# VOICES OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH: THE EVOLUTION OF G77 MEMBERS' SOLIDARITY IN THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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## Abstract

This article examines the evolution of Global South solidarity within the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) through the lens of the Group of 77 (G77). Despite the G77's well-known role as a collective platform for developing countries to articulate shared interests and positions, scholarly debate persists over whether its solidarity has endured or has fragmented amid growing internal heterogeneity. This study analyzes Global South solidarity through two dimensions: voting alignment in UNGA roll-call votes among G77 members and their rhetorical alignment in general debate speeches. The findings show that G77 voting solidarity remains robust, though it declined moderately after the Cold War, whereas rhetorical solidarity has strengthened in the post-Cold War era. Contrary to conventional expectations, economic and political heterogeneity do not undermine G77 cohesion. Instead, power disparities generate fragmentation, with weaker states diverging in voting behavior and stronger states adopting distinct rhetoric. A case study of Mexico illustrates the fluidity and strategic nature of solidarity, as the country balances Global South commitments with North American economic integration. These findings together challenge deterministic accounts of fragmentation, underscoring the resilience and adaptability of Global South solidarity and the G77's continuing relevance in global affairs.

## Keywords

Global South Solidarity, G77 Members, Voting Alignment, Speech Similarity

Over the past several decades, the term "Global South" has become increasingly prominent in international political debate. What was once a loosely defined label—often used interchangeably with "developing countries" or the "Third World"—has gradually taken on greater political weight, now representing an influential force in global affairs. Within the United Nations (UN), the most consistent institutional expression of this collective identity is the Group of 77 (G77), a coalition established in 1964 to strengthen the bargaining power of developing states in multilateral negotiations. Initially comprising 50 members, the G77 has since expanded to 134 countries, making it the largest coalition of states within the UN system. The endurance of this coalition's solidarity, however, has long been contested among scholars. Advocates contend that the G77 has shown remarkable resilience, frequently uniting around critiques of the Western-dominated international order and pushing collectively for reforms in areas such as trade, security, environmental governance, and climate policy (e.g., Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten, 2017; Lees, 2023; Dragujic, 2025). Skeptics, on the other hand, argue that the group's cohesion is weakened by deep internal divisions arising from economic disparities, political diversity, and shifts in the regional/global distribution of power (e.g. Vickers, 2013; Nayyar, 2016). From this perspective, the growing influence of large economies like China, Brazil, India, and South Africa has introduced further complexity, often making consensus on common goals more difficult to achieve.

This study takes up the question of whether the G77 operates as a cohesive bloc or as a coalition increasingly stretched thin by internal tensions. It follows two lines of inquiry: first, how solidarity within the G77 has evolved over time in the UN, and second, which factors have enabled unity or driven fragmentation among Global South states. The argument advanced here is that solidarity within the Global South is neither a fixed nor an illusory phenomenon. Rather, it constitutes a dynamic process shaped by shifting geopolitical contexts (such as the Cold War and its aftermath), shared material and ideological interests, leadership within the group, and institutional mechanisms that facilitate coordination. Using a mixed-methods approach—combining statistical analysis of UN General Assembly (UNGA) roll-call voting, textual analysis of UNGA debates, and an in-depth case study of

Mexico—this research shows that, despite strong centrifugal pressures, solidarity continues to function as an essential and strategic feature of Global South diplomacy, particularly in the UN arena.

By tracing the historical trajectory and dissecting the drivers of cohesion and division, the article offers a comprehensive examination of the patterns and determinants of Global South solidarity within the UN. It sheds light on the dynamics of international coalition-building among states that historically shared experiences of colonial subjugation, economic dependency, and political marginalization. The G77 serves as a critical lens for understanding how these legacies and structural constraints shape contemporary strategies of collective action among developing states. Moreover, this study illuminates the future of multilateralism amid shifting geopolitical alignments and intensified contestation over the rules of the international order. The rise of emerging powers complicates the G77' collective agenda by introducing divergent interests and competing visions. Yet, the persistent demand for a more equitable international system underscores the continuing significance of Global South solidarity as both a normative aspiration and a political instrument. By examining the interplay of unity and fragmentation within the G77 thus offers insights into the prospects for a more pluralistic and representative multilateral order.

The article is structured as follows. Section one reviews the scholarly literature on Global South solidarity, identifying theoretical, methodological, and empirical gaps. Section two outlines the theoretical framework and proposes testable hypotheses. Section three details the research design, including the operationalization of key variables and data sources. Section four presents preliminary findings from the statistical analysis of UNGA roll-call voting. Section five examines the case study of Mexico to illustrate the evolving dynamics of its engagement with other G77 member states within the UN, highlighting the mechanisms that foster cohesion and contribute to fragmentation. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications for global governance and avenues for future research.


## A Divided Literature on Global South Solidarity at the UN and Its Shortcomings


Scholarship on Global South solidarity reveals a stark divide between optimistic and pessimistic assessments. Optimists contend that the G77 continues to display strong solidarity. They argue that the persistence of a profound North–South divide reinforces unity in the South despite the group's internal diversity. Kim and Russet (1996), Vieira (2016), and Mosler and Potrafke (2020) highlight the enduring significance of structural inequalities between developed and developing states in shaping collective alignments on both sides. Quantitative studies by Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten (2017), Lees (2023), and Dragujic (2025) find that Global South countries often vote cohesively in the UNGA, while Waheed et al. (2011) and Bull and Banik (2025) underline the persistence of their rhetorical unity in international arenas. Other scholars, such as Vickers (2013) and Nayyar (2016), view the economic rise of Southern powers such as China as a potential source of enhanced political leverage that facilitates collective action within the South.

The pessimists, by contrast, contend that Global South solidarity has gradually weakened, primarily because of the South's internal diversity and widening inequalities among member states. Collective action theories suggest that actor heterogeneity exacerbates the difficulty of coordination and cooperation on collective agendas (Olson, 1965; Oye, 1985). Panke (2013) highlights the organizational challenges facing broad and heterogeneous groupings such as the G77 and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), noting that divergent national interests make it difficult for developing countries to maintain consistent collective positions. Echoing this view, Berger (2004) and Toye (2014) contend that increasing economic divergence, especially the ascent of middle-income and emerging powers, has eroded the sense of shared identity that once underpinned solidarity in the developing world. Additional research highlights regime-type differences, especially variations in levels of democracy, as a key factor shaping divergent patterns of co-sponsorship and voting at the UNGA (Finke, 2021; Wheeler, 2021). Similarly, regime change and leadership turnover are often associated with voting realignments in the UN (Hagan, 1989; Smith, 2014). At its core, the divide between these two camps reflects a deeper disagreement over the very nature of solidarity within the Global South. For critics, unity is largely rhetorical, masking pragmatic compromises and divergent interests. For proponents, even rhetorical expressions of solidarity serve as a political resource, signaling cohesion and shaping bargaining dynamics in multilateral negotiations.

Despite extensive debate, the existing literature exhibits notable theoretical and methodological shortcomings. First, solidarity is often conceptualized in binary terms—as either present or absent—without sufficient attention to its fluid, context-dependent nature, and strategically contingent nature. Such a view obscures the reality that solidarity and fragmentation can coexist within the G77 and that the balance between them may shift in response to changing circumstances or tactical considerations. Second, many studies neglect the interaction between structural forces and agency, for example, how systemic transformations intersect with leadership dynamics and agenda-setting within the group. Likewise, little effort has been made to distinguish between enduring, identity-based forms of solidarity and more contingent, issue-specific alignments that arise around particular agendas. Methodologically, existing research has leaned heavily on quantitative analyses of UNGA roll-call votes. While roll-call data shed light on certain aspects of coalition behavior, they capture only one dimension

of solidarity. Overreliance on this measure risks selection bias by overlooking other forms of collective action. Importantly, arenas such as general debate speeches and the negotiation of communiqués are crucial spaces in which solidarity is articulated, tested, and reaffirmed. To address these gaps, this paper proposes a multi-dimensional, longitudinal research design that combines roll-call analysis with text analysis of the debate transcripts. It also advances a theoretical framework that integrates structural, interest-based and leadership perspectives. This study recognizes solidarity as both rhetorical and substantive, both durable and adaptive, and as shaped simultaneously by international structures and domestic political conditions.

## Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses: Drivers and Obstacles of Southern Solidarity

The evolution of Global South solidarity can be understood through several theoretical lenses. Three major perspectives stand out in the literature and in the design of this study: structural theories, community-of-interest theories and leadership theories. Each offers insights into the drivers and obstacles of solidarity, and each generates testable hypotheses. Taken together, these three theoretical approaches offer a comprehensive framework for understanding Global South solidarity. Structural theories draw attention to how systemic contexts and power disparities shape the possibilities for cohesion. Community-of-interest theories highlight material, political, and ideological foundations that bring countries together. Leadership theory, in turn, underscores the role of leading actors in sustaining Global South solidarity. By integrating these approaches, this study moves beyond asking simply whether the Global South is united or divided, instead treating solidarity as a dynamic outcome shaped by the interplay of multiple forces.

### *Structural Theories*
Structural theories emphasize the impact of the international system on alignment behavior. During the Cold War, the bipolar structure of world politics created favorable conditions conducive to Global South solidarity. Developing countries shared experiences of colonial domination, economic marginalization, and political exclusion, and many aligned—directly or indirectly—with the communist bloc as a counterbalance to Western dominance. Muhr (2022) finds that bipolarity heightened both the ideological and geopolitical stakes of solidarity, while Litonjua (2010) and Pinheiro (2024) point to shared anti-colonial struggles as a critical driving force for Southern solidarity. Similarly, Amin (2019) argues that the aspiration to escape Western imperial influence became a central motivation for collective action among the states of Global South.

In the post-Cold War context, structural theories emphasize power asymmetries within the Global South itself. Emerging powers such as China, India, India, Brazil and South Africa have become more integrated into global markets and increasingly assertive in their international influence. As Vickers (2013) and Stokes et al. (2016) observe, these states often require less support from weaker Southern counterparts and, in some cases, even want to reproduce hierarchical dynamics within the developing world. Rather than pushing for a radical restructuring of the West-dominated international order, they tend to pursue influence within existing institutional frameworks (Golub, 2013). They also frequently coordinate through the institutions of their own such as BRICS, and periodically clashes with low-income states (Vihma et al., 2011; Ferdinand, 2014; Vickers, 2013; Gray and Murphy, 2014). From these structural explanations, two hypotheses can be derived:

Hypothesis 1.1: Global South solidarity was stronger during the Cold War era than in the post–Cold War period.
Hypothesis 1.2: Greater power disparities among Global South countries reduces Global South Solidarity.

### *Community-of-Interest Theories: Economic, Political, and Ideological Similarities*
A second theoretical approach emphasizes shared material and ideological commonalities as the foundation of solidarity. Although the Global South is heterogeneous, many countries share vulnerabilities—such as economic underdevelopment, political illiberalism, or skepticism toward a U.S.-led international order—that create incentives for collective action. Economic conditions have long been a key driver of South–South cooperation. Shared experiences of marginalization in the global economy have encouraged coordinated actions among developing countries. Low-income countries, in particular, face severe economic challenges and pressing financing needs (Georgieva, 2023). UN Trade and Development (2022) summerizes four major challenges confronting least developing countries: soaring debt, export marginalization, energy poverty, and climate vulneablity. These challenges, however, are far less applicable to more advanced developing economies such as China and India. As some Southern states rise economically and politically, their policy preferences on international issues evolve, often diverging from or even conflicting with those of other developing countries (vom Hau, Scott, and Hulme 2012; Stokes, Giang, and Selin 2016). Consequently, economic heterogeneity produces divergent interests: Wealthier Southern states often prioritize market access and influence, while poorer states advocate redistributive reforms. Disparities in economic development can thus underimine collection action, foster competition, generate distributional conflicts, and even reproduce patterns of subordination reminiscent of Southern neo-colonialism (Snidal, 199; Gray and Gills, 2016).

Political regime type represents another potential source of solidarity. When the G77 was founded, most member states were non-democratic and could find common ground in resisting liberal norms promoted by Western democracies. This shared illiberal orientation reinforced South–South cohesion, particularly in the face of Western criticism regarding governance and human rights. Over time, however, many developing countries democratized, increasing political heterogeneity within the Global South (Stokke and Tornquist, 2013). Such variation can weaken solidarity, as democracies and autocracies diverge on issues such as sovereignty, internatonal intervention, and human rights  (Mansfield, Milner, Rosendorff, 2009; Kneuer, 2025).

A third dimension of Community-of-Interest involves ideology. As Owen (2010) and Voeten (2021), emphasize, ideology plays a central role in shaping international alignments. Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten (2017) observe that the "non-Western pole" often consists of states whose only shared characteristic is opposition to Western order.  Klingebiel (2023) argues that "from the perspective of Southern actors, the existing international order is a deeply unjust system that primarily protects the interests of the West, and especially those of the USA." Therefore, many Southern states cohere around opposition to a U.S.-led international order, articulating a "South–South" ideology of resistance. From the perspective of Community-of-Interest theories, the following hypotheses can be derived:

**Hypothesis 2.1:** Higher economic heterogeneity among Global South countries reduces Global South Solidarity.
**Hypothesis 2.2:** Greater political heterogeneity among Global South countries reduces Global South Solidarity.
**Hypothesis 2.3:** Opposition to a U.S.-led international order correlates with stronger solidarity among Global South countries.

### *Leadership Theories*

Leadership constitutes a critical factor in sustaining Southern solidarity. According to Northouse (2018), leadership enhances collective efficacy by reducing coordination problems and clarifying strategic objectives. Effective leaders provide vision, coherence, and organizational capacity, enabling Global South countries to articulate shared positions. Strong and moderate leadership is generally considered effective in this regard. By contrast, weak or radical leadership can undermine coalition cohesion, as it may alienate moderate members. Baumann et al. (2024) find that radical Southern leaders often encounter resistance from within the group, as most members prioritize pragmatic engagement over confrontational approaches. From these insights, the following hypothesis is derived:
**Hypothesis 3:** Global South countries exhibit greater solidarity under strong leadership and reduced solidarity under radical leadership.

## Research Design: Variables, Data, and Models

To evaluate the hypotheses outlined above, this study adopts a mixed-methods research design that integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches. Recognizing the multidimensional nature of Global South solidarity, the analysis employs two complementary quantitative indicators: roll-call voting alignment and speech textual
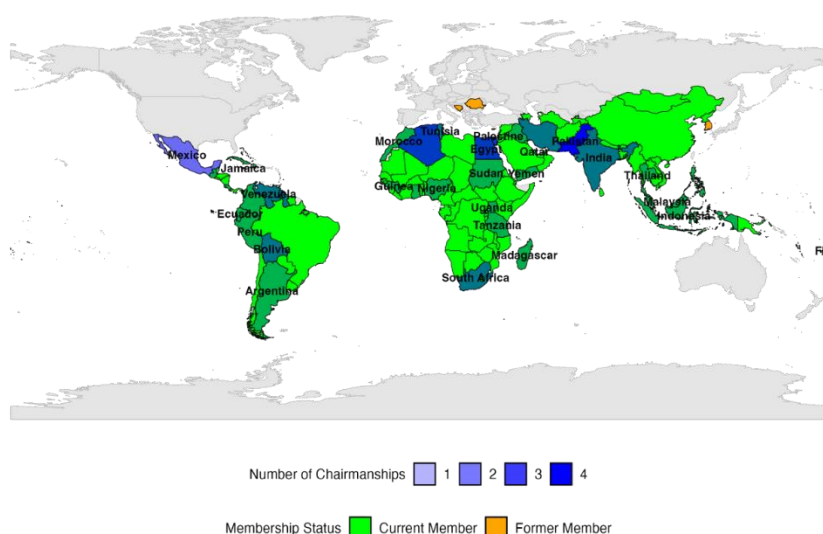


**Map 1 Geographic Distribution of the G77 Membership and Chairmanship**

similarity in the UNGA debates.The empirical focus is on the member states of the G77, which serves as the primary institutional expression of the Global South in international organizations. The UN constitutes the principal forum through which the G77 articulates and advances its collective interests. Since its founding in 1964, the G77 has expanded from 50 to 134 members, encompassing almost all developing countries worldwide. Map 1 depicts the membership of the G77 and highlights the states that have held the rotating chair since the position was created in 1970. Among these, Pakistan (four terms), Algeria (three terms), Egypt (three terms), India (two terms), and Mexico (two terms) stand out for their repeated leadership roles, shown in blue.

### Dependent Variables: Voting Solidarity and Rhetorical Solidarity of the Global South

This study conceptualizes Global South solidarity as the degree to which the G77 member states align in behavior and discourse within the UNGA. To operationalize this multidimensional concept, two dependent variables are employed: roll-call voting alignment and rhetorical alignment in UNGA general debates. Roll-call voting alignment in the UNGA, a standard measure of coalition behavior, is derived from the UNGA Voting Dataset compiled by Voeten and Merdzanovic (2009). Two indicators are constructed. First, *the state-year-level loyalty score* captures individual-level solidarity by calculating the percentage of resolutions in a given year on which a state voted in line with the G77 majority position. Second, *the group-year-level cohesion score* reflects overall group solidarity, measuring the average percentage of member states voting with the G77 majority in a given year. These measures together allow for both longitudinal analyses of solidarity trends over time and cross-sectional comparisons of variation among the G77 member states.

While roll-call voting alignment provides important insights into Global South solidarity, it captures only one dimension of this multidimensional phenomenon. The UNGA general debate offers a complementary lens, as it serves as a critical platform for Southern states to articulate their positions, signal alignments, and forge collective identities. To measure rhetorical solidarity, this study draws on the UNGA Debate Corpus (Slava, Baturo, and Dasandi, 2017), which contains digitized speeches from 1946 to 2024. Rhetorical alignment is operationalized using text similarity scores derived from correspondence analysis. These scores capture the degree of discursive alignment among G77 member states in a given year, reflecting the coherence of rhetorical strategies within the Global South.

### Independent Variables for Hypothesis Testing

The independent variables in this study are derived directly from the theoretical framework and operationalized to the proposed hypotheses above. To examine the impact of global structural conditions on the G77 solidarity, Hypothesis 1.1 introduces a *Post-Cold War* dummy variable, coded 0 for 1945–1991 and 1 thereafter. Hypothesis 1.2 examines the effect of power disparities within the G77 using the Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) dataset (Singer, 1988); *Power Disparity* is captured by a Gini coefficient of national capabilities, with higher values indicating greater disparity in power. Figure 1 illustrates that power distribution within the Global South has become more unequal over time, while the Global North has experienced increasing equality. Economic conditions are central to Hypothesis 2.1: *Economic Development* is measured by logged GDP per capita (World Bank, 2025) where lower values represent greater economic vulnerability; *Economic Heterogeneity* is operationalized through annual group-level Gini coefficients based on GDP per capita and total GDP, reflecting variation in economic development across the G77 members in a given year. As shown in Figure 2, both indicators suggest that the G77 has become more economically diverse over time. *Political Illiberalism* is captured by the inverse of Polity IV scores (Gleditsch, 2018), with higher values indicating more illiberal regimes. To test Hypothesis 2.2, *Political Heterogeneity* is then measured by yearly group-level Gini coefficients calculated from Polity IV scores, which captures variation in regime types within the G77. Figure 3 demonstrates that both the Global South and Global North have become increasingly politically diverse. To test Hypothesis 2.3, *Ideological Distance from the U.S.* (i.e., the degree of Anti-U.S. Led International Order) is captured by the distance between a coutry's estimated ideal point in UN roll-call voting and the U.S. position in the previous year (Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten, 2017), with higher values indicating greater ideological divergence from the U.S. Finally, to test Hypothesis 3, *Strong Leadership* is proxied by the GDP of the chair country, reflecting its capacity to provide resources and coordination, and *Radical Leadership* is proxied by the chair country's ideological distance from the U.S. in UN roll-call voting.
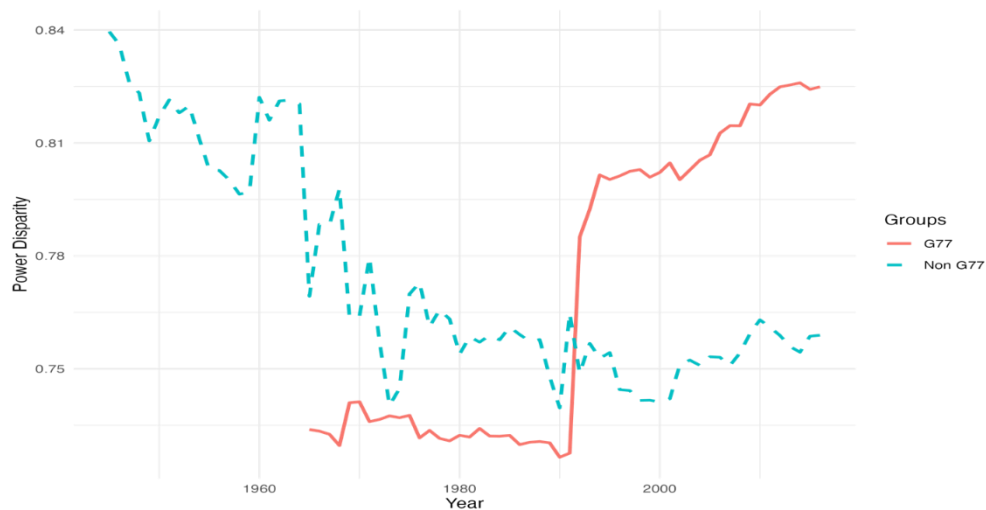
**Figure 1 Power Disparity within the G77 and the Non-G77**
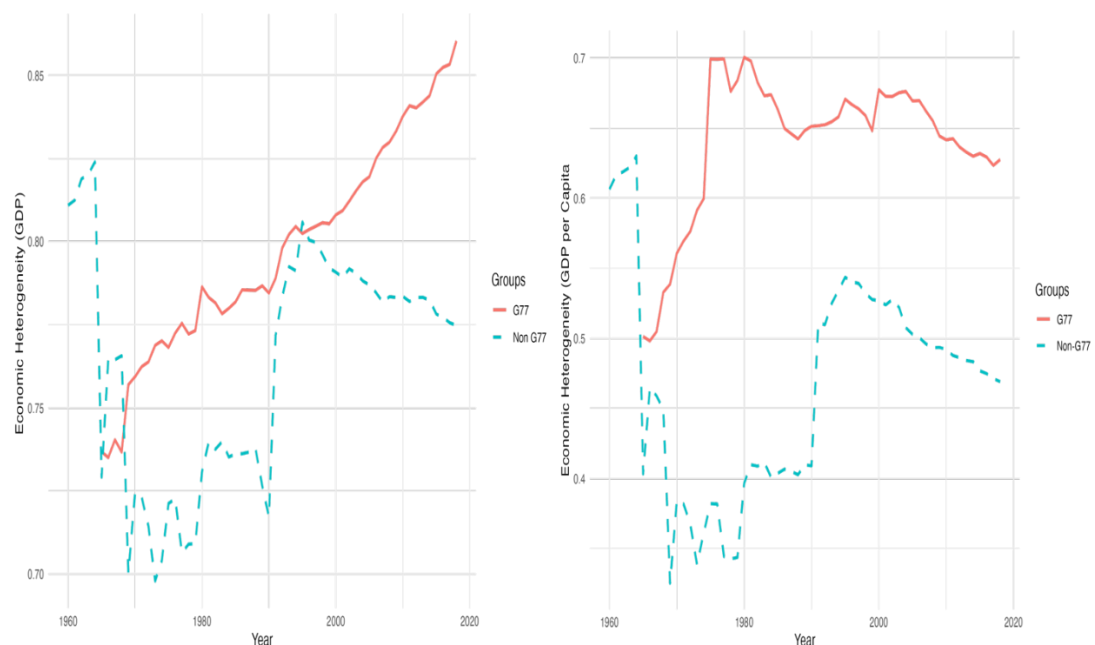


**Figure 2 Economic Heterogeneity within the G77 and the Non-G77**
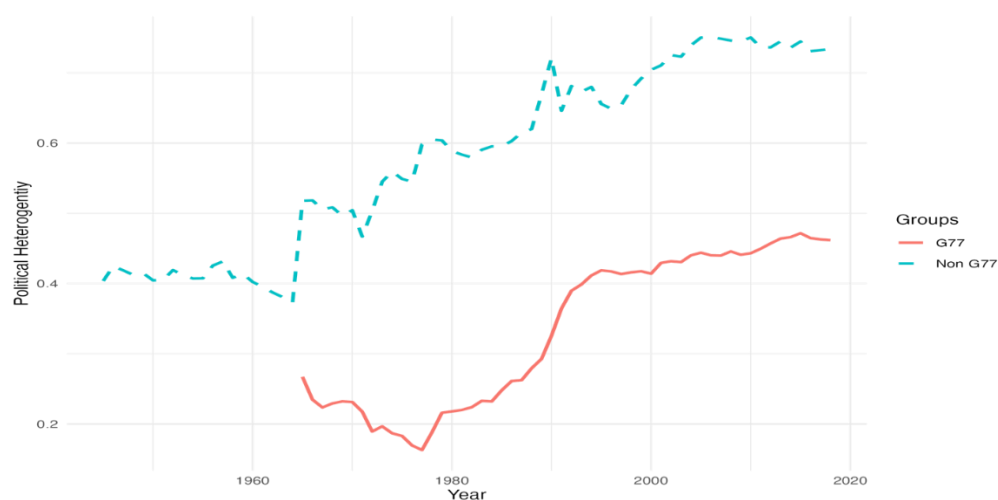


**Figure 3 Political Heterogeneity within the G77 and the Non-G77**

# Models and Specification

To evaluate the hypotheses empirically, different statistical models are employed depending the dependent variable, capturing multiple dimensions of G77 solidarity. *Voting solidarity* is analyzed using logit regression models, with the state–vote as the unit of analysis. The dependent variable is a binary indicator of whether a G77 member state voted with the majority position of the G77 in a given roll-call vote. Robust standard errors are clustered by roll-call vote to account for vote-specific dependencies. *Rhetorical solidarity* is examined through linear regression models, with the state–year as the unit of analysis. The dependent variable is the speech similarity score—derived from cosine similarity—which measures the degree of discursive alignment in UNGA General Debate speeches. Robust standard errors are clustered by year to account for temporal dependencies.

In addition, several control variables are included to isolate the effects of the independent variables. *Population* is measured as logged population size from the World Bank's World Development Indicators (2025) to account for differences in state capacity and representation. *Military Capability* is measured using CINC scores to control for differences in material power among G77 member states. *Regional Blocs* membership in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the African Union (AU), the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Pan-American Union, and the BRICS group, controlling for overlapping regional solidarities. Lastly, *Issue Area* is captured with six dummy variables—disarmament, economic issues, human rights, the Middle East, nuclear issues and decolonization —to reflect thematic variation in UNGA agendas.

# Empirical Findings and Discussions

This section presents the key findings of the empirical analysis, examining two dimensions of the G77's solidarity—voting alignment and rhetoric alignment. The results indicate that, while the G77 has experienced fluctuations in cohesion over time, it continues to exhibit enduring solidarity in the UNGA. The evidence suggests that the Cold War period created particularly favorable conditions for Southern solidarity. In the post-Cold War period, Global South solidarity has declined somewhat but has persisted at a moderately high level. Furthermore, the findings show that economic and political heterogeneities do not undermine Global South solidarity. In contrast, power disparities among the G77 member states and variation in leadership styles exert a more pronounced negative influence on the group's cohesion.

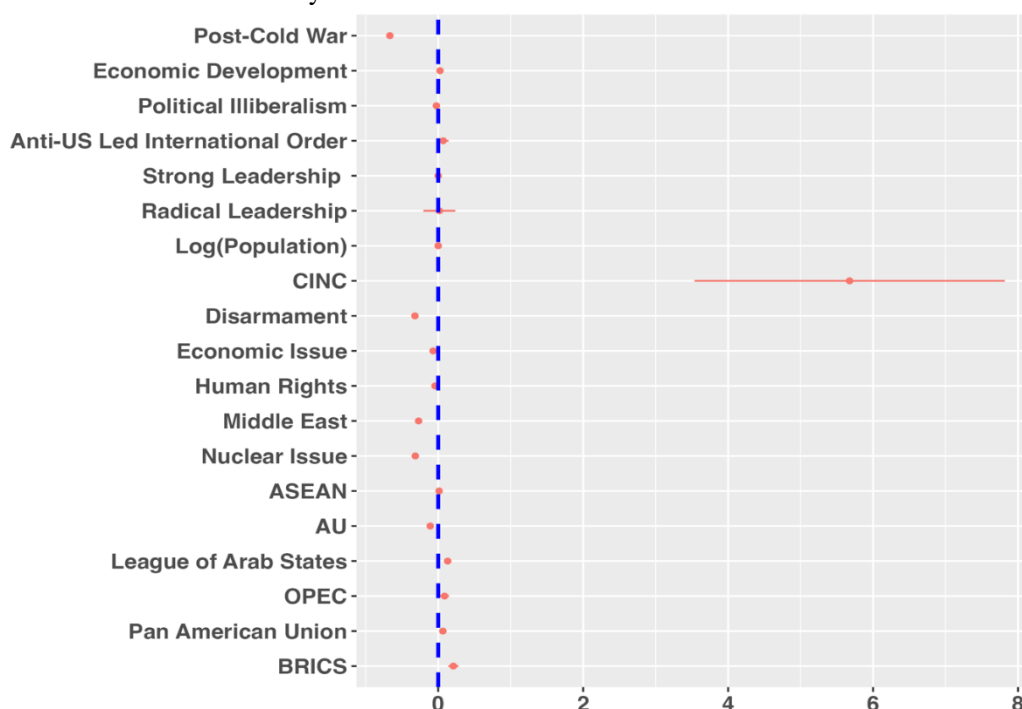### Findings on Voting Solidarity during and after the Cold War

The empirical analysis of voting alignment among the G77 members reveals the durability of the group's solidarity. At the state level, loyalty scores—measuring the annual percentage of roll-call votes in which a state aligns with the G77's majority position—demonstrate considerable variation among member states. Countries such as Brunei, Bangladesh, Guyana, Malaysia, and the United Arab Emirates exhibit high alignment, with loyalty scores exceeding 90 percent. In contrast, microstates such as Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, and the Marshall Islands exhibit lower alignment, often below 40 percent. These states are typically recent G77 members, reliant on Western aid, or geopolitically aligned with the U.S. At the group level, Figure 4 illustrates that the G77 consistently maintains a high degree of voting cohesion over time, with on average G77 member states vote with the group's majority position in over 80 percent of UNGA roll-call votes. Solidarity was particularly robust during the Cold War (1945–1991), especially in the 1970s and 1980s, when alignment with the communist bloc provided an external anchor for cohesion. Although voting solidarity declined in the post-Cold War era, the decline was less pronounced than critics anticipated. Average group-year cohesion scores rarely fall below 0.75. Blocs such as BRICS and ASEAN demonsrate a rather high level of voting alignment with the G77 majority position. These findings underscore the durability of G77 solidarity and align with arguments by Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten (2017) and Lees (2023), who emphasize the sustained unity of the Global South in UNGA voting.
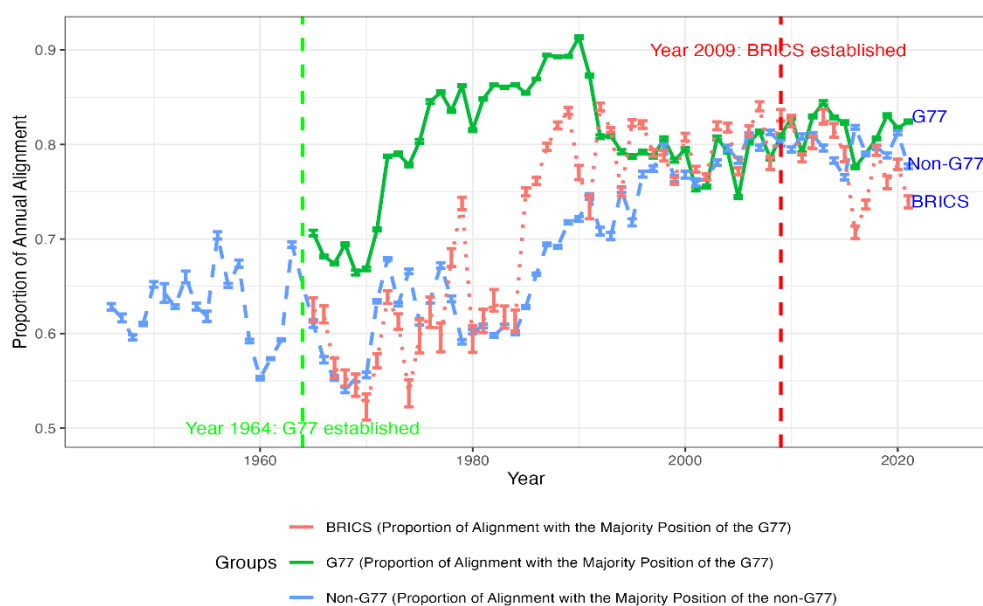
**Figure 4 Voting Alignment within the G77, Non-G77 and the BRICS**

Figure 5 presents the coefficients and their 95% confidence intervals from a logit regression model analyzing G77 member states' voting alignment with the G77 majority position in UNGA roll-call votes. The results show that the Post-Cold War dummy variable is negative and statistically significant, indicating that G77 member states are less likely to align with the group's majority position in the post-Cold War era, thereby supporting Hypothesis 1.1. This finding implies that Cold War geopolitics fostered G77 solidarity, rooted in shared structural inequalities and exclusion of developing countries. At the individual state level, the analysis shows that economic development (measured by logged GDP per capita) and political illiberalism (measured by the inverse of Polity IV scores) do not appear to significantly influence a state's voting solidarity. In contrast, military capability (measured by CINC scores) and ideology of anti-U.S. led international order (measured by the difference of ideal point estimates) are positive and statistically significant, indicating that states with greater military capacity and those more divergent from U.S. positions are more likely to align with the G77 majority. In addition, member states belonging to the BRICS group, the League of Arab States, or the OPEC exhibit significantly higher voting alignment with the G77 majority compared to other regional blocs, underscoring the reinforcing effect of overlapping solidarities on G77 solidarity.



**Figure 5 A Logit Model of Global South Countries' Voting Alignment with the G77 Majority Position**

### *Findings on Rhetorical Solidarity during and after the Cold War*

Figure 6 depicts the speech similarity of countries within the Global South (the G77states) and the non-Global South states (the non-G77 states) since 1970, measured by the score on the first dimension of correspondence analysis. It shows that both groups exhibited relatively low speech solidarity in the Cold War, with similarity increasing in the post-Cold War period, implying a growing rhetorical divide between the South and the North in the UNGA debates. To further explore variation in Global South solidarty, the follow-up regression analysis focuses exclusively on the G77 members states at the individual state level. Figure 7 presents the coefficients and their 95% confidence intervals from a linear regression model analyzing the rhetorical solidarity of the G77 member states in the UNGA speeches. The results shows the Post-Cold War dummy variable is positive and statistically significant, indicating greater rhetorical alignment among the G77 member states in the post-Cold War era, thus disconfirming Hypothesis 1.1 in the context of rhetorical solidarity. Economic development (measured by logged GDP per capita) and political illiberalism (measured by the inverse of Polity IV scores) are statistically insignificant, suggesting they do not significantly influence rhetorical solidarity. Consistent with expectation in Hypothesis 2.3, ideological opposition to the U.S.-led led international order (measured by ideal point estimates from UNGA roll-call voting) is positive and significant, indicating that states with greater divergence from U.S. positions display higher rhetorical solidarity.

In contrast to voting alignment, military capability (CINC score) is negatively correlated with speech similarity, suggesting that militarily powerful G77 states use distinct language in UNGA debates compared to other members. Prior scholarship (e.g., Slava, Baturo, and Dasandi, 2017) argues that UNGA speeches reflect foreign policy preferences more directly than voting behavior. As such, this pattern implies that powerful G77 states may align with the group's majority in voting for strategic reasons rather than shared foreign policy interests. Additionally, the effect of regional bloc membership also differs between rhetorical solidarity and voting solidarity: AU members exhibit significantly higher rhetorical similarity, reflecting their cohesion around broader Global South agendas, wheras League of Arab States members exhibit significantly lower rhetorical similarity, suggesting that their regional priorities diverge greatly from the G77's collective discourse.
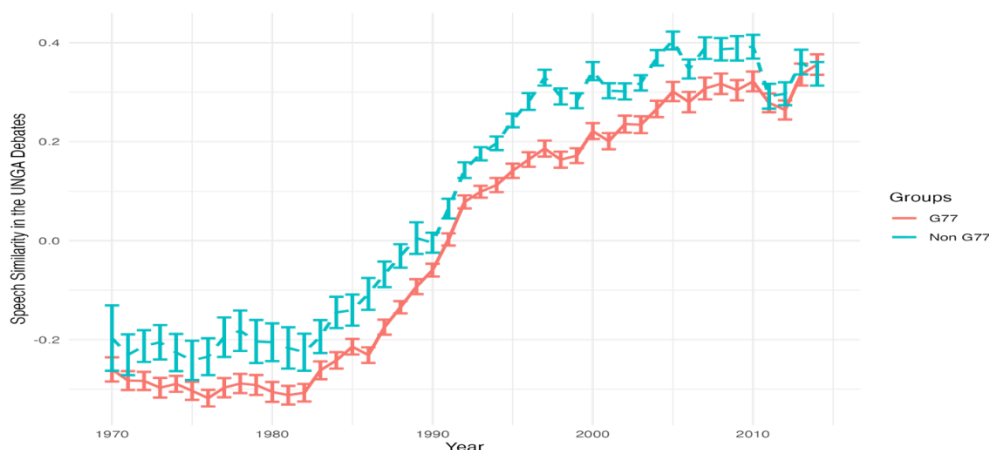


**Figure 6 Speech Similarity within the Global South and the Global North**
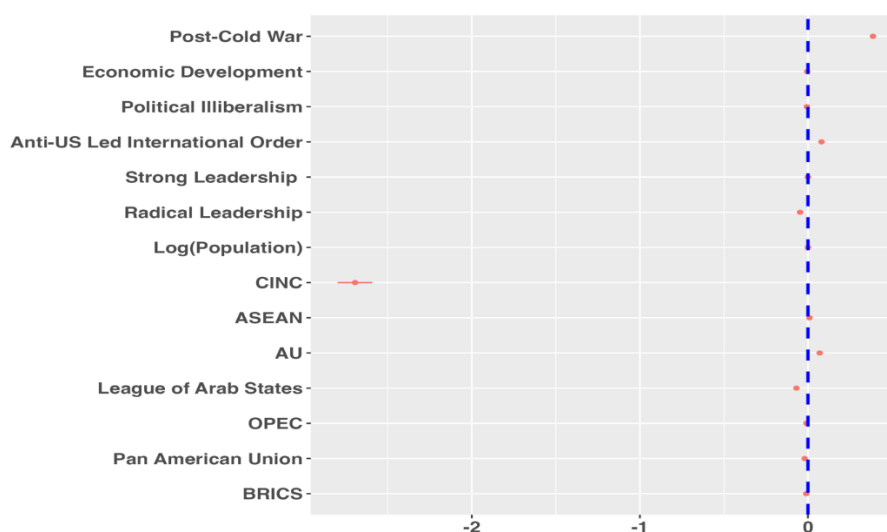


**Figure 7 A Linear Model of G77's Speech Similarity (The DV is CA1, i.e., the score on the first dimension in the correspondence analysis for text classification.)**

## The Role of Internal Heterogeneity and Leadership

This section further examines the effect of internal heterogeneity and group leadership on G77's voting alignment at the group-year level using regression analysis. Figure 8 presents the results, revealing that, contrary to Hypotheses 2.1 and 2.2 and long-standing assumptions in the literature, economic and political heterogeneity within the G77 do not undermine voting solidarity. In fact, higher levels of economic heterogeneity (measured by group-level Gini coefficients based on total GDP) and political heterogeneity (measured by group-level Gini coefficients of Polity IV scores) are positively correlated with voting solidarity. This suggests that differences in income levels and regime types do not lead to systematic fragmentation within the Global South. Rather, these factors exert no significant negative effect on group-level cohesion, implying that the G77 has developed institutional norms or instruments that mitigate the divisive effects of heterogeneity and enable member states to prioritize shared grievances and collective goals over internal differences. In contrast, power disparity (measured by the Gini coefficient of CINC scores) significantly undermines G77 voting solidarity at the group level. This finding aligns with state-level results presented in Figure 5, which show that countries with higher CINC scores align more closely with the G77 majority position. Together, these results suggest that it is the less powerful states, rather than the stronger ones, that contribute most to deviations from the G77 majority and decline in group solidarity. Regarding to group leadership, the analysis finds no statistically significant effect of chair country characteristics (proxied by GDP for strong leadership and ideological distance from the U.S. for radical leadership) on voting solidarity, indicating that chair countries of the G77 play a limited role in shaping group-level solidarity within the UNGA.
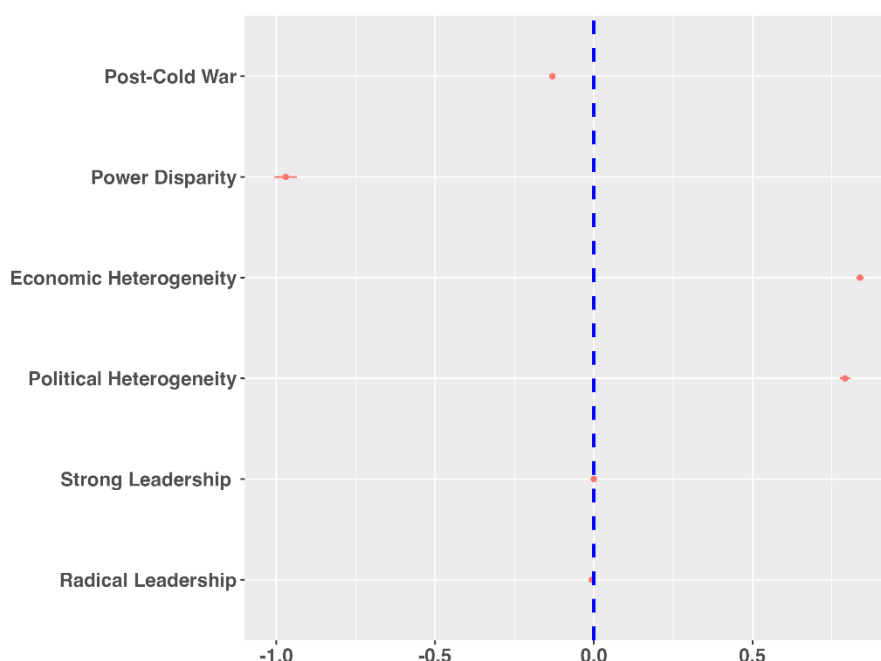


**Figure 8 A Linear Model of Global South Countries' Voting Similarity at the Group-Level**

## Case Study: Mexico's Evolving Global South Solidarity

To complement the quantitative analysis above, this section examines Mexico as a case study to illustrate the dynamics of Global South solidarity within the UNGA. Mexico holds a unique position in the history of Global South solidarity: It was a founding member of the G77 in 1964, withdrew in 1994, and rejoined in 2023. During its initial G77 membership (1964–1994), Mexico exhibited strong and increasing alignment with the G77. Its voting loyalty scores, measured as the annual percentage of UNGA roll-call votes in which Mexico aligned with the G77 majority position, consistently exceeded 85 percent and in some years rose above 95 percent. At the same time, as shown in Figure 10, Mexico's rhetorical alignment increasingly diverged from the U.S, with steadily declining ideal point estimates in UNGA general debate speeches (using US speeches as the reference texts), reflecting a growing rhetorical commitment to Global South solidarity. In this period, Mexico positioned itself as a champion of the developing world, though it simultaneously maintained strong economic ties both with the USSR and U.S.

Mexico's solidarity with the Global South during the Cold War was shaped by both structural and domestic factors. Internationally, the bipolar order provided a geopolitical space for middle powers like Mexico to advocate for the Global South without fully aligning with either superpower. Mexico championed "Third World" causes, emphasizing decolonization, sovereignty, independence, and economic justice in UNGA debates.

Domestically, the Institutional Revolutionary Party, which governed Mexico over 70 years until 2000, pursued a nationalist and developmentalist agenda that resonated strongly with the G77's priorities. Mexico's UNGA speeches invoked themes of non-intervention, self-determination, and the need for a "new international economic order." However, Mexico moderated its rhetoric, favoring reformist over revolutionary appeals, enabling it to act as a bridge between radical G77 members and the Western bloc.

The post-Cold War era marked a sharp turning point in in Mexico's alignment with the Global South. Economic liberalization and integration into North America, exemplified by the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994, drew Mexico closer to the U.S., culminating in its withdrawal from the G77 in the same year. As a result, Mexico's voting loyalty scores dropped sharply, falling below 70 percent in most years. Figure 10 illustrates a corresponding shift in rhetorical alignment toward the U.S., with its UNGA speeches emphasizing democracy, human rights, and trade liberalization. Despite its withdrawal, Mexico maintained selective engagement with the Global South, participating in key meetings of developing countries and sustained a range of bilateral and multilateral ties, including with China. Mexico's rejoining of the G77 in 2023, coupled with its endorsement of resolutions on development finance and fair global trade, reflects a renewed but pragmatic commitment to Southern solidarity. Mexico's trajectory underlines two broader dynamics of Global South solidarity. First, it demonstrates how Southern solidarity can evolve from fervent commitment to pragmatic engagement, reflecting changing domestic and international contexts. Second, it highlights the strategic balancing act faced by states that straddle both the North and the South: Mexico continues to identify with the Global South, but does so while deeply embedded in North American economic structures. Its case illustrates the fluid and contingent nature of solidarity, shaped by the interplay of structural conditions, domestic politics, and strategic considerations.
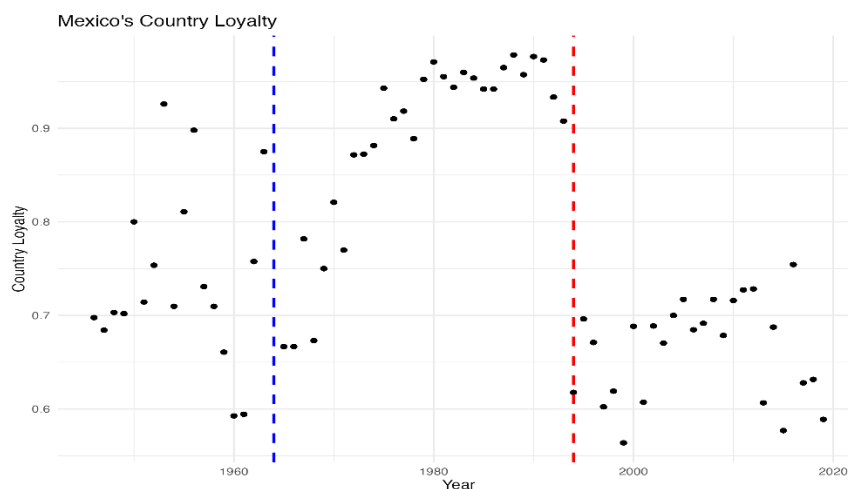


**Figure 9 Percentage of Resolutions Mexico's Aligned with the G77 Majority in UNGA Voting**
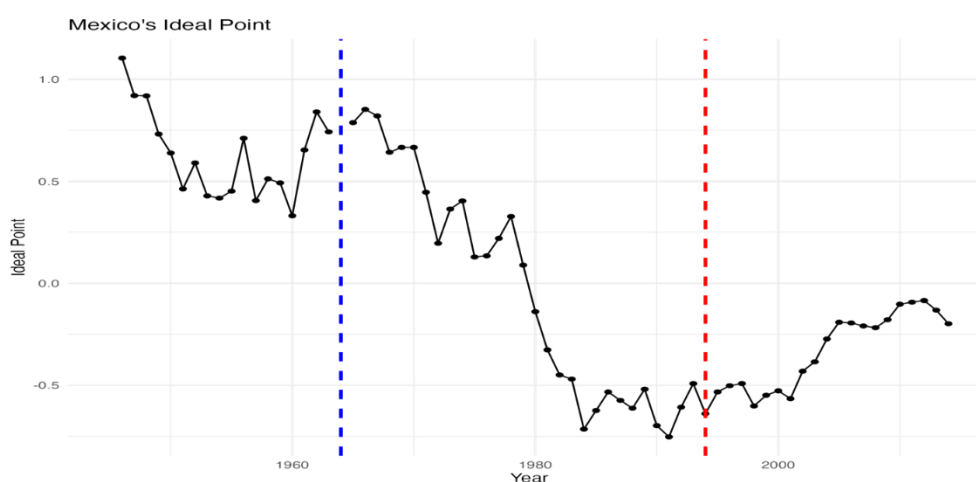


**Figure 10 The Speech Similarity between Mexico and the US in UNGA Debates**

## Conclusion

This study examines how Global South solidarity, as expressed through the G77 in the UNGA, has evolved over time and what factors foster unity or drive fragmentation. Employing a mixed-methods approach—integrating roll-call voting alignment, speech similarity through text analysis, and a case study of Mexico—the analysis reveals that

G77 solidarity is both resilient and dynamic. Far from being a relic of Cold War geopolitics, solidarity remains a vital feature of multilateral diplomacy in the developing world. The findings confirms that solidarity was stronger during the Cold War, when bipolarity and anti-colonial struggles reinforced unity. Yet, contrary to pessimistic predictions, G77 cohesion has persisted at moderately high levels in the post-Cold War era. Roll-call voting demonstrates consistent alignment of G77 members, with the average loyalty score measured by the yearly voting alignment ratio exceeds those of the non-G77 states in most years. Text analysis further shows that rhetorical solidarity has strengthened over time, as Global South countries converge around themes of sustainable development, reform of global economic governance, and climate change in UNGA debates.

The findings challenge the common argument that internal heterogeneity undermines Global South solidarity. Economic and political diversity within the G77, measured by Gini coefficients of GDP and Polity IV scores, does not lead to systematic fragmentation. Instead, these factors are either neutral or positively correlated with voting and rhetoric solidarity, suggesting that institutional norms enable G77 members to prioritize shared interests over differences. By contrast, power disparities, measured by the Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) Gini coefficients, significantly undermine group-level voting solidarity, driven primarily by weaker states' divergence from the majority position. In rhetorical terms, militarily powerful states display lower solidarity, highlighting the strategic rather than genuine nature of their voting behavior. The Mexico case study illustrates the fluidity and strategic nature of solidarity: Mexico's alignment with the G77 evolved from fervent commitment during its initial membership, to low solidarity following its 1994 withdrawal, and to pragmatic engagement upon rejoining in 2023.

This study advances the scholarly debate on Global South solidarity by integrating structural, community-of-interest, and leadership theories. It moved beyond the binary of unity versus fragmentation, showing instead that solidarity is multidimensional, context-dependent, and dynamic. Methodologically, the study's multidimensional operationalization of solidarity—combining behavioral (voting) and rhetorical (speech) measures—overcomes the limitations of prior research focused exclusively on roll-call votes. The persistence of G77 solidarity underscores the continuing relevance of the Global South as a collective actor in global governance. Policymakers in the Global North must recognize the G77's influence and engage with it to build global consensus, rather than treating the developing world as fragmented or marginal. The findings also suggest that the North–South divide has evolved, driven by structural inequalities that fuel demands for reform in global governance. Additionally, the fluidity of solidarity, as exemplified by Mexico, indicates that strategic considerations can reshape alignment, requiring adaptive diplomatic strategies. Finally, the role of rising powers (e.g., China, Brazil, India, South Africa) is pivotal. Despite their high voting solidarity, their lower rhetorical solidarity suggests a more strategic engagement. Their future choices—whether to strengthen their Southern solidarity or pursue narrow national interests—will greatly shape the trajectory of the G77.

Further research should deepen the long-term analysis of how Global South solidarity is generated, sustained, or weakened. Systematic data on collective speeches, draft resolutions, and meeting practices could shed light on the mechanisms of its unity. Comparative studies of other coalitions, such as the Non-Aligned Movement, BRICS, or regional blocs, would clarify whether the identified mechanisms extend beyond the G77. Additionally, a closer examination of how rising powers engage with the broader Global South could provide deeper insights into the evolving dynamics of the Global South solidarity.

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