Mr. Castro Goes to New York: Autocrats and Democrats on the International Stage

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Abstract

When do leaders choose to speak to the world, and do democrats and autocrats deliver different messages? International fora used to be the domain of professional diplomats, but national political leaders increasingly speak at international fora. Looking at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) annual meetings, leaders' appearances have increased from just under five percent in the early 1970s to over 50 percent in 2018. This is particularly puzzling as the UNGA was meant to be a deliberative forum privileging diplomacy over politics. We argue that UN meetings increasingly serve as focal points for leaders to announce foreign-policy goals on the international stage. But there are differences across regime type: autocrats' speech signals distance and division, where democratic leaders use more cooperative language. Put another way, when democratic leaders show up at the UN, they do so to gain support; when autocrats come to the UN (a less frequent occurrence), they attempt to use the forum as leverage to defend the norm of non-interference in domestic affairs. Using a corpus of UNGA speeches, we show that leaders across regime type tend to replace diplomats and ministers of foreign affairs at the UN particularly in two cases: in the 'honeymoon' period following their initial elections, and also when both allies and adversaries are present.

Key Words: United Nations; diplomacy; leaders; diplomatic speech; democracy

and dictatorship

When do national leaders appear on the international stage? Although international fora used to be the exclusive domain of diplomats and ministers of foreign affairs, heads of state increasingly take the microphone at these gatherings, even in the presence of other outlets for them to exert international influence. When do national leaders choose to speak to the world, and what types of messages do they deliver? Furthermore, do democrats and autocrats use their international platforms differently?

We argue that multilateral fora serve different purposes for democratic and autocratic leaders. International organizations (IOs) such as the United Nations (UN) — ones that cover a broad scope of issues and espouse a goal of universal membership — face a bind. On the one hand, they can serve as a true forum for truly international deliberation over a wide range of issues, rather than the more limited discussions that might occur in smaller and more narrow IOs. On the other hand, including countries or issues that provoke countries can open the door to the forums being undermined and to provide a platform for leaders hostile to international cooperation. This is as true today (when US President Donald Trump goes to the UN to announce "The future does not belong to globalists. The future belongs to patriots"[1]) as in the early days of the UN, when after Nikita Khrushchev's address to the UNGA, a 1961 Senate Committee on Foreign Relations report worried that by allowing Soviet participation at the UNGA, "Isn't Mr. Khrushchev given a better platform from which to denounce our cause and subvert our youth?"[2]

To that end, we argue that leaders in general can benefit from speaking at international fora, but autocrats and democrats face different payoffs for utilizing the international stage. First, international meetings can serve as a focal point for world leaders, and they are more likely to attend when either allies or adversaries are present. Second, what they say varies across regime type: when leaders from autocratic countries choose to address the world, they do so to express division and distance, and to reiterate their own sovereignity. When leaders from democratic countries speak in international fora, they do so to increase support for their ventures — and small countries are likely to cast their foreign policy projects in cooperative language. And, third, leaders across regime type can use the UNGA target both domestic and international audiences; elections at home as well as policy events globally can spur leaders to make an

[1]Remarks by President Trump to the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, September 25, 2019

[2]"The United States in the United Nations: 1960 - A Turning Point?" Senators George D. Aiken and Wayne Morse, February 1961.

appearance.

This paper utilizes novel data on the identities and speech individual country representatives who deliver annual speeches at the UN General Assembly (UNGA). We built on a previously released United Nations General Debate Corpus (Baturo, Dasandi and Mikhaylov, 2017), adding to it important details about speakers representing member-states.

Two puzzles present themselves from the data. First, these speeches have significant formal and ceremonial aspects, on their face intended to welcome the new incoming UNGA president, as well as to put national foreign policy priorities and concerns on public record. So it is not automatically clear what countries would gain from sending their heads of state to speak at this forum. Second, the UN has many established venues through which countries can meaningfully express their preferences: most notably, any member can vote on resolutions, and five powerful countries command the Security Council, so it is unclear what leaders — particularly those from powerful countries — have to gain from addressing the assembly in person. Here again, the added benefit of sending a national leader rather than a delegate to engage in what should formally be diplomatic politesse is unclear, particularly as leaders face constraints on their time (Kelley and Pevehouse, 2015), whereas for technocrats diplomatic engagements are part of the job description. And unlike other IOs or international fora where country representation is baked into the proceedings — G8 summits always require leader participation, for example, and other IOs such as NAFTA or the EU have designated fora where heads of states must appear — the UNGA is the only truly global forum where leaders visits are optional: heads of state can *choose* whether or not to attend.

We address these puzzles by arguing that leaders of authoritarian and democratic countries alike seek distinct benefits from appearing at the assembly. The UNGA can serve as a focal point for leader visits, and across regime type, leaders go to the international stage to gain broader support for their foreign-policy goals, targeting domestic as well as international audiences. This should not be too surprising, but here we specify the conditions under which this strategy might prove most fruitful. We also demonstrate that there are significant differences between the type and content of speech engaged by leaders compared with that of diplomats or ministers of foreign affairs.

We bring together three distinct literatures in political science. The first is on the foreign policy strategies of democracies and autocracies. While some argue that democratic countries pursue different foreign policy objectives than do autocracies (Gaubatz, 1996), others posit that

regardless of regime type, leaders must appeal to audiences that will ensure their survival, and thus their international strategies can be understood along similar lines (Keller, 2005; Weeks, 2008), as can their rhetorical efforts (Weiss and Dafoe, 2019). Much of this research, however, centers on regime type and conflict initiation; it has less to say about the behavior of autocrats in fora that are intended to promote cooperation.[3] To the extent that literature on autocratic cooperation exists, it tends to focus on the behavior of single autocracies such as China (Chin and Stubbs, 2011; Kastner and Saunders, 2012) or Russia (Obydenkova and Libman, 2014) in regional and international initiatives. Scholars tend not to compare the behavior of democracies and autocracies in the same forum.

The second literature centers on theories of personal influence on policy outcomes, focusing on how variation in individuals can shape international cooperation and conflict.[4] A renewed interest in the impact of individuals on the psychological aspects of bargaining (Holmes, 2013) has led to studies of the interpersonal relationships between leaders (Yarhi-Milo, 2014, 2018) as well as the influence of leaders' backgrounds on the probability to initiate war, across regime types (Debs and Goemans, 2010; Saunders, 2011; Horowitz and Stam, 2014). But here too, the focus on leaders tends to center on international conflict; other issue areas are less frequently considered, particulary the conditions under which leaders might choose to appear at an expressly pacific, cooperative forum.

The third literature investigates how the routine details of diplomatic interactions can shape cooperation or conflict (Adler and Pouliot, 2011; Bueger and Gadinger, 2015). These studies highlight the role of diplomats in bilateral relations (Neumann, 2012; Lebovic and Saunders, 2016) as well as the role of differing levels of delegation in IO staff can impact cooperative outcomes (Hawkins et al., 2006; Vaubel, Dreher and Soylu, 2007; Parizek, 2017). In these accounts, individual diplomats can have discrete influence on policy outcomes (Gertz, 2018; Jordan and Tuman, 2018), and professional diplomatic technocrats face differing incentives than do political actors (Johnson, 2013; Ainsbett and Poulsen, 2016). Such lenses have already been applied to the UN, showing how, for example, changes in the appointment process of the Secretary General have influenced policy outcomes (Wiseman, 2015). These approaches have also acknowledged, and analyzed, the particular importance of speech in diplomacy (Jönsson

[3]There is a rich literature on why autocrats sign human rights treaties (Vreeland, 2008; Hollyer and Rosendorff, 2011), as well as the behavior of non-democracies on the UN Security Council (Vreeland and Dreher, 2014), but to our knowledge nothing on when heads of state choose to supplant their diplomatic agents at the UNGA.

[4]To look at the convergence of domestic incentives faced by leaders across regimes, see (Baturo, 2014).

and Hall, 2003; Bayram and Ta, 2019). The domestic conditions that might lead to the delegation of a leader to an international forum have yet to be examined.

This paper contributes to the growing literature on the politicization of the UN. Although votes have already shown to be highly politicized (Dreher, Sturm and Vreeland, 2009), recent work has shown that national interests can also prevail when countries take the helm of various sites of UN operation, including the Security Council (Kuziemko and Werker, 2006; Mikulaschek, 2018) and the position of the Secretary General (Novosad and Werker, 2019). This paper shows that politics spill over even to the UNGA, initially designed as more of a discursive forum than a venue for position-taking per se.

The paper is organised as follows. Below we outline the role of the UN in international diplomacy, and discuss the possible benefits that political leaders may gain from appearing, and speaking at the UNGA in person. We also present preliminary results regarding differences in what leaders and other country representatives, tend to cover in their speeches. We further propose an explanation for leaders' appearances at the UN that is centred on their domestic and international concerns and audiences. In the remainder of the paper we introduce the data, alternative and complementary explanations, and present the results of several model specifications.

International Cooperation, International Representation, and Regime Type

Who speaks at international fora, and what are the incentives to do so, across time and across countries? This section starts with a review of the intellectual beginnings of the UNGA and how they relate to theories of international cooperation and socialization. It then discusses theories of communication and political competition across regime type. We then combine these theories to present our hypotheses, along with discussing possible competing explanations.

Power through Expression and Representation at IOs

Scholars and practitioners alike have long grappled with the question of participation at international organizations. On the one hand, many of the core theories of international collaboration center on the idea that actors in international fora can become socialized into norms of cooper-

ative behavior (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001; Johnston, 2001; Bearce and Bondanella, 2007). On the other hand, principal-agent theories tell us that there can be a degree of slack when certain competencies are handed off to third parties (Hawkins et al., 2006; Johnson, 2014). These ideas are to some extent in contradiction with one another: while agents may be better stewards of complicated or sensitive matters of international governance, when left to their own devices, they may direct policy in a direction more attuned to their own interests than to that of the principals (in this case, national governments).

This tension was present in the early conceptions of international governance, when the architects of international operation sought to strike an appropriate balance between technocratic remove and political realities. At the beginning of the 20th century, policymakers and public intellectuals argued over the most effective form of international governance, one that harnessed diplomatic expertise and norms while remaining grounded in domestic politics. At the time, representation was among the more important institutional design feature of international cooperation. Once ideas of international governance had moved away from exclusively legal conceptions, such as the Hague conferences of 1899 and 1907, the dominant post–World War I view was to have the League of Nations embody an international civil service removed from politics (Ranshofen-Wertheimer, 1945). This reflected a consensus that national interests should take a back seat to the complexities of international governance, and that international cooperation was best stewarded by diplomats rather than by politicians (Kindleberger, 1955; Wertheim, 2012). Although the design of the League of Nations did include an assembly for parliamentarians, it was intended to only meet every few years, with the majority of the work taking place in the Council.

However, the outbreak of World War II discredited the League's model of international cooperation conducted primarily by civil servants — and the subsequent design of the UN reflected a shift in this thinking. There was still appetite for a truly international forum for governance, not simply a political organization where the great powers ran the world. But in the initial proposals for the UN, the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom all favored "a Council composed of Great Powers and some smaller states," with the understanding that "the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security should be placed on the Council," and that the "powers for this ... should not be shared with the Assembly" (Webster, 1947). Instead, the UNGA was meant to serve as a forum for both inclusion as well as discussion, intended to represent the "deliberations of diplomats gathered in public assembly

[to] develop a new kind of *esprit de corps* based upon more than professional solidarity. The habit of working together on an organized and thorough footing would equip diplomats to tackle issues before they became dangerous and threatened war. ... Diplomats would enter the assembly ignorant of everything but the arguments of *raison d'etat* to graduate as citizens of one world, reasonable men embodying 'the reason of the whole'" (Keens-Soper, 1984).

In other words, the institutional design of the UN was such that the Security Council was the venue for power politics, and the UNGA was meant to be the site for broader country inclusion and generalized discussion — but with a particular view toward preserving an ability to shape debate and put new items on the agenda in the UNGA. Importantly, the UNGA specifically acknowledged that small states in particular could make recommendations to the Council, even if they could not veto the decisions made there. The ability to have some role for proposal and discussion was viewed as a key precursor to ensuring small states' participation, which the more powerful countries viewed as desirable in order to create an organization that was truly international. As Webster (1947) put it, "the League of Nations had given many of the smaller states an experience of international affairs and an influence on them such as they had never before possessed and were anxious to retain. .... [The] Small Powers ... had contributed powerful forces to the armies of the United Nations. The peoples that had resisted the domination of the Axis were not likely to accept the leadership of the Great Powers unless they shared in some way in the great decisions" (page 20).[5]

This meant in practice that the role of the Security Council was meant to be the locus of power politics, and that the Assembly was meant to be the realm of diplomatic discussion. Indeed, early research on the interactions at the UN tended focus on the experience of permanent representatives and ministers of foreign affairs, not of leaders themselves (Alger, 1963; Ernst, 1978; Peck, 1979). Heads of state were not really intended to speak at the UNGA, and certainly not heads of state from powerful countries.

Indeed, for the first 14 years of the UN's existence, this norm was largely upheld, with permanent representatives and ministers of foreign affairs dominating the UNGA.[6] The pivotal moment came in 1960, with two related events. The first was the initiation of UN membership

[5]Similarly, Vallat (1952) wrote, "Except in the case of situations which are being dealt with by the Security Council in discharge of its special responsibilities for taking action to preserve the peace, the General Assembly will have authority not only to discuss these great problems, but to make recommendations concerning them to the Security Council or to the member governments, or both."

[6]In 1948 the prime ministers of Belgium and Canada spoke at the UN; there were also one or two leaders in attendance in 1956–57 and 1959.

from newly independent African states, bringing the number of UN members from 82 to 99 — and bringing with it fears of a shift in the balance of power from previously dominant nations. A 1960 CFR report to the US Senate lamented, "These new African members not only bring novel viewpoints and problems .... their presence together with other Asian and African States could constitute a bloc of votes sufficient in most circumstances to control action in the General Assembly on important questions. This development is not necessarily harmful to us, but the day of the assured comfortable majority of votes behind any U.S. proposal is gone." Implied was the need for more overt attempts at preserving the influence of the U.S. on the UN through influencing its members. The same report acknowledged that although the U.S. still held power in the UNSC, "now it is still true that all the Assembly can do is recommend. But a hostile recommendation by two-thirds of the nations of the world would not be comfortable."[7]

The second event was the crisis in the Congo. Mere weeks after the country gained formal independence, on 30 June 1960, conflicts erupted between colonial whites and Congolese, and Belgian troops moved in to defend the colonists. The UNSC quickly adopted a resolution calling for the withdrawal of Belgian troops to be replaced by UN peacekeepers. But the issue proved a flashpoint for competing visions of the UN role in global affairs as well as of the balance of power within the organization. Then–UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold favored an expanded role of the UN to promote peace throughout the world.[8] By contrast, the UN intervention in July highlighted a growing split between the East and West, along with the incipient Non-Aligned Movement, regarding the legitimacy of UN peacekeeping and the state of international affairs more generally.

Attendantly, at the September 1960 UNGA, "world interest in the organization [had] never been greater. At the convening of the 15th General Assembly an unprecedented group of chiefs of state and prime ministers was present, 21 leaders in total. Names such as those of Eisenhower, Khrushchev, Nehru, Tito Macmillan, Sukarno, Hussein, Toure, Castro, Kadar, Nkrumah, and Nasser crowded other news off the front pages."[9] At the assembly, US Presi-

[7]CFR report, 1961.

[8]In his last address to the UN before he was killed in an airplane crash in the Congo, he reflected, "In particular the discussions in the last session of the General Assembly have raised far-reaching questions on the nature of the Secretariat. What is at stake is a basic question of principle: Is the Secretariat to develop as an international secretariat, with the full independence contemplated in Article 100 of the Charter, or is it to be looked upon as an intergovernmental — not international — secretariat providing merely the necessary administrative services for a conference machinery? This is a basic question and the answer to it affects not only the working of the Secretariat but the whole of the future of international relations."

[9]CFR report, 1961.

dent Dwight Eisenhower tried to enlist other countries into sharing the financial burden of UN peacekeeping, saying, "United Nations experts are being asked to train the Congo's security forces. If the Secretary General should find it useful to undertake increased activity in order to meet requests of this nature elsewhere, my country would be glad to join other Member States in making essential contributions to such United Nations activity."

By contrast, speeches by leaders from nonaligned and new nations tended to stress noninterference and sovereignity of smaller countries. For example, Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito stressed that "the emergence of newly independent nations should be encouraged, since the ending of various forms of colonial relationships in the modern world is part of the efforts of the whole of mankind to achieve universal peace and progress. Unfortunately, these processes are still meeting with a lack of understanding and with resistance. Many colonial Powers and highly developed countries are unwilling to reconcile themselves to the ineluctable historical trends in Africa and in other underdeveloped areas. They seek to block these processes in various larger or smaller areas, on the strength of their acquired positions and of their material and other advantages, or to alter their course by various political, economic and military means. Such efforts, doomed as they are by history, and futile in the final analysis, give rise to or aggravate conflicts and crises."

At the other extreme, Soviet Premier Nikita Kruschchev decried "the sinister forces which profit from the maintenance of international tension are clinging tenaciously to their positions. Though only a handful of individuals is involved, they are quite powerful and exert a strong influence on the policy of their respective States. A major effort is therefore required to break their resistance. ... We saw a dangerous manifestation of the work of these forces last spring when the aircraft of ... the United States of America treacherously invaded the air space of the Soviet Union and that of other States. What is more, the United States has elevated such violations of international law into a principle of deliberate State policy. ... There are some confirmed fanciers of other people's property who will never take a lesson to heart." This culminated in the famous shoe-banging incident prompted by a speech by the head of the Filipine delegation. This led the US to complain that "Soviet participation in the United Nations has been consistent with Lenin's policy regarding Communist participation in national parliaments; namely, with the objective of destroying parliaments ... [but now] Soviet obstruction has risen to a higher order of magnitude."[10] Nikita Khrushchev later explained to the top officials in 1962

[10]CFR report, 1961.

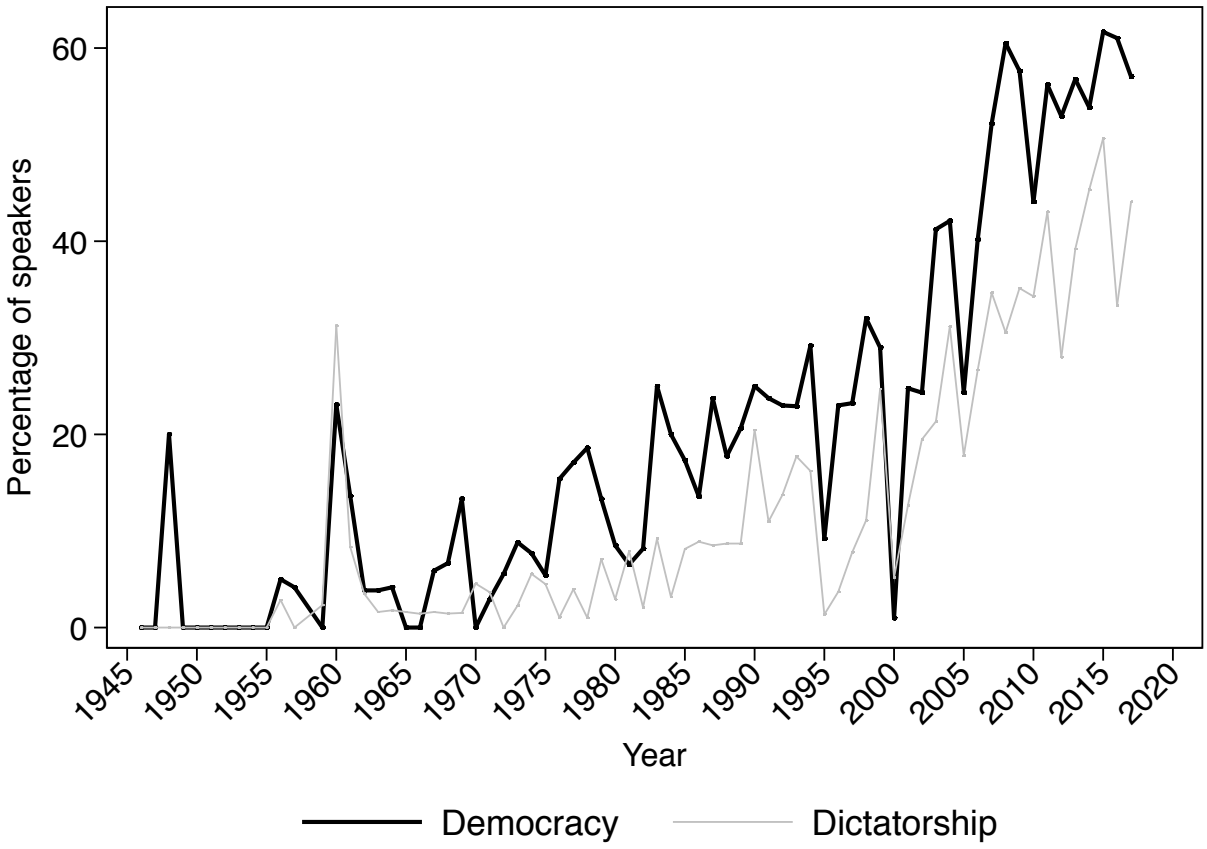

Figure 1: *Leaders in the UN as an Emerging Norm.*

that "your voice must impress people with certainty. ... Don't be afraid to bring it to a white heat, otherwise we won't get anything" (Fursenko and Naftali, 2006, 413). The belligerent rhetoric of Khrushchev — the leader of a second, weaker superpower at the time — was meant to signal conviction and resistance to pressure, to appeal to the leaders of newly independent states.

The 1960 UNGA session, however, did not prove to set a precedent for leader attendance. Although Hammarskjold had an ambitious vision for a more active and interventionist UN, his untimely death cut short that vision's implementation, and subsequent UNGA sessions did not see the type of leader attendance as in that pivotal meeting.

Nonetheless, the share of leaders speaking at the UN continued to rise. When we examined who in fact speaks on behalf of nation-states at the United Nations, extending from data on UN speeches (Baturo, Dasandi and Mikhaylov, 2017), results point to a shift in this norm, for both powerful and peripheral countries. While leaders' appearances were exceptional until 1960, and relatively infrequent throughout the 1960–80s, starting in the early 1990s, and in particular from 2000s, leaders began speaking at the UNGA with increased frequency, rather than simply

leaving the discussion to foreign ministers or permanent representatives. The percentage of leaders has grown from 2 percent in the 1946–69 period (excluding the session in 1960), to 5 percent in the 1970s, to 12 percent in the 1980s, to 17 percent in the 1990s, to 35 percent in the 2000s and 43 percent from 2000. This was true for both democracies and authoritarian regimes, as evidenced from Figure 1. In fact, from 2014 onward, over half of all speakers have been national political leaders.

The increasing tendency of leaders' appearances is difficult to explain by plummeting air travel costs that could have made air trips to New York — the seat of the United Nations General Assembly — more affordable over time. First, the predominant majority of national leaders, irrespective of the state of their national economies, have their own presidential jets or at least could rely on a national airline to travel on state business.[11] It is therefore difficult to imagine leaders being prevented from travel by budgetary concerns. Further, we do not observe that the ministers of foreign affairs — who equally would have to travel from national capitals — increasingly substitute heads of national missions to the UN, who are based in NYC. In the 1940s–60s, 64 percent of speakers are foreign ministers, about 25 are heads of diplomatic missions. In the 1970s–80s, 80 percent of speakers are foreign ministers, and 12 percent are heads of diplomatic missions. In the 1990s, 16 percent are diplomats and 49 percent are foreign ministers. Because leaders increasingly appear at the UN, the percentage of foreign ministers declines from 1990–2018. Clearly, leaders' appearances cannot be explained by budgetary considerations.

Many leaders also began to discuss notably different things than did their more diplomatically oriented counterparts, both in terms of *how* they express themselves and in *what* they emphasize. As the first test, we can visualise differences between leaders on the one hand, and ministers of foreign affairs, various diplomats and other speakers on the other. Figure 2 displays the results of the keyness analysis for speeches made in the UN in 1970–2018. The analysis behind the top figure evaluates the lexical differences across texts attributed to national leaders (the target group) versus other speakers (the reference group), irrespective of what countries they come from. *Prime facie*, leaders are more likely to speak about lofty goals facing the humankind including climate change, sustainable development, democracy and various wants and needs. The most important terms in leaders' statements that make these texts most distinct from

[11] Seretse Khama of Botswana (1966–80) humourosly chastised fellow African leaders who all, despite being socialists, traveled by private jets, and he alone, a "capitalist," used his country's national airline to arrive at the summit.

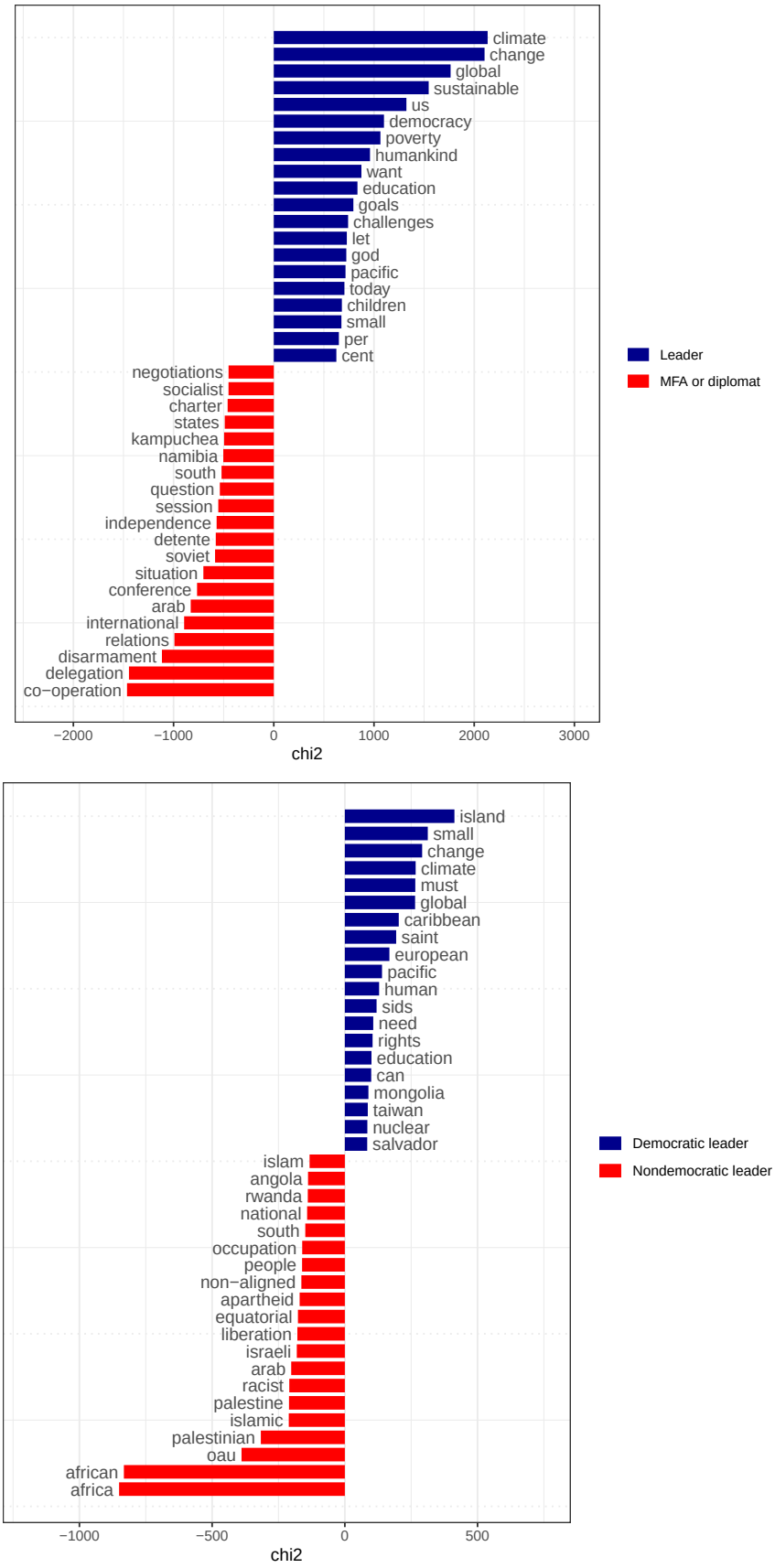

Figure 2: *Lexical Differences: Leaders v Other Speakers and Democratic v Nondemocratic Leaders*. *Note: Based on keyness analyses of the UNGD text corpus .*

all other statements made by different types of speakers, are displayed in the ranking order of importance. Top 20 terms are displayed that are ranked by a Chi-squared score for features that occur differentially across different categories. In contrast to leaders, other speakers are more likely to discuss UN affairs ("conference", "session", "charter") and international diplomacy ("detente", "independence", "disarmament"), as well as Arab-Israel issues.

Results are suggestive, but they clearly may reflect the effects of potential cofounders. If however leaders tend to represent particular countries or regime types, such as democracies for instance, the differences visible from Figure 2 may merely reflect differences between countries, not the type of speakers (see, however, Figure 1 that indicates nondemocratic leaders' appearances over time). Therefore, the bottom subplot of Figure 2 distinguishes between speeches made by democratic leaders (target group) and their nondemocratic peers.[12] Democratic leaders tend to emphasise global issues such as climate change and human rights (similarly to the leaders overall in the top subplot), as well as the questions of interest to small states such as Pacific islands, while dictators focused on questions of apartheid, Africa, national liberation struggle, and Arab-Israel issues.[13] In the empirical section we examine the differences between speeches made by leaders and other types of speakers, both in terms of *how* they talk and also *what* they talk about, while controlling for potential cofounders.

Leaders vs Delegates at the UNGA: Presence and Speech

Some scholars argue that heads of state play only a symbolic role in international politics. In this view, political appearances and speeches merely act as manifestations of state interests that find more meaningful expression in votes and in actual policymaking.

But leaders — both in developed and developing countries, and regardless of regime type — often put themselves forward to launch their foreign policy agendas. For example, U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who is known for his commitment to human rights, visited the United Nations earlier than most presidents — a mere eight weeks after he became president — and spoke in service of putting his signature foreign policy issue on the agenda. "I have come here to express my own support, and the continuing support of my country, for the ideals of the

[12]The text corpus is pre-processed in a standard manner by removing numbers, symbols, stopwords, punctuation, and stemmin,g and changing into lower-case.

[13]If leaders are more likely to speak in the post-Cold War period, the revealed emphasis on global issues can be partly explained not just by the type speakers but also the tendency to discuss such issues after the end of the Cold war overall. In the appendix we include additional results that separate time periods and various speakers.

United Nations," he said, asking the U.N. to even increase its commitment to human rights, promising to put U.S. power behind this goal. "The United States, my own country, has a reservoir of strength: economic force, which we are willing to share; military strength, which we hope never to use again; and the strength of ideals, which are determined fully to maintain the backbone of our own foreign policy."[14]

Generally speaking, the United Nations Charter Article 10 gives the Assembly a potentially unlimited agenda by specifying that country representatives may discuss "any questions or any matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in present Charter."[15] Unlike votes on resolutions that are linked to UN decision-making and may be influenced by foreign aid considerations (**?**), diplomats and leaders are less constrained in what they choose to discuss in their diplomatic statements; they can use speeches to signal their policy position, to rally support, and to exert moral pressure, among other things.

The attempt to use the UN as a space to announce foreign policy projects extended to authoritarian regimes as well. For example, Indonesia's Suharto did not speak at the UNGA for the first 25 years of his rule, and in fact disliked public speaking. As Anderson (2008) wrote, "Suharto had no oratorical gifts whatsoever —- almost always he scrupulously droned his way through tedious, statistic-filled, cliche-ridden speeches written for him, in bureaucratic Indonesian, by the State Secretariat. As John Roosa has pointed out, no one remembers a single phrase Suharto coined in 33 years in power." But in his first UNGA appearance in 1992, Suharto had recently taken for the first time the role of secretary general of the Non-Aligned movement, and used his speech to promote that movement: "On behalf of the leaders of the Movement, whose consensus views were summed up in what has come to be known as the Jakarta message, may I convey to the Assembly the gist of that message. ... As a political coalition encompassing more sovereign States than has any other grouping in history. ... We commit ourselves to the shaping of a new international order ... [and] we pledge to seek that new international order through the central and irreplaceable instrumentality of the United Nations."[16]

This attempt to commandeer the international stage was also in the context of increasing post–Cold War attention to Suharto's violation of human rights. The same year of Suharto's

[14]"From Truman to Trump: How U.S. Presidents Have Addressed the U.N.," *The New York Times,* Sept. 19, 2017.

[15]`https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-iv/index.html`.

[16]UNGA Speech, $https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/47/PV.10$

UN speech, the U.S. Congress had put the brakes on military aid to Indonesia, which turned out to be the beginning of the end for Suharto's regime, with the attendant rise of Indonesia's Democratic Party.

Theory and Hypotheses

These examples show that both democrats and autocrats use the forum of the UNGA in an attempt to advance their standing domestically and their international agendas. Even though principal-agent theories suggest that governance can be effectively delegated to bureaucrats, and indeed the early days of the UNGA were primarily the domain of international diplomats and ministers of foreign affairs, national leaders still can reap benefits from speaking at the UN's General Assembly. How might that differ over time and across regime type?

We argue, first, that UN meetings can serve as focal points for leaders to coordinate appearances. But these peer effects can cut in both directions: leaders find it worthwhile to attend summits when they know that not only their allies, but also their adversaries, will be in attendance. The 1960 UNGA described above is a case in point: if UNGA discussions center on a prominent matter in international affairs, leaders have an incentive to stake their position, and the attendance of a leader will draw more attention than would a diplomat or a foreign minister. Additionally, the UNGA is the world's preeminent international forum, with a diverse and inclusive membership. Unlike in other regional IOs, leaders who attend the UNGA have the opportunity to gain access to a wide variety of leaders on the international stage.

- $\mathbf{H}_1$ *UNGA as focal point:* Leaders go to the international stage when other leaders from rival and allied nations are also in attendance.

These peer effects will be particularly felt during crises or special sessions, when the UN turns its attention to events of global importance. Appearances from leaders hold particular weight in these settings, as leaders attract visibility and can stake their positions in opposition to their rivals and with the support of their friends.

From this hypothesis, we go one layer deeper to look at the varying incentives across regime type. All national leaders, whether democratic and non-democratic, are likely to publicise their international standing as world leaders, to gain visuals of their appearances alongside prominent figures, such as through bilateral meetings with the leaders of the United States and other important countries. But we argue that autocrats and democrats use this opportunity for

different ends. Autocrats go to signal distance and to advance norms of sovereignity and non-interference. This means that they use language that is more divisive and less cooperative. This is somewhat paradoxical and unique to the UN forum; because, as mentioned, the UNGA is both truly international but also optional for leaders to attend. This means that when autocrats do choose to show up, they use the forum to advance norms that are not necessarily in keeping with the UN mission in the first place.

In contrast, when democratic leaders choose to attend the UNGA in place of diplomats or foreign ministers, they promote norms that are consistent with the organization. That is, they use more inclusive language and reference coordinated action. Democratic leaders tend to couch their foreign-policy goals in rhetoric that highlights cooperation rather than autonomy.

This does not necessarily mean that democrats are more cooperative and autocrats are more hostile. Rather, they employ different rhetoric to advance their own self-interested foreign policy goals. Take, for example, small island nations, which tend to be democracies and are also not particularly powerful in global politics. When drawing attention to their plights in the face of rising sea levels, leaders tend to use more cooperative language in a bid to cast their national problems in an international light, highlighting group responsibility and coordinated action. At the other end of the spectrum, authoritarian leaders can use the rhetoric of non-interference and anti-colonialism in an attempt to express support with similarly aligned nations. In other words,

We also argue that these tendencies are reflected subnationally as well, at the level of partisanship. Even within countries, leaders on the right and on the left share those same rhetorical qualities as autocrats and democrats, respectively. That is, within authoritarian regimes, more left-leaning leaders will use more cooperative language; within democracies, more right-leaning leaders will also deploy isolationist language, as the example of Trump illustrates.

- $\mathbf{H}_2$ *Autocrats vs democrats:* Leaders from democracies will tend to use more cooperative language; leaders from autocracies will tend to use more divisive language.

Domestic Politics and International Rhetoric

Since the seminal Putnam (1988) argument that leaders in international negotiations play a two-level game, communicating simultaneously to foreign and domestic audiences, much work has been done to examine the role of both foreign policy and political rhetoric in both autocracies

and democracies (Milner, 1997). In democratic and autocratic political systems alike, incumbent leaders strategically deploy communication channels in an attempt to hold onto power (Bueno de Mesquita and Downs, 2005; Magaloni, N.d.). Electoral competition has also been argued to turn leaders' attention to the international scene; Smith (1996) has shown that upcoming elections tend to spur "violent, adventurous foreign policy projects." This holds true for authoritarian regimes such as China as well Kastner and Saunders (2012). Even in democracies such as the US, travel abroad can improve a president's standing (Darcy and Richman, 1988; Simon and Ostrom, 1989), and presidents' international behavior shifts when other avenues are blocked, particularly when government is divided (Kelley and Pevehouse, 2015).

Scholars have also traced the importance of elections to outcomes within the UN. In developing countries, political turnover is linked to voting realignments already in the early days of the UN (Hagan, 1989), and this has been shown to hold true in more recent periods regardless of level of development (Mattes, Leeds and Carroll, 2015).

For example, the leader of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, after the introduction of personal sanctions against him and other Zimbabwean officials in March 2003,[17] decided to appear in the United Nations every year from 2003 onward—in contrast to an appearance rate of around 40 percent prior to 2003— and lambast the United States and United Kingdom while defending Zimbabwe's controversial land program: "Notwithstanding that determined and resolute attempt at frustrating our land-reform programme, the fast-track phase through which we reasserted our sovereign right over our land as a principal resource is largely concluded, and is now yielding tangible benefits to the vast majority of our people."[18] Likewise, President Putin of Russia travelled to New York in 2015 to criticise the West for its imposition of sanctions on Russia: "Today, however, unilateral sanctions that circumvent the United Nations Charter have almost become the norm. They not only serve political aims, they act as a way of pushing competitors out of the market."

Sanctions are not the only factor that may affect the incentives to attend international gatherings. Leaders who are vulnerable domestically and face the threat of a coup will be less likely to visit the UN meeting. Indeed, many successful coups occur when leaders are away from their countries. The degree of leaders' personal power may also influence the likelihood of foreign travel. However, the direction of effects is unclear. On the one hand, more powerful leaders

[17] See Office of Foreign Assets Control, 2013, Zimbabwe Sanctions Program, https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/zimb.pdf.

[18] See https://www.un.org/webcast/ga/58/statements/zimbeng030926.htm.

face fewer constraints on their power and may be more secure in power to be able to attend the United Nations. On the other hand, the more power the rulers have the less secure they are in office, as described by Wintrobe (1998) in the so-called dictator's dilemma. Furthermore, the type of non-democratic regime may also influence the likelihood of leaders' appearances. All things being equal, and controlling for domestic vulnerability, as explained above, we expect that leaders of personal and military regimes to be more likely to attend the United Nations, than the leaders of party regimes. More institutionalised party leaders do not require to drum up domestic support and improve their personal publicity.

The discussion above leads us to the following hypotheses:

- H_{3a} Domestic audience: In democracies, domestic goals takes the form of *upcoming* elections; in autocracies, speaking to domestic audiences takes the form of speaking to either their elite audiences at home.

- H_{3b} International: In democracies, international goals take the form of expressed foreign aid and other international commitments, as expressed in speeches. In autocracies, they take the form of regional initiatives as well as the affinity to the UNGA president.[19]

Competing and Complementary Explanations

We also consider other explanations that might be driving both representation at the UN and the types of speech that might take place. As this paper is a first draft, this is only an initial cut at operationalizing the determinants of leaders' appearances at the UN, and we discuss further steps in the conclusion.

Other reasons may also influence the likelihood of leaders' likelihood to attend the international fora. Leaders in their first years in office may use this opportunity to introduce themselves, meet and greet their international peers. In turn, leaders in their last year in office may travel to the UN for their farewell address. Furthermore, electoral incentives are not the only incentives facing the leaders. Leaders of nations in conflict may travel to the UN to drum up international support and rally allies against their international rivals, while those whose countries' economies are doing badly may turn to the UN as an opportunity to meet donor country

[19]Hypotheses H1a and H1b are works-in-progress. In the empirical section that follows we primarily test for electoral incentives, controlling for other factors. However, results are preliminary as the electoral factors also need to account for lame duck syndrome. Likewise, we still work on additionally measuring the effects of leaders' speeches at home by assembling additional data on domestic coverage. We also intend to account for international organisations' membership, affinity to the UNGA president, and whether a country is under sanctions.

representatives. Among dictatorships, leaders may also face different incentives regarding international appearances. It is conceivable that leaders who find themselves under sanctions will have very limited opportunities for travel abroad. To avoid the appearances of being a pariah and therefore vulnerable, political leaders may use the exception to travel restrictions that the United Nations grant and attend the world forum in defiance.

Varieties of Authoritarianism

Within autocracies, there may also be important differences in the type of regime. Not every authoritarian leader faces the same incentives, and this in turn may influence their estimation of the gains they might receive from addressing international audiences.

In personalist regimes, leaders may be more likely to take the world stage partially due to their own vanity, and also to ensure more reliable information firsthand, if their own networks cannot be trusted (Frantz and Ezrow, 2009). The same pattern may hold true for military leaders. Party leaders face more veto players at home than personalist and military regimes, and in those instances leaders may be more comfortable delegating authority to agents such as ministers of foreign affairs. Many party-based regimes are also Leninist-type communist regimes whose leaders are less likely to travel to one of the main cities of their "principal adversary", New York. We therefore have to account for such regimes, in addition. More vulnerable dictators who may experience coups in the event of their domestic absence will be reluctant to travel to the UN irrespective of other considerations. As discussed above, the degree of ruler's personal power may also influence the likelihood of international appearances, and below we additionally account for this factor as well.

Small Countries and Heads of State

Beyond just regime type, it should also be recognized that not all countries have the ability to influence the international agenda on their own. As noted previously, small countries in particular were meant to be given particular voice there; as Keens-Soper (1984, 86) put it, "for Third World countries the General Assembly is therefore an anvil upon which power and privilege are to be browbeaten into their images of right and justice". Even at the founding of the UNGA, "it was thus made possible for all states to urge their point of view on all international questions, whatever interests might be affected, an opportunity of which very full use has been made in the first Session of the General Assembly. ... Among the smaller Powers it was also realized

that the Assembly would be the organ on which they would all be represented. It would be the only forum in which each of them could be sure of a voice and a vote."[20]

However, such a setup does not explain why middle and lesser powers would choose to send heads of state rather than other delegates to the UNGA. But smaller countries long operated at the UN through permanent representatives (Peck, 1979). If anything, the ability to set agendas might predict a higher level of government involvement, such that heads of state would historically have been *more* likely to attend so that their agendas could be raised.

Instead, we argue that smaller nations may be simply motivated by personal access to personal rewards. Particularly for countries that are the subject of international sanctions, or countries where executive corruption is high, travel to New York may be particularly attractive. (Novosad and Werker, 2019) show that rich countries tend to use the UN's staff positions; similarly, (Parizek, 2017) finds a curvilinear pattern of representation among UN staff, with both the richest and the poorest countries being overrepresented in staffing, with middle-income countries relatively underrepresented. This indicates that both the most and the least powerful countries would tend to attempt to seize power in the UN through the staff; corrupt countries, particularly those in the middle of the income spectrum, might be more likely to send heads of state to capture the spoils. In summary, we expect the leaders of small states, as well as those high on the perceptions of corruption indicators, to be more likely to appear in the UN.

If this conjecture were true, we would also expect to see that leaders who visit the UN for patronage purposes would also speak differently than did those who were there for political reasons. That is, since their speeches are not the main motivation for their visit, we would expect them to more closely resemble the speeches of a generic diplomat rather than of other world leaders. Specifically, when leaders are trying to influence domestic or international audiences, their speeches will be more focused on policy, whereas when leaders travel to New York for private gain, their speeches will read more like empty rhetoric.

Descriptive Statistics

This section provides some summary statistics and graphics of the degree and kind of representation by the heads of states, and speeches across time. Earlier we examined the increasing

[20]Webster (1947) also notes that "the prevention of any formal action which, directly or by implication, would increase the competence of the General Assembly ... such action conforms with the Russian predilection for restricting negotiations to the smallest possible number of participants."

	country size, $km^2(log)$	population, mln (log)	% with pop.<500,000	% with pop.<100,000
MFA or other	827,440 (5.12)	34.4 (6.75)	24	24
Leader	764,419 (4.95)	37.6 (6.70)	28	39

Table 1: *Small Countries and Leaders in the UN* Note:

trend towards leaders' appearances in the UN, visible in democracies and non-democracies alike. No particular region is responsible for this trend; the percent of leaders per region represented in speeches is relatively stable, as Figure 6 in appendix shows. However, when we compare the relative representation of leaders in regional groups, that is, percentage of leaders to all country representatives making the appearances in the UN, Figure 7 (appendix) indicates that the leaders of small island nations from the Pacific Ocean, such as those of Vanuatu, Marshall Islands, and Saint Lucia, for instance, are the most likely to substitute their ministers of foreign affairs. The second region most likely to send their leaders, as opposed to diplomats, is Latin America.

Table indicates that geographically smaller nations are more likely to send their leaders as opposed to ministers or other diplomats (statistically significant difference). On average however, less populous countries do not send their leaders to the UN. However, the relationship is somewhat curvilinear, as many large, and very small nations, tend to have a higher representation by leaders. A closer look at very small nations, those with the population below half a million, and very small — below 100,000 people — indicate that such nations are more likely to send leaders to speak at the UN. This may be because their national governance structures are relatively thin, and they lack a "deep bench" of officials to send. In contrast to 24 percent of speaker who are leaders if nations are not small, those with the population below half a million tend to send leaders, 28 percent of the time, while very small ones send leaders 39 percent of the time, and the differences are statistically significant. Likewise, 33 percent of delegates from large nations — those over 100 million — are heads of states, in contrast to 23 percent of leader-delegates among nations with a population below 100 million.

Results and Discussion: Why do Leaders Go to the UN?

We can now test whether leaders' appearances at the UN are driven by the mixture of domestic and international concerns. In particular, we test our core hypothesis on the relationship between elections and leaders' appearances. The dependent variable is binary, taking the value of 1 when a national political leader visits and makes a speech in the UNGA, and zero otherwise.

Models are specified as random effects, we also include fixed effects estimations for robustness.

The first column in Table 2 includes the results of a simple model that only accounts for geographic representation, with Western countries category omitted. It also includes geographic distance (between the US and national capitals) measure. Not surprisingly, as previously seen in Figure 7, Oceanic and Latin American countries are the most likely to send their leaders to New York. In turn, Model 2 includes several country-level variables to account for likely domestic concerns, such as variables for whether a country holds *legislative* or *executive* elections to account for possible electoral considerations, whether a country experiences *Civil war* (if intra-state war with at least 1,000 battle deaths). Election years and *Civil war* indicator are sourced from (Coppedge and Ziblatt, 2019). We also include an indicator for whether a country is under international sanctions that year (Morgan, Bapat and Kobayashi, 2014), as well as a logged measure of GDP per capita (from the WDI) and the *Polity2* score (Marshall and Jaggers, 2003). We include a dummy for whether such country is from one islands in Oceania. Results indicate that more democratic but less economically developed nations are more likely to send their leaders to the UN. Political leaders are also much more likely to head for New York in their executive election years but not in the years of legislative elections, and that many travel when their countries find themselves under international sanctions. In the fixed effects specification (3) only democracy, Oceania, and executive election year variables retain significant coefficients.

Models 4–5 include variables that account for international concerns for leaders' appearances. Specifically, we include the degree of corruption, *Corruption* (Political corruption index (D), sourced from Coppedge and Ziblatt (2019), as well as whether session coincides with the first year in office of particular leaders to test the "international shopping" and "hello world" hypotheses. We also include the number of political leaders from the same geographic region in attendance that year, excluding an observation if a given leader is attending, as well as a dummy variable for the emergency special UN session that year.[21] We expect that the leaders will be more likely to match high-level representation when their regional friends and foes appear, as well as when the international situation is dire. We find that leaders are more likely to appear in their first year in power, perhaps to introduce themselves to peer leaders for the first time, as well as more regional peers are in attendance. Leaders of more corrupt nations also tend attend to the UNGA but the coefficient on *Corruption* is only borderline significant. Furthermore,

[21] 1956, 1958, 1960, 1967, 1980–82, 1997–8, 2000-2004, 2007, 2009, 2017–8.

fixed effects results (5) suggests that the corruption effects are likely to be conflated with other country traits such as democracy.

Columns 6–7 combine the predictors that account for domestic and international concerns. In summary, and all things being equal, leaders tend to head for New York in their first year in office, when their nations are democracies and when they represent small island Pacific nations, but also when their countries are under sanctions, as well as during election years for the executive office.

The seeming importance of elections needs to be further investigated. All UNGA annual sessions in 1970–2018 period but one begin in September, with the earliest on 12 September 2002 and the latest —latest in September — on 28th in 2015. The exception was the 2001 session that began on November 10 because of the 9/11 attacks that postponed the UN meeting. In in Table 2 election year indicators cannot distinguish whether a political leader appears in New York following election victory earlier (if elections take place in January to early September in a given year), or if she chooses to speak at the UN prior to election, that is, following the completion of the General Debate, typically end of September or middle of October. Table 3 includes the results of additional estimations. Column 1 includes the results of a simple model: as before, executive election year (but not legislative election year) has a statistically significant coefficient. In turn, Model 2 includes two new variables, *Post-UN executive election* and *Post-UN legislative election* that take the value of 1 if election *follows* the UNGD session, that is, takes place from October to December of the same year so that the leaders can increase their visibility by appearing at the international forum, and 0 if election precedes the UN meeting. We find that leaders are more likely to appear in the UN before the election, not following, which provides evidence for strategic concerns behind their diplomatic appearances.

To study the logic of elections and diplomatic appearances further, we additionally test whether leaders are more likely to appear in the UN when elections are expected to be close and therefore, they may require additional publicity during election campaigns, including high-profile appearances at the UN. We therefore construct two additional indicators: *executive* and *legislative* vote premiums, estimated as the difference between the largest and second largest vote-getters, in executive and legislative elections, respectively (Coppedge and Ziblatt, 2019). The sample only includes election-years (when elections follow the UN session). Results in columns 3–4 suggest that leaders are more likely to appear when the difference between the winner and the second runner is small, which in turn suggests that more electorally vulnerable

leaders are likely to turn to diplomacy as a campaign strategy. Interestingly, leaders are also more likely to appear when not only executive but also legislative elections are expected to be close calls. In the absence of better measures (such as cross-national pre-election polls), we can only infer *a priori* electoral uncertainty from *ex post* eventual margins of victory, however.

Results displayed in Columns 5–6 indicate that it is only leaders who resort to high profile diplomacy when close executive elections are anticipated. When we employ a different dependent variable that takes the value of 1 for *second-in-command*, i.e., prime ministers in presidential and semi-presidential systems, and presidents for parliamentary systems, the coefficient on *executive vote premium* is no longer statistically significant. However, *second-in-command* are more likely to go to the UN when parliamentary elections are expected to be close, as evidenced by the coefficient on *legislative vote premium* (Column 6). In summary, leaders tend to appear in the UN when the executive elections follow the session, not before, and when elections are likely to be close calls (difference between first and second candidates turns out to be smaller). This effect only holds for political leaders and does not for their "Number 2s."

In summary, we find evidence that electoral concerns play part in leaders' appearances. It is however likely that such concerns will only apply for leaders of small nations, or in dictatorships where high-profile appearances at the international stage may indeed be important and can be broadcast prominently. It is unlikely that UN appearances are relevant for advanced democracies where domestic campaigns follow different political logic.

We know that democratic leaders are more likely to appear at the UN, than dictators. Many dictators do however go to New York, and, as we stipulated in a theory section, dictators may attend—or not— international fora for different reasons. Table 4 takes a closer look at the determinants of diplomatic appearances by dictators. All models specified as random effects. For robustness, in the supplementary analyses section we also include the results of fixed effects models. Column 1 includes three dictatorial regime categories (with a personalist regime omitted) sourced from Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2014), as well as an indicator for Leninist-type communist regimes that takes the value of one for years when a communist party is in power, sourced from (Priestland, 2010).

Results indicate that while communist party leaders are less likely to head to New York, the leaders of military regimes — are more so. This results may be explained by the fact that many military juntas hail from Latin America - one of the "top" senders of leaders to the UN, as well as that the majority of them were the US allies (Kirkpatrick, 1982). In turn, Column 2 includes

	RE		*FE*	*RE*	*FE*	*RE*	*FE*
	1:	2:	3:	4:	5:	6:	7:
GDP per capita, logged		-0.186**	0.175	0.057	0.524	0.102	0.899
		(0.085)	(0.501)	(0.093)	(0.423)	(0.098)	(0.556)
Polity2		0.045***	0.040**	0.044***	0.013	0.039***	0.012
		(0.008)	(0.015)	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.008)	(0.015)
Legislative election		-0.020	-0.000			-0.063	-0.125
		(0.061)	(0.129)			(0.065)	(0.135)
Executive election		0.300***	0.436**			0.206**	0.325+
		(0.082)	(0.164)			(0.086)	(0.173)
Civil war		0.154	0.223			0.179	0.142
		(0.139)	(0.218)			(0.135)	(0.226)
Under sanctions		0.223**	0.111			0.158+	-0.030
		(0.086)	(0.139)			(0.091)	(0.143)
Corruption				0.334+	-1.776***	0.289	-1.566**
				(0.187)	(0.468)	(0.207)	(0.646)
First year in office				0.240***	0.484***	0.265***	0.628***
				(0.062)	(0.105)	(0.075)	(0.140)
Regional leaders attending				0.040***	0.111***	0.076***	0.185***
				(0.008)	(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.020)
Emergency session year				-0.125	-0.145	-0.085	-0.119
				(0.123)	(0.273)	(0.139)	(0.293)
Geographic distance	0.000						
	(0.000)						
Population size (logged)	0.064						
	(0.064)						
Africa	0.064						
	(0.134)						
Asia	-0.217						
	(0.273)						
Latin America	0.510**						
	(0.168)						
MENA	-0.332						
	(0.203)						
East Europe	-0.038						
	(0.158)						
Oceania	0.659***	0.201**		0.387+		0.407***	
	(0.192)	(0.072)		(0.219)		(0.069)	
Constant	-0.590	0.077		-1.125**		-2.036***	
	(0.466)	(0.298)		(0.482)		(0.452)	
N	7779	4334	3694	5811	5550	4262	3667
N countries	195	154	128	154	128	151	127
Log-likelihood	-3555.049	-1626.143	-1125.476	-2561.020	-1882.211	-1535.839	-1055.311
chi2	744.614	401.384	432.184	616.223	1258.655	428.606	548.571

Table 2: *Why do Leaders Go to the UN?* Note: Models 1–6 are estimated as random effects. Western leaders are baseline category in Model 1 and 4. Significant + p <0.10, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01.

	Years		*Election years*			
	1:	2:	3:	4:	5:	6:
Legislative election	0.012					
	(0.046)					
Executive election	0.263***					
	(0.068)					
GDP per capita, logged	-0.022	-0.020	0.348	-0.034	-0.169	-0.481**
	(0.074)	(0.074)	(0.233)	(0.183)	(0.319)	(0.181)
Post-UN exec. election		0.218**				
		(0.100)				
Post-UN leg. election		-0.174+				
		(0.093)				
Exec. vote premium			-0.010**		-0.005	
			(0.004)		(0.004)	
Leg. vote premium				-0.008**		-0.016**
				(0.003)		(0.006)
Constant	0.180	0.201	-0.303	0.283	0.048	0.860
	(0.282)	(0.283)	(1.009)	(0.786)	(1.234)	(0.834)
N	6443	6443	208	446	101	221
N countries	168	168	67	114	57	96
Log-likelihood	-3055.043	-3061.395	-125.685	-252.255	-36.805	-77.927
chi2	624.366	657.539	40.672	58.162	11.114	37.434

Table 3: *National Elections and UN Appearances* Note: Models 1–6 are estimated as random effects. Models 1–2 are estimated on on a full sample, Models 3–6 — on the sample of electoral years in which elections follow the UNGD sessions. The dependent variable are national leaders in 1–4, second-in-command (e.g., prime-ministers or vice-presidents in presidential systems or presidents in parliamentary systems) in 5–6. Significant + $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

additional variables that were employed in full sample estimations earlier. Results indicate that executive election year is an important predictor of leaders' appearances, even in dictatorships. However, the coefficient on corruption is not statistically significant.

We also expect that domestic vulnerability may influence the likelihood of dictators leaving their countries for the UN since the absence of a dictator may provoke a coup event. Because leaders' personal power cuts across nondemocratic regime types, so that there exist more and less personalistic regimes even among party- and military-based ones, instead of regime categories we can include *personalism*, an indicator for leader's power from Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2018). Dictators who do not rely on collective leadership structures will be more reluctant to be absent from their national capitals so as not to invite a coup, and therefore not to attend the UN. We additionally include *Time since coup event* and *Time since campaign onset*. The expectation is that following the coup, leaders will be less likely to leave their country, while the longer the mass campaign lasts (such as protests and strikes), the less likely the ruler will be able to depart for the UN meeting. Results in Columns 3–4 suggest that more personalistic dictators, as well as dictators that are more vulnerable due to ongoing campaigns, are less likely to travel to the UN.

	1:	2:	3:	4:
Military regime	0.458**	0.491**		
	(0.174)	(0.191)		
Monarchy	-0.338	-0.146		
	(0.257)	(0.272)		
Party regime	0.208	0.333**		
	(0.153)	(0.152)		
Communist regime	-0.486**	-0.571**		
	(0.204)	(0.255)		
GDP per capita, logged		-0.177		-0.164
		(0.145)		(0.128)
Legislative election		-0.003		0.007
		(0.106)		(0.108)
Executive election		0.306**		0.361**
		(0.134)		(0.130)
Civil war		0.221		0.104
		(0.166)		(0.160)
Under sanctions		0.128		0.048
		(0.135)		(0.136)
Corruption		-0.108		0.225
		(0.264)		(0.255)
Time since coup event			0.003	0.006
			(0.005)	(0.005)
GWF personalism			-0.540**	-0.594**
			(0.199)	(0.200)
Time since campaign onset			-0.013**	-0.009**
			(0.005)	(0.005)
Constant	-0.657***	-0.277	-0.245	-0.070
	(0.199)	(0.524)	(0.237)	(0.520)
N	2777	2152	2559	2152
N countries	110	100	110	100
Log-likelihood	-844.895	-634.232	-717.745	-637.660
chi2	348.020	225.294	213.963	207.373

Table 4: *Dictators in the UN* Note: Models 1–4 are estimated as random effects, on the sample of dictatorships. Personal regime is a baseline omitted category. Significant + $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

In summary, dictators travel to New York when they want to deliver a message to the UN and to appear among international statesmen in election year, and they stay at home when they are vulnerable to coups, or merely paranoid due to highly personalised power. Leaders of the communist regimes tend to abstain from visits to the UN hosted by the main adversary.

Results and Discussion: When Leaders Go, What do They Say?

Having examined the main reasons behind leaders' attendance of the highest international forum, in this section we can shed more light whether they are more likely to emphasise broad international goals, or use different, more cooperative language, or in case of dictators— more divisive language, than diplomats and other country representatives. That is, we intend to estimate whether speeches produced by leaders are lexically different from those produced by diplomats, focusing in particular on "technocratic" diplomatic language, as well as "non-interference" rhetoric.

To examine differences in speeches made by leaders and other types of speakers more systematically, we first turn to semi-supervised machine learning technique, Latent Semantic Scaling (LSS) (Watanabe, 2019). LSS is a word embedding-based document scaling technique that takes the set of seed words as weak supervision to assess the lexical similarity overall. Specifically, we are interested in studying whether leaders are less likely to rely on a technical, diplomatic language in their diplomatic communication at the UN, and instead directly defend the right to non-interference in domestic affairs and sovereignty as the ultimate norm. We therefore construct two dictionaries, *diplomatic* and *sovereign* dictionaries.[22] After text pre-processing, LSS estimates word parameters in a latent semantic space by computing similarity between all the selected features and seed words to weight these features in terms of the propensity to use diplomatic jargon in speech, or intensity of *sovereign* rhetoric.

As we detail in the appendix, the top *sovereign*-related terms have lexical similarity in the UN texts with other "fighting", non-interventionist rhetoric, while *diplomatic*-related terms are strongly related to other technical diplomatic parlance. As a formal test whether leaders are more or less likely to employ such language in their addresses to the UN, we can fit several

[22]First, *diplomatic*: resolution, treaty, plenipotentiary, compromise, ratification, convention, demarche, envoy, modus, modus vivendi, pact, non grata, protocol, rapprochement, nota verbale, excellency, interim, bona fide, casus belli, ceteris paribus, de jure, ex officio, force majeure, pro tempore. Second, *sovereign*: sovereign, sovereignty, non-intervention, nonintervention, meddling, internal affairs. Text corpus is pre-processed in standard manner allowing for 1: 2 ngrams (word combinations).

	"Diplomatic" LSS		*"Sovereign" LSS*	
	1:	2:	3:	4:
Leader	-0.253***		0.071**	
	(0.025)		(0.023)	
Democracy	-0.043		-0.239***	
	(0.034)		(0.032)	
Cold war	-0.639***	-0.632***	0.216***	0.213***
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Democratic MFA		0.140**		-0.275***
		(0.046)		(0.044)
Democratic leader		-0.215***		-0.159***
		(0.049)		(0.046)
Nondemocratic MFA		0.116**		-0.005
		(0.038)		(0.036)
Constant	0.312***	0.167***	0.007	0.026
	(0.023)	(0.036)	(0.022)	(0.035)
N	7897	7897	7897	7897
N countries	200	200	200	200
Log-likelihood	-9493.576	-9480.136	-9107.515	-9104.727

Table 5: *Diplomatic and Aggressive Rhetoric: LSS Analyses* Note: Models 1–4 are estimated as fixed effects. Nondemocratic leaders is a baseline omitted category in 3–4. Significant + p <0.10, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01.

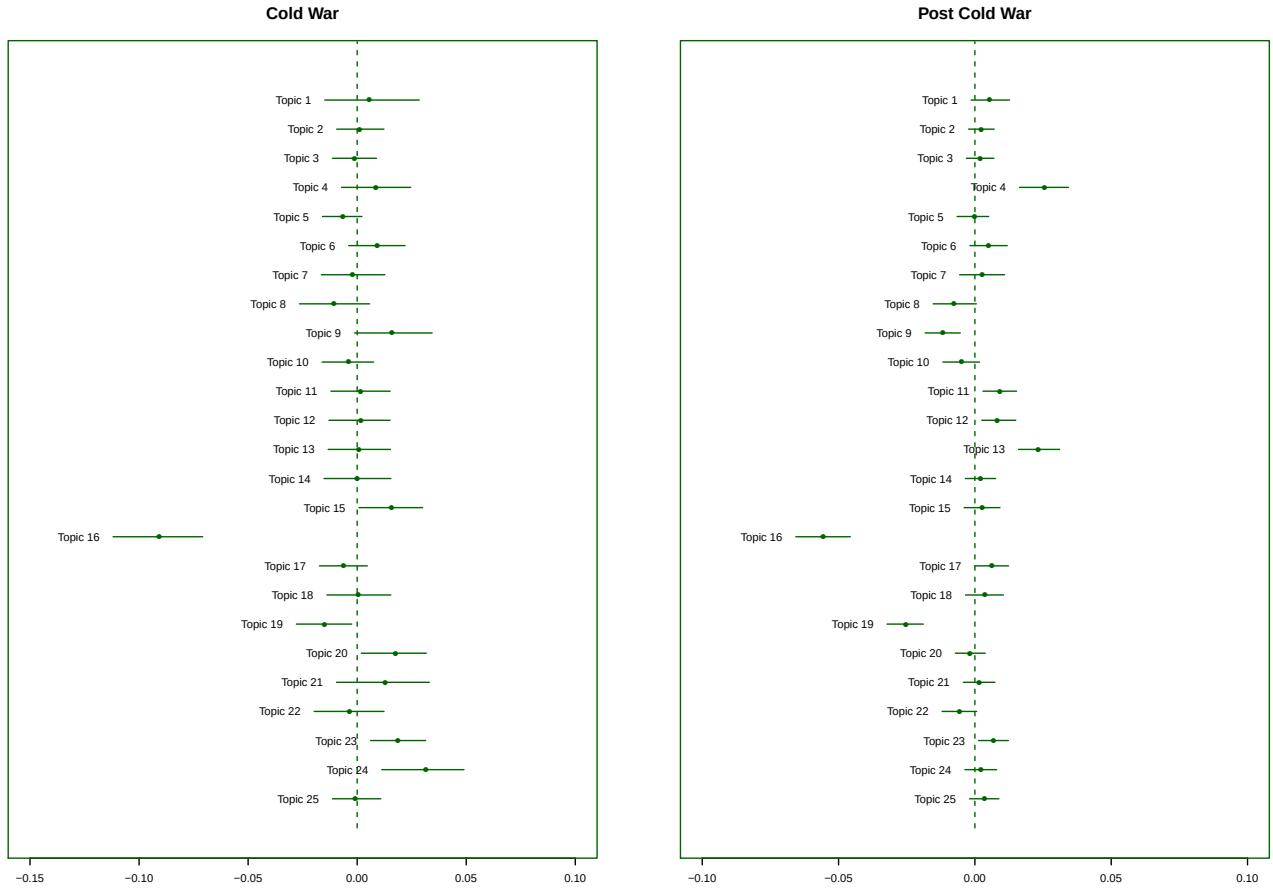

Figure 3: *Policy Topics: Are There Any Differences Between Leaders and Diplomats?*. Note: Estimated from STM, as described in text.

model specifications to predict LSS scores for each speaker-year observation in the data set, in the UN speeches of all members from 1970–2018.

Table 5 includes two specifications to test whether leaders are less likely to rely on diplomatic language (1–2) and more likely — invoke the norm of sovereignty (3–4). Higher values on the dependent variables stand for higher proportion of text lexically related to dictionaries. All models are fixed effects regression models. Results indicate that leaders are less likely to use diplomatic language, and more likely — the language of sovereignty (Models 1 and 3). In turn, foreign ministers —whether from democratic or nondemocratic nations — are more likely to use diplomatic terms than are leaders. Democratic leaders, as well as democratic foreign ministers, are less likely to defend the norm of sovereignty than nondemocratic leaders.

Differences between leaders and other types of speakers, as well as between democratic and nondemocratic leaders, go beyond the content of their addresses. As a simple test for whether leaders rely on divisive or uniting language, we additionally conduct dictionary analyses by estimating the ratios of "us versus them" and "me versus you" terms in speeches.[23] We find that leaders overall are more likely to rely on "us versus them" language but this result is primarily driven by the propensity of democratic leaders to constantly refer to "us" and "ours" such as "our values." Nondemocratic leaders instead are more likely to use more specific and singular "me versus you" language. These preliminary results may indicate that democrats emphasise cooperation and common goals and speak on behalf of democratic community and alliances, while dictators use more divisive language. We include results in the appendix in Table 6.

We can also turn to non-supervised analyses to gauge the differences between leaders and other types of speakers. Earlier we examined preliminary evidence from the keyness analyses. Because observed differences may be driven by selection bias — specific countries tend to "select" leaders as speakers in particular time periods — we implement a structural topic model in the context of structural covariates including speakers' types, country effects and time trend (Roberts et al., 2013). We also control how the effects of leader-speakers differ depending on whether they make their speech during the Cold War (prior to 1990) or after. The observed metadata will affect the frequency with which a topic is discussed. This therefore permits to test the degree of association between covariates and the average proportion of a document discussing a topic. Looking at topic models of potential differences between how leaders speak

[23]The "us versus them" is the ratio of "we", "our", "us", "ourselves", and "ours" to "their", "they", "them", "themselves", "theirs" used in speeches. In turn, "me versus you" is the ratio of "I", "my", "me", "myself" to "he", "him", "her", "himself", "herself", "she", "you", "your", and "yourself".

compared with non-leaders, we see interesting distinctions from Figure 3. Preliminary results indicate that leaders are distinct on 5 topics, that is, have a higher share of these topics in their speeches than other speakers. Thus, in the post Cold War period, they are more likely to discuss UN Reform (4); Arab-Israel issues (11); Latin American concerns, particularly dependency (12); climate change (13); as well as nuclear disarmament (23). This emphasis may indicate that in contrast to their foreign ministers and other diplomats who are likely to follow a more technocratic language of diplomacy, leaders may be more vocal in condemning economic under dependency, as well as to engage in attacks on Israel and criticise the UN for lack of its institutional reform. Results are however very preliminary and require further investigation.

In summary, regarding leaders' appearances at the UN, we find that there are some regional differences driving the pattern of leaders appearing in NY. Leaders of small Pacific nations, as well as those from Latin America, go to the UN more often than others. Likewise, more democratic leaders but also leaders from more corrupt nations—which may indicate personal motivation behind official trips to NYC—are also more likely to speak at the UNGA. Leaders in their first year in office also tend to appear more often than otherwise. There is clear evidence for possible electoral concerns however: leaders are much more likely to attend the UNGA session in their election year, and only executive election matters, particularly if the election follows the session, and particularly if the election is expected to be close. There are some important differences among dictators who speak from the rostrum of the UN: leaders of Leninist party regimes, more personalistic leaders and leaders who are more vulnerable domestically, tend to stay at home. In turn, all leaders are less likely to rely on formal diplomatic language in their communication. However, democratic leaders tend to speak in terms of "us versus them" and emphasise community and cooperation, while nondemocratic leaders strongly argue against non-interference in their domestic affairs, and use "me versus you" language—more so than their own diplomats.

Conclusion

What is the role of domestic politics in leaders' participation in international fora? The United Nations proves a worthwhile venue to investigate this question. We have shown that leaders tend to make an effort to attend the UNGA when it is clear that both their friends and their enemies are in attendance. What they say, and how they say it, varies by regime type: democrats use more inclusive language where autocrats use divisive speech. Leaders use the UN platform

as a way of targeting both international and domestic audiences: elections play a pivotal role in sending leaders to speak abroad. Regardless of regime type, international stages can provide a platform for leaders to broadcast their priorities both abroad and at home.

We plan to further investigate the role that elections play, whether countries operate in the shadow of upcoming ones or if previous elections kick off a 'victory tour' for newly elected leaders to get to know their counterparts around the globe. We also plan to look at the role of the media in this relationship. UN speeches only work to signal to domestic audiences if they are covered in the press at home, and we plan to look for empirical support that these speeches are covered in the local press.

We would also want to take the text analysis further. We are currently working to contrast not only leaders' speech with that of other leaders — specifically, the contrast between our first and second hypotheses involving leaders speech under different conditions. We also want to compare more systematically the speech of leaders with that of diplomats or ministers of foreign affairs. Our hypotheses suggest that under certain conditions, leaders will speak more 'politically' than do diplomats. We are working to test this by coming up with baselines for diplomatic speak, comparing as well the speeches that the Secretary General makes.

We also plan to investigate the activities of leaders once they are at the UN. Presumably many leaders attend these gathering because of the "bang for their buck" that they can offer, in terms of conducting meetings with other important people. There is anecdotal evidence that such meetings occur — for example, the 1970 UN session celebrated the organization's 25th anniversary, and several world leaders that attended that meeting are also documented as having attended a White House state dinner a few days later. Although most UN records of meetings are confidential, we plan on using data from **?** to investigate whether leaders at the UN subsequently had formal meetings in DC.

Of course, the UNGA is only one type of international organization at which countries can speak. We have argued here that the UNGA has always played a specific role within the context of the broader UN; rather than functioning as a forum for great powers, the UNGA was specifically set up to give a voice to all members. Future research could investigate the scope conditions under which different types of international organizations might serve a similar purpose. Various institutional design features might make the comparison to the UNGA more or less relevant. Other international organizations structure their meetings differently, such that they have explicit summits for heads of state compared with separate meetings of their parlia-

mentary assemblies. In other words, there are separate venues for heads of state and for other representatives. In such cases, countries would not face a choice of whom to send to each venue, but the types of speeches that were made — and whether elections influenced those speeches — could still be analyzed.

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Supplementary Materials

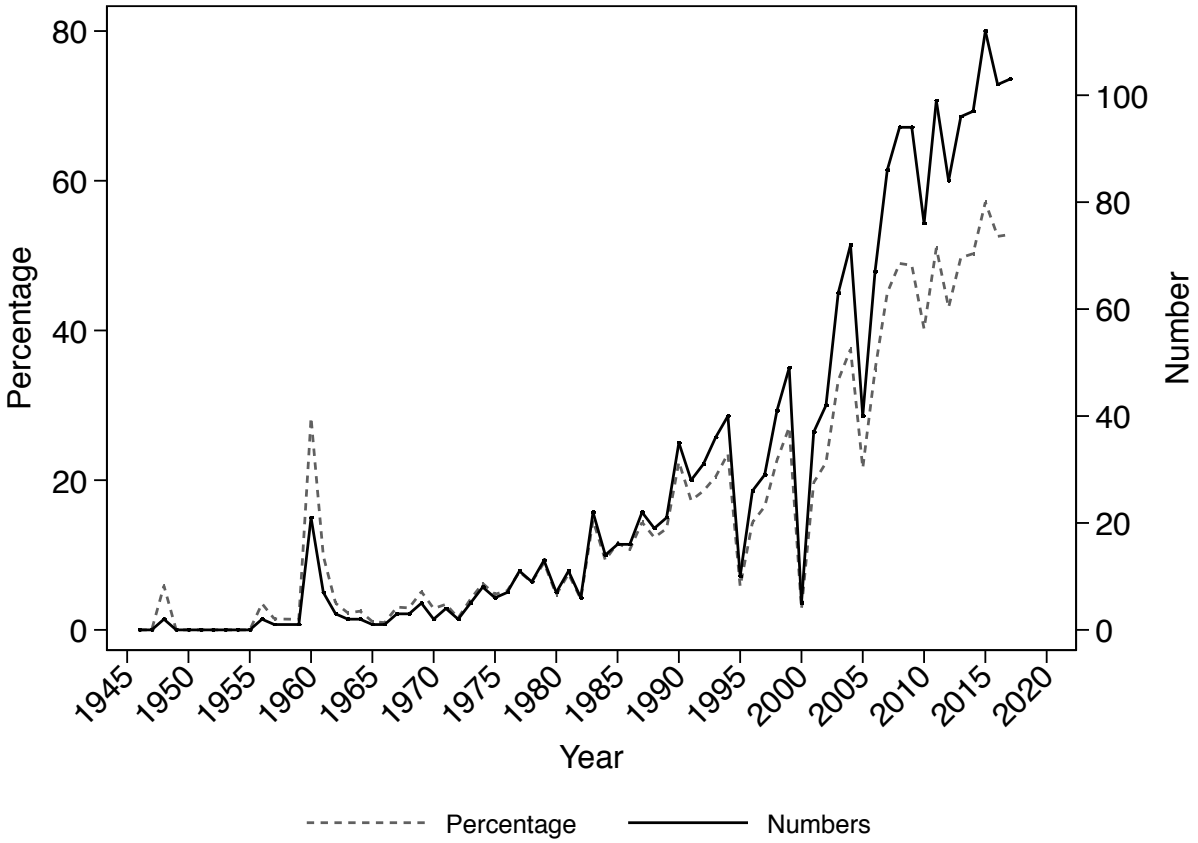

Figure 4: *Leaders in the UN: Numbers and Percentages*.

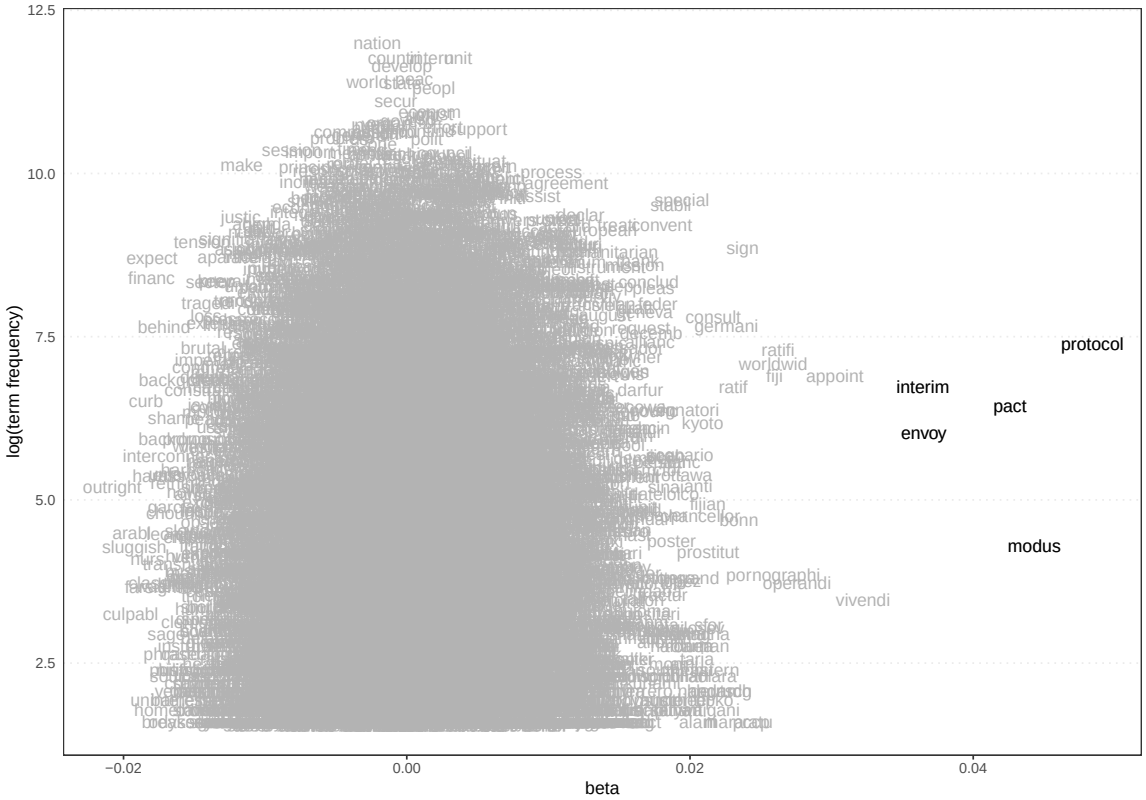

Figure 5: *Top Terms: LSS Results Using Diplomatic Dictionary*.

	"Us versus Them"		*"I versus You"*	
	1:	2:	3:	4:
Leader	0.623***		-0.026	
	(0.144)		(0.017)	
Democracy	1.207***		-0.085***	
	(0.200)		(0.024)	
Cold war	-2.313***	-2.312***	0.120***	0.121***
	(0.128)	(0.129)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Democratic MFA		-0.646***		0.039+
		(0.186)		(0.023)
Nondemocratic MFA		-1.842***		0.116***
		(0.237)		(0.029)
Nondemocratic leader		-1.233***		0.107**
		(0.286)		(0.035)
Constant	4.888***	6.730***	0.297***	0.178***
	(0.134)	(0.161)	(0.016)	(0.020)
N	7850	7850	7805	7805
N countries	200	200	200	200
Log-likelihood	-23281.663	-23281.423	-6707.633	-6707.262

Table 6: *"Us versus Them" and "Me versus You" Rhetoric: Dictionary Analyses* Note: Models 1–4 are estimated as fixed effects. Democratic leaders is a baseline omitted category in 3–4. Significant + $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

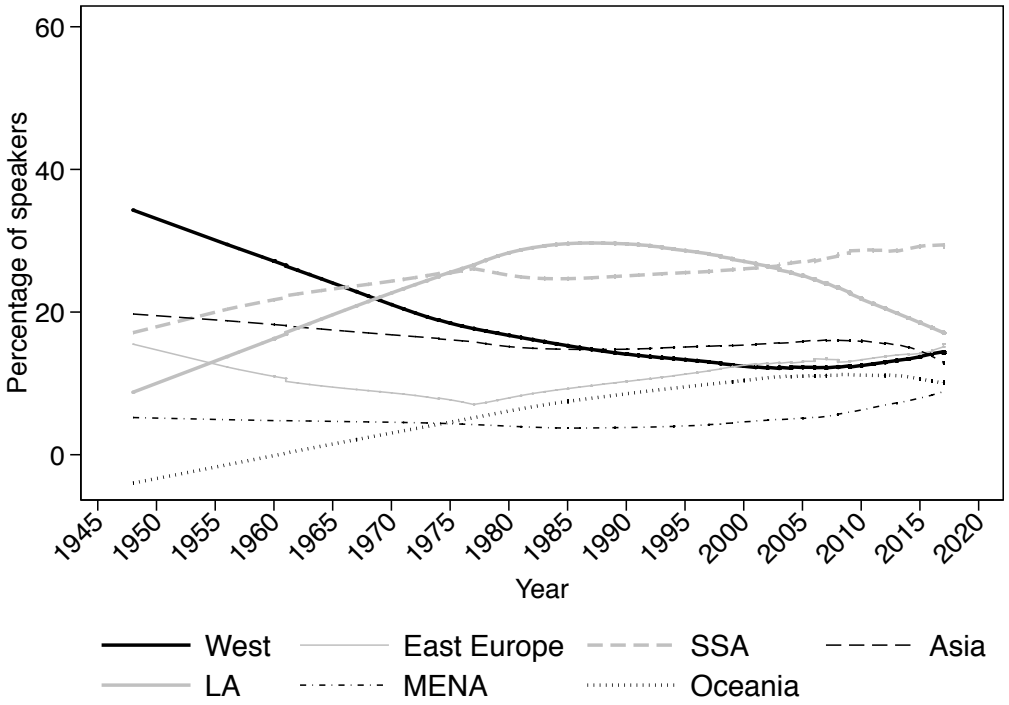

Figure 6: *Percentage of Regional Leaders to Total Leaders.*

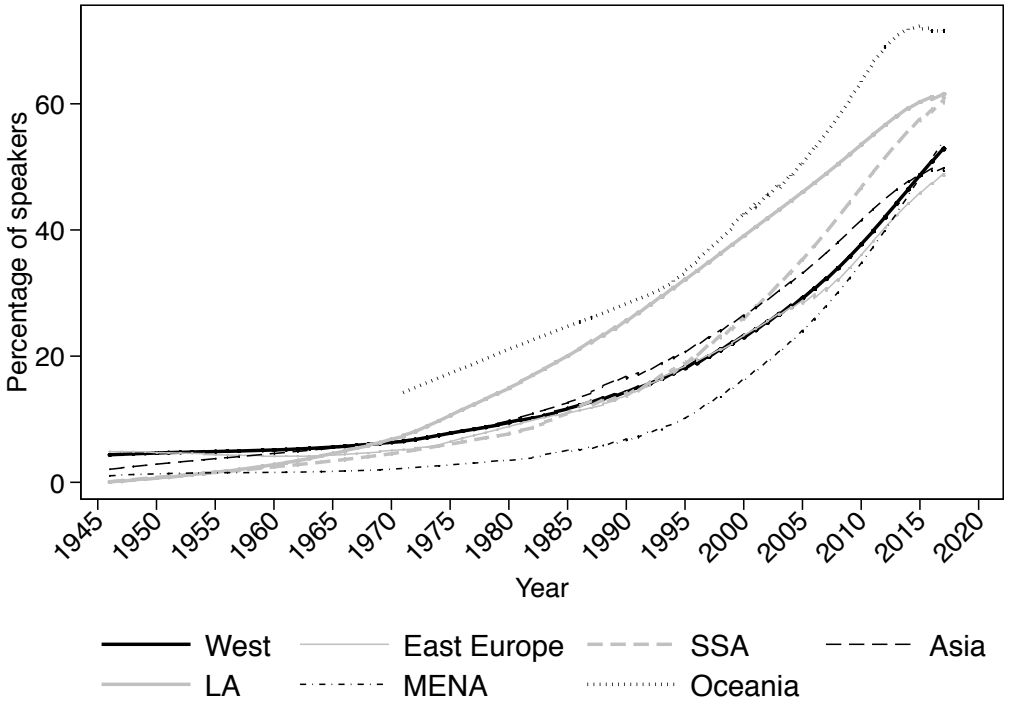

Figure 7: *Percentage of Leaders to Other Speakers, Per Region.*

	Years		*Election years*			
	1:	2:	3:	4:	5:	6:
Legislative election	-0.034					
	(0.083)					
Executive election	0.334**					
	(0.107)					
GDP per capita, logged	4.947***	4.968***	2.645**	4.075***	2.006	4.010+
	(0.282)	(0.282)	(1.340)	(1.076)	(2.495)	(2.092)
Post-UN exec. election		0.183				
		(0.157)				
Post-UN leg. election		-0.331**				
		(0.127)				
Exec. vote premium			-0.028**		-0.003	
			(0.010)		(0.017)	
Leg. vote premium				-0.029***		-0.036**
				(0.008)		(0.017)
N	6144	6144	185	360	60	119
Log-likelihood	-2622.392	-2624.050	-70.787	-124.833	-18.314	-30.838
chi2	395.549	392.234	13.613	30.545	0.692	8.542

Table 7: *National Elections and UN Appearances FE* Note: Models 1–6 are estimated as fixed effects. Models 3–6 are estimated on the sample of electoral years and when such elections follow the UNGD sessions. The dependent variable are national leaders in 1–4, second-in-command (e.g., prime-ministers or vice-presidents in presidential systems or presidents in parliamentary systems) in 5–6. Significant + p <0.10, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01.

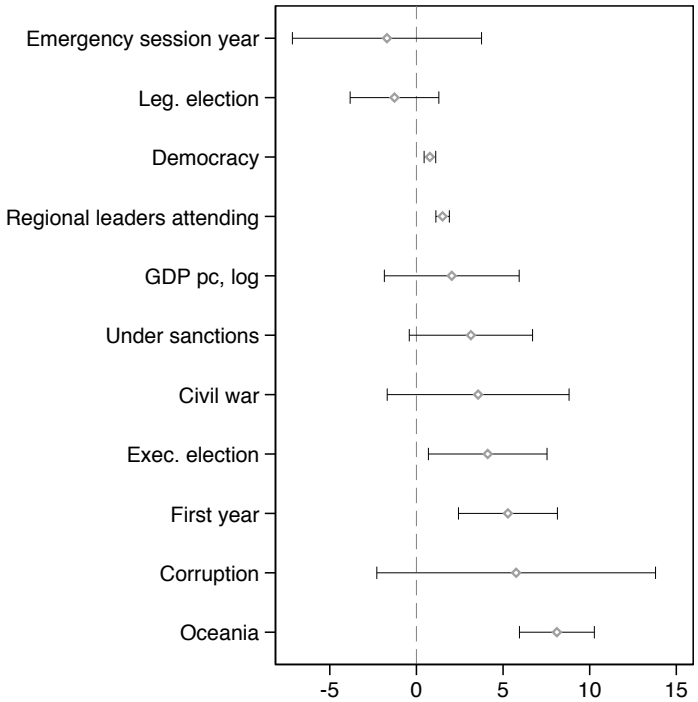

Figure 8: *Average Marginal Effects of Predictors*. Note: Average marginal effects (AME) of the explanatory variables on the probability of leaders' visits of the UN, estimated following Model 6, Table 2. Time variables are estimated but not displayed.

	1:	2:	3:	4:
Military regime	0.639	1.186**		
	(0.405)	(0.534)		
Monarchy	-14.582	-13.538		
	(524.158)	(674.746)		
Party regime	-0.673+	-0.126		
	(0.347)	(0.465)		
Communist regime	-0.426	0.242		
	(0.464)	(0.614)		
GDP per capita, logged		0.839		-0.682
		(0.766)		(0.895)
Legislative election		-0.150		-0.136
		(0.212)		(0.214)
Executive election		0.663**		0.661**
		(0.239)		(0.240)
Civil war		0.391		0.439
		(0.287)		(0.280)
Corruption, VDEM		2.385**		1.648+
		(1.010)		(0.926)
Time since coup event			0.054***	0.055***
			(0.009)	(0.011)
GWF personalism			-0.616	-0.534
			(0.455)	(0.498)
Time since campaign onset			-0.010	-0.005
			(0.008)	(0.010)
N	2212	1581	1835	1581
Log-likelihood	-670.006	-479.855	-535.493	-471.923
chi2	24.138	35.071	39.272	50.935

Table 8: *Dictators in the UN FE* Note: Models 1–4 are estimated as fixed effects, on the sample of dictatorships. Personal regime is a baseline omitted category. Significant + $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.