

Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

# Institutionalization of Relationship and Voting Cohesion: A Case Study of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) at the UN General Assembly\*

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## Abstract

In an era marked by complex international dynamics, examining voting cohesion within international organizations is a crucial avenue for understanding international relations. This research delves into the relationship between the institutionalization of relations among the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) members and their voting behavior at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The central hypothesis of this study posits that a positive correlation exists between the level of institutionalization and the degree of voting cohesion they exhibit at the UNGA. A comprehensive dataset of voting patterns at the UNGA from 2009 onwards is analyzed to investigate this hypothesis. The focus is on the voting alignment of OTS member states with each other and their alignment with major powers like the United States, China, and Russia. Through a meticulous analysis of temporal, issue-specific, and major power alignment,

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the research seeks to discern the patterns indicating a positive relationship between institutionalization and voting cohesion among OTS member states.

**Keywords**

Voting cohesion, Organization of Turkic States, UNGA, voting alignment, regional organizations.

# İlişkilerin Kurumsallaşması ve Oylama Tutarlılığı: Birleşmiş Milletler Genel Kurulunda Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı (TDT) Örneği\*

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## Öz

Karmaşık uluslararası dinamiklerin damga vurduğu bir çağda, uluslararası örgütler içindeki oylama tutarlılığının ölçülmesi, uluslararası ilişkileri anlamak için önemli bir yol teşkil etmektedir. Bu çalışmada, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı (TDT) üyeleri arasındaki ilişkilerin kurumsallaşması ile Birleşmiş Milletler Genel Kurulundaki (BMGK) oy verme davranışları arasındaki ilişki incelenmektedir. Bu çalışmanın temel hipotezi, uluslararası örgütün kurumsallaşma düzeyi ile BM Genel Kurulunda sergiledikleri oy tutarlılığı seviyesi arasında pozitif bir korelasyon olduğudur. Bu hipotezi araştırmak için TDT üye devletlerinin BM Genel Kurulundaki oy davranışları kapsamlı bir veri seti ile analiz edilmiştir. Üye devletlerin BM Genel Kurulundaki oy tutarlılığının yanı sıra onların ABD, Çin ve Rusya gibi diğer aktörlerle olan oylama tutarlılığına da çalışmada odaklanılmıştır. Çalışmada; zamana bağlı, konu bazlı ve büyük güç ittifakları gibi konular dikkate alınarak, üye devletler arasında kurumsallaşma

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ile oylama tutarlılığı arasında olumlu bir ilişki olduğunu gösteren şablonların ortaya konulması için itinalı bir analiz yapılmaya çalışılmıştır.

### **Anahtar kelimeler**

Oy tutarlılığı, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı, BMGK, oylama uyumu, bölgesel örgütler.

## Introduction

The United Nations constitutes the preeminent and legitimate global international organization encompassing 193 member states. Nonetheless, its inception and continued operation have largely relied upon Western powers, particularly the United States (Acharya and Plesch). Within this framework, UNGA occupies a unique position among the six primary organs of the UN.<sup>1</sup> It serves as the singular institution among the sextet that encompasses representatives from all member states, upholding their sovereign equality and providing each entity with an individual vote, independent of military strength, economic resources, population size, territorial breadth, or any other factor (Peterson 1). UNGA can be likened to a legislative body; however, it convenes annually to scrutinize an extensive agenda. At the conclusion of each yearly session, it ratifies resolutions and conclusions pertinent to each agenda item. Although certain resolutions may merely pertain to procedural matters, numerous others hold considerable significance; indeed, they may be deemed historic due to the events they instigated or because they signified pivotal moments in the sphere of international relations (Marín-Bosch). The diverse assortment of issues captured within the voting behavior of a state typically reveals its political stance, the alliances it subscribes to, and the rationale that informs such alliances (Khan).

The analysis of whether sovereign entities implement a cohesive and coordinated strategy in their voting behavior within an international organization or forum is indeed vital. Given the increasingly interconnected and interdependent nature of international relations, numerous international institutions today highlight the essential importance of unity. Concerning regional organizations, a unified approach in diplomatic initiatives not only amplifies the collective voice of the member states but also enhances the effectiveness of their joint policy statements. Using the Organization of Turkic States as a case study, our research tackles this important issue. The questions steering our research include: How does the degree of institutionalization among the members of OTS relate to their voting cohesion at the UNGA? What significant issues are indicative of the voting alignment among OTS members? In what ways do these alignments develop?

Our research hypothesis indicates a positive correlation between the level of institutionalization among OTS member countries and their voting cohesion at the UNGA. The article explores this correlation starting from 2009. The findings could deepen our understanding of voting behaviors within OTS and also enrich the broader dialogue regarding the impact of institutions on state relations. In this context, the study aims to link the theoretical frameworks of liberal institutionalism with empirical analysis, shedding light on the evolving connection between institutionalization and foreign policy coherence within the complex realm of global governance. International organizations develop their own identities, bureaucracies, missions, and ethical principles. As the bureaucracy progresses, the international organization can make increasingly informed decisions. This rationality further enables member states to cooperate in setting shared goals (Barnett and Finnemore, *The Power of Liberal International Organizations* 163-164).

The subsequent sections outline the complete framework of our research initiative, each acting as a phase in understanding the intricacies of the connection between OTS' institutionalization and voting unity at UNGA. We commence with a theoretical foundation and a concise literature overview before exploring a variety of research, hypotheses, and academic discussions that depict the environment of regional organizations, institutionalization, and voting tendencies within the UNGA setting. With this context established, we provide a detailed examination of the OTS, emphasizing its institutional development. The ensuing materials and methods section meticulously outlines our procedures for data collection, processing, and analysis. The results are examined in the results and discussion sections, culminating in a definitive synthesis in the conclusion.

### **Theoretical Background and a Brief Literature Review**

There is a growing body of scholarly inquiry dedicated to the examination of voting behaviors within the UNGA (Bailey et al.; Kim and Russett; Voeten, "Data and Analyses of Voting"; Voeten, "Clashes in the Assembly"; Voeten et al.). For instance, the connection between regime type, leader characteristics, and voting behavior in the UNGA has been examined (Dreher and Jensen). Additionally, some studies have investigated how major global powers attempt to secure votes in the UNGA by providing

aid (Wang; Istomin), while others have analyzed how sanctions influence voting trends (Adhikari et al.). Moreover, ongoing investigations in this area continue to assess various elements that affect voting patterns at the UNGA, such as the influence of regional alliances (Panke, “Regional Power”; Panke, “States”; Ferdinand), economic motivations (Dreher and Sturm), and shifting geopolitical landscapes (Istomin).

Institutionalization and socialization carry considerable theoretical significance for the theory and practice of international relations. The emergence of institutional approaches within IR theory can be attributed to rational choice theory, liberalism, neo-functionalism, and social constructionism. The term institutionalization describes the process through which behaviors, like the actions of sovereign states and global rights, become shaped by commonly accepted rules and norms. Conversely, socialization denotes the process of integrating states into a particular worldview that aligns with the goals of other states, which form the foundation of the global economic and security framework (Risse and Sikink; Alderson; Johnston, “Treating International Institutions”). Socialization theory elucidates international cooperation by concentrating on microprocesses like persuasion and social influence. Consequently, grasping the roles of institutionalization and socialization in international relations is essential for both theoretical exploration and practical policymaking (Risse and Sikink). Since the 1960s, we have witnessed the rise of institutional approaches in International Relations theory (Jönsson et al.), leading to various levels of inquiry into the implications of institutionalization and socialization for understanding cooperation within international institutions and prompting discussions on institutional design and collective action (Johnston, “Socialization in International Institutions”; Böhmelt and Spilker).

Institutionalization and socialization enhance collaboration through a variety of mechanisms. Institutions often cultivate shared norms and values among member states, establishing a foundation for collaboration. The frequent interactions within institutions build trust among member states, diminishing the fear of betrayal and promoting cooperation (Hoffman). Institutions offer frameworks for the peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts, lowering the chances of conflicts escalating into confrontations (Mitchell). Institutions encourage the flow of information, aiding member

states in making well-informed decisions and coordinating their actions. Consequently, institutions can help minimize transaction costs related to negotiations and cooperation, streamlining the process for states to collaborate effectively (Keohane and Martin; Axelrod and Keohane). Socialization within institutions can apply peer pressure on states to adhere to established norms and rules, fostering compliance (Goodman and Jinks). These represent merely a few of the mechanisms thoroughly examined in theoretical contexts, emphasizing how institutionalization and socialization are vital in fostering cooperation and stability in international relations.

The empirical research indicates that the effectiveness of their collective action within international organizations (IOs) relies on their skill in formulating collective stances that cover a wide array of issues (Barnett and Finnemore, *The Power of Liberal International Organizations*; Abbott and Snidal). As we examine the voting behaviors in the UNGA, it becomes clear that the votes cast there carry implications that extend beyond a simple count of preferences (Seabra and Mesquita). They act as a subtle reflection of international relations, where geopolitical alliances, common interests, and diplomatic factors converge to influence the trajectory of collective action. Consequently, scholarly discussions have acknowledged UNGA votes as authentic indicators of solidarity within and among diverse groups of states (Burmester and Jankowski, “The Unsolved Puzzle”; Hooijmaaijers and Keukeleire).

In this regard, regional organizations exhibit a tendency to harmonize their voting positions within the UNGA, as highlighted by existing studies (Burmester and Jankowski, “Comparing Regional Organizations”). The analysis reveals that the European Union (EU) stands out as a notable exception among regional organizations, demonstrating a unique and cohesive presence within the UNGA (Kissack). However, this situation takes on a different perspective when analyzing the voting behaviors of states that hold seats on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in comparison to their regional peers (Lai and Lefler). These findings collectively emphasize the potential for regional organizations to align their members’ voting preferences within the UNGA, although this is dependent on the particular organization and contextual intricacies (Van Langenhove et al.).

The study of collective voting dynamics among regional coalitions within the UNGA has attracted notable interest, investigating several aspects of



togetherness and agreement. A body of research has examined the attitudes of members from regional organizations regarding specific issues. For example, studies have analyzed the voting tendencies of groups such as the EU and the Arab League during UNGA sessions discussing the Israeli Palestinian conflict (Mandler and Lutmar). Thorough investigations have explored the realm of long-term solidarity within regional organizations, carefully assessing their voting behaviors throughout numerous UNGA sessions (Hooijmaaijers and Keukeleire 394). Additionally, some research efforts have sought to evaluate the adherence of regional blocs like the EU, ASEAN, and BRICS in the UNGA (Gunes and Ozkaleli; Jin and Hosli; Hooijmaaijers and Keukeleire). This analytical area has examined whether member states of regional organizations converge around a shared position on particular issues (Mandler and Lutmar 92).

The domain of voting unity among OTS member states has mostly gone unexplored within this body of academic literature. Only one research effort has investigated whether coherence has improved over the years and which topics have seen greater alignment between 1993 and 2011 (Kaplan et al.). Recognizing this gap in existing studies, our research aims to examine the intricate relationship between institutionalization and UNGA voting patterns among OTS members.

### **The Evolution of Institutionalization and Foreign Policy Alignment within the Organization of Turkic States**

The Organization of Turkic States (OTS) was established to promote comprehensive cooperation among Turkic-speaking countries. The foundation of the OTS was laid with the signing of the Nakhchivan Agreement in 2009, which formally established the organization and outlined its primary objectives of fostering political, economic, and cultural collaboration.

#### **Establishment and Development of OTS**

##### **1. Foundational Period (2009-2012)**

- o *Nakhchivan Agreement (2009)*: The agreement was signed by Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Türkiye, establishing the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States (Turkic Council), which later evolved into the OTS (Kocatepe 96-97).

- o *Initial Objectives*: Focused on enhancing cooperation in political, economic, cultural, and humanitarian fields, emphasizing shared linguistic, cultural, and historical ties.
2. Institutional Expansion (2012-2018)
- o *Development of Institutional Frameworks*: During this period, the OTS developed several key institutions, including the Turkic Academy, the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation, and the Turkic Business Council (Şahin and Argalı).
  - o *Increased Cooperation*: Emphasis was placed on joint economic projects, cultural exchange programs, and educational initiatives to strengthen the collective identity and collaboration among member states (Emeklier et al.; Yıldız; Yesevi).
3. Consolidation and Global Engagement (2018-Present)
- o *Broader International Role*: The OTS has increased its engagement with other international organizations and states, enhancing its global visibility and influence (Musabay Baki 39-40).
  - o *Strategic Partnerships*: Focused on strategic issues such as energy cooperation, transportation corridors, and security collaborations, reflecting the evolving geopolitical landscape (Köstem 13).

### **Foreign Policy Alignment**

The establishment of the OTS has profoundly influenced the foreign policy orientation of its member nations. As the organization evolved, it enabled enhanced coordination and unity in the international stances taken by its members, especially in multilateral platforms like the UNGA. The common cultural and historical heritage, along with the formal institutional structures of the OTS, has cultivated a spirit of solidarity and shared objectives, resulting in more uniform voting patterns and cooperative foreign policy approaches among member nations. By exploring the formation and evolution of the OTS and analyzing its effects on foreign policy alignment, this research seeks to illuminate the dynamics of regional collaboration and the significance of institutionalization in shaping international relations within the Turkic-speaking community.

## Material and Methods

### Data

The research exclusively extracted data<sup>2</sup> associated with resolutions from the year 2009 onwards, coinciding with the inception of the Organization of Turkic States. This dataset forms the basis for the subsequent analysis investigating the potential correlation between the institutionalization of OTS relations and its impact on voting cohesion within the UNGA. As such, the dataset encompasses a multitude of variables, each capturing distinct dimensions of voting behavior and contextual information. To address the research question concerning the correlation between the institutionalization of relations and voting cohesion among OTS member states, the dataset has been filtered to include voting data exclusively from OTS member countries. Additionally, we have another filtered dataset for the analysis that focuses on voting behavior with major powers such as the United States, China, and Russia.<sup>3</sup>

The utilization of these datasets facilitates a comprehensive investigation into temporal patterns, issue-specific cohesion, and alignment with major powers. Through meticulous data exploration and analysis, this study seeks to unveil potential relationships between the institutionalization of relations, foreign policy cohesion, and collaborative decision-making within the framework of the UN General Assembly.

### Methods

#### *Temporal Cohesion Analysis*

The dataset analyzed in this study comprises voting patterns at the UNGA from 2009 onwards. This period was selected to provide a comprehensive overview of the voting behavior of the Organization of Turkic States members in relation to their institutionalization process. The primary objective of the Temporal Cohesion Analysis is to assess the voting cohesion among member states of the Organization of Turkic States over successive United Nations General Assembly sessions. This analysis will be conducted by applying the “Agreement Index” (AI<sub>i</sub>) formula to measure the degree of voting consensus among OTS member countries on various resolutions.<sup>4</sup> The AI<sub>i</sub> formula, designed to capture voting cohesion within a group, is expressed as follows:

$$AI_i = (\max(Y_i, N_i, A_i) - 1/2(Y_i + N_i + A_i - \max(Y_i, N_i, A_i))) / (Y_i + N_i + A_i)$$

Where:

- $Y_i$  represents the count of “Yes” votes by group  $i$  on a given resolution.
- $N_i$  represents the count of “No” votes by group  $i$  on the same resolution.
- $A_i$  represents the count of “Abstain” votes by group  $i$  on the same resolution.
- $\max\{Y_i, N_i, A_i\}$  denotes the highest count among  $Y_i$ ,  $N_i$ , and  $A_i$ .

The formula considers the positions of alternatives in individual rankings and quantifies the agreement level between individual and collective rankings. As such, this formula quantifies the extent to which OTS member states align in their voting behavior, assigning a value between 0 (indicating maximum disagreement) and 1 (indicating complete agreement). The  $AI_i$  calculation considers the dominance of the highest vote count and balances it against the total number of votes cast by the group. The resulting  $AI_i$  values will allow for the analysis of voting cohesion trends over time.

#### *Issue-Specific Cohesion Analysis*

In tandem with the Temporal Cohesion Analysis, an Issue-Specific Cohesion Analysis will be conducted to explore whether OTS member countries exhibit heightened voting cohesion on topics. By leveraging the issue codes (Palestinian conflict, nuclear weapons, arms control, colonialism, human rights, and economic development) provided in the dataset<sup>5</sup> the percentage of instances in which OTS members vote collectively on each issue will be calculated. The comparison of issue-specific cohesion with overall cohesion will enable the identification of issues that foster stronger consensus among Organization of Turkic States.

#### *Analyzing Voting Alignment with Non-OTS Countries*

The final analytical facet involves scrutinizing the alignment patterns of OTS member states with major global powers such as the USA, China, and Russia. The focus will be on calculating the percentage of votes in which OTS countries align with each of these significant actors on various resolutions. This analysis will yield insights into the level of agreement or divergence between OTS and non-OTS countries and provide context for understanding OTS member states’ broader international alignments.

## Data Analysis Approach

For the Temporal Cohesion Analysis, Ali values will be computed for each UNGA session, enabling the observation of voting cohesion trends over the years. The Issue-Specific Cohesion Analysis will involve calculating the percentage of votes on each issue for which OTS members vote together, facilitating a comparative assessment with overall cohesion. Finally, alignment patterns with non-OTS countries will be deduced by calculating the percentage of shared votes on diverse resolutions.

By employing these three distinct methodologies – Temporal Cohesion Analysis, Issue-Specific Cohesion Analysis, and Analyzing Voting Alignment with Non-OTS Countries – this study endeavors to comprehensively investigate the degree of cohesion among OTS member states in their UNGA voting behavior. These analyses will provide insights into the evolution of OTS members' alignment, potential issue-specific consensus, and their positioning in the broader international context. The triangulation of these methodologies will contribute to a nuanced understanding of the relationship between institutionalization within OTS and its impact on voting patterns within the UNGA.

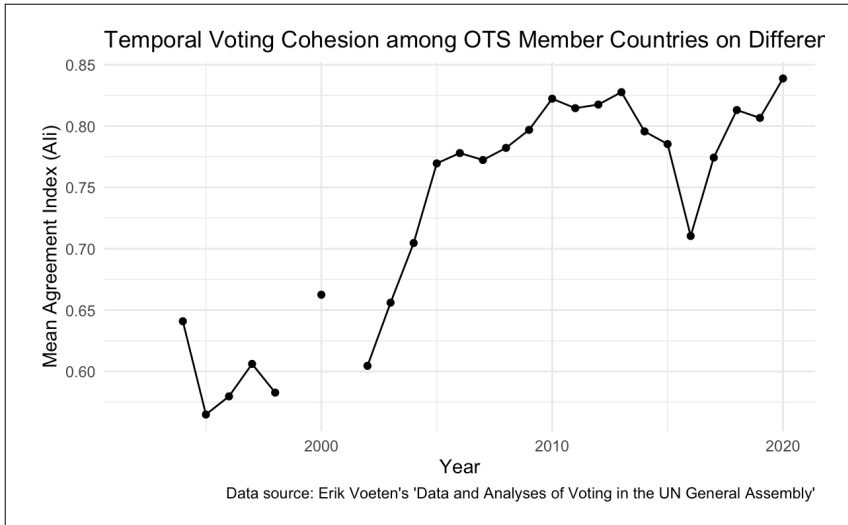
## Result and Discussion

### Temporal Analysis

The examination of temporal patterns in voting behavior holds a significant place within the realm of international relations research. Voting cohesion, indicating the alignment of member states' voting choices on various resolutions, offers insights into the evolving dynamics of cooperation and consensus-building within international organizations. In the context of the Organization of Turkic States, this section investigates the temporal trends of voting cohesion among its member countries within the United Nations General Assembly sessions. By tracing voting patterns over different years, this analysis sheds light on the level of coherence in policy preferences and the stability of collaborative decision-making among Organization of Turkic States.

The temporal analysis of voting cohesion within the OTS member states reveals intriguing insights into their collaborative behavior over time since 2009. The analysis involves calculating the percentage of instances in which

OTS countries cast congruent votes on UNGA resolutions within each session. This measure serves as an indicator of the degree to which these countries vote together, thus reflecting a shared foreign policy approach.



**Figure 1.** Temporal Voting Cohesion among OTS Countries

The findings reveal an upward trend in voting cohesion among OTS countries over the years since 2000. A cohesion threshold of 0.75—where 0 represents the least cohesive and 1 reflects the most cohesive sessions—has been employed to categorize the sessions. Impressively, 36 sessions surpass this threshold, signifying a substantial alignment in voting behavior, while only 13 sessions fall below it. The computed overall average cohesion for OTS countries' sessions since 1992 stands at 0.73, underscoring a noteworthy level of harmony in their voting choices.

Another way to investigate the details of the cohesion over the years is to find the high and low cohesive sessions. The below table provides such exercise.

**Table 1**  
High and Low Cohesion Sessions over the years

**High Cohesion Sessions**

Year	Session	Mean_Ali
1992	46	1
1993	47	1
1995	49	1
2002	56	1
2013	67	1

**Low Cohesion Sessions**

Year	Session	Mean_Ali
1999	53	0.6250000
2000	54	0.6250000
2005	59	0.6250000
2006	60	0.6875000
2007	61	0.6458333
2008	62	0.6125000
2009	63	0.6250000
2010	64	0.5982143

The identification of highly cohesive sessions, such as Session 47 in 1992, Session 56 in 2002, and Session 67 in 2013, offers intriguing insights into the cooperative dynamics among OTS member states within the United Nations General Assembly. These sessions, characterized by significant voting alignment, may indicate pivotal moments of consensus-building and concerted diplomatic efforts among OTS countries. The temporal distribution of these cohesive sessions' spans across different years, suggesting that collaborative behavior has manifested consistently over time, despite contextual changes.

Interestingly, the lowest cohesive sessions, Session 62, 63, and 64, occurring in 2008-2010, offer an equally significant perspective. The coincidence of these sessions with the years following the foundation of OTS in 2009 may point to an initial phase of establishing diplomatic coordination

mechanisms and institutional frameworks. It is plausible that during this period, the member states were still in the process of institutionalizing their relationships, harmonizing foreign policy objectives, and aligning their voting behavior within the UNGA. These lowest cohesive sessions could indicate challenges that arise when forming a new international organization. Establishing common ground, coordinating positions, and fostering trust among member states may have been priorities during these years. The fact that these sessions occurred shortly after the foundation of OTS could suggest that the initial phases of any international organization may witness varying levels of cohesion as mechanisms of cooperation are solidified.

Overall, the juxtaposition of highly cohesive and lowest cohesive sessions provides a nuanced understanding of the trajectory of OTS's diplomatic coordination. It underscores the evolution of cohesion from formative stages to more mature diplomatic collaboration, which is likely influenced by the institutionalization of relationships and the gradual alignment of foreign policy preferences among member states.

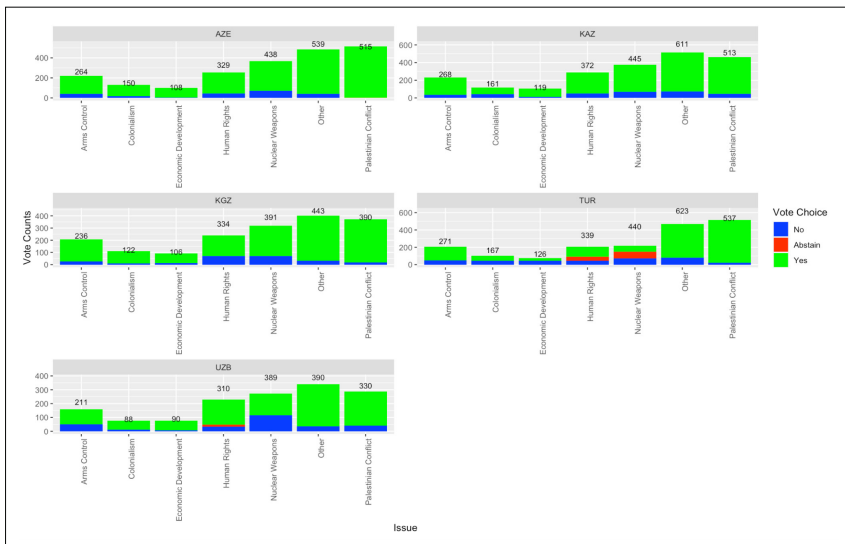
Nonetheless, the observed upward variation in voting cohesion across the years holds profound implications for comprehending the evolving collaborative dynamics among OTS member states within the UNGA. The prevalence of sessions exhibiting high levels of cohesion suggests a robust consensus-building process, where OTS countries consistently converge on shared diplomatic directions. This trend may signify the presence of institutionalized relationships, common foreign policy objectives, or effective coordination mechanisms among OTS nations. During the 66th session of the UN General Assembly in 2011, for example, the OTS Council of Foreign Ministers convened and shared views on session problems (Kaplan et al. 132). Members of the OTS continue to band together and form a unified perspective on problems. The cases of Afghanistan and Cyprus are examples of this. Member states have decided to work together at the UN on these concerns (Yesevi 16). Following the ninth meeting in Samarkand in 2022, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev indicated that a commission inside the OTS would be established to communicate with the UN on Afghanistan, and that the OTS will act together on this problem (Başaran).



Furthermore, the increase in overall cohesion since 2009 aligns intriguingly with the hypothesized impact of institutionalization. In the broader context of international relations theories, the observed temporal patterns could also resonate with liberal institutionalist perspectives. The cohesive voting behavior may be indicative of the positive influence of international institutions on state interactions. This alignment might signify increased coordination, lowered transaction costs, and enhanced cooperation among OTS countries. This rise in alignment could be indicative of the strengthening institutional framework that bolsters collaboration, mitigates uncertainties, and facilitates concerted decision-making. These observations resonate with the liberal institutionalist theory, affirming the positive role of institutions in enhancing diplomatic coordination and reducing friction among member states.

### Issue-specific Cohesion Analysis

The issue-specific cohesion analysis reveals insightful patterns in the voting behavior of OTS member countries across different topics. The distinct voting tendencies observed can be interpreted in the context of regional dynamics, foreign policy considerations, and common interests shared among these nations.



**Figure 2.** Distribution of Yes-No-Abstain Votes on Different Issues

The higher rate of abstentions for Türkiye in human rights and nuclear weapon-related issues could indicate a nuanced stance on these matters. Abstentions might reflect Türkiye 's desire to avoid taking a clear stance or to express concerns about certain aspects of the resolutions. This could also be related to Türkiye's foreign policy strategy of maintaining positive relations with various stakeholders and balancing its priorities.

The higher rate of "no" votes for nuclear weapon-related issues by Uzbekistan might reflect a strong stance against nuclear proliferation or concerns about specific resolutions in this domain. This could be indicative of Uzbekistan's commitment to global non-proliferation efforts or its security concerns in the region.

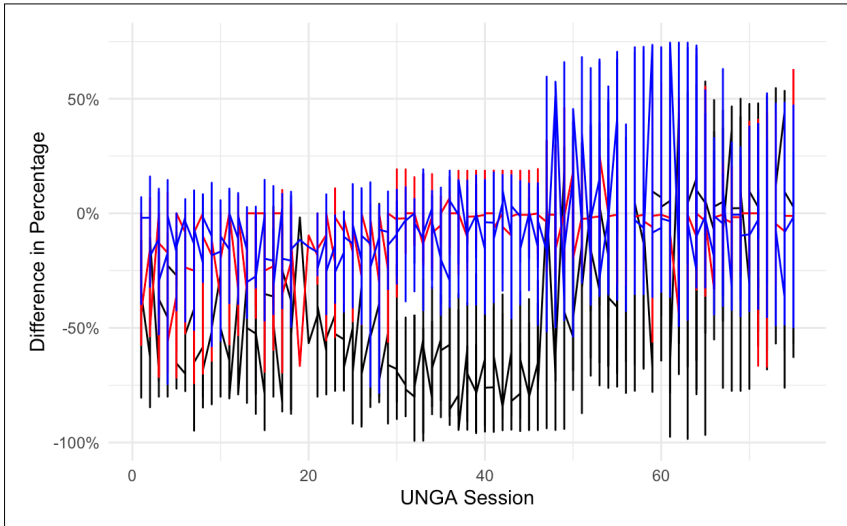
The overall cohesion observed among OTS member countries on various issues suggests that these nations share common interests and priorities in their foreign policy decisions. This cohesion could be attributed to shared cultural, historical, and economic ties among OTS countries. It might also indicate that these nations have established a level of coordination and consultation in their international engagement, reflecting their institutionalized relationship.

It is imperative for member states to share similar normative values to enable OTS to collaboratively address specific issues. Norms govern appropriate behaviors within a given identity framework. In this context, it is crucial for member states of the OTS to establish shared identities and norms, as this facilitates consistent actions on various matters. When member states adopt the identity of international organizations, the organization's norm-teaching characteristics become evident (Yesevi 12). When understanding these voting patterns, it is critical to keep the larger geopolitical background in mind. Regional dynamics, alliances, economic partnerships, and historical ties can all have an impact on how these countries vote on specific issues. Additionally, the investigation should consider the specific substance of each resolution and the potential ramifications for the different OTS member countries.

### **Analyzing Voting Alignment with Non-OTS Countries**

The below line plot shows the differences in voting tendencies (percentage of yes, no, and abstain) between general voting tendencies and OTS

voting tendencies across UNGA sessions. The red and blue lines represent differences in no votes and abstain votes, respectively, compared to the general tendencies.



**Figure 3.** Differences with other countries

Interpreting the line plot of differences in voting tendencies between general voting and OTS voting requires an understanding of the implications of these differences. Here's how we might interpret different patterns in the lines:

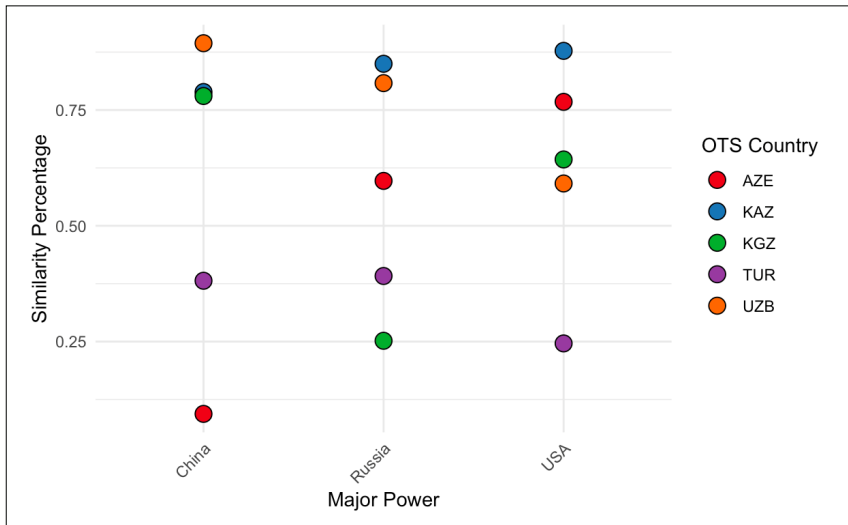
#### Lines Below Zero (Negative Differences)

- **Red Line (No Votes):** When the red line is below zero, it indicates that OTS countries are generally voting “no” less frequently compared to the general voting tendencies. This could suggest a higher level of consensus or alignment among OTS countries on issues where they might have historically diverged from the general trend.
- **Blue Line (Abstain Votes):** Similarly, a blue line below zero suggests that OTS countries are abstaining less frequently compared to the general trend. This might indicate a stronger stance or willingness to take a clear position on issues.

### Lines Between 0 and – 50

- Differences in the range of – 50 to 0 might suggest moderate alignment between OTS countries and general voting tendencies. While they are not drastically different from the general trend, there could be certain issues where OTS countries show slightly different voting behaviors.

Overall, lines below zero suggest alignment or consensus, while lines above zero suggest divergence or distinct stances. The magnitude of the difference provides an indication of the extent of this alignment or divergence.



**Figure 4.** Alignment with Great powers

The metric denoted as the “Similarity Percentage,” graphically depicted in the figure above, serves as a quantitative gauge of the nuanced and intricate alignment present within the voting patterns of each Observer and Transitional State (OTS) country in relation to the prominent major powers on the global stage, namely the United States (USA), China, and Russia. This pivotal percentage affords a profound insight into the extent to which the respective OTS country’s voting tendencies coalesce with the voting inclinations of the designated major power. By virtue of this numerical measure, we are enabled to ascertain the frequency with which these OTS

countries' voting choices are consonant with those exercised by the major power under scrutiny.

In the context of the visual representation, an examination of the discrete figures corroborates the salient observation that Azerbaijan, as a specific instance, evinces a conspicuously lower degree of cohesion in its voting patterns vis-à-vis China, a phenomenon aptly captured by the lower Similarity Percentage. Conversely, Azerbaijan's voting cohesion with the United States emerges as more robust, thereby inferring a higher alignment with the latter. Additionally, Uzbekistan emerges as a compelling case wherein it is distinctly characterized by a heightened level of voting coherence with China, as evidenced by the elevated Similarity Percentage, while concurrently exhibiting a correspondingly diminished level of concurrence in voting proclivities with the United States. This pattern underscores the intricate interplay of divergent geopolitical factors influencing the voting dynamics of these OTS countries, fostering a more nuanced understanding of their international alignments and affiliations.

The fact that OTS members are in multiple alliances constitutes the organization's most difficult challenge. For a long time, the Central Asian Turkic States were ruled by the Soviet Union. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Türkiye and the United States attempted to exert substantial influence in the region. China, on the other hand, has better commercial relations with the region, owing to the "Belt and Road" project, a contemporary Silk Road project unveiled in 2013 (Yıldırım 29). China and Russia have larger trade volumes with the region than Türkiye and the US (Demir 53). The member states of the OTS participate in various alliances for domestic purposes and to maintain the multipolar political balance of the world. For instance, Türkiye has been a NATO member since 1952, whereas Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan belong to the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) (Kocatepe 255–56). Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan are all members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). All members of the OTS, except Türkiye, are also members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Türkiye is a member of the G-20 and Hungary, an observer member of the organization, is a member of the EU (Demir 54-55). Furthermore, China has launched the C+C5 program, which involves multifaceted cooperation with the Central

Asian Turkic States. Uzbekistan looks to be actively seeking commercial collaboration with China. The partnerships likely influence the OTS member nations' foreign policy preferences and alignment.

## **Conclusion**

The Organization of Turkic States has attracted considerable attention in the realm of Eurasian politics as a significant regional entity. The political capabilities of this organization are often explored in scholarly discussions. One key indicator of an organization's potential is the degree of collaboration and unity among its members. The foreign policy orientations of member states serve as a gauge of their cohesion and teamwork. Analyzing member states' voting patterns in the UNGA can reveal whether their foreign policies are aligned. This research aims to assess foreign policy consistency within the regional organization by investigating the voting behavior of OTS members in the UNGA.

Robust institutionalization is vital for regional organizations to function with coherence. The European Union serves as an exemplary case in this regard. In this context, the study examined whether there exists a correlation between the level of institutionalization within the OTS and the consistency of UNGA voting. Since 1992, Turkic States have enhanced their collaboration and set up institutions to facilitate ongoing cooperation. The member states gathered under a unified framework and formed a regional organization through the Nakhchivan Agreement. At its eighth summit held in Istanbul, the regional organization ratified the "Vision of the Turkic World 2040" document and updated its objectives. Member states underscored the importance of foreign policy dialogue and collaboration in both the Nakhchivan Agreement and the 2040 Vision document that was adopted during the Istanbul Summit on November 12, 2021. Mechanisms have been implemented to promote coordination among member states, and specific goals have been identified for future advancement in this area.

UNGA voting serves as a valuable instrument for assessing foreign policy coherence. This study explored the impact of institutionalization on UNGA voting through three research questions: the degree of alignment among member states in UNGA voting, the alignment of member states on particular issues, and the alignment of member states with global powers.

The analysis results indicate that the overall unity among OTS members has strengthened in recent years, suggesting positive progress toward the OTS objective of collective action on international platforms. In particular, there are specific domains where OTS members demonstrate significant consensus on certain issues, showcasing successful institutionalization and alignment in their foreign policies.

Nevertheless, the data also reveal particular matters where member states fail to reach an agreement. This indicates that although the OTS has achieved notable advancements in promoting cohesion, member states still prioritize their individual national interests on certain issues. This duality underscores the intricate nature of regional cooperation, where institutionalization enhances overall unity but does not completely diminish individual national considerations.

The process of pursuing shared values, principles, and interests among member states falls under the responsibility of the Organization's Secretary General. The analysis indicates that both the member states and the organization must intensify their efforts regarding specific issues. The primary challenge for the organization lies in finding a balance between the interests of member states and those of global powers.

UNGA votes provide only a glimpse into a state's foreign policy orientation. It is crucial to examine other indicators for a comprehensive understanding. However, UNGA voting also offers the opportunity to analyze a long period of time and a vast number of sessions. Through the analysis of numerous sessions over several years, it is possible to achieve consistent outcomes. To achieve greater cohesion in UNGA voting, it is imperative that Member States adopt common interests, principles and norms. This is underlined in the Turkic World 2040 Vision document. It is important to note that for the member states of the OTS to collaboratively participate on international platforms, consultation among the member states alone may be insufficient. Increased cohesion among the societies of the member states is also necessary. In this sense, the materialization of institutionalization can be viewed as an extension of the research to be carried out in this domain. Exploring how institutionalization in an organization contributes to the establishment of shared principles will enhance the literature and lead to a deeper understanding of the subject.

## Contribution Rate Statement

The authors' contribution rates in this study are equal.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of this study. There is no conflict of interest between the authors.

## Notes

- 1 The six principal organs of the United Nations (UN) are the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the UN Secretariat.
- 2 Erik Voeten compiled the dataset used in this study, which was provided inside a repository of voting behavior and resolutions made by UN member states. See: (Voeten et al.).
- 3 All datasets and codes will be published in a public repository (github or figshare) in order allow other researchers to verify our findings and build on their work. This is important for ensuring the quality and integrity of scientific research.
- 4 For a detaile discussion on the formulation: (Born and Nevison).
- 5 ME: Palestinian conflict, NU: nuclear weapons, DI: arms control, CO: colonialism, HR: human rights, EC: economic development.

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