


# INTERNATIONAL LAW AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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## NAVIGATING GLOBAL SOUTH'S AMBIVALENT STANCE ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

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### Abstract

The study reveals the complexity of the Global South's stance on the Russia-Ukraine war within a broader context of a changing world order. Through the lens of neorealism and constructivism, we explore how the positions of the Global South countries are influenced by their vision of own national interests, divergent perceptions of the causes and possible consequences of the war, and of the roles of the parties involved with regard to the prospects of reshaping the global system of international relations.

We trace the increasing attention to the Global South in the West and the evolution of its perception from the concept of an economically disadvantaged Third World to an important geopolitical player. We discuss why the postcolonial perspective of war that has gained traction in Ukraine is perceived differently in the Global South due to their own historical experience, the role of the West, and Russian propaganda. We also analyse why the Western framing of the Russia-Ukraine war in the context of preserving the existing world order and as a battle between democracy and autocracy has limited appeal for the Global South.

We discuss how pragmatic indifference and strategic opportunism are preventing countries in the Global South from taking a more active stance on the war, and how their governments are seeking to mitigate or compensate for the negative effects of the war. We analyse how China's perception of the war is influenced by competition with the U.S. and aspirations to build a multipolar world devoid of Western hegemony, and how Beijing's pro-Russian neutrality affects the position of the Global South.

The article reveals how Ukraine, faced with the challenge of gaining political support from the Global South, while being critically dependent on military and financial assistance from the Global North, has achieved certain progress in this regard, but still seeks a more active engagement of the Global South as a potential balancing force in world order.

**Keywords:** Global South, Russia-Ukraine war, Third World, Non-Aligned Movement, postcolonialism, world order.

### Introduction

Traditionally, the Global South has been referred to in international relations as a post-Cold War alternative to the term "Third World", economically disadvantaged nation-states, mostly members of the Non-Aligned Movement (Mahler, 2017). But today, the Global South is significantly different from how it was perceived in previous decades. While to a certain extent it is still about the "spaces and peoples

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negatively impacted by contemporary capitalist globalization” (Mahler, 2017), it is also about “a multifaceted movement that underscores the need for a postcolonial international community of interest” (Grovogui, 2011), a powerful force “to present and claim future alternatives to neoliberal globalization” (Ballestrin, 2020), countries from across the globe with variegated economic and political systems and asymmetrical power that does not prevent them from “taking common policy positions in international affairs and multilateral settings” (Brosig & Verma, 2024).

The growing influence of the Global South on international relations is increasing the competition for its countries’ support between the Global North, primarily the United States and the European Union, and the Global East, particularly Russia and China.

The deficit of comprehending the evolved Global South as a geopolitical actor makes it challenging to understand the motivations and predict the policies of its actors, as illustrated by the difficulties in the U.S. and Europe’s attempts to find common ground with the Global South in elaborating a coherent position of the international community on Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

In this paper, we will aim to consider the complexity of the Global South’s views on the Russia-Ukraine war within the context of a broader picture of the changing world order, the main factors and trends in this perspective, and what it means for Ukraine and for the international relations studies on the Global South.

### **Methodology**

This study relies on the rationalist and constructivist approaches to interpreting international relations, as well as the power transition theory. The former approaches help to understand how the egoistic national interests of the Global South countries and their divergent interpretations of the conflict and the roles of the parties involved influence their stance on the Russia-Ukraine war. The power transition theory initiated by Abramo Organski (1958) suggests a useful angle to explain how and why global players compete for the voices of the Global South states to establish favourable global hierarchy with asymmetrically distributed power which can reassure peace (Kugler & Organski, 1989).

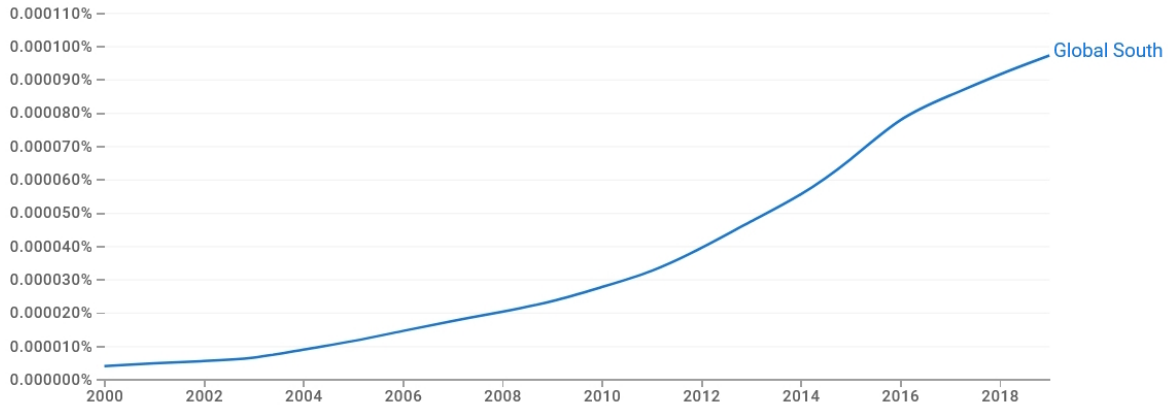
We begin with analysing how the perception of the Global South has been reconsidered in international relations (IR) studies, evolving from the concept of an economically disadvantaged Third World to an important geopolitical actor that is gaining increasing influence. In the following sections, we explore the Global South countries’ stance on Russia-Ukraine war, highlighting its ambivalence and unwillingness to clearly take sides. We further analyse the complexity of the factors that influence the position of the Global South, including the postcolonial legacy and utilisation of it by Russia in attempts to justify its aggression against Ukraine.

We explore how the perspectives of pragmatic indifference and strategic opportunism are pushing the Global South countries to refrain from taking a more active position in the war, including imposing economic sanctions against Russia. Furthermore, we analyse China’s stance and its role in shaping position of the Global South countries, and explore how they perceive the conflict through the prism of their attitude to the existing world order and their aspirations for a more just system of international relations. We conclude with a reflection on Ukraine’s attempts to gain support from the Global South and the prospects for further development.

### **“A Vital New Force in international affairs”**

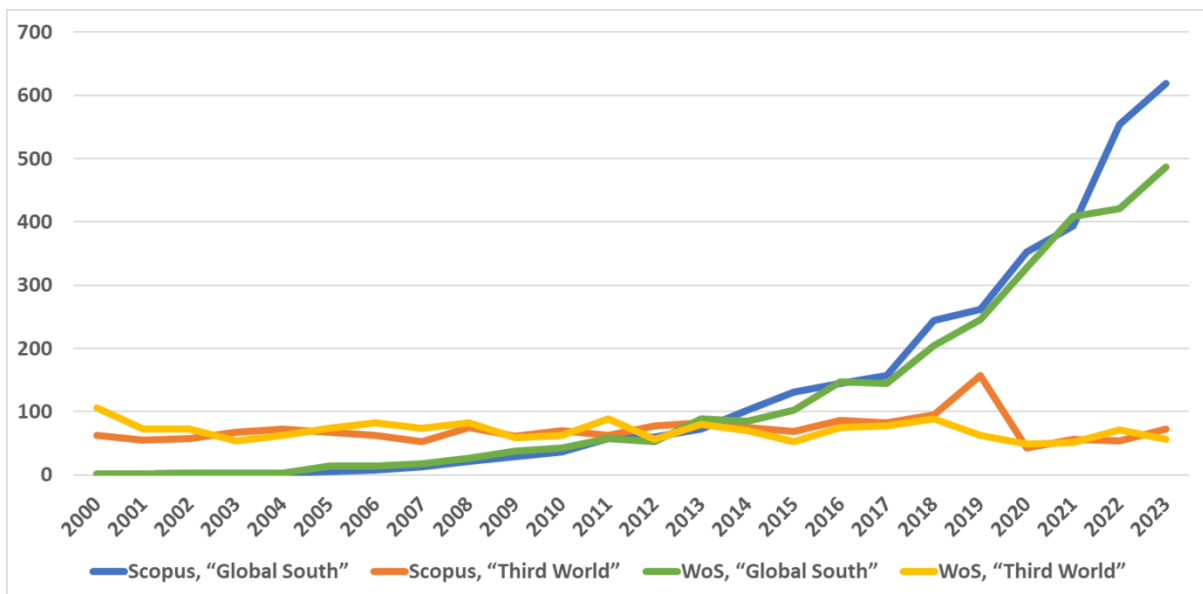
Back in the distant 1964, British sociologist Peter Worsley in his book “The Third World” predicted the emergence of “a vital new force in international affairs” (Worsley, 1964). Today, this is taking place, and the new dynamics in IR are widely recognised by scholars and policymakers. Prof. John Ikenberry from Princeton University names the Global South, along with the Global West, and the Global East, as “Three Worlds” offering their “grand narratives” and “seeking to shape global rules and institutions” (Ikenberry, 2024). Prof. Stephan Klingebiel from the German Institute of Development and Sustainability points out that “actors in the Global South are no longer merely participants on the sidelines, but active co-players which many actors are trying to win over” (Klingebiel, 2023). U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken called Africa, the continent with the largest number of the Global South countries, “a major geopolitical force” that “will shape our future” (Blinken, 2022).

It is not surprising that, according to the Google Books Ngram Viewer, the mention of the Global South in books increased 32 times between 2000 and 2019, as shown in Fig. 1 (Google Books Ngram Viewer, 2024).



**Fig. 1. The term “Global South” in a corpus of books, indexed by Google Books, 2000-2019.**  
**Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer (as of 7 July 2024).**

Even more revealing is the data from Scopus and Web of Science Core Collection, where the number of indexed publications with the term “Global South” in the title increased hundreds of times from 2000 to 2023. If in the early 2000s the number of indexed publications with the term “Global South” in the title in Scopus and Web of Science was estimated at a few per year, in 2023, more than 600 such publications were indexed in Scopus and almost 500 in Web of Science, as shown in Fig. 2 (Scopus, 2024a, 2024b; Web of Science, 2024a, 2024b).



**Fig. 2. The number of publications with “Global South” and “Third World” in the titles, indexed in Scopus and Web of Science Core Collection, for 2000-2023.**  
**Sources: Scopus, Web of Science (as of 7 July 2024).**

It is noteworthy that in this case, the term “Global South” has not just replaced the term “Third World,” the number of references to which in the titles of publications indexed in Scopus and Web of Science has not changed significantly, with some deviations in different years. Therefore, we can certainly state the growing academic interest in the “Global South” and not just the substitution of one term for another.

It is also worth noting that out of a total of 3,273 publications with the term “Global South” in the titles indexed in Scopus for 2000-2023, most authors are affiliated with the United States (745 publications),

the United Kingdom (608), South Africa (376), Germany (276), and Canada (229). The situation is similar with the publications indexed in Web of Science Core Collection: out of a total of 2,936 publications with the term “Global South” in the titles indexed for 2000-2023, most authors are affiliated with the United States (730 publications), England (503), South Africa (289), Germany (214), and Canada (213).

Thus, out of the top five countries of affiliation for the authorship of publications with the term “Global South” in the titles indexed in 2000-2023, only one is from the Global South itself, namely the Republic of South Africa, while four represent the Global North. On the one hand, this indicates a significant and growing interest of the countries of the Global North in the Global South. On the other hand, it also indicates that the position of the academic community of the Global South itself is underrepresented in the world’s leading academic publication databases, which is unlikely to be beneficial to a better understanding of the motivations that influence policy-making in the Global South.

### **Postcolonial and Non-Aligned Legacy, Pragmatic Indifference and Strategic Opportunism**

From a postcolonial perspective, which has recently gained a new impetus in academic research and political rhetoric in Ukraine, the ambiguous position of the Global South on Russia's invasion of Ukraine might seem paradoxical. After the colonial nature of Russia's war against Ukraine was highlighted by a number of reputable scholars on both sides of the Atlantic (e.g., Mälksoo, 2022; Snyder, 2022), and after Russian president Vladimir Putin openly linked his actions to the 18th-century territorial conquest of Russia's first emperor, Peter the Great (OSN, 2022), Kyiv expected more unified support from countries that had themselves suffered from colonialism not long ago.

During the vote on the United Nations General Assembly Resolution ES-11/4 (12 October 2022), condemning the Russian Federation's attempted illegal annexation of four regions of Ukraine and demanding the withdrawal of all Russian military forces from the territory of Ukraine, 143 countries voted in favour, while 5 voted against, 35 abstained, and 10 did not vote (Mälksoo L., 2023). Of these 50 countries that in one form or another did not support the resolution, almost all of them represent the Global South, plus several post-Soviet states dependent on Russia. Namely, Belarus, North Korea, Nicaragua, Russia, and Syria voted against the resolution. Algeria, Armenia, Bolivia, Burundi, Central African Republic, China, Congo, Cuba, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Guinea, Honduras, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lesotho, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Pakistan, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Uganda, Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe abstained. Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, São Tomé and Príncipe, Turkmenistan, and Venezuela did not vote (Besheer, 2022).

Notably, most South American, and African countries supported Resolution ES-11/4, which condemned Russia's aggression against Ukraine, with no African country voting against it. Another important indicator of the predominantly negative perception of African countries towards Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine was the fact that only 17 heads of state participated in the Second Russia-Africa Summit in 2023, compared to 43 heads of state who attended the First Russia-Africa Summit in 2019 (ISSAfrica, 2023). Below we will consider why, despite the generally negative perception of Russian aggression against Ukraine, the countries of the Global South mostly prefer to refrain from taking an active position in condemning Russia's actions.

When analysing the situation through the prism of postcolonialism, it should be kept in mind that it has a completely different perspective for the countries of the Global South than for Ukraine. And this is not surprising, because even for the countries of the Global North, which overwhelmingly actively support Kyiv in its opposition to Russian aggression, until recently the Ukrainian stance was less welcomed than the Russian one, and Ukrainian studies, including on colonialism, have long remained “subaltern and marginalized” vis-a-vis Russian studies even in the West (Chernetsky, 2003; Kurylo, 2023; O'Sullivan & Krulišová, 2023).

For the countries of the Global South, the perception of the Ukrainian perspective on the colonial nature of Russian aggression is even more challenging due to their own colonial legacy of the 20th century. For “the Western governments now supporting Ukraine's resistance to Russian imperialism were previously the colonial powers ruling the peoples of the Global South, while the USSR often supported anti-colonial struggles” (Karadjis, 2023).

And Russia's official and latent propaganda is making every effort to maintain and strengthen its image as a leader in the fight against neocolonialism (Shekhovtsov, 2022). To this end, “Russian leadership portrays the conflict in Ukraine as a Western attempt to colonise Russia” (Kozyrev, 2023), “cynically attempting

to frame Russia's illegal actions in Ukraine as an anti-colonial response to Western hegemony" (Šćepanović, 2024). Moreover, this position is being promoted not only at the political and media level through the powerful mechanisms of Russian information policy (Bondarenko et al., 2020), but also in the academic sphere. For example, Viatcheslav Morozov, former professor at the University of Tartu, in his book "Russia's Postcolonial Identity: A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World" explains Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine as the "defensive moves", provoked by "what it perceives is an expansion of the Western empire, which through a series of 'colour revolutions' is consolidating its hegemonic position in world affairs" (Morozov, 2015, p. 135).

To illustrate the scale of Russian propaganda's influence, it is worth mentioning that the Spanish-language versions of Russia Today TV and Sputnik Radio alone have an audience of more than 30 million regular viewers and listeners (Farah & Ortiz, 2023). At the same time, Ukraine and its Western partners are far behind in terms of information activity in the Global South, where Russian narratives have a broader reach (Klyszcz, 2023). Efforts to challenge Russian postcolonial narratives in the academic community (e.g., Durdiyeva, 2023; Hendl et al., 2023; Mälksoo M., 2023) also still remain rare voices.

Along with the ambiguous interpretations of the postcolonial moment in the Russia-Ukraine war, another factor preventing the Global South countries from taking a more clear position is their non-aligned heritage. Founded to counterbalance the bipolarization and to advance interests of developing countries amid the 20th century Cold War confrontation, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) continues to influence the international stance of its member states. As the Russia-Ukraine war has revitalised the East-West rivalry and the Cold War geopolitics (Dąbrowska, 2023), non-aligned countries are trying to avoid taking sides and direct involvement in the confrontation, as well as minimize the damage caused by the war.

A comprehensive analysis of the reasons influencing the Global South's stance on Russia-Ukraine war also requires not losing sight of the fact that national governments tend to make cost-benefit assessments, prioritising their own national interests. This includes rationalising from perspectives such as pragmatic indifference and strategic opportunism. Countries of the Global South prefer the status quo to policy change, as change requires the expenditure of economic and political resources, and they are not prepared/willing to bear these costs. Global South actors also "try to offset the negative consequences of the war through strategic gains in other areas" (Brosig & Verma, 2024).

Although Russia is not a major trade partner for the Global South, but it is still an important exporter of energy, fertilizer, food, and arms. In some cases, the countries of the Global South have difficulties finding an adequate alternative to Russian supplies, while others decided not to miss the opportunity to negotiate more favourable terms of trade under Western sanctions and disregard the moral aspect of such a decision. Many governments "approach the Russian invasion pragmatically and try to generate economic benefits from a purely interest-driven, transactional perspective" (Öniş, 2022).

For example, after losing a significant part of its European export market, Russia offered China significant price discounts for oil, gas and coal supplies (Düben, 2024). Although Russia is not Indonesia's largest trading partner, but supplies of Russian potassic fertilisers, coal briquettes, asbestos, refined petroleum, and semi-finished iron are important for Indonesia's economic development (Sebastian & Priamarizki, 2024).

Another example is India which strives to become a leading world power and whose government considers Russia as an important partner in strengthening India's military capacities. Russia has long been and remains India's primary arms provider, and even though New Delhi has been trying to diversify its arms supplies in recent years, it still needs a steady flow of Russian weapons and spare parts to ensure the effective operation of its armed forces (Kronstadt, 2022). Another factor that encourages New Delhi to continue military-technical cooperation with Moscow is the transfer of military technology. Unlike Russia, India's other important arm-trade partners, such as the U.S., the UK, France, and Israel, "have not been willing to collaborate and cooperate with India in the joint development and production of state-of-the-art military platforms" (Verma, 2024).

### **China's Role and Scepticism Towards the Western-led World Order**

China's "pro-Russian neutrality position" in the Russia-Ukraine war (Kozyrev, 2023) is an important signal for the Global South countries that influence their stance on this issue. As the most important trade partner and investor in infrastructure development in the Global South, China naturally also aspires to be its informal political leader.

Most countries in the Global South trade more with China than with the U.S., for example, China overtook the U.S. as Brazil's largest trading partner already in 2009. Beijing has increased its investment in Africa from \$75 million in 2003 to \$5 billion in 2021 (Freitas, 2023). In 2000-2022, Chinese lenders provided 1,243 loans amounting to \$170.08 billion to 49 African governments and 7 regional institutions. This is 64% of the World Bank's \$264.15 billion in sovereign loans to Africa and almost five times the African Development Bank's \$36.85 billion in sovereign loans to Africa in the same time period (Moses et al., 2023).

Moreover, amid the Western-controlled global economic system's failure to provide the resources that would enable the Global South to develop (Krause, 2024), China is proposing "the developmental model that raised its people out of obscurity and poverty to developed global superpower status in a few short decades" (Dreyer, 2023), and this model seems attractive to both ordinary citizens and governments in the Global South. People get hope for rapid poverty alleviation, while ruling elites see an opportunity to achieve economic development without the need for a political transition from authoritarianism to liberal democracy.

Therefore, when Xi Jinping makes his first foreign visit after being re-elected for a third term to Moscow, he sends an important signal to numerous China's partners in the Global South. Beijing's position on the war is determined not so much by its attitude towards Russia and Ukraine as by the perception of the war in the broader context of the great power competition and possible reshaping of the world order. Debating the difficult political choices facing Beijing in the wake of the war, China's expert and academic community is mostly inclined to conclude that in the context of U.S. global dominance, Russia remains China's key partner to counter-balance American global power and regional influence (Sagild & Hsiung, 2024). This emphasis is reinforced by the Chinese government's tendency to correlate the Russian narrative of NATO's eastward expansion with Beijing's own concerns about the U.S.-led alliance-building in the Indo-Pacific, particularly the "Quad" with India, Japan, and Australia, and the AUKUS security partnership with Australia and the UK (Düben & Wang-Kaeding, 2023).

There is also a viewpoint in China that this war is a proxy conflict waged by the United States against Russia (Sagild & Hsiung, 2024), or even China itself (Bachulska & Leonard, 2023) in order to contain the latter in light of Beijing's ambitions to become a leading global power (Leoni & Strina, 2024). Some Chinese experts and scholars also argue that through this war, the U.S. seeks to consolidate its transatlantic partnership with the European Union, as well as strengthen its military hegemony and influence on the global energy sector (Zhen, 2023).

According to Vitaly Kozyrev, "China utilises the Russian-Ukrainian war" as an instrument of pressure on the West, demanding that Beijing's proposals for a new world order be heard by the West (Kozyrev, 2023). Therefore, it is not surprising that the 12-point "China's Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis" published in February 2023 contained Beijing's vision of a multi-polar world devoid of Western hegemony. For example, it called for the strict observation of the "universally recognized international law" and rejection of the "double standards". It also stressed that security of one country "should not be pursued at the expense of others", and "the legitimate security interests and concerns of all countries" must be seriously taken and properly addressed (MFA of China, 2023).

In May 2024, "Common Understandings Between China and Brazil on Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis" was published, calling for deescalation, dialogue and negotiation, international peace conference recognized by both Russia and Ukraine, avoidance of nuclear crisis, and opposing to "dividing the world into isolated political or economic groups" (MFA of China, 2024). Notably, both Wang Wenbin, a spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry, and Li Haidong, a professor at the China Foreign Affairs University, commented this Sino-Brazilian common understandings as a representative viewpoint of the Global South, which advocates for a "more balanced and reasonable structure of world power" and "fairer global order" (Zhang Han, 2024).

While Western leaders frame the Russia-Ukraine war in the context of preserving the existing world order and as a "battle between democracy and autocracy" (Biden, 2022), it is reasonable to question whether the Global South is satisfied with the existing world order enough to defend it, and whether the choice between liberal democracy and autocracy is perceived there in the same way as in the Global North?

The problem is that the answers to both questions are negative rather than positive. From the perspective of the Global South, the existing world order "is a deeply unjust system that primarily protects the interests of the West, and especially those of the USA" (Klingebiel, 2023). Furthermore, the Global South "does not want to support Ukraine when it is seen as a struggle between Western liberal democracy –

let alone American hegemony – and Russia” (Ikenberry, 2024). And it is hard to disagree with scholars who argue that framing confrontation as democracy vs. authoritarianism has limited appeal for the Global South (Tsang, 2023), as the political elites in the Global North and the Global South have different visions of priorities and guiding principles for the world order. The former emphasising democracy, market economy and universal human rights, and the latter prioritising national autonomy, non-intervention in internal affairs and state-permeated economies (Schirm, 2023).

Wars and violations of international law can hardly surprise the Global South countries, many of which have been facing such violations in their neighbourhood for decades, which “tend to remain sidelined in the media and political discussions in most parts of the world” (Forsberg & Patomäki, 2023), despite the fact that examples of massive human suffering in the Global South have become reference cases for investigations of this type of crime (Naumkina et al., 2024). Therefore, while the countries of the Global South are unlikely to believe that Russia is fighting for a more just world order, neither should they be assumed to have a strong interest in defending the current Western-led world order, which they see as unjust and insufficiently responsive to their national interests that “may not always coincide with the interests of the West” (Kipiani, 2023).

The scepticism of the Global South is additionally exacerbated by the negative image created by some recent experiences of the U.S.-led interventions, including in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya. So, the Western-led support for Ukraine is seen by many in the Global South as a manifestation of the U.S. hegemony, and “it is not a cause they want to embrace” (Ikenberry, 2024). This scepticism also extends to the issue of sanctions. Guillaume Long, former foreign minister of Ecuador, argues that many in Latin America consider sanctions to be selective and politicized, with a lot of double standards, and that they are “a tool of the US hegemony rather than a tool of global justice” (Guyer, 2022).

Therefore, not seeing geopolitical advantages in engaging in the struggle to preserve the current world order, especially if it may be associated with certain economic losses due to restrictions on trade with Russia, the Global South countries “do not see much value in strongly aligning with either side, the West or Russia”, and prefer to rhetorically condemn the invasion but not to impose sanctions (Brosig & Verma, 2024). Thus, the critical attitude towards the Western-led world order negatively affects the consolidation of the Global South's support for Ukraine, which, on the one hand, is critically dependent on the support of Western partners, and on the other hand, is a kind of “collateral victim” of the South’s scepticism towards the West.

### **Ukraine’s Struggle to Win the Support of the Global South**

While resisting full-scale Russian aggression, Ukraine faces a difficult challenge in international relations – receiving critical military and financial assistance from its partners in the Global North, Kyiv also needs political support from countries in the Global South, whose role in world affairs continues to grow. As discussed above in the article, most countries of the Global South have taken an ambivalent position, denouncing Russian aggression on the one hand, but avoiding more active actions, including economic sanctions, on the other.

A positive moment for Ukraine is the fact that Russia has not succeeded in gaining clear support even from its partners in BRICS, an organisation created with the participation of important players in the Global South, including Brazil, India, China, and South Africa (Karadjis, 2023). Moreover, during the important voting on the UN General Assembly Resolution ES-11/4 entitled “Territorial Integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations”, Brazil voted for it, while China, India, and South Africa abstained (Besheer, 2022). According to numerous surveys, since the full-scale invasion in February 2022, public opinion support for Russia has dropped globally, including among citizens of the Global South countries, and even in the BRICS member states of Brazil and India, the majority sympathized with Ukraine amid the war unleashed by Russia (Karadjis, 2023).

Analysis of the voting in the UN General Assembly in 2023, indicates that “all things being equal, a country’s support for Ukraine is somewhat correlated with its wealth”, and Ukraine gains less support from the poorest countries than from the richer ones (Véron, 2023). In this regard, an important step was the launch of the humanitarian food programme “Grain from Ukraine”, which supplied Ukrainian grain to a number of countries in Africa and Asia facing malnutrition and hunger (MFA of Ukraine, 2024).

In the context of scepticism in many Global South countries about the current world order, which they consider unjust (Klingebiel, 2023), it is also reasonable that Ukraine emphasises the importance of the UN Charter and includes in its peace plan, as first steps, the provisions beneficial to the common good of the entire international community, such as radiation and nuclear safety, including the ban on nuclear

blackmailing; food security, including safe export of grain to the countries of Global South; and energy security, including the ban on weaponization of energy resources (Zelenskyy, 2022b).

Numerous visits of Ukrainian officials to the capitals of the Global South countries and bilateral top-level meetings, as well as media interviews and video addresses by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to the political, expert and academic communities in the Global South (e.g., Zelenskyy, 2022a, 2022c, 2023) demonstrate the seriousness with which Kyiv perceives the need to enlist the support of the Global South. It is also indicative that half of the top-level bilateral meetings held by the Ukrainian president during the Global Peace Summit in Switzerland on 15-16 June 2024, were with leaders of the Global South countries, namely: Argentina, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, and Palau. In his speech at the Global Peace Summit, Volodymyr Zelenskyy emphasised that a just end to Russia's war against Ukraine should mean a transition to the fair application of the UN Charter and international law for every nation in the world (Zelenskyy, 2024).

Evidently, Ukraine has learnt the lessons of previous years, when it relied mainly on the assistance of its Western partners from NATO, the EU and the OSCE to counter Russian aggression (Tytarchuk & Khylo, 2016), and since the full-scale invasion, Kyiv has been actively working to gain truly global support. Ukraine's certain progress in engaging support from the Global South is indicated by the fact that as of 11 July 2024, out of 87 states that signed the Joint Communiqué on a Peace Framework following the Global Peace Summit in Switzerland, 36 signatures represent Global South countries. Despite lacking China, India, Brazil, and South Africa, the list of signatories includes such important regional players as Argentina, Kenya, Philippines, and Türkiye (FDFA, 2024). It should also be taken into account that China and Brazil are promoting their own vision of the war settlement, mentioned earlier in the article, that reflects Beijing's ambitions for leadership within the Global South and beyond.

### Conclusions

It was not the Russian-Ukrainian war that gave rise to the Global South as an important geopolitical player, but the competition for support from the Global South between Ukraine and its Western partners, on the one hand, and Russia and China, on the other, that forced the world community to acknowledge the increased role of the Global South.

While not supporting Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and simultaneously having a historically motivated lack of trust in Kyiv's partners from the Global North, the countries of the Global South are seeking to avoid direct involvement in confrontation and at the same time not to miss the opportunity to take advantage of the growing need for their voice to demand a more just world order with due respect to their national interests.

For international relations studies, the growing geopolitical influence of the Global South means that there is a need to engage more with scholars and analysts from these countries to better comprehend perspectives and positions from the ground, not only through the lens of Western IR paradigms.

It is in the world community's common interest that the Global South acts as one of the independent balancing pillars of the world order, in cooperation and competition with the Global West and Global East. It is important that, while legitimately defending its subjectivity from the West, the Global South does not fall into a new dependence, this time on the East. The growing weight on the international stage also places greater responsibility on the Global South itself, as its role and position significantly influence what the world of tomorrow will look like, including whether it will be a safer place than it is today.

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