and status dimensions not only through reliance on material resources alone (Paul, Larson, and Wohlforth, 2014). State representatives also articulate their ideology, reaffirm principles, and attempt to persuade others regarding the attractiveness of their norms and values. While conflict is often used as a way of seeking status (Renshon, 2017), a normative action to that end is equally important (Buzas, 2018; Dixon, 2017). Actors, including autocrats, seek to attain and maintain power; they also frame their actions through rhetoric justifying why they seek or hold power and status (Gamson, 1992). On the international stage, Chinese officials acknowledge that they aim to attain "global discursive and geostrategic dominance," "promoting and entrenching the Party's alternative discourse system for the world" (Hamilton and Ohlberg, 2020, 110). Indeed, normative action is a cost-effective strategy to project power (Paris, 2020).

As noted by Krebs and Jackson (2007), political actors do not regard politics merely in terms of power coercion or distribution but in fact engage in rhetorical contestation over meaning as they need to forge a shared understanding with their audience to acquire support. Status in a global order is not determined by a state's own subjective beliefs, it reflects collective beliefs about that state's position relative to other states, as perceived by others, even if such perceptions may be subjective (Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth, 2014, 8–9). In turn, while status is subjective, the state may infer it from the behavior and speech of others, from "positions and protocol symbolizing respect and deference" (Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth, 2014, 10).

To that end, international resolutions are often seen to express the view of the majority of states, they also influence the perception of what the world opinion is (Claude, 1966). Many resolutions advance particular norms that states consider important. For example, a representative of Russia, alongside important resolutions on space exploration or noninfectious diseases for which his country received strong support in the United Nations, has singled out a resolution related to norms and values as special: "[w]e also have an important ideological resolution, as you know, about combating the glorification of Nazism."[3] In IOs, while resolutions are largely symbolic, they provide states with important status markers, assist in altering the discursive environment, and in isolating opponents.

Resolutions can also be used for persuasion, as points of reference to substantiate claims for legitimacy (Hurd, 2011, 10). For example, in 2014 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, when only 11 states sided with Russia against UNGA resolution 68/262 on

[3] Vitaly Churkin, September 11, 2015, http://russiaun.ru/en/news/intrv_tsrg.

the territorial integrity of Ukraine, the Russian Federation seemed isolated. Then, when during the same session the majority of states were persuaded to support the Russian anti-Nazi resolution, the United States and Ukraine—which openly opposed it—found themselves in an even smaller minority of only four members and had to explain why they had voted against it, as discussed in an upcoming section. That is, states dissatisfied with their status will attempt to influence the perceptions of others, by seeking acceptance of their moral authority and norms, including through resolutions.
While it is important to question what states get from advancing the norms, particularly the reception of domestic or foreign audiences, this paper is concerned with the conditions under which such norms are supported by other member states in IOs—a more specific question to which I now turn.

Counternorms in Context

When confronted with liberal norms, autocrats attempt to subvert them (Buzas, 2018; Dixon, 2017), questioning their universality. During the Cold War, the influence of communist norms, promoted by the Soviet Union on the international stage, was considerable (Kramer, 1999). Such norms—based on the ideology of class struggle—were contested by liberal democracies but nevertheless had at least some global appeal. In the post-Cold War period, no longer able to resort to communism, some autocrats retrieve even older norms in order to alter the discursive environment in IOs to their advantage (Paris, 2020). Their counternorms target liberal values and norms (Acharya, 2011; Ambrosio, 2008; Cooley, 2015). Following the end of the Cold War, however, autocrats have struggled to articulate a coherent ideological stance on par with the communist ideology. As a result, while the liberal order rests on clear ideational foundations, the opposite ideological pole of international politics, unlike the communism of old, remains less well-defined and only loosely centered around statism and noninterference (Voeten, 2021, 24).

The norm of noninterference, including the right to defend historically rooted cultural values, has in particular been advanced by China (Cooley, 2015, 51) and Russia (Paris, 2020).[4] Furthermore, Russia became one of the strongest defenders of "traditional values," including that of the heterosexual family. "Traditional values" have become

[4] In the UNGA, declarative resolutions on the subject were adopted, but they tended to receive a considerable number of "Nay" votes and abstentions from the democratic member states. For example, in 2005, resolution 60/164, "Respect for the principles of national sovereignty and diversity of democratic systems in electoral processes" was adopted by 110 votes to 6, with 61 abstentions.

part of Russia's general strategy to build a broad and diverse coalition of states concerned with defending particularistic rights, such as Islamic or Asian values (Edenborg, 2021). Similar to sovereignty or noninterference, however, "traditional values" have limited appeal beyond the more conservative and nondemocratic member states.[5]

Table 1. Normative Action, Universalism, and Moral High Ground

		Appeals of norms or issues	
		More particularistic	*More universalistic*
Moral high ground	*High*	Traditional values Slave trade reparations Palestine self-determination	Immigrant rights Racial discrimination Anti-Nazism/racism nexus
	L*ow*	Internet sovereignty Nuclear energy Sustainable fisheries	Space exploration Sport for peace[6] Anti-Nazism/WW2 anniversary

Can autocrats build a successful normative campaign, convincing the majority of states to support their norms? I posit that the more successful norms are those that, first, can be generally accepted as more *universalistic* as opposed to particularistic; second, the opposition to which—including for democracies—is costly on *moral grounds*; and third, over which autocratic actors can credibly claim *issue ownership*.

In practice, all norms are, or can be, challenged over their universality (Buzas, 2018; Voeten, 2021). Norms are judged subjectively, based on the extent that states speak and behave as if they regard such norms as real (Paris, 2020, 464). Still, we can distinguish between norms that tend to apply to individual states, or groups of states—*more particularistic norms*—and those that are in principle applicable to all states—*more universalistic norms.* For illustration, Table 1 includes more universalistic norms, such as those related to racial discrimination, in contrast to those that are particularistic, such as the endorsement of Palestine sovereignty or sustainable fisheries, which are of particular concern to Palestine and its allies or seafaring nations.

[5] Thus, U.N. Human Rights Council resolution 26/1, "Protection of the family" was adopted but only by 26 to 14, with 6 abstentions.

[6] Such as, for instance, A/RES/74/16 "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" or A/RES/71/160 "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace".

In turn, norms vary in terms of their potential to cause moral outrage if they do not attract sufficient deference, and/or if they are violated (Hall, 1997). For example, a proscriptive norm against racism has gradually become a moral imperative in international relations, even if substantive racial inequality exists (Buzas, 2021). Not all universalistic norms provide member-states sponsoring them with a potential for taking the moral high ground in their defence, if such norms happen to be opposed by other members. Promoting peaceful space exploration as a norm[7] is unlikely to trigger disagreements as it benefits the whole of humanity; states are also likely to agree that universal sport participation can unite peoples and countries for peace. In fact, numerous UNGA resolutions endorsing such positions exist, almost always adopted by consensus indicating their universal appeal. Yet, in contrast to racial discrimination and similar norms, resolutions related to sport or space have limited potential to draw or coerce support on moral grounds.

To persuade other members to assist in their status claims through normative action, actors also need to credibly claim issue ownership over norms (Dahl, 2006). The Soviet Union was credible in pioneering the advancement of communist ideology due to its status as the first communist state in the world (Kramer, 1999). In turn, Russia and the United States can credibly "own" resolutions related to space exploration, because they were the first countries to develop capaibilities in space. In contrast, former empires will not be credible while relying on anti-colonialism for normative action, in contrast to African nations or former colonies.

Explaining Support for Russia's Anti-Nazi Campaign in IOs

The combination of a potentially universalist norm over which an autocratic actor can claim strong association, together with high social costs of opposing such a norm, presents such an actor with an opportunity for successful normative action. This includes strategies to persuade other states to accept the norm as legitimate, also convincing them to vote for norm-endorsing resolutions in the IOs.

As an important example of how autocrats can promote their values and ideology and convince other member states to support them, I study Russia's campaign to advance the norm of combating Nazism in IOs, as outlined in the introduction. Instead of comparing Russia with other autocrats, or anti-Nazism with other norms, my comparative framework is centered on explaining support for Russia's anti-Nazi initiatives over time across member states, and across different IOs. As such, the central research question is the following: Under what conditions are authoritarian actors likely to gain support for their counternorms?

[7] Such as in UNGA resolutions A/RES/65/271 "International Day of Human Space Flight" or A/RES/65/97 "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space", for example.

First, to be successful, autocrats must be able to advance a norm that satisfies the criteria discussed earlier. The top right quadrant of Table 1 includes such norms, provided an actor can also credibly associate with them. These are more universalist norms that can be defended from a high moral standpoint (Hall, 1997), such as those against racial discrimination, immigrants' rights, or anti-colonialism among others. An autocratic actor advancing such norms may put liberal actors in a bind, forcing them to choose between acquiescence, acknowledging the status claim of such an actor, and opposition, thus risking potential reproach from other states.[8]

During the Cold War, for example, the Soviet Union and other autocratic states used a norm against racial discrimination to place Western democracies under a spotlight for their tacit support of South African apartheid (Buzas 2021, 451; Dudziak 2011). More recently, China has skillfully linked such norms as the right to development or sovereign control over the internet to anti-colonialism, making it more difficult for former colonial powers to oppose on moral grounds (Hamilton and Ohlberg, 2020). Autocrats are also capable of repurposing such seemingly Western norms as those related to good governance (Hafner-Burton, Pevehouse, and Schneider, 2023).

In particular, as I explain in more detail in a case study that follows, Russia's international anti-Nazi campaign has been primarily based on its successful manipulation of agenda control and ideational linkages between combating Nazism and racial discrimination. Simply put, Russia's representatives in IOs were able to de-emphasize anti-Nazism as a universalist but low-salience norm prescribing the observance of World War II anniversaries, emphasizing its strong and existing linkages to a more salient, anti-racism norm instead, as seen in Table 1. That is, Russia's diplomats have constructed, and then advanced, an anti-Nazi/racism nexus, rendering anti-Nazism an important ideological norm capable of attracting global support.

Simply put, an anti-Nazi norm is both a prescriptive one in that it prescribes to honor Russia's status and moral authority as an indispensable nation that removed the scourge of Nazism in 1945, a victory that made the U.N. system possible; it also proscribes—as in "inadmissibility of certain practices," "measures to be taken," or "combating glorification of"—what Russia regards, as a self-appointed guardian of the World War II legacy, to be morally objectionable. This often boils down to simply labelling its opponents as Nazis or their reincarnates, as discussed in a section that follows. Because racial equality and decolonization have been at the top of the international agenda,

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[8] Generally, if actors are unable to win on existing dimensions, they may engage in the so-called *heresthetic*, making another issue—favorable to them—more prominent. They do so through agenda control and manipulation, aiming to structure the situation so that they win, "regardless of whether or not the other participants are persuaded." (Riker, 1983, 60). This also relates to the strategic use of norm-based arguments (Schimmelfennig, 2001) and rhetorical coercion, leaving opponents "without access to materials needed to craft a socially sustainable rebuttal" (Krebs and Jackson, 2007, 36).

particularly in the U.N. system, since the 1950s (Buzas, 2021, 452), and an anti-Nazi/anti-racism nexus, I expect that Russia's anti-Nazi initiatives will attract strong support from former colonies that have regarded issues related to racism and racial discrimination as highly salient. Furthermore, at the level of IOs, we can also infer that Russia should be more successful in global fora—such as the United Nations—with a considerable number of former colonies. From this it can draw from linkages with racial discrimination in contrast to regional organizations, whether in Europe or Eurasia, where anti-racism is not as salient and where racial nationalism has grown (Buzas, 2021, 441).

In the context of IOs, we can gauge the attractiveness of a given norm by looking at how other members vote on proposed resolutions and whether they engage with such a norm in speech.[9] Russia's strategy aims to attract support from members for the resolutions it sponsors.

It also strives to convince the largest possible majority regarding the universalism of this norm; that is, aiming to attract, build, and sustain a broad discourse coalition (Hajer, 1993). This leads to the following hypotheses:

H_1: *Anti-nazism/anti-racism nexus:*

- H1a: Russia will be more successful in attracting votes—and convincing others to incorporate anti-Nazi language—from former colonies, regardless of their regime type.
- H1b: These strategies will be more successful in global fora, such as the United Nations, than in regional IOs.

To test H_1a, I will focus on the voting behavior, as well as speech, of individual member states. In order to evaluate H_2b, which requires comparisons across IOs, I can draw from the progression of anti-Nazi initiatives in the UNGA, as explained in a section that follows. Also, given that further institutionalization is one of the declared goals (see Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2015), the strategy to advance a norm can be represented through several stages, from (1) a consistent official rhetoric on the issue; (2) adopting a resolution containing language against Nazism among its clauses, or a declaration; (3) a resolution specifically against Nazism in its title; (4) a resolution with specific actionable clauses. In principle, advancing a new norm generates its own

[9] Actors can persuade others as to the validity of a new norm when others accept and internalize them as standards of appropriateness (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). It is hard to say whether actors in fact sincerely internalize a norm; I focus on their observable behavior.

momentum and may lead to more tangible outputs, including a new international convention as happened with resolutions condemning racism and the subsequently adopted convention. Therefore, further steps are (5) international convention with binding clauses; (6) further institutionalization including a new entity under funds and programs. In summary, depending on what stage a given IO has reached, we can assess the relative success of Russia's strategy.

The dynamics of normative action can also be dictated by strategic considerations. One of the assumptions in the literature is that autocratic actors propose new norms to challenge and undermine the existing liberal order (Cooley, 2015; Paris, 2020). Because that approach is promoted by the United States and its allies (Voeten, 2021, 2), actors advancing their counternorms are also driven by rivalry concerns. Scholars studying interstate rivalry point out that contested issues between rivals, including intangible issues such as identity and status (Mitchell and Thies, 2011, 236), can, if unresolved, contribute to the persistence of rivalry. Post-Cold War, with the emergence of the unipolar system, Russia first chose to pursue accommodation with its former rivals, and this accommodation was also sought in the IOs. From the early 2000s, Russia, unable to directly challenge the United States, insisted on being recognized as a great power and engaged in soft balancing through IOs to undermine the liberal order (Paul, 2005).

Because opposition to anti-Nazism can be framed as morally dubious and socially unacceptable, opponents are in effect forced to endorse a stance they would have otherwise rejected, or to in fact reject it, facing possible moral outrage. For example, in 1971 Israel's representative vehemently protested against the Soviet delegate's earlier statement in which the latter urged others to support the anti-Nazi resolution, also placing "Zionism and the Jewish people in the context of Nazism [which] proves that the Soviet Union has gone very far from the ideas of the war-time coalition against Nazism and from the principles upon which the United Nations was founded" (A/PV.2025, 8). Yet, when placed on the spot by the Soviet tactics, Israel had no choice but to support that very resolution. For Israel with its memory of the Holocaust—and also for the majority of other member states—Nazism represents an ontological alien, combating it is a moral universal (Levy and Sznaider, 2006).

While Israel can be regarded as a special case, I expect that Russia's international opponents are likely to acquiesce to the anti-Nazi norm during periods of international cooperation, such as during détente or in the 1990s, and particularly if Russia remains within the "anti-Nazism/racism" nexus and does not move beyond the racial discrimination consensus. They will, however, abstain or even vote against it—facing strong criticism as a result—during international tensions, primarily when Russia openly challenges the U.S.-dominated order.

H_2: *Conflict and cooperation dynamics:*

- H_2a: Russia will be more likely to sponsor anti-Nazi resolutions, also more prominently using anti-Nazi discourse, during periods of tension.
- H_2b: During cooperative periods, democracies are more likely to acquiesce to anti-Nazi initiatives.

Finally, Russia's campaign is likely to be supported by other autocratic actors, many of which support each other's initiatives, and many are also united under the statist vision in IOs (Voeten, 2021, 24). While H_1b proposes that it will be less successful in regional IOs, one caveat is that it will, however, be more successful in those regional organizations dominated by other autocrats, particularly those allied with the Russian Federation (Libman and Obydenkova, 2019). Therefore

H_3: *Regime type:*

- H_3a: Russia's initiatives will be supported by non-democracies, through votes and speech.
- H_3b: Russia will be particularly successful in those regional IOs dominated by other autocrats.

In summary, the proposed hypotheses are intended to explain the support for Russia's initiatives at the level of individual member states, across IOs, as well as campaign dynamics over time. Below, drawing from the official meeting transcripts and other data, I first document and discuss Russia's strategy of combating Nazism in the U.N. system over seven decades, addressing H_2a and H_2b, in particular.

Russia, Anti-Nazism/Anti-Racism Nexus, and the United Nations

When did the strategy to advance the norm of combating Nazism acquire a central place in official diplomatic communications of the Russian Federation—what Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, and Roselle (2017) define as a strategic narrative (that is, a toolbox for managing expectations and altering the discursive environment in the international order)?

In order to demonstrate that Nazi-centered rhetoric is not a recent phenomenon but in fact has long been a strong attribute of Russia's diplomatic communication, and to underline how central it has become, I draw from this country's annual statements made during the General Debate in the UNGA from 1946 (Baturo, Dasandi, and Mikhaylov, 2017). A typical speech during the debate covers most significant policy issues of concern, such as those concerning international security, development, human rights, the environment, or conflict.

To study "anti-Nazi" rhetoric, I construct a new term dictionary, *Anti-Nazism*.[10] Figure 1 plots the share of this dictionary in Soviet and Russian texts at the United Nations, in percentage terms. To place "anti-Nazi" rhetoric in context, I compare it with Russia's references to NATO, which has always occupied an important role in foreign policy discourse due to its balance-of-power concerns (Paul, 2005), as well as to standard Marxist rhetoric such as references to Marx, Engels, Lenin, the October Revolution, communism, proletariat, working class, exploitation, and similar terms employed during the Cold War. I then estimate the share of terms that belong to these three dictionaries as percentage to the total number of terms in each document.

As can be seen in Figure 1, during the Cold War Soviet diplomats routinely invoked "anti-Nazi" rhetoric, particularly in the late 1940s when the U.S.S.R. was represented at the United Nations by Andrei Vyshinsky. Even though World War II came to be celebrated officially under Leonid Brezhnev, the share of anti-Nazi terms declined from the late 1960s. During détente this rhetoric gradually diminished, reaching a low point around the mid-1980s, and remained low under Boris Yeltsin. Results indicate that from around 2000 onward, the Russian Federation has come to rely more and more on "anti-Nazi"

[10] The dictionary includes the key terms contained in various resolutions to combat Nazism (see below): "nazi" (and derivatives, such as "nazist," "nazism" etc.), "neo-nazism," "fascism," "neo-fascism," "reich," "waffen," "wehrmacht," "munich," "nurnberg" ("nuremberg"), "hitler," "hitlerite," "third reich," "glorification," "barbarossa," "falsification," "great patriotic," "second world," "victory day." Text corpus is preprocessed by removing numbers, symbols, stop words, punctuation, changing into lower-case, and stemming.

rhetoric in its diplomatic statements, becoming even more prominent than it was during the Cold War and that this practice predates the 2014 Ukrainian crisis. Based on Figure 1, I find support for H_2a, that Russia turns to anti-Nazi language at times of international tensions.

Figure 1. Russia's Anti-Nazi Strategic Narrative in the UNGA. Note: Dictionary analyses of the ratio of speech that belongs to the Anti-Nazi dictionary to total speech, in comparison

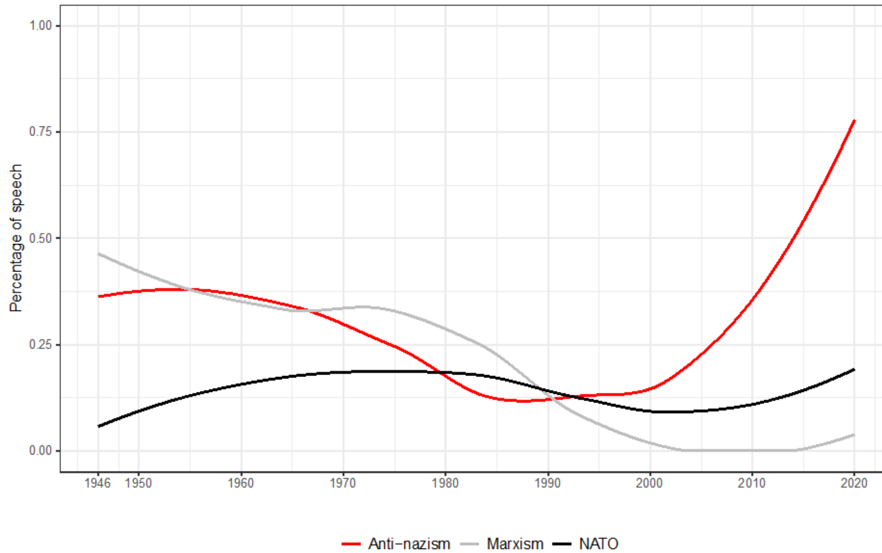
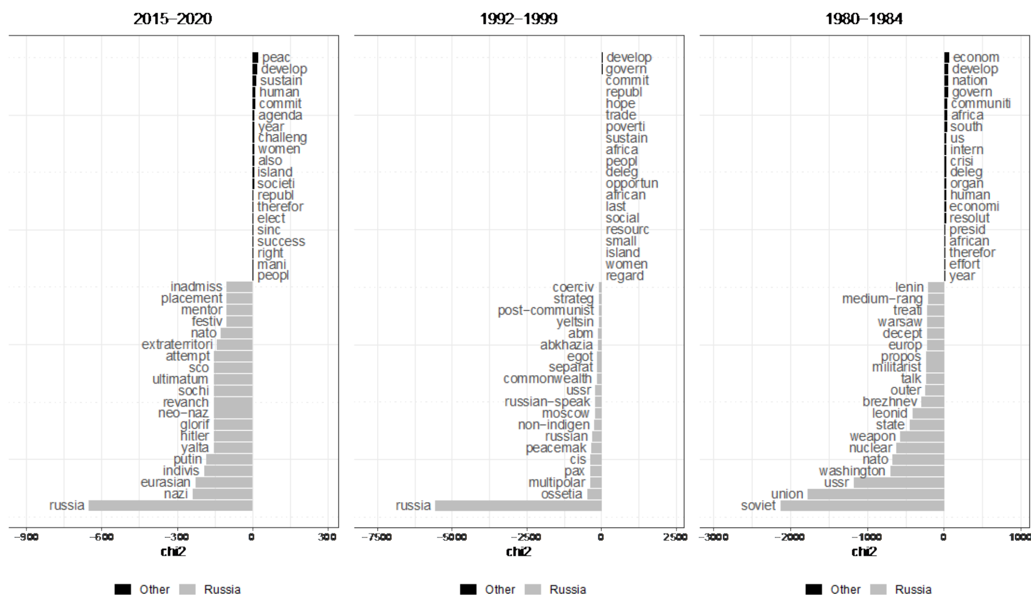


Figure 2. Lexical Differences: Russia vs Others.



Note: Keyness analyses of U.N. speeches, three periods. The top 20 terms are ranked by an χ2 score for features that occur differentially across two categories.

To underscore how unusual Russia's rhetoric in the UNGA has become, Figure 2 displays the lexical differences (keyness analysis) across Russian texts versus the rest of the world in three different periods, from 2015–20, during the 1990s, and throughout the "short Cold War" of the early 1980s. The analysis behind the figure evaluates what terms make these texts most distinctive from all other statements made by the rest of the world. The most important terms are displayed and ranked by a Chi-squared score for features that occur differentially across different categories. Figure 2 shows that in contrast to such terms as "peace," "development," "sustainable," "human," "commitment," "agenda", "women"—in reference texts from 2015–20, Russia, alongside expected "Russia," "Putin," or "Eurasian" terms, differentiates itself by relying on "Nazi," "Yalta," "Hitler," "glorification," "neo-Nazi," "revanchist," and "mentor" terms. The terms of "glorification" and "inadmissibility" clearly refer to the names of anti-Nazi resolutions sponsored by Russia at the United Nations. This result underscores the prominent role of the "anti-Nazi" discursive frame. What is striking is that Russian contemporaneous rhetoric is very different not only from its speeches in the 1990s (middle sub-plot), but even from those during the Cold War (right) when it was dominated by the balance-of-power terms.

The emphasis on combating Nazism in speech is important for Russia's efforts to legitimate its status claims, as well as to rally support for its resolutions on the subject. As I proposed earlier, the key component of Russia's anti-Nazi campaign was to successfully link the anti-Nazi norm with that against racial discrimination in the U.N. system.

From the inception of the United Nations system, the Soviet Union has been at the forefront of combating racism and racial discrimination (Dudziak, 2011). From 1950 on, the UNGA has consistently voted on resolutions concerned with the practices of racial discrimination and apartheid. As the number of newly independent states—former colonies—has grown, the issue of racism has become the subject of ever-increasing attention in the assembly, shifting attention away from Cold War issues to basic socioeconomic, and even moral, problems (Banton, 1996). How did Soviet diplomats introduce the issue of combating Nazism, making it an integral part of a growing anti-racism consensus? The immediate impetus was apparently triggered by the epidemic of swastika images and other anti-Semitic acts in West Germany from 1959–60 (Normand and Zaidi, 2008, 261). In 1960, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to the Commission on Human Rights (under the U.N. ECOSOC) was tasked with developing proposals to combat various forms of discrimination. The Sub-Commission was well placed as it dealt with manifestations of anti-Semitism and other forms of racial discrimination. From studying the available meeting transcripts, it appears that the Soviet representative, (no first name) Mironova, was instrumental in linking anti-Semitism and racial discrimination to the issue of Nazism and neo-Nazism, for the first time at the United Nations. Thus, during a debate on a draft resolution condemning anti-Semitism, she suddenly proposed to replace the words "and other religious and so-called racial prejudices in various countries" with

> *"which have recently occurred in various countries and which are reminiscent of the crimes committed by the Nazis prior to and during the Second World War and were severely condemned on behalf of the United Nations by the Nurnberg International Tribunal" (E/CN.4/Sub.2/206, 61).*[11]

Although early Soviet proposals on the issue did not yet make it into the texts of draft racial discrimination resolutions, during plenary and subcommittee debates in the early 1960s, linkages between the two norms were made for the first time.

From early 1964 important work began on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) (Banton, 1996). During a debate of the Sub-Commission, another Soviet representative named (no first name) Ivanov repeatedly argued that the convention was "too narrow in scope" and that it should also prevent racial discrimination by racist and fascist organizations (E/CN.4/Sub.2/SR.409, 13). Furthermore, he argued,

> *"racism was known to be a tool of colonialism, and there might well be organizations financed by monopolies whose interests were furthered by the domination of subject peoples, which would thus be able to carry on their undesirable activities unchecked. Fascism, with all its attendant manifestations of racial hatred, was far from being dead, and the draft convention should take that fact into account" (E/CN.4/Sub.2/SR.409, 8).*

In response, other members of the Sub-Commission noted the Soviet views regarding "that the convention should take account of fascism," and confirmed they were open to future suggestions (E/CN.4/Sub.2/SR.409, 9).

The ICERD was unanimously adopted in 1965. Even though it did not include explicit language about combating Nazism, ideational and organizational linkages between the norms raised by Soviet representatives in their groundwork within the subcommittees made possible for the first resolution against Nazism only two years later. In 1967, resolution A/RES/2331(XXII) "Measures to be taken against nazism and racial intolerance" was approved for the first time. The 1967 resolution did not yet include what would become standard language in the 1980s and then the 2000s; that is, celebrating and reaffirming the World War II victory and condemning the glorification of

[11] Mironova also proposed to replace "outrages committed" for "the crimes committed by the Nazis prior to and during the Second World War and sternly condemned on behalf of the United Nations by the Nurnberg International Tribunal" (E/CN.4/Sub. 2/206, 61).

Nazism, Waffen-SS, and neo-Nazism.[12] Instead, it expressed deep concern about manifestations of racial intolerance and condemned "any ideology, including nazism, which is based on racial intolerance and terror." Polish representative Bohdan Tomorowicz, in explaining the vote, underlined the linkages between racism and Nazism in South Africa and Western Germany, pointing out that "nazism is very much alive in the form of apartheid" (A/PV.1638, 6). In turn, the representative of the U.S.S.R. emphasized how the Soviet delegation always voted against racist regimes "in the so-called Republic of South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and South West Africa," and then drew attention to a close "collaboration between the Republic of South Africa and the Federal Republic of Germany," so that "attention is rightly drawn to the direct connexion between nazism and racism" (A/PV.1638, 6). While many Western opponents of the Soviet Union were openly criticized during debates on this resolution, when faced with a choice to vote against anti-Nazism they apparently had little choice but to support it.

From 1967 to 1971 the UNGA endorsed "Measures to be taken against nazism and racial intolerance" on an annual basis. Anti-Nazi resolutions have also come to encounter resistance, however, as can be seen from Figure 3. In 1970 what irked many Western governments were the new linkages made between Nazism and economic and social conditions to "ensure a decent standard of living for a population, makes it impossible for fascism, nazism or other ideologies based on terror to succeed" (2839(XXVI). In 1971 the Soviet delegate, in his explanation of the vote, moved further to the positions of the Global South:

> *[...] the revival of nazism and fascism cannot be regarded as a threat to the peoples of the European continent alone. The facts show that, in combination with the racists and colonialists who have entrenched themselves—for example, on the African continent—this will also endanger the peoples of Africa and everyone who is fighting against apartheid, racism and colonialism (A/PV.2025, 8).*

He then attacked South Africa and Israel for "the Nazi practices of the racist regimes in southern Africa and also the neo-Nazi ideology and practice of international zionism, as one form of national intolerance and racial hatred" (A/PV.2025, 8).[13]

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[12] Strictly speaking, the first resolution combating Nazism was adopted in 1946: "The principles and judgments of the Nurnberg Tribunal (including the annex of the verdict that listed organisations, such as the Nazi party and SS detachments, as responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity)," as endorsed by UNGA resolution 95(I) of December 11, 1946.

[13] Attempts to link racism and Zionism culminated in 1975 in resolution 3379(XXX), which condemned "an unholy alliance between South African racism and zionism," supported by 72 with 35 nays and 32 abstentions.

During détente, Soviet representatives opted out from sponsoring dedicated resolutions, or including anti-Nazi language among the clauses of racial discrimination resolutions. With the end of détente, however, in the 1980 resolution (35/200), "Measures to be taken against Nazi, Fascist and neo-Fascist activities," was tabled again. Between 1980 and 1986 seven such resolutions were adopted.[14] In 1983 Gershman of the United States criticized the Soviet-sponsored resolution, for

> *it is at best an anachronism and an absurdity; at worst, it is a propaganda initiative promoted largely by totalitarian States for the purpose of disguising their own totalitarian character. Nazism was defeated in 1945. It is no longer a major or even a minor centre of political, military or ideological power. To suggest otherwise might lead some to believe that the United Nations lives in a time-warp. [...] We do not welcome the focus of attention on an issue of historical importance but of marginal contemporary significance. We do not believe in using totalitarian methods to combat totalitarian ideologies" (A/37/PV.110, 1883).*

However, in a demonstration of successful moral coercion, the U.S. representative joined in voting for the resolution, pointing out "The United States has chosen not to break the consensus on draft resolution," "despite the fact that we consider it to be, on the whole, a bad draft resolution" but welcoming "the condemnation of totalitarianism" within it as a greater good (A/37/PV.110, 1883).

The last resolution before the Soviet collapse was in 1988. Between 1989 and 1999 the UNGA dutifully condemned racism, but no anti-Nazi resolutions appeared, even if anti-Nazi rhetoric had not completely disappeared.[15] The omission in the aftermath of the Cold War's end, and subsequent retrieval, of the anti-Nazi norm makes sense in the context of Russia's political transition at the time. Frustrated with its status and power being largely lost, however, Russia has turned to retrieve older norms such as sovereignty (Paris, 2020, 464). Then, in 2000, for the first time in the post-Cold War period and Putin's first year in office, a new resolution entitled "Measures to be taken against racial discrimination or ethnic exclusiveness and xenophobia, including, in particular, neo-Nazism" was tabled again. The draft was proposed in the Third Committee by a close ally of Russia, Belarus, on November 2, 2000 (A/C.3/55/L.25).[16]

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[14] In 1985 resolution 40/148 attracted the opposition of the United States and Israel, with 19 abstentions, apparently because of the last-minute insertion of "and social progress in the world" in its preamble (A/40/PV.116, 83).

[15] In 1998 a Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism criticized the rise of neo-Nazis in the developed world (A/C.3/53/SR.23, 2). Boris Yeltsin proposed in a letter to the United Nations to celebrate the anniversary of the defeat of Nazism (S/1994/557). Ms. Boyko (Ukraine) stated "that, despite Member States' commitment to the fight against racism, that evil persisted and neo-fascism and neo-Nazism were resurgent in many parts of the world." (A/C.3/53/SR.23, 4).

[16] A Belarusian diplomat referred to the report on racism (A/55/304), which documented the growth in activities of "far-right organizations, neo-Nazis and skinheads," and argued that the general debate clearly "showed the critical

In 2001 and 2003–04 these resolutions were adopted without opposition. Then, as Russia became vocally anti-Western, anti-Nazism again became a contentious issue. As a result, since 2005 the United States has firmly placed itself in opposition to anti-Nazi resolutions. In doing so it was joined by its closest allies, as well as a growing number of nations that abstained, indicating a lower degree of disapproval than voting against.

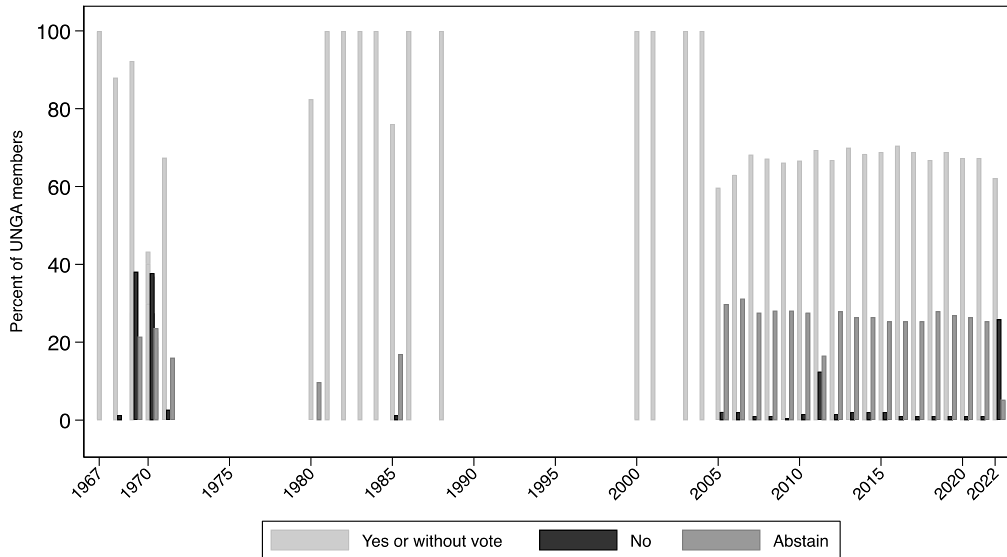
Figure 3 traces the history of support for all anti-Nazi resolutions (the selection of relevant resolutions is explained in the empirical section that follows), as the percentage of nations to the total number of members that year, in terms of their voting behavior. The results in Figure 3 provide support for hypothesis H_2a: Russia has sponsored its anti-Nazi resolutions when it openly opposed the global liberal order and wanted to provoke its Western opponents and did not—as can be seen from the absence of resolutions during détente and from the mid-1980s to 1999—when it aimed to cooperate. Because the pattern in Figure 3 is easy to interpret, I do not include additional tests to correlate resolutions with noncooperative periods.[17] In turn, Western democracies generally acquiesced to Russia's normative claims—as judged by adoption by consensus or preference to abstain—when relations with the country were good or at least tolerable (H_2b).

In 2005, even though the majority of 114 supported the anti-Nazi resolution proposed that year, 4 nations were against, and 57 abstained. Speaking on behalf of the European Union, Dixon of the United Kingdom argued that the resolution was not a "meaningful tool to fight neo-Nazism and other forms of racism" as "it undermined the right to associate, assemble or express one's opinion" (A/C.3/60/SR.42, 2).

importance of a draft resolution on measures against neo-Nazism" (A/C.3/55/SR.29, 9). Then, Azerbaijan, Cuba, Kazakhstan, and Russia joined in sponsoring the draft; resolution 55/82 was adopted without vote.

[17] U.S.S.R./Russia display higher rates of vote agreements with the United States in 1971–79, and in 1990–2004 (see Voeten, 2021, 31).

Figure 3. Support for U.N. Resolutions Condemning Nazism, 1967–2022.



Note: Percentage of UNGA members voting for, against, and abstained from voting. Resolutions adopted without the vote are also included (those with 100 percent support).

The records of the debate make clear that Western representatives reacted to the inclusion of specific instruments in the draft.[18] Later on, Russia would repeatedly invoke it when accusing Western countries of promoting free speech over the criminalization of neo-Nazism (A/62/PV.76, 8). From 2012, instead of the "Inadmissibility of certain practices" as it was prior, an even stronger anti-Nazi-centered resolution entitled "Combating glorification of Nazism" has been proposed, and voted on, annually. In 2014, following Russian aggression in Ukraine and the fact that Ukraine has joined the United States, Canada, and Palau in opposition, the Russian representative invoked the language of human rights and quasi-religious fervor at the same time: "The victory over Nazism had been a landmark in the global human rights architecture, leading to the

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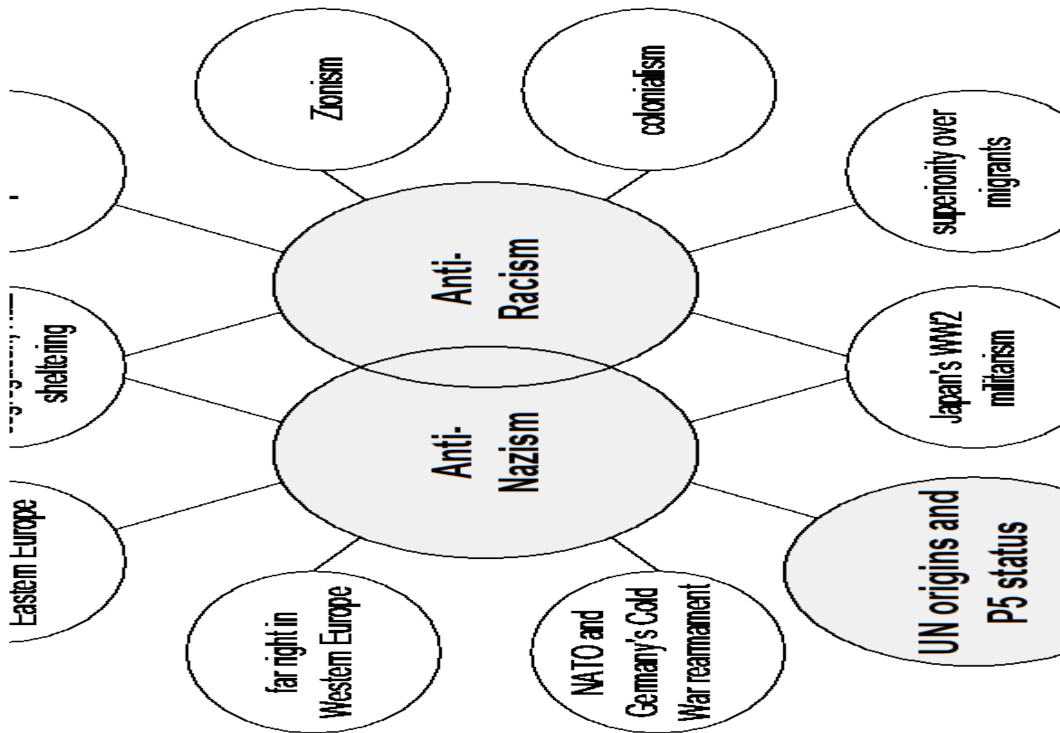
[18] Pursuant to Article 4 of the ICERD, the signatories are to "condemn all propaganda and all organizations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin" and to declare any dissemination of such ideas an offence punishable by law. Even though the United States and Western European nations signed the convention, they however made explicit reservations against accepting obligations to restrict freedoms of speech, expression, and association under Article 4. See the U.S. declaration "That the Constitution and laws of the United States contain extensive protections of individual freedom of speech, expression and association. Accordingly, the United States does not accept any obligation under this Convention, in particular under articles 4 and 7." https://indicators.ohchr.org/. The U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (panel of experts) criticized such reservations as incompatible with the convention, however. See A/87/18, "General recommendation I concerning States parties' obligations (art. 4 of the Convention)," available at www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CERD/Pages/CERDIndex.aspx.

establishment of pioneering instruments” so that in Europe there has “been a worrying increase in the erection of monuments in tribute to Nazis, the declaration of days celebrating liberation from Nazism as days of mourning.” These acts were not only “criminal acts” under the racial discrimination convention but also blasphemy” (A/C.3/69/SR.49, 10/11).

Figure 4. Combating Nazism as Russia’s Strategic Narrative in the United Nations



The fact that Russia has decided to focus on combating Nazism as its main international ideology is not surprising as its World War II victory is its signature achievement. The Russian narrative re-emphasizes the sanctity of its contribution in the defeat of Nazism, which then led to the post-World War II origins of the U.N. system, in turn enabling Russia to argue that combating Nazism is not simply one of many universalist norms. Instead, because the very United Nations rests upon on, as Russia’s representatives argue, anti-Nazism it must be recognized as a first-order norm in the international architecture, a norm that predates liberal universalistic norms, making Russia special, an

indispensable nation. To that end, Vladimir Putin has made direct links between the establishment of the United Nations and the primacy of an anti-Nazism norm:

> *Next year marks the 75th anniversary of the Second World War and the establishment of the United Nations Organisation [...]. It is important to condemn attempts to glorify the Nazis and also to firmly stand up for a world order based on international law and the United Nations Charter.*[19]

The ability to claim that the fight against Nazis predated the United Nations, which in turn established universalistic rights is important. Even more important in persuading others to recognize anti-Nazism as a valid norm, and Russia's right to advance it, is the existence of strong linkages between combating Nazism and racism, which in turn permitted Russia to rally majority support, taking the moral high ground at the same time. In the words of the Russian representative in 2014,

> *to vanquish racism, it was essential to have full international cooperation to protect human rights, as it was a truly global issue requiring [...] efforts from all States without exception. In 2015, two significant dates would be celebrated: the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, when the world had been able to overcome its differences to destroy Nazism, an ideology based on hatred of others and racial superiority; and the fiftieth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racism, which had been the world's response to the horrors and crimes of Nazism and fascism. The famous words "never again" must become the symbol of international actions to combat racism (A/C.3/69/SR.38, 2).*

Figure 4 summarizes the logic of Russia's discursive anti-Nazism strategy in the United Nations. As I have outlined, the Soviets have drawn from ideational linkages with anti-racism to ensure their high moral standing while advancing anti-Nazism and to attack Western democracies for various issues including European colonialism, apartheid, the Israeli record in Palestine, Europe's treatment of migrants, racism in the United States, Japan's war record in China and Korea, and German rearmament, etc. Similarly, in the post-Cold War period, Russia has relied on anti-Nazism generally to advance its status in the UNGA, also using it against its Western and Eastern European opponents, linking their opposition to Russia's initiatives to their tacit support of the far right, among others.

[19] The 2019 BRICS summit, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62045.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Combating Nazism

Russia has "combatted" Nazism through a multipronged strategy of placing anti-Nazi and related resolutions on the organizational agenda, by rallying, securing, and publicizing support for such resolutions. I evaluate the effectiveness of combating Nazism by first, explaining the roll call of support for anti-Nazi resolutions (H_1a and H_3a), comparing it with anti-racism resolutions; second, by gauging the extent of the discursive coalition with a shared anti-Nazi-prong rhetoric (H_1a and H_3a); and third, by comparing Russia's record across IOs (H_1b, H_2a, and H_3b).

Who Supports Anti-Nazism in Votes?

Has a prominent placement of combating Nazism in Russian diplomacy in the U.N. system influenced other member states? I now turn to test hypotheses H_1a and H_3a, examining whether Russia's initiatives are more likely to be supported by former colonies and non-democracies. First, I examine votes cast on all UNGA resolutions related to anti-Nazism, charted in Figure 3 earlier. I also explain the determinants of votes against racial discrimination.

Altogether, using the U.N. Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS), I identify 39 UNGA resolutions condemning Nazism, Fascism, or Neo-Nazism in their titles, from 2331(XXII) in 1967 to 77/204 in 2022. Thirteen resolutions were approved without vote while one more had no record regarding how countries voted. I analyze the remaining 25 resolutions.[20] On average, excluding adopted without vote, anti-Nazi resolutions received 111 votes in favor (64 percent of members), 12 (8 percent) against, and 39 (28 percent) abstaining from vote. About 5 percent of members are marked absent.

I also examine whether factors behind anti-Nazism support also explain support for the roll calls condemning racism. Using voting data from Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten (2017*a*), and updating it to the 2020–22 period, altogether I identify 104 resolutions related to racial discrimination.[21] Altogether, there are over 220 resolutions on racism

[20] The full list is compiled through a search of the key words "nazism," "fascism," and "neo-nazism" in resolution titles, using the UNBIS. Then, I additionally searched for the same key words through full texts of UNGA resolutions classified under subjects of *racial discrimination-elimination*, *racial discrimination-programme implementation*, and *racial discrimination* in order to identify resolutions related to racial discrimination but which include relevant clauses on combating Nazism. Altogether, I identify 39 UNGA resolutions related to combating Nazism. One resolution has a designation of "no recorded vote" even though an actual vote took place. In turn, 13 resolutions were adopted without a vote, and there is voting data for 25 resolutions.

[21] Specifically, I ran a key search on "racism," "racial," and "Durban" (Related to the Durban declaration, after the Durban declaration, and the program of action taken in 2001, the United Nations's program to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance globally). I further cross-checked for additional resolutions related to racism in the UNBIS system under the subjects of *racial discrimination-elimination*, *racial discrimination-programme implementation*, and *racial discrimination*. I excluded resolutions R/33/98, R/34/24, and R/36/8 related to racial discrimination and apartheid in South Africa, which are primarily concerned with economic sanctions, as well as resolution R/43/13, related to "racial elections" and "Pretoria," though primarily concerned with free and fair elections and not racial discrimination. In turn, resolutions R/65/240, A/RES/35/33, and A/RES/35/34 have

(Buzas, 2021, 440), but the total number includes those approved by consensus. Anti-racism resolutions received 105 (70 percent) votes in favor and 10 (8 percent) and 22 (14 percent) votes against and abstentions, respectively.

The data cover the 1967–2022 and 1951–2022 periods for both types of resolution. The dependent variable is binary, taking the value of 1 when a country supports a resolution. I categorize votes against and abstentions as 0s.[22] Because I include time-invariant measures of former colonies, specifications are pooled probit regression models with cluster-robust standard errors; each model includes resolution fixed effects (dummy variables) to control for the possibility that the results are driven by particular resolutions, adopted in particular years.

If H_1a holds, first, the anti-Nazi resolutions—because of the existing linkages with racial discrimination, as argued earlier—will be supported by former colonies. Second, another implication of H_1a is that similar factors will generally be behind support for anti-Nazism and against racism.[23] In turn, H_3a states anti-Nazism will also generally find support among more authoritarian members.

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designations of "no recorded vote" although an actual vote took place. Altogether, I included 104 resolutions in the analyses: 34 among them are related to racial discrimination and apartheid in South Africa. Two resolutions, R/30/3379 (1975) and R/46/86 (1991)—the latter revoked R/30/3379—are related to the links between racism and Zionism.

[22] Most scholars regard abstaining as tacit disapproval, different from mere absences (Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten, 2017*a*). Abstention can also be interpreted as an equidistant position on the issue, or the lack of a clear position (Peterson, 2006, 102). The Russian Foreign Ministry posits that assistance in the dissemination of ideas of Nazism, as well as a refusal to participate actively against them, may take various forms including "systematic abstention or voting against" Russia's sponsored resolutions (tion, 2015, 14). For robustness, I have estimated separate specifications with the dependent variable that excluded votes against, with very similar results on the main predictors.

[23] Apart from the Former colony, in a separate estimation in Table 2 (Columns 3, 6), and in the section that follows I include African regional voting block membership, an ethnic diversity measure to account for particular concerns over racial discrimination, as well as an alternative measure for former colonies, years of statehood, as a logarithm.

Table 2. *Voting for Anti-Nazism and Anti-racism Resolutions in the United Nations.*

	Anti-Nazism			*Anti-racism*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
Democracy	-3.199***	-2.983***	-4.867***	-1.881***	-1.642***	-3.535***
	(0.668)	(0.654)	(1.260)	(0.396)	(0.381)	(0.784)
GA, votes with Russia	6.331**	6.096**	19.099	13.165***	13.171***	23.766***
	(3.027)	(2.953)	(12.160)	(1.608)	(1.583)	(6.809)
Former colony	0.675**	0.548	1.575**	0.276	0.174	0.564
	(0.306)	(0.354)	(0.560)	(0.183)	(0.196)	(0.401)
GDP pc, log	-1.491***	-1.122**	-1.755***	-1.146***	-0.884***	-1.666***
	(0.303)	(0.365)	(0.446)	(0.233)	(0.264)	(0.372)
War anniversary	0.202	0.186	0.466			
	(0.135)	(0.118)	(0.446)			
UNGA 67/154	0.504**	0.486**	1.373			
	(0.223)	(0.221)	(0.873)			
UNSC 418				0.366	0.300	-0.900
				(0.733)	(0.742)	(0.848)
Ethnic fractionalization		0.556			0.585	
		(0.609)			(0.394)	
African group		0.787**			0.556**	
		(0.372)			(0.264)	
WWII casualties		0.000				
		(0.000)				
Trade with Russia			-0.114***			-0.110***
			(0.030)			(0.025)
Constant	4.130	2.350	-2.255	-1.458	-2.683+	-3.480
	(2.722)	(2.834)	(8.134)	(1.269)	(1.378)	(4.088)
Resolution fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Log-likelihood	-750.562	-733.618	-357.734	-2186.062	-2137.719	-782.975
N resolutions	18	18	12	97	97	36
N countries	157	152	154	157	152	154
N	2093	2048	1646	8753	8598	4463

*Note: Models 1–6 are pooled logit regressions with country-clustered standard errors. + $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.*

Further variables control for political, economic, and temporal dynamics beyond the core hypotheses.[24] To account for time effects, in addition to resolution fixed effects, I control for whether speeches are made in an anniversary year, since references to war and Nazism may increase then. In several specifications, I also control for the period following 2012. I expect that the saliency of Nazism in the UNGA significantly diminishes after the end of the Cold War, yet following UNGA resolution 67/154, as explained earlier, it will attract more attention again. I also expect that the topic of racism will be particularly prevalent when UNSC resolution 418, the arms embargo against South Africa for its apartheid regime, is in place from 1977 to 1993. As further controls, I include logged income per capita, voting affinity with Russia, a measure of trade with Russia to account for economic ties, and a measure of national *WWII casualties*, for historical legacies.

Columns 1–3 in Table 2 explain votes against Nazism, while votes against racism are detailed in columns 4–6. First, "base" models 1 and 4 include the core variables to account for H_1a and H_3a, together with temporal controls. Second, for robustness, in models 2 and 5, instead of *Former colony Ethnic fractionalization* and African (regional block) group are included; I also include a measure of *WWII casualties* as a further control. Third, because the *Trade with Russia* measure, only available from 1981, has a significant number of missing values, I include it in models 3 and 6 only.

The coefficient on *Former colony* is statistically significant in "anti-Nazi" specifications, indicating that many newly independent states appear to be persuaded by Russia's efforts to link racism and Nazism. In Model 2, a measure of the African block is significant instead. The coefficient on *Former colony* in specifications to explain anti-racism votes is only borderline significant, likely indicating a larger and more diverse coalition of support of an anti-racist norm (Buzas, 2021). Furthermore, more authoritarian members are more likely to support both types of initiative. The results also indicate that very similar factors are behind the support for anti-Nazism and anti-racism, as stipulated by H_1a. More democratic, being also more economically developed, countries tend to abstain or vote against such proposals, while Russia's allies and those

[24] African group membership is coded from Peterson (2006, 45–47). Former colony is based on Mayer and Zignago (2011). Ethnic fragmentation is sourced from Alesina and Ferrara (2005); Democracy takes the value of 1 if it is a liberal or electoral democracy (Coppedge, Gerring, and Ziblatt, 2019). GA, votes with Russia is the percentage of time the country votes together with Russia (Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten, 2017b). Instead of the former colonies dummy indicator, I also use the logarithm of the number of years of independent statehood—newer countries in the international system are predominantly former colonies (Correlates of War Project, 2017). The national share of imports and exports to and from Russia, as well as the log of GDP per capita, are from the IMF balance of trade data https://data.imf.org and the World Bank's World Development Indicators. In turn, War anniversary is a dummy variable taking the value of 1 for the 25th, 50th, 70th, and 75th anniversaries of 1945 victory (1970, 1995, 2015, and 2020). Finally, I include a measure of WWII casualties, in thousands (Britannica, 2019).

members that generally vote similarly to Russia tend to support these initiatives. Trade links with Russia have negative effects on countries' roll calls, suggesting again that support predominantly comes from the Global South, which has fewer economic ties to Russia.

Who Supports Anti-Nazism in Speech?

Has an advancement of a norm to combat Nazism persuaded other states to accept it as legitimate? Have they come to adopt the elements of such rhetoric in their own speech? Reading through the records of U.N. plenary meetings, it is clear that many non-Western speakers routinely refer to neo-Nazism and fascism in the context of racism discourse. For example, in 1996 Burundi referred to genocide in Rwanda as an example of a "Hitler-like nazism" (A/51/PV.16, 26). In 1997 China argued that neo-Nazism in developed countries was rising (A/C.3/51/SR.25). The anti-Nazi references are very common among Russia's post-Soviet allies, but often appear in speeches of the representatives from the Global South too. Thus, in 2020, Pakistan decried "the global resurgence of fascist ideologies [...] based on atavistic notions of racial superiority" (A.75/PV.33, 16–17). India thanked Russia for the Victory Day parade, and noted that it is "disheartening" that India's sacrifices in war are not acknowledged by the allies, even though "much of the war was fought in and over colonies controlled by the colonial Powers" (A.75/PV.33, 12). Syria in particular strongly follows Russian rhetorical framework, lamenting the "falsification of history" that "seek[s] to deny the contributions of the former Soviet Union and its successor, the Russian Federation" (A.75/PV.33, 12–13).

To study the propensity of using anti-Nazism frames by other states in the United Nations, as well as to examine the lexical similarity between Nazism and racism-related terms, I turn to a semisupervised machine learning method, specifically, Latent Semantic Scaling (LSS) (Watanabe, 2021). As "seed words," I draw from the Nazi-related terms, used in Figure 1.[25]

Figure 5 displays the terms with the highest coefficients for "anti-Nazi" and "anti-racist" rhetoric, as estimated by the LSS algorithm, on a corpus of all UNGA speeches. The size of included terms in the figure is determined by the size of their coefficients. Even though

[25] LSS is a word-embedding-based document scaling technique that requires neither significant hand-coding of documents for training models, nor to have large dictionaries but a relatively small number of seed words as weak supervision, computing similarity between all features and seed words, as explained in Watanabe (2021). I compute average scores per text, where positive values stand for a higher propensity for either anti-Nazi or anti-racism rhetoric. The corpus is the U.N. General Debate (Baturo, Dasandi, and Mikhaylov, 2017). Anti-Nazism seed words are the same used in the dictionary analyses previously: "nazi" (and derivatives, such as "nazist," "nazism," etc.), "neo-nazism," "fascism," "neo-fascism," "reich," "waffen," "wehrmacht," "munich," "nurnberg" ("nuremberg"), "hitler," "hitlerite," "third reich," "glorification," "barbarossa," "falsification," "great patriotic," "second world," "victory day." Racism "seed" words are "racist," "racism," "race," "neoracist," "apartheid," "slave," "eugenics," "racial," "xenophobia," "xenophobic," "intolerance."

distinct terms are used as "seed" words in both estimations, there appears a strong lexical similarity between anti-Nazi racialized rhetoric and that centered on anti-racial discrimination.[26] This provides strong evidence for the existence of ideational linkages between discursive coalitions centered on these two norms in the United Nations. What countries are more likely to refer to Nazism in speech, and are these the same countries that invoke racism? Following H_1a and H_3a, the anti-Nazi rhetoric is more likely to appear in the speeches of non-democratic representatives and former colonies. Further, similar factors will be behind rhetoric centered on racial discrimination. I include the same predictor variables as in Table 2.

Table 3 includes the results of the statistical analyses. Two specifications that include time-invariant measures (2 and 5) are specified as random effects; other models are panel linear models with country fixed effects. The dependent variables are LSS scores—interval measures— for anti-Nazism (1–3) and anti-racism (4–6) rhetoric. Higher values on the dependent variables mean that the speeches made by country representatives are lexically related to anti-Nazi and anti-racism rhetorical frames.

Figure 5. Anti-Nazi and Anti-racism Terms.

Note: These are 80 top terms following LSS analysis, using anti-Nazism and -racism dictionaries as seed words for weak supervision, as explained in the text. Font size depends on the size of coefficients for these terms, from 0.04 to 0.15 (Nazism) and 0.04 to 0.20 (racism).

[26] The algorithm has determined that among a hundred lexical terms related to Nazism and to racism, respectively, there are 14 terms shared by both groups including "nazism," "racism," "apartheid," "pretoria," "regim-," "obnoxi-," "black," "namibian," "coloni-," "hatr-," "corpor-." That is, these terms are present in the two groups of terms that are most lexically similar to the two groups of predetermined seed words.

The results indicate that authoritarian nations as well as countries with a shorter history of statehood—that is, former colonies—are more likely to resort to anti-Nazi and anti-racism rhetoric alike, which supports hypotheses H_1a and H_3a. In contrast to the results in Table 2 earlier, African nations are no more likely to resort to such rhetoric than other regional representatives. In turn, nations with a similar record in the General Assembly to that of Russia tend to resort to both types of rhetoric. Anti-Nazism is more likely to be invoked during anniversary years, as well as by speakers from World War II participant countries with larger casualty numbers. As expected, racism and apartheid are strongly condemned in the period of an arms embargo against South Africa, while states more strongly criticize Nazism following resolution 67/154.

The results further underline that the anti-Nazi and anti-racist rhetoric are similar lexically, indicating norm linkages. Russia's annual proposal of its anti-Nazi resolutions on the UNGA agenda, and its prominent rhetoric broadcasting new norms as a moral imperative, have influenced other member states. For example, after the 2014 U.N. vote, Equatorial Guinea's representative—whose country had neither World War II history nor strong ties to Russia— argued that African countries knew well about racism and apartheid. His delegation had voted in favor and proposed that all sorts of Nazi groups be labelled as terrorists (A/C.3/69/SR.50, 4). Such rhetorical support does not go unnoticed. In 2019 during the first Russia-Africa Summit held in Sochi, at which the host nation announced significant debt relief for its debtors, Vladimir Putin, when talking about the U.N. politics, acknowledged that "We are grateful to our African partners for supporting priority resolutions for us, namely, to combat the glorification of Nazism."[27]

[27] Summit Russia-Africa, October 24, 2019, http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61893.

Table 3. Anti-Nazi and Anti-racism Rhetoric in the United Nations.

	Anti-Nazism			*Anti-racism*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
Democracy	-0.336***	-0.266***	-0.198***	-0.334***	-0.294***	-0.202**
	(0.049)	(0.048)	(0.051)	(0.070)	(0.069)	(0.070)
GA, votes with Russia	0.352**	0.223**	0.672***	0.345**	0.193+	0.758***
	(0.112)	(0.110)	(0.107)	(0.128)	(0.115)	(0.148)
Statehood, years	-0.397***	-0.293***	-0.212	-1.372***	-1.083***	-0.725**
	(0.077)	(0.067)	(0.149)	(0.121)	(0.117)	(0.247)
GDP pc, log	0.167	0.127	0.408**	0.326**	0.127	0.679**
	(0.106)	(0.078)	(0.128)	(0.162)	(0.118)	(0.203)
War anniversary	0.069**	0.054	0.114**			
	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.045)			
UNGA 67/154	0.327***	0.290***	0.305***			
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)			
UNSC 418				0.541***	0.564***	0.649***
				(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.069)
Ethnic fractionalization		-0.254			-0.189	
		(0.161)			(0.229)	
African group		0.114			-0.151	
		(0.094)			(0.143)	
WWII casualties		0.000**				
		(0.000)				
Trade with Russia			0.015**			0.010
			(0.005)			(0.008)
Constant	-0.201	-0.151	-1.833***	0.759	1.129**	-2.269**
	(0.394)	(0.328)	(0.462)	(0.545)	(0.468)	(0.826)
Specification	FE	RE	FE	FE	RE	FE
ρ	0.358	0.191	0.400	0.479	0.199	0.420
RMSE	0.607	0.621	0.531	0.776	0.798	0.662
N countries	157	154	152			
N	6786	6666	4002			

*Note: Models 1–2 and 4–5 are panel linear models with country fixed effects, 3 and 6 are random effects regressions. + p <0.10, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01.*

Combating Nazism Across International Organizations

The results in the previous section indicate that Russia has been rather successful in the UNGA. Now, turning to hypotheses H_1b and H_3b, as well as H_2a, I can compare Russia's record across other IOs of which it is a member. As proposed by the theory, normative action in IOs moves from an inception, when a state advocates for its norm, through several stages until that norm is institutionalized in the IOs.

Prominent anti-Nazi rhetoric has been a feature of Russian addresses not only in the UNGA but also in other IOs, such as the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). In his 2014 address to the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, Sergey Naryshkin, the Russian lower house speaker at the time, focused his speech on "the most alarming and dangerous developments, that is—about frightful signs of resurgent Nazism, which are difficult to confuse with anything else."[28] In yet another forum at the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe meeting on May 17, 2019, Sergey Lavrov continued with the same anti-Nazi rhetoric: "Seven decades after the Great Victory in Europe, movements seeking to glorify Nazism and its accomplices are still rearing their heads," also blasting former Waffen-SS and Nazi henchmen in Latvia and Ukraine (CM/PV(2019)129-RU).

I therefore conduct the same dictionary analyses of Russia's speeches in these two organizations as for UNGA in Figure 1, drawing from the originally collected data. Because neither the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) nor the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE (OSCE PA) require the hosting of a general debate, as is the case for UNGA, instead I turned to annual statements made at the executive level of these organizations—speeches by foreign ministers at the Council of Europe annual ministerial meetings, and at the OSCE Ministerial Councils.[29]

Because texts are available for the post-Cold War period, I do not measure Marxist rhetoric. From Figure 6, similar to the U.N. data, we can observe an inflection point around the mid2000s. This occurs around the time of President Putin's "Munich" speech challenging Western hegemony (Tsygankov, 2015, 145). Were Russia's representatives to these IOs as successful as their colleagues in the United Nations?

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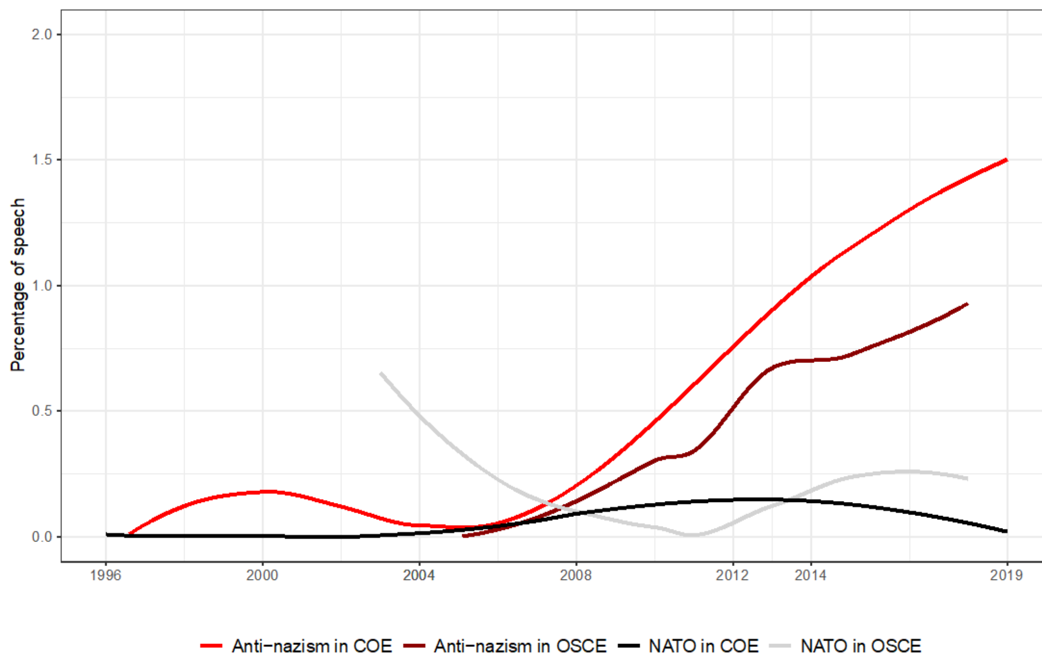
[28] See www.oscepa.org/documents/annual-sessions/2014-baku/speeches-16/2573-speech-by-sergey-naryshkinchair-of-the-russian-duma-eng-2014-06-28/file

[29] From the Council of Europe (COE) https://www.coe.int/en/web/cm/ministerial-level and OSCE https://www.osce.org/ministerial-councils web pages. I collected short statements made at the plenary meetings of the OSCE Ministerial Councils and added closing statements to these, if available in a given year. The U.N. speeches are the longest, followed by those made at the COE, and OSCE statements are the shortest. Because not all records from Ministerial Councils and meetings are made available, I was able to collect Russia's statements at the OSCE only for the 2000–18 period (the first Ministerial Council took place in 1991), and while the COE statements cover the period of Russian membership from 1996–2019, several years are missing.

Drawing from the data on Russia's membership in the IOs from Pevehouse et al. (2020) and supplementary data collection, as explained in Table 4, I examine whether Russia was successful across 18 IOs including informal IOs, such as the G20. As of 2022, combating Nazism has appeared on the agenda of nine IOs but not for the other nine. Hypothesis H_1b posited that Russia would be more successful in the global fora, such as the United Nations, than in regional IOs, unless the latter are dominated by autocratic members (H_3b).

Combating Nazism is a norm that has been very prominent in the U.N. system as a whole. This is evident from multiple anti-Nazi resolutions in the UNGA, the Economic and Social Council, in addition to reports of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism to the UNGA and to the U.N. Human Rights Council. In the United Nations, Russia has advanced to the fourth stage, securing the adoption of a resolution with specific, actionable clauses. Thus, the 2017 resolution entitled 72/156 mandated that the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, appointed by the U.N. Human Rights Council, provide regular reports to the Human Rights Council and the UNGA on the issue of Nazism.[30]

Figure 6. Anti-Nazi Rhetoric in the COE and OSCE.



Note: Dictionary analyses of the percentage of speech that belongs to Anti-Nazi dictionary to total speech. Russian statements at the COE ministerial meetings and the OSCE Ministerial Councils (plenary meetings and closing statements)

[30] The Rapporteur may also request that states detail their implementation of the resolution in the future (A/HRC/38/53).

In other IOs, however, Russia was either still advocating for recognition of its norm at the level of rhetoric—that is, the first stage, as revealed in Figure 6—or it reached the level of declarations or resolutions only; that is, either the second or third stages. It has also appeared on the agenda at the PACE, the Commonwealth of Independent States (such as in the 2019 Heads of State Declaration against Nazism; the 2012 Model Legislative Act on the inadmissibility of actions for rehabilitation), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO; such as the 2019 Heads of State Council Declaration to support Russia's anti-Nazism initiatives), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO; 2019 model legislative act to improve the national legislation of CSTO members in the field of countering the spread of Nazism and its manifestations; 2009 declaration on the same matter), *inter alia*.

Based on Table 4, which also includes the percentage of ex-colonies among members, as well non-democratic membership in 2021, there is partial support for H_1b: Russia has indeed been most successful in the global fora, not in regional IOs. It was able to place its initiatives, at least at the level of declarations, on the agenda of regional IOs when the latter were dominated by autocrats such as the SCO or CSTO (H_3b). One caveat, however, is that even if a regional IO is dominated by autocrats, but its remit was primarily economic—such as the Eurasian Economic Union, for example—the Russian Federation has not advanced its norm there, preferring political or security IOs for this purpose instead. That is, H_1b and H_3b are generally supported; more detailed analyses are beyond the scope of this paper due to space constraints.

Table 4. Anti-Nazi Initiatives by Russia in International Organizations.

IO	% Autocrats	% Ex-colonies	Anti-Nazi Initiative
United Nations and UNGA	48	83	yes
U.N. Human Rights Council	49	73	yes
COE and PACE	15	58	yes
OSCE and OSCE PA	24	62	yes
CIS and CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly	78	89	yes
The Union State*	100	50	yes
Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)	100	75	yes
Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) PA	83	75	yes
BRICS*	60	60	yes
G20*	25	45	no
UNESCO	48	83	no
Eurasian Economic Union	80	80	no
Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council	26	64	no
Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)	44	78	no
Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS)	9	55	no
Arctic Council	13	50	no
Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA)	85	78	no

*Note: Russia's record of IO full membership is from Pevehouse et al. (2020). Initiative is categorized if an organization includes "combating Nazism" at least at the level of declaration (stage 2). The full list of 87 organizations is reduced to include security or primarily political cooperation organizations, excluding specialized agencies (e.g., International Whaling Commission). Primarily economic cooperation organizations are also excluded, except the Eurasian Economic Union, which is politically important to Russia. *Additional organizations not included in Pevehouse et al. (2020).*

At the ministerial level of the OSCE, member states have made several declarations regarding the fight against racism and anti-Semitism. However, regarding Nazism specifically, Russia was successful only twice in securing ministerial decisions addressing the rise of neo-Nazis, in 2006 and 2007.[31] In fact, despite Russia's numerous efforts to place the issue of combating Nazism to the agenda of the organization, it was consistently blocked by the majority of member states, every year.

In the OSCE PA, Russia equally failed to place its anti-Nazi resolution on the agenda of the plenary since 2007.[32] For the 2015 annual session Russian representatives planned to push for a resolution against Nazism, but because of the visa ban imposed on some delegates the whole delegation did not attend the meeting.[33] In 2016, Nikolay Kovalev of Russia proposed a draft resolution requiring all OSCE states to "Implement Joint Measures to Combat Manifestations of Neo-Nazism" and recommending the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights to monitor incidents of neo-Nazism and other forms of extremism.[34] However, the draft resolution did not even make to the general committee on democracy and human rights of the OSCE PA.[35]

In 2019 the Russian Federation proposed to create a new post of special representative on the glorification of Nazism and was successful in placing the supplementary item "Combating Xenophobia, Aggressive Nationalism and Related Intolerance" on the agenda of the OSCE PA. As in previous years, however, the Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs rejected it by 25 votes against, 11 in support, and 13 abstentions. The delegations of Ukraine, Lithuania, United States, and United Kingdom opposed the resolution. After the vote, the head of the Russian delegation, Peter Tolstoy, angrily summarized that "what is happening today in the OSCE PA resembles some kind of surrealistic cinema, a Nuremberg inside out."[36] A senior Russian lawmaker, Leonid Slutsky, underlined an unaccustomed situation that Russia found itself in in the OSCE PA: "For the first time after World War II, an international organization,

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[31] See the OSCE Ministerial Council decisions MC.DEC/13/06 and MC.DEC/10/07, "Tolerance and Nondiscrimination," https://www.osce.org/mc/29452. Following 2007, the only ministerial declarations that included "Nazism" were in 2009 and 2014, and only in the context of World War II victory: "We pay our earnest tribute to the historic role of the allied forces and their sacrifices in the defeat of Nazism during the Second World War." See the OSCE Ministerial Council declaration 7/14, https://www.osce.org/mc/130726.

[32] The 2007 OSCE PA declaration included standard "deep concern at the glorification of the Nazi movement. https://www.oscepa.org/documents/annual-sessions/2007-kyiv/declaration-8/ 250-2007-kyiv-declaration-eng/file.

[33] http://www.oscepa.org/documents/all-documents/annual-sessions/2015-helsinki/reports-4/3068-2015-helsinki-annual-session-report-eng/file.

[34] https://www.oscepa.org/documents/all-documents/annual-sessions/2016-tbilisi/supplementary-items/3314-14-prohibit-neo-nazism-eng/file.

[35] Before every annual session, there is a meeting of the so-called Standing Committee, comprised of the Heads of Delegation of the OSCE PA members. During this meeting, the allocation of Supplementary Items is decided upon, as well as if items are even considered to be included in the discussions. The Russian item was rejected during voting and was therefore not included in any further discussions, nor in the Final Declaration. The exact voting margin was not recorded by the OSCE, however, it was most likely by a large majority. Personal communication with Tim Knoblau, OSCE PA, Denmark, 18 July 2017.

[36] TASS, 7 July 2019, "OSCE PA Committee rejects Russian resolution on combating the glorification of Nazism", https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/6639115.

namely the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has turned down a Russia-initiated draft resolution on fighting against aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism."[37]

That is, based on Russia's record in the OSCE, I find further support for H_2: The last time Russia was able to secure its ministerial decisions or place its resolution in the Parliamentary Assembly of the same IO was in 2007, that is, prior to the 2008 war in Georgia, when a more cooperative period was about to end.

At the Council of Europe (COE), Russia has been more successful, but again, only during its more cooperative period. Following the admission of the Russian Federation in 1996, the assembly acted on racial discrimination and political extremism,[38] but only in 2006 did it pass an explicit resolution to combat Nazism (Resolution 1495 (2006) Combating the resurrection of nazi ideology). It is not surprising that the 2005 Political Affairs Committee rapporteur on the issue that proposed the draft resolution was a delegate from Russia, Mikhail Margelov. The resolution stipulated a major international conference and urged relevant bodies, particularly

the COE's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), to tackle the issue of the glorification of Nazism.[39] The 2005 report by Margelov was somewhat different in tone to the anti-Nazi statements from Russian representatives that were to follow a decade later. Indeed, Margelov never mentioned Ukraine and instead singled out several Western European countries, Latvia, as well as Russia, where racial violence and the number of "skinheads" were on the rise.[40]

In retrospect, 2006 was a high watermark for the Russian efforts to place anti-Nazism center stage in the PACE.[41] In April of 2014 Russia's delegation voting rights were suspended in the PACE because of its aggression against Ukraine. In contrast to its anti-

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[37] TASS, 7 July 2019, "Slutsky warns about widening gap in OSCE's and its Parliamentary Assembly's approaches," https://tass.com/politics/1067449.

[38] As early as 1980, PACE adopted Resolution 743 "Need to combat resurgent fascist propaganda and its racist aspects," that urged the governments to take appropriate measures to counter subversive Nazi groups.

[39] The ECRI annual reports routinely mention concerns over neo-Nazism in Europe. See ECRI annual reports in 2009, 2012–13, 2015–16, and 2018. In particular, the 2013 report highlights its concern "by the persistence of fascist World War II nostalgia in a number of countries. There is evidence of Waffen-SS commemorations, Nazi memorials, rehabilitation of war criminals and rewriting of history in a more favourable light" (ECRI, 2014, 12).

[40] PACE, 2005, Doc. 10766, Combating the resurrection of nazi ideology, December 19, 2005. In 2006 there was a related resolution, 1527 (2006) Rights of national minorities in Latvia, adopted, and that urged the Latvian government to take a firm stance against the attempts to justify crimes committed in Latvia by Nazi troops.

[41] Deputies adopted resolution 1481 (2006) on the need for international condemnation of crimes of totalitarian communist regimes. In 2009 the assembly endorsed a new resolution, Attitude to memorials exposed to different historical interpretations in Council of Europe member states, which condemned "all forms of dictatorial regimes such as National Socialism, fascism and totalitarian communism" (see Resolution 1652 (2009)). In 2012 the delegates from the Russian Federation attempted to amend resolution 1877 on protecting the freedom of expression online by inserting the condemnation of "the glorification of Nazism in all its manifestations as a form of dangerous extremism" but amendment 6 was soundly defeated by 37 against 15 votes. Council of Europe, Amendment 6, Doc. 12874, April 24, 2012.

Nazi resolution 69/160 in the UNGA that year that received strong support, Russia's anti-Nazi initiative was soundly defeated at the PACE. Specifically, a vote on the second amendment that the Russian Federation proposed (to insert "Waffen-SS, the division 'Galicia'" wording) to Resolution 2011 "Counteraction to manifestations of neo-Nazism" on September 30, 2014, in the PACE, was supported by only 29 deputies, with 13 abstentions and 82 members against it.[42]

In summary, at the PACE or OSCE PA, Russia was unable to draw on support from ex-colonies and had very limited support from ideological "fellow travelers" or representatives from energy-dependent states.

Across all IOs, Russia has pushed to further institutionalize anti-Nazism. Multiple times in the OSCE PA Russia has pushed to create a new post of special representative on the glorification of Nazism, yet was unsuccessful.[43] The 2019 declaration of the SCO's Heads of State Council pledged its members' support "to jointly advance the proposal to recognise Victory over Nazism in World War II as humankind's world heritage, and monuments to the fighters against Nazism in all countries as a world memorial for humankind to remember" (SCO, 2019, 14). As can be seen from Table 4, one exception to the expectations in H_1b is UNESCO, a global IO with ex-colonies as members, from which Russia was unable to find support. Hypothetically, should UNESCO have placed such war memorials under its protection, their removal—as occurred across Eastern European states following the 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine—would have been a daunting task.[44] In 2019, Russia raised the stakes by publicly making a new proposal to declare World War II victory the "heritage of humanity" and transform war memorials into protected world memorials.[45]

Limitations to Russia's Strategy: Resolutions in 2014 in PACE and 2020 in UNGA

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[42] The draft, prepared by Marietta de Pourbaix-Lundin (Sweden), recognized neo-Nazism as a pan-European problem. In the PACE Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination the majority approved the first Russian amendment that linked the conflict in Ukraine to neo-Nazism by invoking "the Nuremberg Tribunal and the judgment of the Tribunal recognised as criminal the SS organisation and all its elements, including the Waffen SS, the division "Galicia" and others." (Committee Opinion on Counteraction to manifestations of neo-Nazism, Doc. 13602.) In the Political Affairs and Democracy committee, the second amendment did not receive majority support however. The delegate from Estonia, Saar, argued that the amendment made them "fight with shadows of the past"; it was also controversial. It tells us that surviving members of the Waffen-SS organizations, the youngest of whom are in their 90s, are building monuments and memorials and organizing public demonstrations. That is total nonsense. See AS (2014) CR 30, http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/Records/2014/E/1409301000E.htm.

[43] Personal communication with Tim Knoblau, OSCE PA, Denmark, July 18, 2017.

[44] The Soviet war memorials meant "to capture the moral high-ground, where opposition to the occupying Soviet forces could be construed not only as ingratitude but implicit support for the discredited regimes of the past" (Rees, 2004, 18).

[45] The Federation Council, June 6, 2019, http://council.gov.ru/events/chairman/105518/.

Russia may also have approached the limits of its strategy not only at the PACE but even in the UNGA. Table 5 includes the results of a vote from the PACE (Columns 1–3). In contrast to the UNGA where each member state has one vote, in the PACE individual parliamentarians cast their vote; deputies from the same member country may vote very differently. Unfortunately, due to a very small sample size, it is impossible to account for country group effects. Instead, I tested for the effects of the party ideology of group members. The dependent variable takes the value of 1 if deputies support the Russian amendment and 0 if they reject it. I excluded abstentions, a much smaller number than in the UNGA vote. Model 1 includes the same predictors as in previous specifications, except for colonial status. In the second model, I included two more controls, *WWII casualties* and *Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)* membership. In turn, Model 3 incorporates party categorical predictors instead.

Because there are only three non-fully democratic country members in the PACE, including Ukraine, *Democracy* is not a statistically significant predictor. Instead, and as earlier, individuals from countries that vote similarly to Russia in the United Nations, such as Armenia or Azerbaijan, support Russian initiatives. In turn, the third model only includes PACE party groups as predictors. The baseline omitted variable is the largest group in the estimation sample, the Group of the European People's Party *EPP/CD*. The results show that Left (UEL) and Socialist groups, as well as the *NR* group—that is, unaffiliated deputies—are more likely to support Russia, in contrast to the center-right, *EPP/CD*.

In columns 4–5 of Table 5, I explain the vote against including a clause regarding "monuments to those who fought against Nazism are a worldwide memorial to humankind" into the 2020 draft resolution on the 75th war anniversary.

In contrast to the more general anti-Nazi resolutions that rely on racialized language, this time Russia's preference was supported by only 40 states, with 45 abstentions and 54 against, while many criticized Russia for pursuing "historic revisionism" (A/75/PV.21, 20). That is, when Russia has attempted to expand the scope and attack its Eastern European opponents directly, as it did in 2020, it failed even in the United Nations. Results in Table 5 show that neither *Former colony* status nor *African group* assisted the Russian effort.

Table 5. Limitations of Russia's Anti-Nazi Initiatives.

	PACE (2014): 2011/Amendment 2 (Waffen-SS)			*UNGA (2020): A/75/L.6 (Monuments)*	
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
Democracy	1.913	1.706+		-1.123**	-1.085+
	(1.211)	(1.004)		(0.558)	(0.600)
GA votes, with Russia	0.160+	0.186**		0.137**	0.149**
	(0.089)	(0.079)		(0.063)	(0.070)
Trade with Russia	-0.009	-0.004		0.085+	0.066
	(0.067)	(0.062)		(0.044)	(0.074)
GDP pc, log	-0.359	-0.459		-0.446**	-0.287
	(0.469)	(0.531)		(0.212)	(0.235)
WWII casualties		0.000			0.000
		(0.000)			(0.000)
Conservative (EDG)			1.204		
			(0.938)		
Other (NR)			1.946**		
			(0.689)		
Liberal (ALDE)			0.916		
			(0.776)		
Left (UEL)			3.150**		
			(0.980)		
Socialist			2.151***		
			(0.647)		
Former colony				0.892	0.821
				(0.796)	(0.834)
African group					1.019
					(0.762)
CIS		-1.191			1.021
		(1.390)			(1.424)
Constant	-7.675	-7.984	-2.457***	-6.337	-8.684
	(6.883)	(6.774)	(0.646)	(5.286)	(5.807)
Log-likelihood	-57.423	-56.498	-54.790	-49.151	-47.574
N	103	103	111	127	127

*Note: Probit regression models in 1–5; EPP/CD is the omitted category in 2. + p <0.10, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01.*

Simply put, Russia was successful as long as it linked its anti-Nazism program to a more universalist anti-racism agenda. When it attempted to depart too far from these linkages, attacking its Eastern European opponents directly—as it did at the PACE or in the UNGA in 2020— support dissipated.

Conclusions

This paper has examined the politics of combating Nazism by the Russian Federation as a case study of how autocratic states persuade others to support their counternorms. Taken in isolation, Russia's strategic communication centered on arguments about its central role in combating Nazism over 75 years ago. These arguments can be dismissed as nostalgic claims of a declining power. Yet, from the perspective of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, advancing anti-Nazism as a global norm can be seen as an important ideational strategy to legitimate its claims to not only power but status. It also shows that autocratic actors are capable of building long-term and consistent international campaigns to advance their counternorms. The strategy pursued by Russia from the early 2000s was not novel, as it was successfully advanced by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Largely abandoned in the late 1980s, it was taken back from the shelf under Putin. In contrast to the Soviet Union that prioritized the communist ideology and the balance-of-power in global politics, an international ideology centered on anti-Nazism has become central for Russia in the post-Cold War period.

The tactics of linking the issue of racism and combating Nazism was rather successful, until 2022. After global opinion turned against Russia following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, most observers hastened to conclude, not unreasonably, that the Russian Federation has lost the support of other members, and may turn into a pariah state. Yet, even in late 2022, Russia could garner support for these tropes. In contrast to its "anti-Nazi" resolution 76/149 in 2021 with 130 votes in favor, 49 abstentions, and only 2 against, in 2022, another "anti-Nazi" resolution (77/204) received 120 votes in favor, 10 abstentions, and 50 against. Despite some defections, 115 members that voted in favor in 2021 did not change their vote in 2022, despite the war.

The reason for the support that the Russian Federation has received from states of the Global South—as I propose in this paper—was not economic but ideological. Simply put, Russia was able to capitalize on its consistent and determined stance, dating back to the Cold War period, against racial discrimination in the U.N. system, and the ideational linkages between anti-Nazi and anti-racism program in global politics and IOs. That is, despite a seemingly odd policy to normatively combat Nazism seven decades after the Nazis were in fact defeated, Russia's campaign has proved to be rather successful in influencing other states to affirm Russia's perceived status in the global system. Whenever Russia has moved beyond its "anti-Nazi/racism nexus" however, as it did on few occasions in the United Nations and in other IOs, it paid with a loss of support.

This paper contributes to the literature on norms and counternorms (Chaudoin, 2016; Dixon, 2017; Buzas, 2018; Paris, 2020) and, more generally, ideas and ideology in international politics (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993; Shannon, 2000; Terman and Buzas, 2020; Voeten, 2021). It also contributes to the literature on United Nations politics (see Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten, 2017a) and status in world politics (Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth, 2014). Further research is required to compare Russia's normative action with other autocrats. As mentioned earlier, China has relied on anti-colonialism to take a high moral ground while advancing other norms. Another potential universalistic norm available to China is to advance "harmonious relations" as a first-order norm that should underpin other norms. In turn, opposing harmony may be successfully construed as favoring conflict, making it difficult to oppose it as a norm (Hamilton and Ohlberg, 2020, 152).

Future research may also study the effects of Russia's global anti-Nazi campaign for domestic audiences, and whether domestic anti-Nazi frames differ significantly from how Russian diplomats address international audiences. Another important future query is related to how, and whether Russia's, as well as other autocratic members', normative actions influence polarization within the IOs. Indeed, if liberal members are forced into defending their positions, which seem at face value dubious on moral grounds, such as opposing anti-Nazism, this provokes a more heated and belligerent debate in the IOs. What democracies do, and can do, to counter such counternorms successfully, particularly influencing a Global South majority, is another important strand of future research.

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