

**WHEN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN VOTE FRANCE:
AN ANALYSIS OF UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
VOTING BEHAVIORS FROM 1946 TO 2013**

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Abstract: *The main objective of the article is to explore the role of France as a "troisième voie" (third way) in what concerns the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean in the Resolutions voted in the United Nations General Assembly between 1946 and 2013. Starting from an analysis of time, the article will demonstrate possible relations with the French external policy that can justify the tendency found. When it comes to themes, the article will explore the convergence/divergence between France and the region in votings about the Palestine conflict, human rights subjects, and the nuclear theme.*

1. Introduction

When it comes to Latin America and the idea of influence, the main point of debate usually concerns the relation between the region and the United States (US) during history or on the main international organizations, especially within the United Nations (UN). However, as a way to go beyond that, France, a country whose diplomatic relation with Latin America has always existed, has also a possible power of influence in voting procedures. Since the XIX century the cultural exchange and human rights as a value have been determinants elements in France's External Policy (Couffignal, 2011), however, there are/were moments of differing approaches concerning the theme.

This context led us to wonder if the supposed alignment of Latin America with the United States could be seen in the votes of the General Assembly of the UN and if France could have been in any moment an alternative for the region.

The central idea of the UN's role is to act as a structure of cooperation. As an international organization in which most countries participate, it has ways to condition decisions and behaviors of its member (Mestre-Lafay, 2013). In that way, the role of the UN, despite all the possible critiques, is evident as a place where the countries try and, more or less, succeed in making their views and interests for subjects in the international system listened and, by influencing other countries to vote with them, have a Resolution approved.

As a multilateral space of debate where each State counts as one vote with equal weight when it comes to approving Resolutions, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and its votes is not only a way to see the different players using their own and different influence, but also a way to observe convergences and divergences in the foreign policies of the countries.

In that sense, in this study, we will try to see how France has been a *troisième voie* ("third way") to Latin America's voting patterns. However, to do so, it is essential to consider the United States' influence and see the extent to which France truly succeeded in counterbalancing Latin America's northern neighbor. Considering all of that, we asked ourselves when and in what topics has Latin America converged with France rather than with the United States.

2. Methodology

In order to know when and in which topics did Latin America and the Caribbean vote France rather than the US, we took as starting point a quantitative analysis based on Erik Voeten's database, in which there were all non-unanimous UNGA roll-call votings from 1946 until 2013, with the exception of the year 1964 (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013; Voeten 2012). In the first moment, we observed the behavior of France convergence towards the US in all UNGA roll-call votings, from 1946 and 2013, and we noted an increasing disagreement between both (as can be seen in Annex I). From that, we investigated Latin American and Caribbean countries' behavior towards this growing disagreement between France and the US.

Firstly, we filtered all votings where the US and France agreed or where either one was absent¹ and considered only the votings where they disagreed (*yes/no*, *yes/abstention*, *no/abstention*). Then, we built an index of convergence for each year between France and each country of Latin America and the Caribbean, not counting votings where the other country was absent. All indexes of agreement were calculated as follows:

$$IA = \frac{f}{t} * 100\%$$

where *IA* stands for the index of agreement of that year, *t* for the total votings observed the same year and *f* for the total votings where France and the other Latin American or Caribbean country were in agreement that year. Since we considered *yes/abstention* and *no/abstention* as disagreements when observing France's and US's voting behaviors, we concluded that it would be incoherent to calculate the indexes of convergence through a methodology that considered abstentions as "partial convergences", such as the Lijphart index of convergence (Rai, 1974). Therefore, *yes/abstention* and *no/abstention* were considered as disagreements.

However, one must be careful to understand indexes of agreement in the UNGA as convergences of foreign policies. Changes in voting patterns and agreements may be explained by changes in agenda, and not necessarily by changes in states' interests (Voeten, 2012). Therefore, the next step of our research was to identify whether changes in the composition of the topics of disagreement between France and the US have a correlation with changes in voting convergence with France when France and the US disagreed.

Strezhnev and Voeten's database categorizes votings in six main topics: (1) Palestinian conflict, (2) nuclear weapons and nuclear material, (3) arms control and disarmament, (4) colonialism, (5) human rights and (6) development and economic development (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013). Some votings deal with different topics simultaneously and some deal with none specifically (these we called "others"). Our next step was to measure the proportion of each topic over the votings where France and the US disagreed (for the table with the proportions for each year, see Annex II). Then, we calculated the correlation coefficient² between the voting convergence with France in UNGA votings where France and the US disagreed and the series of proportion of each topic. The correlation coefficients found indicate if there is a correlation between convergence and the proportion on the disagreed topic. That is, if the more a topic is object of disagreement between France and the US, the more the Latin American or Caribbean country votes with France. The correlation coefficient oscillates between +1 (there is a perfect positive correlation between convergence and topic proportion) and -1 (there is a perfect negative correlation between the convergence and topic proportion). The closer it is to zero, the less the two variables are related. Furthermore, Jacob Cohen suggests that values near 0.1 indicate small correlation, values above 0.3 indicate medium correlation and values above 0.5 indicate strong correlation (Witte & Witte, 2010).

We could indeed have calculated the convergence between France and Latin America and the Caribbean for each topic. Nonetheless, we were also willing to assess the impact of the absence of a topic

¹ There is a large discussion on bibliography whether absences should be or not understood as "no", because they may be motivated by the rejection of the discussed agenda, but they can also be caused by practical issues (such as a failure to assign UN representatives) (Voeten, 2012; Rai, 1974). Since absences carry large ambiguities, we decided to ignore votings where they occurred.

² Pearson correlation coefficient.

on the agreement behavior. By calculating the correlation coefficients, we were able to know which topics were related to a growth (or decrease) in convergence and which were not.

After the quantitative analyses were done, we conducted an interpretation of the data found based on the available literature on French foreign policies, as well as on other references on Latin American and Caribbean foreign policies. We also often observed the descriptions available in the database for each voting, so to build a more refined description. In this way, we were able to assess when and in what topics did France and Latin America and the Caribbean agreed in the United Nations General Assembly.

3. Bibliography Revision

To discuss French foreign policy towards Latin America is inevitably to discuss France's global ambitions. Alain Rouquié (2017b) says that the interest for such a distant region can only be understood under a framework that aims the desire to re-establish France as a global power. For this reason, before analyzing the evolution of French foreign policy towards Latin America and the United Nations, it is necessary to assess some biases that usually orient the interpretation of the guidelines of France's international positioning throughout the 5th Republic, as discussed by Frédéric Charillon (2010).

Déclin, *rang* and *grandeur* are some of the concepts stressed by the author that are usually employed to depict France's position in the world since 1958. *Déclin* (decline) carries the pessimist view that French presence and influence internationally face a constant declining. However, this approach is tilted to overlook France's not negligible resources. *Rang* (rank) brings the interpretation of a will not to be mistaken by "any other country" (Charillon, 2010, p. 51), while assuming that the assigned role may not be the most important one. Lastly, *grandeur* (magnitude) is the concept used to describe the strategy by which discourse and posture can support (or even replace) force (Charillon, 2010). Although the author believes that many of these concepts are charged with myths, the *grandeur* can be actually observed in many French efforts to use values, ideas and prestige as tools of its foreign policy. In this sense, international positioning of France can be read in a binomial frame pragmatism-ideology. However, as we will further describe in the section on Human Rights votings in the UNGA, to rely on values and ideas does not necessarily imply no practical results.

Once we have established those main points of analysis, we can now use the literature to see the evolution of France's foreign policy, concerning Latin America as a topic and how it was explored; and how France and Latin America have acted in the UN.

In what concerns France's foreign policy towards Latin America, Georges Coffignal (2011) indicates that France has always had a role of cultural leadership for the elites in Latin America's countries, acting as a model of the European civilization. Furthermore, Charillon (2010) stresses that the 5th Republic has always arrogated itself the position of a promoter of dialogue between divided worlds, either East-West or North-South (where Latin America was inscribed). During the Provisional Government of the French Republic (1944-1946), the author indicates that De Gaulle created the Institut Français d'Amérique Latine (IFAL) in Mexico and the Maison d'Amérique Latine (MAL) in Paris, what demonstrates the importance attributed to Latin America during the period. In his mandate as president of the 5th Republic, De Gaulle made a long official visit to the region that allowed the development of exchanges in areas like arts, linguistics, education, science, and technique, what, according to Coffignal, marked an "institutionalization of cooperation relations". However, idealisms set aside, it must be said, as stressed by Rouquié (2017a), that De Gaulle's visit to Latin America was rather a project without a "clear diplomatic project" and that its practical effects were insignificant.

According to Jean-Pierre Bel (2018), the relation between France and Latin America in the 5th Republic has been of moments of not big developments with determined periods in between of intense exchange and really interested. The author indicates that it has been mainly based on the principle of self-determination..

During Pompidou's administration, Europe was the main priority, what reduced the focus in Latin America. According to Maurice Vaisse (2017), the only relation between France and the region concerned intellectual cooperation and technical assistance.

Alain Rouquié (2017a) underlines that d'Estaing administration only assigned an importance to Latin America as long as it was a part of the "North-South debate" aimed by the president, what was, according to Georges Coffignal (2011), a way to promote the economic development in the developing countries. Coffignal affirms that this administration had a role to welcome political refugees originated from the dictatorships in Latin America, but also maintaining relations with the regimes as a way to keep the principle of non-intervention. Nonetheless, Jean Mendelson (2017) believes that during the 1970's Latin America was, in brief, a "dead angle" of French foreign policy.

Mitterrand administration, in turn, would be, according to Rouquié (2017b) and Mendelson (2017), a period of increased attention of France over Latin America. Coffignal (2011) stresses that Mitterrand increases the interaction with the region, developing cultural diplomacy and the scientific and technical cooperation.

According to Judith Bonnin (2017), two main factors led to this change of French foreign agenda. Firstly, the Cuban Revolution (1959) pushed the region into the global Cold War theater and assigned a new importance to Latin America. The so understood zone of US influence saw itself threatened by a change of one of its countries' zone of influence and the region was launched as the main topic in international politics with Missiles Crisis (1962). Secondly, the electoral victory of Salvador Allende in Chile in 1970 fostered French domestic political debate. For the first time in history, a left-wing alliance arrived at power respecting institutions and constitutional norms. This event inspired French socialists and increased Latin America presence in French political debate. The later Pinochet coup would also have a great impact on some sectors in France, which would receive it with a great shock (Bonnin, 2017).

In practical terms, Mendelson (2017) says that Mitterrand increased French presence in Central America, in the context of the Salvadoran Civil War in the early 1980's, appealing the international community to, through the United Nations, work on the protection of human rights in the country³. The author also suggests that Mitterrand, who had already expressed concerns on Latin American dictatorships as first secretary of the Socialist party, had the promotion of democracy and human rights as main workframe in the relations between France and the region. In this sense, although Rouquié (2017b) describes Mitterrand as "pragmatic" (p. 28), his foreign policy towards Latin America seems to have been highly ideological. France's aversion towards Latin American authoritarian governments might have represented a lost opportunity to deepen the relationship between both. Many military governments were eager to develop their own autonomy with respect to the US and were willing to build new alliances. The Brazilian nuclear program, for example, was condemned by the US, what led Brazilian authorities to approach other nations willing to support its program - and this is how Germany and Brazil would strengthen their relations throughout the late 1970's and early 1980's (Cervo, 2010). On the other hand, in this precise moment, when some of the remaining Latin American dictatorships were willing to look for new alliances to the detriment of the US, France turned her back for ideological reasons⁴.

³ It is interesting to note that the UNGA Resolution R/36/155 of December 1981, which appealed all states not to intervene in the internal situation of El Salvador, as well as the UNGA Resolution R/38/101 of December 1982, which expressed concern on the infringement of human rights in the country had the support of French delegation (while the US voted against both). However, they both weren't supported by Latin America and the Caribbean (13 out of 33 countries supported the latter, while only 6 out of 32 voted for the former) (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013). This event raises the question whether the rapprochement conducted by Mitterrand meant a rapprochement towards the countries of the region or an increase of French activism over Latin American and Caribbean issues.

⁴ Nonetheless, one must recognize that Mitterrand's position during the Falklands War was very practical, supporting British position. It was a choice between "responsibilities-alliances and values-affinities" (Mendelson, 2017, p. 95). In this sense, the UNGA Resolutions calling up for the peaceful settlement of the

In what concerns Jacques Chirac's, it is possible to say that he had a pragmatist approach when it comes to Latin America trying to combine the economical and the cultural policies. For this, his visit to the region was mainly guided by the most important economic bloc in the region (the Mercosur) and he expressed concerns to incentive the implementation of French companies in Latin America. Nicolas Sarkozy, in turn, when dealing with Latin America, had a *politique volontariste* with some main countries due to their political and economical importance. Still having as the main point the promotion of the multilateralism, the president put himself as the defender of international institutions and of the "diplomatie de club", like the G20 with emerging countries (Charillon, 2011).

Despite these changes in the agenda, the concern towards multilateral spheres has always been a common denominator in France foreign policies. Frédéric Charillon (2010) calls attention to the fact that French diplomacy has constantly assigned high priority to international organizations and aimed them as a way to influence world politics through the occupation of positions of power inside their structures, seeing as essential a focus on the international institutions, community and law (Charillon, 2005). Even after the 2009 reform of its diplomatic network, France is still one of the main four sponsors of the United Nations. Nonetheless, the author also stresses that French strategy towards the UN might be excessively worried about spotlights and disputed positions, ignoring the role of other inferior (but structurally more important) posts (Charillon, 2010). Once again, the pragmatic aspect is set aside to the detriment of values, ideals and, more specific in this case, the search of prestige - a reflection of the heritage of the *grandeur*.

4. In which periods Latin America and the Caribbean voted France

The graph, made using the methodology above described, shows a growing convergence from the early 1960's until 1994 between France and Latin America and Caribbean countries in UNGA votings where France and the United States disagreed. At the beginning of the period, for the exception of Cuba and Panama, Latin America convergence towards France barely reached the 40% level. At the end of it, for the exception of 1995, the convergence of almost all countries fluctuated between 60% and 80%, remaining at a level of 70%. Moreover, it is possible to notice a significant coherence in Latin American behavior. We used shades of green to represent South American countries, shades of blue to Central American countries and Mexico and shades of yellow and orange for Caribbean countries⁵. It must be stressed that the graph shows the convergence of Latin America and the Caribbean with France in the UNGA votings where France and the US disagreed. Therefore, if convergence with France is higher, the disagreement with the US is forcibly higher. Nonetheless, a decrease in convergence with France is not necessarily explained by an increase of agreement with the US, since there are three possibilities of voting behavior (*yes*, *no* and *abstention*) and hence it is possible that, while France abstained and the US voted *no*, Latin America voted *yes* (and so on).

dispute (R/37/9, November 1982; R/38/12, November 1983; and R/39/6, November 1984) had the support of the US and of Latin America (22 out of 32, 22 out of 33 and 23 out of 33, respectively), while France abstained in all of them (the United Kingdom voted against all three) (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013).

⁵ We previously tried to group countries by blocs: ALBA, CARICOM, MERCOSUR, SICA and Pacific Alliance. Nonetheless, it did not show any clear pattern. The categorization by geographic region demonstrated to be more suitable to outline similar behavior, as we will later reaffirm when discussing voting patterns by subject.

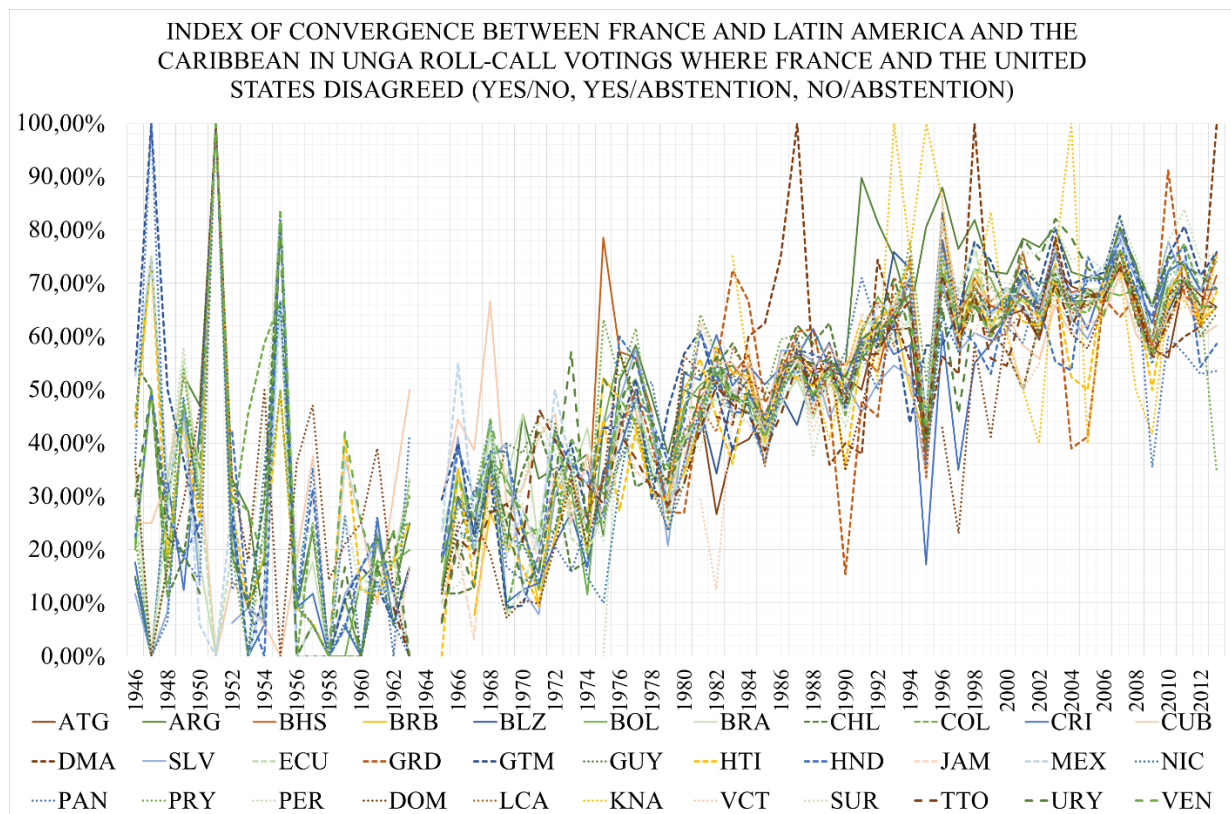


Figure 1. Source: Strezhnev, A., & Voeten, E. (2013). United Nations general assembly voting data. *IQSS Dataverse Network* (<http://thedata.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/Voeten/faces/study/StudyPage.xhtml>).

The oscillations in convergence before 1960 are more explained by the small number of votings in the UNGA (and thus an even smaller number of votings where France and the US disagreed) than by real changes in interests or spheres of influence. Over the years, the number of non-unanimous votings in UNGA sessions increased and thus our sample became more representative of reality.

Firstly, we can observe that De Gaulle's administration is characterized, in the graph, by increasing levels of convergence until 1968. This could be understood as some of the practical results of its official visit to Latin America in 1964, especially considering that, in the following years, Mexico, the country where De Gaulle stayed the longest, presented detached levels of convergence with France (Rouquié, 2017b). However, following Mexico, the highest levels of convergence are found in Central American countries (El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala) - which De Gaulle did not visit. Therefore, if this official visit to Latin America in 1964 had any practical results, it cannot be observed in the United Nations General Assembly.

The *trou noir* (black hole) of French foreign policy towards Latin America during Pompidou's administration described by Bel (2018) can also be observed in the UNGA voting behaviors. The progress observed during De Gaulle's presidency faces a halt for some countries, such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Guyana, and remains stable during Pompidou's administration. However, for the rest of the region, convergence falls at the beginning of its mandate. Nonetheless, we can actually observe that, from 1971 to 1981, agreement between France and Latin America increased in the analyzed votings, for the exception of the valleys of 1974 and 1979. These steep falls in convergence are explained by France's numerous abstentions in the analyzed votings (70% in the 1974, 71,4% in the 1979), and not by an increase in convergence with the US (Latin America and the Caribbean also voted majorly against the US in these two years) (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013).

To understand this growing convergence in a period in which literature usually says Latin America did not have a relevant role in French foreign policy, we had to observe the international environment at the late 1960s and mid 1970s. After the losses in Vietnam and the impacts of the 1973 Oil

Shock, the American government seemed unable to solve these challenges and US hegemony cracked. Weakened, Washington was forced to start negotiations with Moscow and Beijing and the *détente* began. In this international scenario, Latin American governments “of all ideologies” (Brands, 2012, p. 121) saw an opportunity to adopt independent positions and to look for new alliances beyond the US. Moreover, since many countries in the region faced domestic instability, the strategy of adopting bold foreign policies would also aim the achievement of legitimacy and consensus. This was a strategy adopted by the Peruvian *junta*, by the Brazilian generals, by Argentine military government of 1966-1973 and even by the PRIist Mexico, which was facing the popular upheavals that followed Tlatelolco massacre. In the 1970s, Bolivarian countries (Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela) also saw their international positions favoured by the rise of the prices of oil, their main exported good. Even smaller countries challenged American hegemony. Bolivia, Jamaica and Guyana nationalized and/or moved against US-owned companies, while Panama insisted on the renegotiations on the Panama Canal (Brands, 2012).

In brief, the broken bipolarity of the *détente* put an end in American exclusivity towards Latin America and allowed the region to further develop its bonds with other international actors, Europe included. In the 1970s, for example, Brazil bought Mirage fighters from France and signed a treaty on nuclear cooperation with Federal Germany (Brands, 2012; Cervo, 2010). In this sense, even though d’Éstaing administration (1974-1981), as said by Alain Rouquié (2017a), had no specific policy towards the region beyond its “North-South” debate, Latin America challenging position in relation to the US explains the increasing convergence with France in the UNGA votings where France and the US disagreed.

In the early 1980s, however, convergence growth once again faced a halt. In this period, the independent foreign policies conducted by Latin American governments lost their momentum, especially because the region was generally affected by the debt crisis (Brands, 2012). However, what is most interesting to observe is that, paradoxically, the period comprises the first half of Mitterrand administration (1981-1995), to which literature usually assigns a foreign policy more concerned with Latin America. The convergence only starts to grow again in 1990. Moreover, literature generally affirms that the early moments of Mitterrand presidency are those where a foreign policy towards Latin America is more affirmed, while, in 1983, he would have made a “liberal and European choice” and would have set the region aside (Rouquié, 2017b). Nonetheless, we found an opposite tendency: greater convergences with France in the analyzed votings occurred *at the end* of Mitterrand’s administration - and not at the beginning⁶.

One could argue that the explanation for this phenomenon dwells in Mitterrand’s condemnations of human rights violations committed by the remaining Latin American dictatorships, what would have harmed the relations between France and the region. Then, the democratization wave would have created a favorable environment for increasing convergence and rapprochement, since both parts would share a preoccupation on human rights. Nonetheless, this reasoning is insufficient to explain why other countries that were not dictatorships at the moment, such as Mexico, also presented similar patterns of convergence (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013). This indicates that the explanations for these behaviors may be found in elsewhere - such as in the voting patterns of Latin America towards the US.

Since 1994, the convergence of Latin America and the Caribbean towards France in the analyzed votings has reached a new halt, but a more constant one. The Chirac-Sarkozy plateau differs drastically from the values of the beginning of our records. This plateau translates the processes (and efforts) that led to this observable rapprochement, but also reflects the unwillingness (and the neglect) to increase the alignment between France and the region. Nevertheless, this chronological approach, however relevant it may be, is not sufficient, since, as said before, change in voting patterns may rather reflect changes in the agenda, and not in states’ preferences (Voeten, 2012).

⁶ However, levels of convergence were indeed greater in 1981 and 1982 than in 1980, and in 1983 they indeed started to fall - what corroborates with literature.

5. In which topics Latin America and the Caribbean voted France

In the next phase of our research, we tried to assess if the proportion of a disagreed topic between France and the US had a correlation with the convergence of a country towards France in the analyzed votings. The table below shows the convergence coefficient between each voting behavior and each topic. That is, if convergence with France increases when France and the US disagreed more in a specific topic, the greater will be the coefficient of correlation.

Firstly, we can observe that greater divergences between France and the US in Palestinian issues are usually associated with greater convergences towards France. There is a strong correlation (>0.5) for almost all countries and only Dominica's voting behavior seems to have no correlation to the proportion of how France and the US disagreed in votings on the Palestinian conflict. Therefore, we can affirm that, generally, the more the US and France disagreed on Palestinian issues, the more Latin America and the Caribbean voted France in the UNGA.

Greater divergences between France and the US in votings about nuclear weapons and nuclear material have shown to have a relevant correlation with the voting behaviors of a restricted number of countries. The only countries whose voting behaviors had a moderate (>0.3) or higher correlation with the proportion of disagreement on this topic were Caribbean countries and Belize, and it is important to stress that this correlation was negative. That is, we can state that usually the more the US and France disagreed in votings related to nuclear weapons and nuclear materials, the more Belize and Caribbean countries (with the exception of Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic) *disagreed* with France⁷.

The third topic where we could observe a significant general correlation was human rights. Generally, we can affirm that, the more the US and France disagreed in votings on human rights, the more Latin America voted France, with the exception of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts, Panama and Suriname, whose coefficients are too small (<0.3) on the subject.

⁷ Since there are three options of voting (*yes*, *no* and *abstention*), this does not necessarily mean that this disagreement with France meant an agreement with the US.

	PALEST	NUCW	DISARM	HUMR	COLON	ECD	OTHERS
ARG	0,731593	-0,08227	0,270606	0,48633	0,078996	0,147425	-0,50822
ATG	0,357772	-0,51791	0,303817	0,509774	0,263675	-0,04123	-0,62912
BHS	0,456671	-0,54662	0,180748	0,30786	0,242195	-0,03638	-0,6728
BLZ	0,50098	-0,56983	0,082263	0,489998	0,403056	-0,16333	-0,64381
BOL	0,655293	-0,11897	0,23372	0,456038	0,049912	0,161157	-0,43203
BRA	0,78976	0,015232	0,424021	0,598318	0,21481	0,338563	-0,70975
BRB	0,643436	-0,28609	0,362354	0,460275	0,044761	-0,05238	-0,72725
CHL	0,619041	-0,15818	0,232144	0,422926	-0,06114	0,196452	-0,38277
COL	0,567539	-0,17417	0,147532	0,435968	-0,02164	0,151023	-0,34742
CRI	0,595821	-0,03239	0,339687	0,476423	0,02016	0,210711	-0,47202
CUB	0,753764	0,114834	0,467517	0,484124	0,264649	0,373817	-0,75419
DMA	-0,05732	-0,29241	0,20546	0,160129	0,030319	0,209956	-0,10608
DOM	0,574966	-0,09147	0,244884	0,475128	0,064441	0,154822	-0,44763
ECU	0,770017	-0,0103	0,400846	0,568178	0,149056	0,237562	-0,64827
GRD	0,369241	-0,46285	0,053679	0,26146	0,135655	0,01214	-0,41467
GTM	0,607936	-0,13544	0,275943	0,532627	0,050989	0,209176	-0,48335
GUY	0,673315	-0,28425	0,417614	0,318397	-0,16673	-0,02886	-0,63841
HND	0,711128	-0,07826	0,354091	0,541795	0,051983	0,202089	-0,55171
HTI	0,609545	-0,13942	0,204705	0,435658	0,094128	0,121699	-0,42961
JAM	0,761915	-0,41099	0,232885	0,501801	-0,09806	-0,06943	-0,66392
KNA	0,31541	-0,355	-0,26139	0,012399	0,150313	-0,3696	-0,06187
LCA	0,406376	-0,38648	0,302463	0,38171	0,278811	0,029035	-0,63799
MEX	0,656556	-0,03187	0,36504	0,519938	0,193426	0,245349	-0,59168
NIC	0,769191	-0,07093	0,342394	0,54302	0,111715	0,181627	-0,61131
PAN	0,543636	-0,1144	0,18589	0,289034	-0,11971	0,123541	-0,31061
PER	0,631151	-0,16158	0,224989	0,49776	0,057102	0,173433	-0,46123
PRY	0,703377	-0,05246	0,322187	0,535422	0,119903	0,275279	-0,56743
SLV	0,706378	0,006614	0,435292	0,621951	0,200905	0,263146	-0,66279
SUR	0,481646	-0,36523	0,142186	0,124396	-0,18541	-0,05791	-0,38256
TTO	0,743553	-0,44708	0,240494	0,549246	-0,01598	-0,06114	-0,68618
URY	0,694418	0,02066	0,431511	0,637596	0,147857	0,294817	-0,64539
VCT	0,317755	-0,41447	0,273671	0,489784	0,317003	-0,0382	-0,60002
VEN	0,585084	-0,09038	0,200535	0,396567	0,06437	0,105665	-0,39604

Table 1. Correlation Coefficient between country convergence with France in UNGA voting where France and the US disagreed and the proportion of topics that were object of disagreement between France and the US. “PALEST” stands for “Palestinian conflict”, “NUCW” stands for “nuclear weapons and nuclear material”, “DISARM” stands for “arms control and disarmament”, “HUMR” stands for “human rights”, “COLON” stands for colonialism and “ECD” stands for “(economic) development”.

In these three topics we found general behaviors that we thought were worth to be analyzed specifically in the following subsections. The other three only present a significant correlation (medium, >0.3) with voting convergence for some countries and in none of them a country presents a strong correlation (>0.5). However, it is important to stress that it can be observed a general (but weak) positive correlation in voting convergence with France and the proportion of disagreement between France and the US in votings on arms control and disarmament (Saint Kitts shows a weak negative correlation). As for colonization and development, only Belize and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines presented voting behaviors that had a medium (>0.3) positive correlation to the first topic while Brazil and Cuba had a medium positive correlation to the latter (Saint Kitts showed a negative correlation).

Even though the correlations are high in relation to the votings comprised in “others”, we decided not to analyze this phenomenon due to difficulties to categorize the many different votings subjects that were in this umbrella category.

5.1. Palestine conflict, France and the US

As stated above in our study, by analyzing the chart in Table 1 we identified a strong convergence between France and the Latin American States when it came to voting on the Palestine conflict. To analyze this convergence we will interpret both the French and United States' positions on the issue and how it is related to the results we found on the chart.

France and Palestine share relatively⁸ strong ties that increased over the years, at least when it comes to UNGA decisions, whilst the United States clearly show a more skeptical position towards it. As we can see in Table 1, France's position on the issue is clearly the one shared by Latin America, characterizing France as an evident third way to the region in votings on the topic. When it comes to topics related to Palestinian refugees, for example, from 1979 until 2013 more than 70% of Latin American countries voted rigorously the same as France on all resolutions when France and the United States diverged, except for very few exceptions (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013). The same pattern was observed for the four Resolutions regarding the West Bank, in which no less than 80% of Latin American states voted with France.

Another important issue, Land for Peace⁹, has brought up an interesting pattern. In the first Resolution stressing the necessity for commitment to the principle, R/48/158D, December 1993, France and the United States disagreed, with France *abstaining* itself from voting and the United States voting *no* (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013). What is interesting to analyze in this case, however, is the reaction of Latin American countries, that voted mostly *yes*. 24 out of 33 countries voted yes and only the Dominican Republic voted no (following thus the United States). The rest of the countries all abstained themselves. In this case, we see neither a convergence with France nor a convergence with the United States. It gets even more interesting when we analyze what happened next. In all roll-call voting about the Land for Peace topic that came after this one, starting with the one that came just one year after (R/49/62D, December 1994), France changed its position from *abstention* to *yes* (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013). This can undeniably be explained by the Oslo Accords between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993, given that France had voted in favour of the PLO just a couple of years beforehand.

When it comes to the single resolution explicitly mentioning France in which the United States and the French State disagreed, ESS/1/126B, November 1956, we can see a pattern similar to the one we previously mentioned, but in bigger terms. This Resolution called upon France and the U.K to immediately withdraw their army forces from the Egyptian territory during the Suez Crisis. The United States *agreed*, France *abstained*. Every single existent Latin American State at the time voted *yes*, following the United States - not even one abstained itself (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013). On the other hand, when Resolution R/39/49D, December 1984, was criticizing United States' (and Israel's) position towards its refusal to endorse the International Peace Conference in the Middle East we can see that Latin America was a bit less inclined to vote with the U.S. Once again, United States voted *no* and France *abstained* itself, however 21 Latin American countries voted yes, yet 6 countries still abstained themselves - all of those who abstained were Central American countries, which shows a sign of the influence the United States has over these countries (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013).

When it comes to Resolutions talking about peace in its several axes compiled (e.g. condemnation of the use of force, the need for establishing law and justice, equal rights for Palestinian people, etc.) we noticed, before 1983, high rates of abstention coming from both Latin American states and France, even

⁸ We say relatively because, even if the French State proudly states in its official foreign policy that it has supported the creation of a Palestinian State, they actually abstained themselves in R/29/3236, November 1974, that reaffirmed rights of Palestinian people in Palestine, and recognized Palestinian people as a principal party in establishing a just and lasting peace in middle east. ("Israël / Palestine : 9 clés", n.d.; Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013)

⁹ Land for Peace is an interpretation of UN Security Council Resolution 242. The name Land for Peace comes from the wording of the resolution's first operative paragraph which states that peace should include the application of two principles: Withdrawal of Israeli forces (Giving Up Land), and Termination of all claims or states of belligerency (Making Peace) ("General Assembly Asserts", 1998).

when the United States voted against it (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013). Therefore it could imply a convergence, but it could also imply the wish of Latin American States not to position against their Northern neighbor and thus not to engage themselves in any compromising position. After that, once again mostly due to the Oslo Accords, we say a much bigger will of both France and Latin America to defend measures to guarantee peace in the region.

Finally, we can also analyze it the other way around. For example, the Resolution ESS/5/100, July 1967, that was presented precisely by Latin American States, requested Israel to withdraw its forces from the territories occupied. The United States, that are usually mostly pro-Israel voted *yes* this time, even though the voting was really close: 57 votes *yes* against 43 votes *no* (with 20 *abstentions*). France, notwithstanding, *abstained* itself - staying away from both Latin America (given that they presented the resolution) and the rest of the committee (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013).

5.2. Nuclear weapons and the Caribbean

Concerned with destruction power of nuclear weapons, according to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, their elimination has been one main objective point since the creation of the organization. The first Resolution concerning the question was adopted in 1946.

When it comes to analyzing the Nuclear Resolutions, starting from a more general point of analysis, it is possible to identify two votings in which France voted *no* and the United States voted *yes*. On the first one, concerning the suspension of nuclear weapons testing in the pacific and elsewhere, 80% of the existing countries in Latin America voted with the U.S.. This convergence with the American power is even more evident on the second voting, which was about the prohibition of nuclear weapons, where 93,934% of the countries from the region voted *yes*. From this, it could indicate a tendency of voting with the U.S., but one must be careful when making this assumption due to the fact that the number of voting in which there were opposite votes between the U.S. and France is restrained.

By using the data indicated on Table 1, it is possible to see a lack of convergence between France and the countries of the Caribbean, with the exception of Cuba (0,11483) and reaching its maximum of divergence with Bahamas (-0,5431) (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013).

Just after the Cuban Missile Crisis, one of the biggest moments of tension during the Cold War, in November 1962, four Resolutions were voted concerning the U.S, the U.K and the U.S.S.R. as a recommendation to reach an agreement with mutual understanding to prohibit nuclear weapons (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013). As for how the countries voted, there was one absence from the Caribbean countries, Cuba, but all those who were present voted *yes*. France, however, *abstained*.

There were two Resolutions that concerned specifically France. In the first one, voted in November 1959, after nuclear tests made by the country, which “caused anxiety”, according to the description, the three existing countries from the Caribbean voted in different ways: the Dominican Republic voted *no*, like France; Cuba voted *yes* and Haiti *abstained*. The second one had as objective making France ratify an additional protocol of the Treaty for the prohibition of nuclear weapons in Latin America. In this voting, France voted *no*, diverging from 75,75% of the countries from the Caribbean, who voted *yes*, as did the U.S.

When it comes to Resolutions that had as a specific theme Latin American, it is possible to find four. The common subject concerns the denuclearization of the region, especially about the implementation of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco) (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013). The analysis of the votes shows that there were no negative votes from the Caribbean countries in all Resolutions and its majority has always voted *yes* in the subject matter, as well as the United States. When it comes to the French vote, during all of this proposed Resolutions the country has *abstained*.

In that sense, it is possible to conclude that the big divergence between the majority of the Caribbean countries and France is due to the huge amount of French abstentions on the votes concerning the theme. The special case of Cuba could be associated to the historical relation between the country and

the U.S., what could influence a tendency not to agree with the hemispherical power. However, one must be careful to read these data, since Cuban convergence correlation towards nuclear subjects is indeed too small to infer correlation.

5.3. Human rights and French foreign policy

Another important issue in France's foreign policy is human rights. Pioneer in human rights' charts, the importance France gives to it reflects a lot in how France behaves in the United Nations General Assembly. In what concerns Latin America and the Caribbean, authors Jeanne A. Hey and Frank O. Mora (2003) stress that the countries have had a big influence in international relations and law, for example with regional institutions whose rules and norms inspired the Charter of the United Nations. However, we must be aware that during the timeframe of analysis chosen, Latin America has passed through several human rights attacks, especially from the 60s to the 80s, the period where most Latin American countries had to deal with harsh dictatorships that did not have human rights as a priority.

When analyzing votes, when it comes to votings about Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile in which France and the U.S. diverged, we can see that Latin American countries maintained around the beginning of the regime a voting pattern in which around 40% of them was *for* resolutions condemning human rights violation in Chile, 40% were *against* these condemnations and around 20% *abstained* themselves from votes on the on the topic - while France voted *yes* during the entire regime and the U.S. balanced between *no* and *abstention*. More at the end of the regime we can see that Latin American countries were really divided between *yes* and *abstention*, almost abandoning the *no*. We cannot really establish a voting pattern within countries, except for Chile, that was always *against* these convictions (as expected). Guyana, Jamaica and Mexico were, on the other hand, always *in favour* of the condemnations (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013). To analyze France's voting we must take into consideration their position on the topic.

Even if France received several Chilean political refugees, it also collaborated with Pinochet (Robin, 2008). As revealed by French journalist Marie-Monique Robin (2008), Giscard d'Estaing government confidentially cooperated with Augusto Pinochet's regime in Chile. However, this was not exposed internationally and therefore French condemnation of human rights attacks in the regime remained stable. France has, from the beginning of Pinochet's regime (R/29/3219, November 1974) to its end (R/44/166, December 1989) agreed upon approving resolutions reiterating concern at the persistence and, in some respects, the deterioration of the human rights situation in Chile (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013).

One interesting resolution that deserves to be commented is R/29/3290, December 1974. This resolution, speaking about Pacific Territories, reaffirmed the rights of self-determination and independence for these communities, calling specifically upon an action of the governments of France and the United States to ensure a *speedy attainment* (sic), of the Resolution. France voted *against* this resolution, the U.S. *abstained*, but every single existent Latin American country that was present at the debate voted *yes* (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013). Although we cannot determine the true explanation for this, we can indeed observe that Latin American countries did not want to take the same side of France or the U.S., in matters that approached them specifically.

Finally, we can also analyze here one recent voting that dealt with a matter that is directly involved with Latin America, *the right to development*, in which the convergence with France was 100%. In the Resolution R/67/171, December 2012 the 33 Latin American countries voted *yes*, converging with France, whilst the U.S. had voted *no*. The pattern maintained itself in the Resolution R/68/158, December 2013, one year after, that talked about the same topic and the voting results were exactly the same. This resolution stressed the importance of development, stressing issues such as the need of democratization of the participation of developing countries in international decision-making and the need for the integrations of the rights of children, boys and girls, amongst other topics (Strezhnev & Voeten, 2013).

6. Conclusion

In summary, when analyzing the votes in the Resolutions in the United Nations General Assembly, it is possible to identify eventual convergences or divergences between countries and regions depending on the period or the subject debated. This article has tried to demonstrate that, in the case of the relationship between France and Latin America and the Caribbean, it is possible to see a great convergence when it comes to determined themes and/or determined periods; and not so much in others.

When analyzing the periods of convergence between Latin America and the Caribbean and France's position in the UNGA, it is possible to see a strong relationship with some of the foreign policies practiced by Latin American and French governments. The détente and the search for new allies led Latin American countries to adopt bold international positioning that challenged US hegemony on the continent. This movement in Latin America could be observed in the growing convergences with France in the analyzed votings during the 1970s, even though the French government did not assign a priority to the region. Mitterrand administration was, in general, characterized by a growth in convergences, but, contrary to what is found in the mainstream literature, greater agreements between France and Latin America in the UNGA were rather found at the end of its second mandate (1988-1995) than at the beginning of its first one (1981-1988). From 1996 to 2013, the relations between France and Latin America reached a “plateau”, where convergence neither decreases nor grows.

When analyzing the themes, we were able to identify that usually high disagreements between the US and France on topics such as Palestine conflict and human rights were usually followed by higher convergences between France and every single country in the region (the same can be said, but in a lesser scale, to the topic of arms control and disarmament). When it comes to nuclear votings, it was the theme, between those identified by the database, where the divergence is the clearest, even though geographically restricted to the Caribbean area. Analyzing closely the subjects, those specifically related to Latin America and France had positive votes from the region while France has mostly abstained. In what concern resolutions on human rights, the convergence between Latin America and the Caribbean with France is also clear with all positive date in the table demonstrated.

Despite the efforts, there are methodological issues that reinforce the articles limits. The choice to deal with either time or themes is not enough to understand the entire relation between France and Latin America/Caribbean. Thus, the complexity of the subject and of Strezhnev and Voeten's database opens the possibility for exploring in a future article themes specifics or determined a period of time.

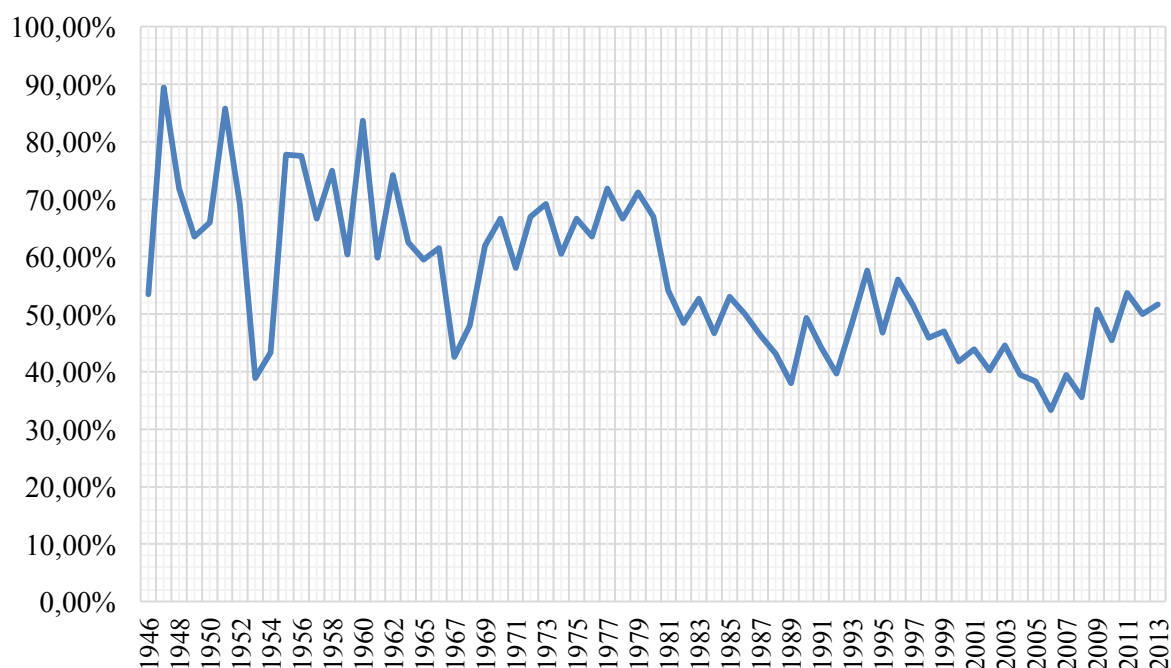
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ANNEX I

INDEX OF CONVERGENCE BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES IN UNGA FROM 1946 TO 2013



Source: Strezhnev, A., & Voeten, E. (2013). United Nations general assembly voting data. *IQSS Dataverse Network* (<http://thedata.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/Voeten/faces/study/StudyPage.xhtml>).

ANNEX II

Table with the proportion of disagreed topics between the US and France. Since some votings are classified in more than one topic, the sum of the values may surpass 100%.

year	palest	nucw	disarm	humr	colon	ecd	others
1946	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	5,00%	15,00%	30,00%	55,00%
1948	5,56%	0,00%	16,67%	11,11%	5,56%	5,56%	55,56%
1949	26,32%	0,00%	0,00%	2,63%	21,05%	2,63%	57,89%
1956	9,09%	0,00%	9,09%	9,09%	0,00%	0,00%	72,73%
1957	23,53%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	5,88%	0,00%	70,59%
1960	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	12,50%	0,00%	87,50%
1963	0,00%	8,33%	0,00%	0,00%	8,33%	33,33%	50,00%
1966	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	5,00%	35,00%	5,00%	55,00%
1972	14,71%	14,71%	17,65%	20,59%	11,76%	20,59%	26,47%
1973	14,29%	10,71%	10,71%	39,29%	42,86%	21,43%	21,43%
1974	20,00%	13,33%	23,33%	30,00%	13,33%	13,33%	23,33%
1975	26,09%	4,35%	17,39%	43,48%	52,17%	13,04%	4,35%
1977	29,63%	14,81%	11,11%	22,22%	25,93%	22,22%	25,93%
1980	47,06%	14,71%	8,82%	29,41%	20,59%	8,82%	20,59%
1981	39,34%	11,48%	13,11%	16,39%	16,39%	16,39%	22,95%
1982	31,71%	10,98%	7,32%	18,29%	17,07%	17,07%	28,05%
1983	37,14%	18,57%	18,57%	20,00%	17,14%	15,71%	21,43%
1984	31,25%	11,25%	13,75%	11,25%	18,75%	13,75%	31,25%

1985	32,39%	9,86%	19,72%	14,08%	11,27%	21,13%	25,35%
1986	27,63%	11,84%	18,42%	15,79%	11,84%	13,16%	32,89%
1987	28,77%	6,85%	19,18%	16,44%	8,22%	15,07%	30,14%
1988	27,03%	6,76%	24,32%	12,16%	9,46%	9,46%	37,84%
1989	32,86%	8,57%	18,57%	15,71%	12,86%	15,71%	25,71%
1990	50,00%	11,90%	14,29%	14,29%	21,43%	4,76%	21,43%
1991	58,97%	10,26%	12,82%	15,38%	20,51%	12,82%	15,38%
1992	50,00%	9,09%	18,18%	9,09%	20,45%	6,82%	29,55%
1993	53,13%	0,00%	12,50%	12,50%	18,75%	9,38%	25,00%
1994	64,29%	3,57%	10,71%	17,86%	25,00%	7,14%	17,86%
1995	43,90%	4,88%	9,76%	17,07%	24,39%	4,88%	31,71%
1996	60,61%	3,03%	18,18%	24,24%	24,24%	6,06%	9,09%
1997	61,76%	5,88%	11,76%	29,41%	23,53%	11,76%	5,88%
1998	63,64%	3,03%	12,12%	24,24%	30,30%	12,12%	12,12%
1999	55,56%	5,56%	13,89%	33,33%	25,00%	13,89%	5,56%
2000	53,85%	7,69%	12,82%	28,21%	25,64%	7,69%	10,26%
2001	56,76%	8,11%	13,51%	32,43%	24,32%	10,81%	5,41%
2002	46,51%	9,30%	18,60%	27,91%	18,60%	11,63%	9,30%
2003	39,02%	7,32%	14,63%	26,83%	14,63%	9,76%	17,07%
2004	39,53%	9,30%	20,93%	23,26%	13,95%	11,63%	13,95%
2005	33,33%	6,67%	17,78%	24,44%	17,78%	20,00%	15,56%
2006	31,03%	8,62%	22,41%	27,59%	24,14%	10,34%	12,07%
2007	36,96%	8,70%	21,74%	30,43%	13,04%	19,57%	6,52%
2008	32,65%	10,20%	18,37%	34,69%	22,45%	22,45%	6,12%
2009	46,88%	6,25%	15,63%	37,50%	34,38%	15,63%	6,25%
2010	41,67%	2,78%	11,11%	38,89%	30,56%	11,11%	11,11%
2011	51,61%	3,23%	16,13%	35,48%	29,03%	19,35%	6,45%
2012	45,71%	2,86%	11,43%	40,00%	28,57%	17,14%	8,57%
2013	51,72%	3,45%	13,79%	34,48%	34,48%	17,24%	6,90%
2014	41,67%	2,78%	16,67%	19,44%	16,67%	16,67%	19,44%
2015	44,12%	2,94%	14,71%	20,59%	17,65%	11,76%	20,59%
2016	40,00%	6,67%	20,00%	26,67%	23,33%	13,33%	10,00%
2017	36,00%	4,00%	14,00%	22,00%	24,00%	24,00%	14,00%

Source: Strezhnev, A., & Voeten, E. (2013). United Nations general assembly voting data. *IQSS Dataverse Network* (<http://thedata.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/Voeten/faces/study/StudyPage.xhtml>).

ANNEX III

List of Abbreviations of Countries (Figure 1/Table 1)

ARG – Argentina
ATG – Antigua and Barbuda
BHS – Bahamas
BLZ – Belize
BOL – Bolivia
BRA – Brazil
BRB – Barbados

CHL – Chile
COL – Colombia
CRI - Costa Rica
CUB – Cuba
DMA – Dominica
DOM - Dominican Republic
ECU – Ecuador
GRD – Granada
GTM – Guatemala
GUY – Guyana
HND – Honduras
HTI – Haiti
JAM – Jamaica
KNA - Saint Kitts
LCA - Saint Lucia
MEX – Mexico
NIC – Nicaragua
PAN - Panama
PER – Peru
PRY – Paraguay
SLV - El Salvador
SUR - Suriname
TTO - Trinidad and Tobago
URY - Uruguay
VCT - Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
VEN - Venezuela