# CHARLES UNIVERSITY

## FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Political Studies

Department of International Relations

# Master's Thesis

**2024**                                                       **Nima Cheraghi**

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## Liberalism in a Post-hegemonic World?; Russia's and India's Narratives of Multipolarity and Liberalism

Master's Thesis

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In Prague on the 30th of April 2024                                     Nima Cheraghi

# Reference

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## Abstract

In the wake of what some perceive to be the emergence of a multipolar post-hegemonic world, many questions have risen about the role liberalism will play in the future of the world order. The rise of autocratic countries like China and the actions of Russia have led some to believe that the future of the liberal order is in danger or even doomed. Through a qualitative content analysis of speeches and statements, this paper seeks to define the preferences of two potential future poles – India and Russia – regarding the nature of the future world order. This thesis explores the roles of strategic narratives and how they can assist us in determining the preferences of an actor. My findings suggest that both states indicate support for maintaining a future order based on norms and cooperation. Dedication to liberal norms does not seem to differ significantly between democratic India and autocratic Russia. The greatest difference is in their narration of Western states. Their desire to amend the order is better characterized as reform rather than revision. Based on theories of liberal institutionalism, the explanatory principle is not that either state is morally committed to a liberal system, but rather they are self-interested in maintaining an order which is largely liberal. The liberal order may not be doomed after all.

## Absrakt

V důsledku toho, co někteří vnímají jako vznik multipolárního posthegemonického světa, vyvstalo mnoho otázek o roli liberalismu v budoucnosti světového řádu. Vzestup autokratických zemí, jako je Čína, a činy Ruska vedly některé k přesvědčení, že budoucnost liberálního řádu je ohrožena nebo dokonce odsouzena k záhubě. Prostřednictvím kvalitativní obsahové analýzy projevů a prohlášení se tento článek snaží definovat preference dvou potenciálních budoucích pólů – Indie a Ruska – ohledně povahy budoucího světového řádu. Tato práce zkoumá role strategických narativů a jak nám mohou pomoci při určování preferencí herce. Moje zjištění naznačují, že oba státy naznačují podporu zachování budoucího řádu založeného na normách a spolupráci. Zdá se, že oddanost liberálním normám se mezi demokratickou Indií a autokratickým Ruskem výrazně neliší. Největší rozdíl je v jejich vyprávění o západních státech. Jejich přání změnit řád je lépe charakterizovat jako reforma než revize. Na základě teorií liberálního institucionalismu není vysvětlujícím principem, že by se oba státy morálně zavázaly k liberálnímu systému, ale spíše mají vlastní zájem na udržování řádu, který je do značné míry liberální. Liberální řád nakonec nemusí být odsouzen k zániku.

# Liberalism in a Post-hegemonic World?; Russia's and India's Narratives of Multipolarity and Liberalism


# Liberalismus v post-hegemonickém světě? Ruské a indické strategické narativy multipolarity a liberalismu

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## Introduction

On October 3, 2000, Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Delhi and signed the "Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership" which proceeded "from the conviction that it is necessary to build a multipolar world global structure based on sovereign equality of all states and peoples, democratic values and justice." Since then, questions have arisen about the perceived decline of US hegemony and the objective emergence of a multipolar world (see Layne 2009; Posen 2009; Massie a Paquin 2019, p. 23–42).

Some scholars, predominantly of the liberal hegemonic stability and realist persuasions, have argued that the inability or unwillingness of the US to play the role of hegemon will do great damage to the liberal international order or perhaps even end it (see Stokes 2018; Mearsheimer 2019). Additionally, In the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, there has been great speculation of Russia's long-term foreign policy goals, some even hysterically suggesting that Russia seeks a revival of the Russian empire (see Hodge 2022; Tharoor 2022). But does a post-hegemonic multipolar world need to mean the end of liberal internationalism and a return to the age of empires and balance-of-powers politics? There is reason to believe this does not need to be the case.

With elevated levels of global uncertainty and wild speculation, a better understanding of Russia's vision for the future global order, through their own narratives, is called for. Not only for the sake of its policy implications on long term strategic planning for the West but also to insert nuance in a topic that is too often reduced to cartoonish depictions of good guys versus bad guys when it is argued that Russia's promotion of multipolarity through opposition to liberalism – as we understand it in the West – is a result of its autocratic nature (see McFaul 2021). In this vein, this thesis also analyzes strategic narratives of multipolarity from India, the world's largest democracy, to determine if domestic governance differences affect their vision for a multipolar future and liberalism's role within it.

This thesis seeks to better understand what narratives the Prime Minister of India, the President of Russia, and their respective foreign ministries employ to frame their vision

for a multipolar world. The goal is to shine light on questions such as; what form does a multipolar world take? Is it liberal or anti-liberal? And what are the geopolitical agents' perceptions of the current order? I do not assume or seek to demonstrate that the American hegemonic order *is* declining, I only assume that it is a reasonable proposition, in the face of which it is important to understand what aspiring powers may desire to create in the multipolar aftermath.

I hypothesize that these offices do not look to replace or do-away with the tenets of liberalism within the international order but rather will claim to believe in it, suggest that the world order should be liberal, and that liberalism has been subverted by Western powers.

To answer these questions, I employ a qualitative content analysis of speeches and statements published on the official websites of the aforementioned offices. From a sample of 120 of these publications, 30 from each office, I code them for various mentions of liberalism, tenets of the liberal order, matters of multipolarity, and attitudes towards the West. My analysis and interpretations lend support for my hypothesis with one caveat; while Russia does claim that the West has subverted the tenets of the liberal order, India abstains from making such accusations. We observe positive mentions of tenets of the liberal order such as IOs (International Organizations), international law, and norms. The concepts of sovereignty and national interest do appear often but not as often as support for the mentioned tenets, suggesting a willingness to pay some sovereignty costs. Russia will often accuse the West of imperialism, dishonesty, and subversion while India avoids doing so, preferring to continue its tradition of non-alignment and extracting benefits from all sides. The results lend credibility to the literature which argues that even within a multipolar future, there is reason to believe that international liberalism will continue.

Of course, what an actor says is not always in accordance with what an actor does. Politicians sometimes lie. However, this does not mean that public statements and the narratives within them are of no value. Referring to the US National Security Strategy, Peter Feaver (2010) argues that, "precisely because it is a public document, it must authentically reflect the administration's world-view; it is not a fortune cookie prediction of what the administration will do in any particular setting, but it is an authoritative statement of the principles that guide the president." I believe this can be applied to

statements and narratives made by high-ranking government officials from Russia and India as well. The value of public statements and narratives will be further expanded upon in this thesis.

Additionally, a theoretical argument preceding the data analysis for why new poles might not seek to replace international liberalism will help to bolster the findings and the significance we can ascribe to it. It is important to make clear that my hypothesis is not founded on the suggestion that India and Russia are 'good boys.' Rather, as will be explained, liberalism has socialized and incentivized states to adhere to its tenets; i.e. no longer can India or Russia desire or imagine a non-liberal world order. This is not an 'end of history' argument, but rather a 'stagnation of history'; that at least within the near future, liberal internationalism will continue to persevere even without a hegemon.

In the case of Russia, the 2008 invasion of Georgia along with the 2014 and 2022 invasions of Ukraine have caused some to characterize Russia's foreign strategy as based on spheres of influence logic or imperialism (Dunn, Bobick 2014). Undoubtedly the invasions of Georgia and Ukraine constitute serious violations of the sovereignty of a foreign state, their right to self-determination, and various international laws. But this is not an anomaly. The liberal order has always witnessed norm violations, even from well-established liberal states. Yet the order has survived because it is malleable. Its malleability is no more tested now than it has been before.

This thesis proceeds by exploring a theoretical framework which argues that all states have benefited from the relative peace and order that international liberalism has brought to the world since the end of the Second World War and have no incentive to transition to a post-liberal order. Furthermore, states have continued to be incorporated in liberal institutions like IOs which commit them to liberal norms (Tallberg et al. 2020). In this section I explain how exactly I define liberalism and suggest that contestation of the liberal order is not dichotomous (liberal or non-liberal/status quo or revisionist) but exists on a spectrum—even contestation can reflect a desire to maintain the liberal system.

Afterwards, I will review the ways strategic narratives can inform us on the intentions and beliefs of geopolitical actors. The work of Alister Miskimmon, Ben O'Loughlin, and Laura Roselle provide a particularly rich theoretical framework for the study of narratives and how they can shape our understanding and expectations of global

order. According to Miskimmon et al. (2013, p. 68) strategic narratives can indicate aspects of the international order by highlighting expectations of behavior, outlining desirability of cooperation or integration, predicting about power changes, threats, enemies and allies, and by outlining the scope for the socialization of actors.

The next section will cover the methodology of this thesis. The corpus of documents encompasses all documents published between December 2006 and April 2023 on the official websites of the Russian President, Indian Prime Minister, Russian Foreign Ministry, and Indian Ministry of External Affairs. After being processed to narrow down the datasets to relevant documents which focus on multipolarity and liberalism, a sample of 120 documents were coded with 30 codes. I will explain the logic of these codes and what they can tell us.

After the methodology is explained, the data will be analyzed. Analysis will consist of displaying counts and distributions, comparing them between states and offices, but most importantly, examining the content of the documents. Through the analysis I will demonstrate that the data does not reject the hypothesis. Theoretical explanations for the findings will also be offered. From there I will draw my conclusion.

# 1. Liberalism After Hegemeny

Whether the liberal order can continue in a post-hegemonic world is a question that reaches down to the very core of IR theory. In Robert Gilpin's (1987, p. 88) book on political economy, he argues that "a hegemon is necessary to the existence of a liberal international economy". The role of the hegemon is to act as the watchman of the liberal system; it must "prevent cheating and free riding, enforce the rules of a liberal economy, and encourage others to share the costs of maintaining the system" (Gilpin 1987, p. 75). When states don't abide by the rules of the game the hegemon has the power to shut them out of the system, keeping revisionist states in check.

However, hegemony is only a necessary condition of the liberal order and not sufficient. Gilpin believes that a hegemon must be ideologically committed to liberalism for the system to function. He criticizes other proponents of the theory as they "underemphasized the importance of motivating ideologies and domestic factors, of social forces and technological developments, and of the market itself in determining outcomes" (Gilpin 1987, p. 91). In order for the system to be liberal, the hegemon must be liberal.

Gilpin is well-aware that all hegemonies must come to an end. He does not outright exclude the possibility that liberalism can continue in a post-hegemonic world. Part of liberal hegemony is restructuring the game from a Prisoners Dilemma into a collective goods model, if a hegemon is no longer around to facilitate this, "bilateralism, discriminatory policies, and economic nationalism begin to supplant liberalism" (Gilpin 1981, p. 91). If the social purposes and interests of the post-hegemony world are aligned, liberalism could continue, but this scenario, Gilpin says, is "unlikely" (Gilpin 1981, p. 91).

Other realists will agree with Gilpin that a liberal order is only possible under a hegemon but argue that liberal great powers are rarely in position to pursue hegemony. Mearsheimer (2018, p. 122) argues that if liberal states exist in bipolarity or multipolarity, "they have no choice but to act towards each other according to realist logic." Additionally, if a hegemon finds itself in a position to pursue hegemony, liberalism will eventually consume itself due to the fanaticism of the hegemon and the activist mentality woven into it. Liberals believe that humans have certain unalienable rights which convinces the hegemon that it is its duty to intervene in states which violate these rights (Mearsheimer 2018, p. 219). While they may restrain themselves from direct intervention in great

powers, they will pursue other means such as propping up NGOs, conditioning aid, or executing intelligence operations. However, this makes the targeted great power feel as if its sovereignty has been violated; ruining relations and increasing tensions (Mearsheimer 2018, p. 162).

Mearsheimer (2018, p. 163) argues that precisely this has happened between the US and Russia as the US has pursued a policy of ignoring Russia's security interests, promoting color revolutions in neighboring states and expressing desire to do so even within Russia itself.

Mearsheimer's criticisms of liberal hegemony reflect the greatest challenge in maintaining a liberal order in a multipolar world. He claims that many liberals believe to know what "the good life" is and so mandate that all states be liberal in their domestic politics. In the liberal perspective, the good life is one in which individual rights are put on a pedestal (Mearsheimer 2018, pp. 219–220). If this is the case, then Mearsheimer is absolutely correct in suggesting that a liberal order cannot exist, especially without a hegemon. There has never been, and likely never will be, a world in which all states or even all great powers are dedicated to a liberal system of domestic politics.

However, a liberal international order does not need to mean that the constituting states must be liberal domestically. Defining the liberal order as one in which all states are or should be liberal makes the mistake of confusing a liberal order for an "Our Order". If we separate domestic and foreign policy, a path clears up for a multipolar future which can be internationally liberal. So, what does it mean to be internationally liberal?

While Hegemonic Stability Theorists and Offensive Realists express little hope that liberalism will go on in a multipolar world, Liberal Institutionalists believe that cooperation and order can continue based on the self-interest of states. Robert Keohane makes this argument in his seminal work *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy.* Keohane argues that while the US was critical in creating the liberal order, and American hegemony may decline, its legacies and regimes will continue; maintaining an order is much easier than creating one. In fact, "as hegemony erodes, the demand for international regimes may even increase" (Keohane 1984, p. 44). Keohane builds off of Krasner's (1983, p. 2) definition of regimes as "sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations

converge in a given area of international relations." Regarding the role of norms in this explanation, Keohane (1984, p. 57) makes a critical point; "the concept of norms, however, is ambiguous. It is important that we understand norms in this definition simply as standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations." If norms are understood as "morally binding," i.e. as a virtue, it makes regime binding based off self-interest a contradiction. Norms need simply to be understood as "standards of behavior, whether adopted on grounds of self-interest or otherwise" (Keohane 1984, p. 57). Moralism is not necessary.

Regimes are not beyond the nation-state, they are the self-interest of the nation-state, and often necessary for its pursuit; "they facilitate the smooth operation of decentralized international political systems and therefore perform an important function for states" (Keohane 1984, p. 63). Thirty-one years after the publication of his book, Keohane (2015) argues that "the success of the World Trade Organization over the last twenty years in preventing a return to protectionism is testimony to the correctness of this judgment…" However, with the rise of China – being one of the three big players and a geopolitical rival to the US – Keohane (2015) claims that "the prospects of 'cooperation after hegemony', while not negligible since the joint gains from cooperation are very great, seem less promising than they were in 1983."

Like Keohane, John Ikenberry (2018) also argues that liberal internationalism has a future in a post-hegemonic world because "the more general organizing ideas and impulses of liberal internationalism run deep in world politics." Importantly Ikenberry (Ikenberry 2018) offers five convictions which capture the general logic of international liberalism; (i) openness; trade and exchange in an open order which facilitates growth and draws states together, (ii) "commitment to some sort of loosely rules-based set of relations", (iii) "some form of security cooperation", (iv) international society as corrigible, and (v) "an expectation that a liberal international order will move states in a progressive direction, defined in terms of liberal democracy."

The codes outlined in the methodology seek to measure liberalism according to these terms. However, I ascribe far more necessity to the first four convictions than the last one. A liberal international order does indeed seem to have a proclivity to encourage liberal democracy (Tallberg et al. 2020), but an expectation to "move states in a

progressive direction" is very different than an expectation for states to *be* progressive. A multipolar world is not a world without the US or the collective EU, they will undoubtedly be great powers and poles in their own right, and as long as they are, they will likely continue promoting domestic liberal democracy. The issue then is to measure if there is sufficient support for the first four convictions—which my research suggests there is. There are also good theoretical reasons to believe that rising powers will maintain the status quo or pursue reforms but maintain the general structure.

Realists and Hegemonic Cycle theorists portray rising powers as revisionist powers since they seek supremacy in the world and so challenge the current order to bring about an order that conforms to their needs (Mearsheimer 2001; Rosecrance 1987). In comparison, the established power and its allies seek to maintain the status quo. Arnold Wolfers (1965) defined status quo powers as those who desire to preserve the established order, have renounced the use of force, and pursue equilibrium over supremacy. Revisionist powers do the opposite.

Recent literature has pointed out the many flaws in these dichotomous perspectives and highlights how desires about the global order can be gradated. Kustermans et al. (2023) offer a framework which focuses on the means and ends of policy. Status quo powers pursue foreign policy objectives through legitimate means and ends in accordance with rules and norms. Revisionist powers can be categorized as competitive, creative, and revolutionary revisionists; those that contest means, those that contest ends, and those that contest both means and ends of legitimate behavior according to the order, respectively.

Cooley et al. (2019) place revisionism on a two-dimensional axis and offer four ideal-types; "Ideal-typical *status-quo* actors express satisfaction with both the current distribution of capabilities *and* the nature of the international order. *Reformist* orientations combine a desire to change the terms of the order and satisfaction with the existing distribution of capabilities. *Positionalist* ones accept the terms of the current order, but would like to see a change in the distribution of capabilities. Ideal-typical *revolutionary* actors are dual-revisionists: they want to overturn both the distribution of capabilities and the broader order."

Both frameworks demonstrate that 'revisionism' can take on many forms. States may seek to keep some or most of the tenets of the existing order during periods of power

redistribution. Many scholars have begun to approach matters of world order in such gradient terms. Much of this research has focused on the rise of China which in realist and hegemonic cycle terms is a classic revisionist and challenging state. However, there is convincing evidence to suggest that China is not as interested in total revisionism as these theories posit. By examining documents published on the Belt and Road Portal, Liu (2021) finds "approaches of the Status Quo and Regime Shifting are very significant in the BRI events, indicating that China supports the current global order in many aspects but also competes with Western countries in power redistribution and non-Western value reviving." Goldstein (2007) finds that China's general attitudes favor cooperation and support institutional theory while its policy towards Taiwan makes power-transition theory relevant. Likewise, by tracking foreign travel of the Chinese President and Premier, Kastner and Saunders (2012) conclude that "most of our findings are consistent with a characterization of China as a status quo power."

Importantly, Kastner and Saunders state "a great deal of literature suggests that the preferences of the rising power matter a great deal." Determining these preferences through an analysis of narratives is the precise aim of this thesis.

An objection arises: Russia's invasions of Georgia and Ukraine display Russia's preference to not abide by the rules of the order. Instead, Russia seems to be following a policy of spheres of influence (SOI) or 'interests'(Trenin 2009). Etzioni (2015) defines SOI as "international formations that contain one nation (the influencer) that commands superior power over others." For realists this isn't a problem, great powers do what great powers do. But for liberalism, one nation commanding superior power over others is a clear violation of sovereignty and norms. Openly accepting SOI would mean "accepting practices which are unacceptable in terms of international norms, domestic politics, and other considerations including human rights" (Keal 1983). SOI can be negotiated, meaning that through multilateral diplomacy states come to agreements whereby great powers legitimize their spheres of influence among all states (Costa Buranelli 2018). But when speaking of the invasions of Ukraine and Georgia we mean a SOI which is unnegotiated and illegitimate. Keal is correct, unnegotiated spheres of influence are not acceptable or consistent with international norms. But international liberalism can suffer them, and indeed has done so in the past.

If SOI are our concern, then we need to look no further than the United States. Besides the Monroe Doctrine, which Susanna Hast (Hast 2016, p. 41) considers the embodiment of SOI doctrine, there are countless instances of the US violating a foreign state's sovereignty. Examples are boundless but include the illegal, non-UNSC-approved invasions of Iraq (Saul 2003) and Afghanistan (Mani 2002), Operation Ajax (Kinzer 2008), and overstepping UNSC resolutions in Libya (Ulfstein, Christiansen 2013). Like the Russian invasions of Georgia and Ukraine, these are examples of illegitimate and abnormal uses of force in violation of a state's sovereignty and international law. Does this make the US an illiberal power? At what point did the US cease being liberal? Was it after the after the Iraq war or did President Monroe end international liberalism before it began in 1832? Has anyone truly ever been a liberal?

If we suggest that the US is not a liberal power for its violation of the sovereignty of other states, then I do not see how liberal theory does not become moot for the logical consequence would be that the US was never liberal and so could not have built a liberal order. However, I believe, as most liberal literature assumes, that there has been a liberal order, and the US has acted as its guardian. This is because for a system to be liberal, it does not need to be perfectly liberal. Just like a physical structure, liberalism has a malleable structure the sways and shifts during high-winds and earthquakes which allows it to deal with deviations and violations; if it didn't, it would have collapsed at the first tremors. Furthermore, as discussed earlier in the section, a state may decide to generally act liberally, in compliance with norms, but follow a different logic with regards to some particular issues.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine and Georgia were violations of liberal norms, just like the US' invasions of Iraq and Libya. But like the US it does not mean that they must be coded as inherently anti-liberal revisionists, and SIO practitioners. Despite Iraq and Afghanistan, the US has continued to be a liberal power; there is room for Russia to be so as-well. I do not argue that it necessarily will, but rather that it has not excluded itself quiet yet. This is why it is so important to seek their preferences.

## 2. Strategic Narratives

This thesis examines public speeches and statements made by high-ranking politicians from Russia and India to determine their preferences regarding the future of the world order and whether we can reasonably argue that liberalism does not need to become a relic in a multipolar world. The most obvious objection will be that relying on speeches may not be a good means of measuring true intent. This is a valid criticism. A state's actions are often incongruent with its professions. This is primarily an analysis of the discourse, but I argue that states craft their commonly used narratives with intent to act as rhetorical means of influencing the system. If what a state says is too incongruent with what it actually wants, then its rhetorical efforts will lead it to a place it did not intend to go. This section covers the role of narratives in shaping the world order.

The conceptualization of strategic narratives as we understand them now can be attributed to Lawrence Freedman (2006) who describes narratives as "compelling storylines which can explain events convincingly and from which inferences can be drawn." Since then, the study of strategic narratives has been further developed particularly through the works of Alister Miskimmon, Ben O'Laughlin, and Laura Roselle. This section draws heavily from their work while incorporating insights from other scholars as well.

Roselle, Miskimmon, and O'Laughlin (2014) situate strategic narratives within Joseph Nye's Liberalism, specifically his concept of Soft-Power. While not the focus of this section, it is important to note that liberalism does not have a monopoly on the value of rhetoric; the role of speeches and their necessity to building order finds room in classical realism as well. EH Carr placed considerable emphasis on the power over opinion in conjunction with material power. For Carr, persuasion is a necessary aspect of politics and argues that rhetoric, to which we can also add strategic narratives, "has a long and honoured record in the annals of statesmanship" (Carr 2016, p. 120). Likewise, Morgenthau, who affirmed the notion that international politics is a struggle for power, defined power as "control over the minds and actions of other men" (Morgenthau 1949, p. 13). For Morgenthau material strength in the form of the military and capacity for violence is the most important factor of a state's power, but alongside it there must also

exist a psychological dynamic. Whatever the material objectives of a foreign policy may be – in this case changing the balance of polarity in the international system – strategy must also entail control over the actions of other states through influence over their minds (Morgenthau 1949, p. 14). This is precisely the goal of strategic narratives.

Miskimmon et al. (2013, p. 3) offer us a rather concise definition of strategic narratives: "Strategic narratives are a means for political actors to construct a shared meaning of the past, present, and future of international politics to shape the behavior of domestic and international actors." The point of constructing meaning isn't just to come to common understanding, but rather, "to influence the behavior of others." Likewise, Jacques Ellul, who defines 'propaganda' in similar terms as strategic narratives, argues that the point of manufacturing creative meaning is to bring about "active or passive" participation (Ellul 1973, p. 63). Narratives are not put out into the ether as an aside to action; they are addressed to publics internal and external to extract particular responses to certain stimuli.

Strategic narratives are comprised of two obvious parts; strategy and narratives. Kenneth Burke influences Miskimmon et al.'s understanding of narratives through his assertion that humans are makers, users, and misusers of symbols (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, Roselle 2018, pp. 6–7). This understanding of the abuse of symbols causes them to go beyond narratives as merely a time sequence. Instead, they argue that narratives contain "characters or actors (agents)", "setting/environment/space (scene)", "conflict or action (act)", "tools/behavior (agency)", and "resolution/ or suggested resolution/goal (purpose)" (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, Roselle 2018, p. 7).

Miskimmon et al. (2013, p. 5) characterize narratives by the process of taking individual facts, connecting them, depicting a problem, and offering solutions. It is always important to remember that "strategic narratives integrate interests and goals—they articulate end states and suggest how to get there." Narratives are what give meaning to the individual fact and allow an actor to communicate this meaning which necessitates ends. Miskimmon et al. consistently emphasize the role narratives play in constructing the identities of actors, which influence their foreign policy strategies and objectives. Actors take individual facts from history and create stories for their own identity and the identity of others. The identities states are able to project of themselves contribute to the shared

meaning of events.

Narratives are strategic, according to Freedman (2006), because "they do not arise spontaneously but are deliberately constructed or reinforced out of the ideas and thoughts that are already current." States do not create them by chance but rather spend resources to craft them with the intention of extracting particular outcomes. Miskimmon et al. (2018, p. 41-48) bring attention to the various qualitative and quantitative methods foreign ministers employ to measure the efficacy of their narratives; "surveys, focus groups, policy analysis, and other methods allow policymakers to show that attitudes, behavior, or decisions have been effected by the communication campaign."

Strategic narratives are strategic in another sense as well, namely that they *are* strategy and an important and necessary strategy at that. They are in and of themselves a means of power due to the psychological effect they have. Hans Morgenthau (1970, pp. 315–324) makes this point as he criticizes America's information services during the mid-20th century. Morgenthau argued that separating the United States Information Agency from the State Department "severed the organic connection that ties information to substantive policy." In turn, foreign policy actions, now separated from narratives, had disastrous effects on the psychology of other nations. Morgenthau offers as an example the 1960 agricultural fair in New Delhi in which the US demonstrated a new mechanized farm kitchen. Morgenthau contends that America showed off its material achievements without considering who is listening or whether the listener understands what is being said. What was an Indian farmer to make of this new expensive farm kitchen which even most American farmers could not afford? The US had no narrative prepared as to what this exhibition would mean for the Indian farmer; it provided no reason to be allies. This defect of information policy leads Morgenthau to claim that "we must recognize information policy as a major branch of foreign policy, as important in its way as diplomacy or military policy. We must therefore stop treating it as a stepchild both in terms of the quantity of money we are willing to spend for it and in terms of the quality of the human material resources we are willing to allocate to it." Narratives must be made with intent to give meaning to material changes.

Miskimmon et al. (2013, pp. 7-8) break narratives down into three types: system narratives, identity narratives, and issue narratives. Although this thesis focuses on system

and identity narratives, these distinctions are not perfect, and it can be difficult to determine where one ends and the other begins. Often, they interact with each other and if narrators aren't careful, they can contradict each other causing a general deterioration of the efficacy of the narratives.

Miskimmon et al. (2013, p. 30) posit that already when we characterize states by their power capacity (e.g. 'great power' or 'rising power'), we have entered the area of narratives "because we are describing actors that fit within a narrative about what actors operate in the international system and how." What a state is considered and considers itself to be influences the way that it treats and is treated by other actors. If a state perceives itself as a great power, it will feel it necessary to be involved in affairs far away and with little relevance to its immediate security. If a state is considered a rising power this likely affects the way established powers treat it compared to if it were already considered a great power. It is not always clear what type of power a state is, and this is where narratives come in with states hoping to characterize a power as they see beneficial.

Narratives must be based on some accurate facts if they are to be believed and effective. The ability of narratives to shape the identities of states operates at the margins; it could make a rising power be perceived as a great power, but scarcely could it make a small power appear as a great power. It's difficult to imagine a scenario where a state like Montenegro or Seychelles could be characterized or characterize themselves as anything but small powers because fact would lend no credibility to it and such a narrative would be ineffective and perhaps detrimental to the goals of the narrator. But in marginal cases the characterization through narratives can have serious effects on the foreign policy of states. Whether India is perceived as a normal, rising, or great power may, for example, affect how states perceive its actions towards Pakistan in pursuit of its security. Subconsciously, or often explicitly in the case of many realist theories, we ascribe greater legitimacy – or at least understanding – to the actions of great powers in the pursuit of their security. How India perceives itself will also influence how it pursues its security interest.

Miskimmon et al. (2013, p. 32) argue that "narratives set out who the actors are, what characterizes them, what attributes they possess, what actions they take, and what motivates them." This is contextualized in a system which affects states as much as states affect the system. Miskimmon et al. (2013, pp. 25-40) identify five types of actors which

appeared after the Second World War; Unipole/Hegemon, Great Powers, Normal Powers, Rising Powers, and Weak/Rogue States. With each identity there are associated characteristics and expected behaviors. The global hegemon is least constrained by the international system, but it still requires narratives to create legitimacy. The greatest danger to hegemons is the perception of hypocrisy; to be one who creates rules and lectures of them but violates them in the pursuit of its goals. Hypocrisy breaks down the legitimization narrative of the hegemon. Great powers are perhaps the most consequential actors in the international system. Central to great powers are narratives of sovereignty, leadership, and responsibility to others. Acceptance of these narratives causes great powers to be involved in more alliances and conflicts. Accepting great power status may cause states seemingly opposite in nature to act similarly. Laura Roselle points out that during the Second Iraq and Chechen war, the US and Russia, respectively, undermined the liberal and cooperative narratives they employed during the first rendition of each theater in favor of great power narratives (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, Roselle 2018, chap. 3).

To be narrated as a rising power presents a double-edged sword. On one hand, a state may choose to identify as a rising power to extract certain favorable foreign policy outcomes. Miskimmon et al. (2013, pp. 38-39) point out that India and Brazil, proliferators of the BRICS narrative, have used their status as rising powers to call for a permanent seat on the UNSC. On the other hand, states may be narrated as rising powers in order to securitize them. What a state may do with its newfound power is often unclear, which makes it a potential threat to the established order (Mearsheimer 2001). Thus, this assumption of rising powers as threats may influence international decision making. Christopher Herrick (2016) outlines how China witnessed its growth being narrated as problematic and launched a counter narrative formulated by Chinese foreign policy advisor Zheng Bijian about China's "peaceful rise"; and so, narrating itself as a normal power. However, because narratives can set expectations for behaviors, Herrick also notes that policy officials in China became worried that the "peaceful rise" narrative may restrict their ability to address the Taiwan question due to the possible expansionist perception of a "rise" and so reformulated to "peaceful development".

Beyond just measures of strength, states may also be characterized in other ways like status quo versus revisionist, or liberal versus non-liberal. States may try to reinterpret their identity even according to ethnic, cultural, or geographical divisions. We often talk

about states like Ukraine moving towards the West, or perhaps that it has always been the West. Of course, Ukraine is not physically moving anywhere, instead these are attempts to shape Ukraine's geopolitical prospective by narrating what Ukraine is.

These identities, either descriptions of power or propositional, are situated in the context of broader narratives about the international system. Systemic narratives serve primarily to define the international order; to tell us its norms and rules, its actors, what the balance of powers may be, and where it is headed. Miskimmon et al. (2013, p. 61) explain that system narratives can influence the international order in three ways: 1) strategic narratives contribute to how order is conceived, 2) they define what the order is and on what terms they are understood, and 3) they are central to maintaining the order.

The modern media ecology gives states the opportunity to make their narratives known to both foreign policy makers and the general public. When the international system appears to change, observers naturally seek explanations. It is at those moments when great and rising powers can take advantage of the situation to provide explanations through narratives which, if accepted, would increase their power and opportunities. Various pieces of information, what we might call news, will make their way to observers through normal channels. But these pieces of information will be fragmented; reports about a particular war or a particular conference will at one point inform the consumer about what has occurred, but by the time the full meaning of this event and its outcomes can be understood weeks, months, or years later, the consumer will have forgotten the cause. Thus, he would have no sense of continuity. But he does. Fragmented information provides opportunities for states to construct narratives about occurrences, what they mean, their implications, and their future.

According to Miskimmon et al. (2013, p. 68) strategic narratives can indicate aspects of the international order by highlighting expectations of behavior, outlining desirability of cooperation or integration, predicting about power changes, threats, enemies and allies, and by outlining the scope for the socialization of actors. More concretely, Barthwal-Datta and Chacko (2020) write that how a state is narrated will link "them with particular types of behaviour such as leadership, balancing, hedging, band-wagoning, coercion, restraint, dominance or subservience", according to which they may in their interactions "promote particular institutional arenas, rules or regimes, multipolarity,

asymmetric multipolarity, bipolarity or unipolarity."

It is this promotion of orders and behavior noted by Barthwal-Datta and Chacko which is the focus of this thesis. For the issue of strategic narratives to be of interest to us and consequential they must, as noted, have some basis in fact. Accordingly, Barthwal-Datta and Chacko (2020, pp. 248–249) note that the new battle to narrate the regional order of the Indo-Pacific is a consequence of China's and India's increase in relative power and the US' decrease in relative power. As a rising power, India's narrative regarding the Indo-Pacific "promotes 'issue-based' alliances with a variety of countries including China, Russia and the United States, to promote a multipolar regional order" while Australia, a stagnate normal power, "seeks to perpetuate the post-World War II status quo in the region, with respect to the continuation of a dominant US presence" (Barthwal-Datta, Chacko 2020). Material changes give way to narrative contestations.

Various scholars have argued that American hegemony is coming to an end (see Acharya 2014). It is not necessary to accept this premise for the purpose of this thesis but only that America's relative power has declined – evident by the undeniable rise in relative power of states like China or India. Just because relative power has declined does not necessarily mean that the American hegemonic order will end but only that other states will offer their own narratives as to what some future of the international system will look like. Indeed, we now live in a period of narrative competition due to the material changes we are witnessing. Or, as Miskimmon et al. (2018, p. 277) say, the increasing prominence of rising powers "appears to put more issues, identities, experiences, grievances, and memories on the table to be taken into account in any future world order."

Material power must exist, but it must be transformed into social power – or one might say persuasive power, or perhaps even deceptive power – to create effective narratives. Emerging powers participate in the construction of order primarily by projective narratives based on identity claims. Emerging powers will try to reinterpret who is who and what can be done. Efficacy is a matter of how these narratives are received by observers and not the concern of this thesis. Instead, I wish to focus only on what narratives are put out by Russia and India to construct a better idea of their intentions, desires, and identities.

Many scholars have used narratives to examine foreign policy outcomes and

strategies. Russia in particular is a favorite case study. Schmitt (2018) applies his theory of narratives and myths to Russian strategic narrative and its interaction with myths within France. He begins by pointing out that in its Foreign Policy Concept of 2013 Russia declared that it must "create instruments for influencing how it is perceived in the world". Schmitt demonstrates that Russia puts forward the system narrative that the US wants to maintain its unipolar dominance at all costs and actively prevents the world from becoming multipolar. The contest between US unipolarity and multipolarity has "dominated Russian narrative about the international system." Under this system narratives lay sub-narratives e.g., Europe is dominated by the US, or dangerous Western military interventionism. These narratives then interact with local myths, French myths in this case, and become influential. Some of these myths are the myth of the golden, the American danger myth, the French "grandeur", and the "savior" myth.

Other scholars have analyzed Russia's narrative on a more regional level. Tyushka (2022) examines the way Russia contests Europe's liberal identity and hegemony through narrative weaponization. Tyushka claims that the Russian offensive narratives portray the EU as a "non-existing EUrope", a "Gayropa", and a "false Europe", which seeks to undermine the resilience of the liberal-democratic integration model. These counter-narratives "constitute legitimate efforts to re-evaluate the state of affairs." The aim of Tyushka's article is said to be to explain how and why Russian actors externalize narratives as part of "an anti-hegemonic (geo)political struggle."

Tyushka argues that strategic narratives can become weaponized when they are used in contexts of confrontation and thus offensive campaigns to exploit the adversaries' vulnerabilities to cognitive influence. Tyushka concludes that anti-Western narratives from Russia have gained ground and have become increasingly digitally reinforced.

Some studies go beyond Russian narratives of domestic subversion and examine the international structure at large. Kurowska (2014) does this by examining Russia's narrative regarding responsibility to protect (R2P), and how Russia argues multipolarity as resistance to liberal norms. Russia may not object to R2P outright, but it certainly takes a more nuanced approach which is chiefly concerned with the current implementation of R2P which Russia believes targets regime change in line with the promotion of democracy. The foundational objection is the forceful imposition of liberal values over peace and

security. The aim is "the insistence on the sovereign equality prescribed by international law against the consolidating practice of intervention maintains the façade of parity with the west." This position also allows Russia to expose the 'double standards' of the West.

Kurowska demonstrates that multipolarity has become central to Russia's lexicon against the West and is employed by scholars and politicians which "liberates Russia from the normative pull of the Western hegemonic order." Russia perceives itself as objecting to the changing of 'basic principles of international law' to doctrines of 'humanitarian intervention'. Essentially, Russia believes that the hegemonic order no longer affirms basic laws and norms but seeks to impose its own normative values upon the world. Multipolarity, for Russia, is the means by which they, as a pole, reinstate dedication to international laws and norms. In other words, they believe they are the true respecters of the international order. The discourse of multipolarity is mobilized as a counterweight to US unilateralism. To this extent, Lavrov urged the international community to pursue a triumph of law over revolutionary action, exemplified by regime change in Libya.

Literature on Indian strategic narrative and rhetoric remains comparatively sparse. Natarajan (2014) examines how India uses digital public diplomacy to create a strategic narrative. Public diplomacy is the vehicle by which states construct and project strategic narratives, with the goal of influencing public opinions of foreign audiences. Strategic narrative is conceptualized as a means of soft power, as a means to foreign policy objectives. India's Public Diplomacy Division is the key state body responsible for India's public diplomacy and boasts a significant online presence. Through its online presence, India is able to publish counter-narratives, particularly in response to non-state actors like terrorist organizations.

Barrinha and Turner (2024) analyze the strategic narratives of Russia, India, and the EU with regards to cybersecurity in the OEWG and AHC. They conclude that the EU uses force for good identity narrative and rules-based order system narrative. Russia's conveys identity narratives of Russophobia and anti-Westernism, and system narratives of sovereignty and multilateralism. India demonstrates the most ambiguous narratives but articulate narratives around "sovereignty (system), multilateralism (system), democracy (identity) and developing nation (identity) to support its policy narrative around technological autonomy and national security."

Additionally, narratives have found a place within the framework of neoclassical realism. While power distribution is still king, neoclassical realism suggests that there are intervening variables between systemic stimuli and foreign policy outcome. If these intervening variables can be defined, it is possible to make predictions of foreign policy outcomes. These variables include leader images, strategic cultures, state-society relations, and domestic institutions (Ripsman, Taliaferro, Lobell 2016, pp. 61–79). Strategic narratives can help define the variable of leader images. Images encompass a variety of ways that leaders process information; this includes ideology, political philosophy, character traits, and even psychological ticks. As a result, images are deeply personalized and represent the core beliefs of leaders. To understand foreign policy choices, it is useful to understand the character and psychology of political leaders, their political philosophy, their perception of themselves and their enemies, conceptions of power, risk tolerance, and more. Researchers may employ Jungian psychoanalysis, examine 'consciousness horizons', discourse coherence, and analyze network relations to do so (Morgado 2019, p. 101). Along with these methods of analyzing the decision makers' personality, one must also analyze their intentions. Methodologically this can be done through "the study of biographies, speeches, behavior, and foreign policy outcomes, with the objective of deducing the GA's [Geopolitical Agent] perceptions" (Morgado 2019, p. 103). For neoclassical realists, this thesis can assist in defining that variable.

In summary, Miskimmon et al. bring narratives into the discipline of IO proper. They tell us that narratives are used to construct meanings of the past, present, and future by piecing together various individual facts in order to persuade others to particular actions, this is what makes the narratives strategic. Narratives can be broken down into 3 types; issues, identity, and system narratives. This thesis concerns itself most with identity and system narratives.

Identity narratives narrate who an actor is, what type of power they are, and what their characteristics are. Depending on what the actor is narrated as, it may affect what courses of policy are appropriate for it. System narratives narrate what the order of the system is understood as by participating actors. Much of creating system narratives involves narrating who the major players are, how strong they are, and what the norms are for the different types of powers.

The modern media ecology has reduced the cost of distributing narratives to practically zero and states take advantage of this to communicate their narratives in the hopes of extracting favorable outcomes. Because their goal is to extract outcomes and shape behaviors, narratives must, to some extent, be truthful and honest; they cannot be total lies. If narratives were based on complete lies, they would extract outcomes which are not in line with the true desires of the states.

## 3. Data and Methodology

This thesis employs a deductive qualitative content analysis to discern the various narratives India and Russia deploy regarding the world order. The subject of this analysis are various speeches, Q&As, and statements published on the official websites of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the Indian Prime Minister (IPM), the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), and the Russian President (RP). Additionally, speeches made by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh were taken from his official archived website. Most of the entries are speeches made by the respective Foreign Ministers, Prime Minister, and President but some entries contain speeches and statements from lower positions within the offices. In the case of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs there are speeches from the Prime Minister published on the Ministry's website likely due to its relevance for foreign affairs.

Through python scripts using the Selenium and Beautiful Soup libraries, releases from the websites were extracted to form datasets for each office. The entries span from December 2006 to April 2023, when the datasets were compiled. The compiled datasets include 7620 entries for the Russian President, 3848 for the Russian Foreign Ministry, 2271 for the Indian Prime Minister, and 3010 for the Indian External Affairs Ministry.

A sample could not be taken from the entire datasets since not all entries will be relevant for the intentions of this research endeavor. For example, in the case of the Russian President and Indian Prime Minister many entries will regard purely domestic affairs and make no remarks about foreign policy. To preprocess the dataset for sampling, a dictionary approach was used to narrow the datasets to relevant entries; 21 words and phrases, displayed in Table 1, relating to notions of world order were used to delimit the

datasets. Among these words and phrases are "international order", "multipolarity", "liberalism", "sovereignty", "the west", etc. It is important to note that in the dictionary search for the Russian President the term "the west" was modified to just "west" due to an encoding issue making "the west" an unsearchable regex term. Other terms could be used but this approach proved sufficient for the delimiting process. The numbers of mentions returned for each office are displayed in Table 1.

The results displayed in table one indicates that the topic of global order and polarity are, at least presented through the selected terms, more salient within the Russian state than within the Indian. This is an expected result as the Russian experience with the global sanctions regime does suggest that power distribution and its uses are a much more pressing topic in Russian political life. Unsurprisingly the frequencies of these terms were greater within the foreign ministries.

Furthermore, to increase how relative the datasets are before sampling, only entries with more than five search terms were kept with the exception of the IPM where it was lowered to more than two mentions. Maintaining a minimum score of 5 for the IPM would not permit a large enough dataset to sample from. As demonstrated by Table 1, the topic of global order simply does not come up as intensely among the Indian Prime Minister.

**Table 1 Occurrences of Search Terms**

| Search Terms | Russia | | India | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | RP | RFM | RFM | MEA |
| World/International Order | 273 | 699 | 68 | 335 |
| Multipolar(ity) | 237 | 399 | 17 | 215 |
| Sovereign(ty) | 1445 | 1435 | 90 | 477 |
| Hegemony | 27 | 58 | 1 | 8 |
| Liberal(ism) | 295 | 145 | 99 | 88 |
| Multilateral(ism) | 526 | 1316 | 162 | 1305 |
| Powershift | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Rising Power(s) | 4 | 0 | 4 | 24 |
| The West | 908 | 2621 | 73 | 279 |
| Globalization | 142 | 185 | 145 | 530 |
| Illiberal/Non-liberal | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| International Law | 868 | 2134 | 18 | 232 |
| Total | 4725 | 8994 | 679 | 3497 |
| Mentions Per Document | 0.669 | 2.337 | 0.299 | 1.162 |
| Mentions Per Entry Per Document | 1.963 | | 0.791 | |

Note: Search terms sharing stems or differentiated by US/UK spelling have been combined for the purposes of this table.

A possible limitation here could be the language of the extracted documents, as only English language texts were extracted. Being the practical global lingua franca, the effort to translate documents into English indicates that the published English translations are intended for a global audience; to make grievances and perceptions aware to a global audience. In this sense the limitation of extracting only English texts is not so much a limitation but a means of selecting for texts meant to influence a global audience. However, this is only applicable to Russia, as English enjoys the status of being an official government language in India. Despite this, the results indicate that ratios of hits per entry are fairly consistent between comparable countries and within countries; RP:IPM = 2.237, RFM:MEA = 2.011 and RP:RFM = .286, IPM:MEA = .257. This demonstrates that despite the difference of the role of English within the countries, there is not a significant difference in the distribution of search hits.

Once processed, and minimum frequency criteria were met, a stratified random sample was taken by breaking up the remaining entries into 30 roughly equal segments according to date and selecting an entry from each segment. This means that 30 samples were taken from each office for a total of 120 analyzed documents. Of the sampled documents, 8 were irrelevant; 1 from the RP, 1 from the MEA, and the remaining 6 from the IPM. This gives a precision score of .933, indicating that the outlined approach had few false positives.

To analyze the content of the documents, 30 codes were derived to denote various attitudes about some of the tenets of international liberalism, their perception of the West's respect for them, and their attitudes towards the West. Each code can be considered a type of identity or system narrative. A total of 1181 (RP = 523, RFM = 305, IPM = 142, MEA = 202) instances were identified throughout the analyzed documents.

For the purpose of this analysis, the codes can be conceptualized in two categories. 15 codes describe attitudes towards liberal principles and condemnations of the West for subversion of these principles. The remaining 15 codes regard polarity and the nature of the West within the global order. A sample of the codes with an example can be seen in Table 2 with the rest available in the appendix.

These codes were created with the intention of extracting data about attitudes towards aspects of the liberal global order and the conduct of established Western powers

within it. By 'aspects of the liberal global order' I do not mean what can be described as the 'virtues' or 'values' of liberalism such as those Tallberg et al. (2020) consider in their research on IO liberal norms commitment which they identify as "democracy promotion, gender equality, good governance, sustainable development, deregulation, debt relief, human security, and responsibility to protect (R2P)." While values such as these are important tenets of international liberalism, this thesis is more interested in the structural manifestations of liberalism within the world order.

To this effect, 4 of the codes are about perceptions of IOs. IOs play the most prominent role in the creation and nature of the modern world order. In liberal institutionalist theory, IOs are the means by which states overcome impediments of peaceful cooperation within an anarchic system because "the informational and coordinating limitations of state interactions can be relaxed and even surmounted by institutions, created for mutual, if differentially, valued benefits by states" (Kolodziej 2005). IOs are not just a norm or a virtue of liberalism but their implementation changes the structure of the international order by acting as a coordinating and enforcement authorities and overcoming the problem of anarchy; they make liberalism on the world stage possible.

For an IO to effectively fulfill its mandate, it must necessarily be endowed by some authority to do so. Cooper at al. (2008) define this authority as "when states recognize, in principle or in practice, their ability to make legally binding decisions on matters relating to a state's domestic jurisdiction, even if those decisions are contrary to a state's own policies and preferences." Stated incur what is called a 'sovereignty cost' "when they surrender discretion over national policies in order to adhere to the standards set by an international institution" (Hafner-Burton, Mansfield, Pevehouse 2015). The pinnacle of such sovereignty cost is when states agree to abide by legally binding international laws. Codes regarding international law were created to measure willingness to endure such sovereignty costs which is a necessary precondition of the liberal global governance system. Additionally, while not logical negations of codes regarding the importance of IOs and international law, 2 codes about sovereignty were included, which serve as proxies for an opposing principle to the importance of IOs and international law.

4 more codes were crafted to measure other structures of international liberal world

order. Two of these regard the importance of norms within the system and Western treatment of them. Unlike international laws, which are written and formal, what exactly norms, are and their function is more ambiguous and debated; for example, scholars of war convention theory (see Bailey 1972), and democratic peace theory (see Chan 1997) will contextualize the role of norms in different ways. Raymond (1997) provides a comprehensive, although somewhat necessarily vague, definition of norms as "generalized standards of conduct that de-lineate the scope of a state's entitlements, the extent of its obligations, and the range of its jurisdiction." Furthermore, Long Peace theory of the Cold War stipulates that despite great power competition between the US and the USSR, norms were able maintain relative peace by creating constraints on behavior (Raymond 1997b). This can be applied to discussions about the perceived upcoming multipolar order; that even though there might not be hegemonic stability in the future, if new poles are sufficiently dedicated to the practice of norm, the relatively peaceful order will continue. The codes regarding norms are intended to discover if such sufficient dedication exists. For this reason, the codes do not focus on any specific norm but rather on the desire to incorporate the principle of the norms within the system.

**Table 2 Sample of codes used for textual analysis**

| *Code* | *Definition* | *Example* |
|---|---|---|
| **Importance of International Law** | Speaker invokes the importance of, or their adherence to international law in conducting foreign policy. They may also claim that the system must be based on predictable and established laws. | RFM: "We continue to make the adherence to supremacy of international law and the rejection of double standards the corner-stone of establishment of the foreign policy line of Russia." |
| **Positive Mention of Liberalism or Democracy** | Speaker mentions liberalism or democracy within the international context in a way that can be understood as supportive, optimistic, or positive. | IPM: "Developing countries like ours, recognise the importance of a liberal and rule based international trading system." |
| **Importance of Multilateralism and IOs** | Speaker invokes the importance of multilateral decision making and the role of IOs in the formation of the international system and policies in a positive way. | RP: "But it is important that the American administration favours multilateral diplomacy and recognises the need to rely on the good offices of the UN." |
| **Western Attack on Sovereignty** | Speaker claims that established Western powers are attacking/harming the sovereignty of other states. | RFM: "We are seeing the attacks the west is making on the sovereignty of Russia and many other countries that pursue a more or less independent policy." |
| **Locked out** | Speaker claims that they have made efforts to participate and integrate into the international system but their efforts have gone ignored, dismissed, or received a lack of cooperation from the established Western powers. | RP: "In this regard, let me remind you of Russia's proposals to our western partners to build confidence and a collective security system. They were once again tossed in December 2021." |

The final two codes referring to liberal structure regard trade. One code seeks to measure the perceived importance of international trade while an opposite code measures how often a speaker stresses the importance of protecting against the negative consequences of trade. Globalization and global trade have become contested issues with many scholars characterizing a moment of 'globalization backlash" and going as far as claiming that "the populist backlash against globalization poses a serious threat to the Liberal International Order (LIO)" (Broz, Frieden, Weymouth 2021). Much of the literature on backlash focuses on developed states but the inability to conclude the Doha round within the WTO, which made developing countries a priority, demonstrates that there an unsurmountable division of preference which has somewhat stagnated the development of the global trade regime.

Trade is a critical facet of the liberal theory and the liberal world order. Trade facilitates economic interdependence which increases the cost of conflict and thus maintaining peace. The further integrated a state is, and the more dependent they are on global trade, the higher the cost of conflict. Trade dependency can invoke a compliant behavior because "the prospect of trade losses can discourage conflict where the risk posed to commerce from fighting is large relative to the value of the stakes in dispute. To deter conflict, trade partners must prefer the status quo to making, or resisting, demands for change" (Gartzke, Westerwinter 2016). The codes for trade in this analysis measure the willingness to be integrated into a trading regime and the desire to minimize the influence of the interdependence thereof.

The aforementioned codes denote various aspects of liberal world structure. Three codes, namely 'Negative Mention of Liberalism or Democracy', 'Positive Mention of Liberalism or Democracy', and 'True Believers of International Liberalism' measure sentiments of liberalism and democracy as such. Since this analysis seeks to uncover the role liberalism should play in the world according to Russia and India, it seems necessary and only logical to code their mentions of Liberalism and Democracy as such.

The remaining 15 codes have been devised to denote various aspects of order, states' role within it, and their behavior. Since the transition to multipolarity would by definition necessitate contestation and end of unipolarity, the 'Impending Collapse of Western Order', 'Change Needed' and the 'Multipolarity' codes were added to measure

how inevitable the speakers believe the multipolar order is, how conscious they are of this end, and how salient a multipolar order is to them. Furthermore, the transition from unipolarity to unipolarity means that greater power and authority will be distributed to other states, both to other great powers but also to normal powers. The 'Rightful Role of Rising Powers' and 'Need for Equally Shared Power and Responsibility' codes measure their perceptions as privileged great powers and also the general need for a more equal distribution of power. The 'Primacy of Regionalism' code measures a related principle, since a unipolar power is considered a unipolar power because it dominates the entire global system, multipolar powers will by contrast incur regions of influence and compete at the margins, this code measures how important the speakers believe pursuing a foreign policy of regionalism is compared to an international one.

Additionally, all these codes can inform us about whether the speakers desire to pursue a policy which makes them a hegemon or one that is anti-hegemonic; do they desire to rule the world or merely live within it? For example, the count of 'Need for Equally Shared Power and Responsibility' can indicate if an anti-hegemonic order is the ideal while a low count can leave this question on the table. Likewise, the instances of the "Rightful Role of Rising Powers" code can help inform us if the speaker believes great powers deserve a privileged role within the multipolar system.

The 'Guidance of National Interests', 'Importance of Mutual Respect', 'Importance of Cooperation' and 'Locked Out' codes are designed to determine priorities and behaviors of foreign policy formation. Like sovereignty, the national interests may need to somewhat be hampered in pursuit of a truly liberal and multilateral order. A particularly high count of this code, especially in comparison to 'Need for Cooperation' may indicate that the willingness to sacrifice in pursuit of a truly liberal order is not sufficiently present. The 'Locked Out' code is of particular interest as it indicates a desire to participate within the liberal system but having been excluded from doing so.

The final codes denote negative perceptions of Western behavior. One method of power contestation is to criticize the behavior of those who hold power, with these codes we can measure how often India or Russia criticize the behavior of Western powers as unrighteous powers. A high count of these codes may demonstrate that they form their foreign policy *against* established powers while a low count may suggest that their foreign

policy is aimed at building multipolarity more *for* their own benefit. Also, these codes can shed light on the divergence of contesting states regarding their perception of the West.

The most significant limitation to my methodology is that only one coder was used. In qualitative content analysis there are always close calls and various other subjective judgments the researcher must make. This can be mitigated by employing multiple coders and selecting instances where judgments intersect. Unfortunately, this option was not available to me. However, this can be partially made up for by the analysis which expands on the actual content coded. Through the exhibition of the content, the data results can be contextualized, which is to say the content can explain the statistical results.

# 4. Findings and Analysis

This section will cover the statistical and qualitative data including the frequency of codes and the contents of the analyzed documents. Key findings will be extrapolated upon, the results of which will be used to for comparison between states, offices, and codes to determine attitudes towards liberalism within the global order, how the speakers desire to interact and participate within the order, and their perceptions of established powers.

The first observation one can make from the first set of codes in Figure 1 is that the most common code is a 'Positive View of IO' in which the speaker makes a mention to an International Organization in a way that can be characterized as praiseful, approving, supportive, or generally positive; 131 such mentions are made. Comparing absolute values does provide some insight but it does not take into account factors such as length of texts or number of relevant texts. Comparing ratios of positive to negative mentions (Positive: Negative) of IOs within offices can give us a more meaningful picture. It is important to note that mentions of collective defense agreements (NATO, CSTO) were excluded from being labeled positive or negative. For Russia we observe 5.466 positive mentions for every negative mention (5.466:1), while India demonstrates a lower ratio of 2.777:1. While both countries do most often speak positively about IOs, it is 1.968 times more likely that an Indian official will make a negative mention of an IO; this is more so true for the MEA with a ratio of 1.689:1.

**Figure 1 Frequency of codes among terms regarding principles of international liberalism**



Frequency of Codes
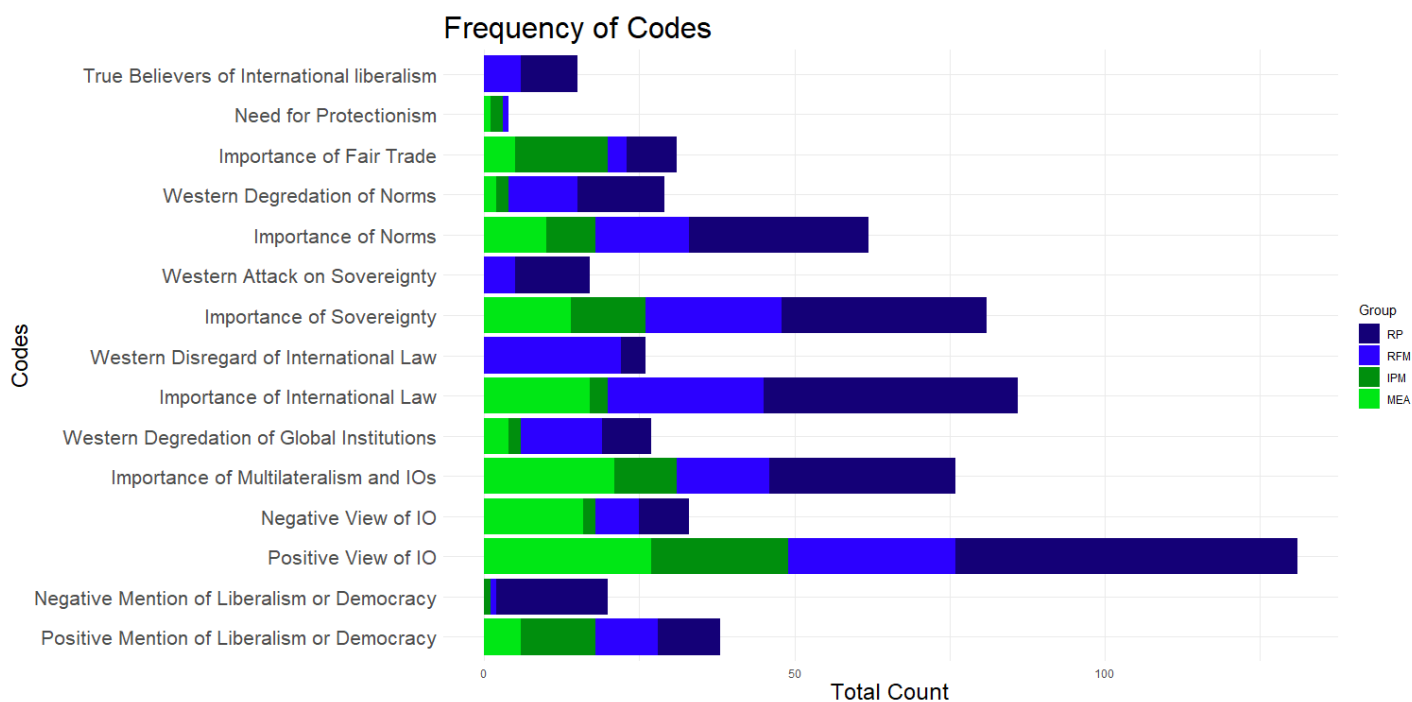
When taking a look at the actual content of these mentions, India's lower ratio appears easily explained; the UN. The overwhelming majority of negative mentions by an Indian official are referring to the United Nations. These negative mentions cannot be characterized as particularly "harsh" – often they will be placed between positive views of the UN, forming a sort of IO compliment sandwich – but they do nonetheless express genuine grievances that appear rather salient. At the core of India's grievances is the argument that the UN has not adapted to serving the needs of *all* states and therefore has not been maximally effective at carrying out its mission. For example, in 2018 at the NAM plenary meeting, Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari stated "The United Nations lies at the heart of the multilateral system set up at the end of the Second World War. Today we need to ask whether an organization designed in 1945 with just 51 member States, is really appropriate to serve the needs of an international community that now comprises 193 independent sovereign States facing 21st century challenges to their citizens' well-being and security." In many similar quotes, the speaker will convey a very fundamental pessimism towards the future of the institution such as in 2018 at the 73rd session of the UNGA by MEA Sushma Swaraj who said "I began by highlighting the unique and positive role of the UN: but I must add that step by slow step, the importance, influence, respect

and value of this institution is beginning to ebb. It is time to wonder if we are wandering towards the fate of the League of Nations."

India's relatively critical position towards the UN is also reflected in Mukherjee and Malone's (2013) examination of India's two year non-permanent membership of the UNSC in which they summarized India's five dominating goals as "making the UNSC more effective", "enhancing India's standing as a responsible world power", "expanding the UNSC's permanent membership", "reforming the UNSC's working methods", and "protecting the primacy of state sovereignty from UN-sanctioned military interventions".

In contrast, as already mentioned, Russia's likelihood of making a negative mention of an IO is lower and of the 15 negative mentions, 4 are about the UN. Among these 4 negative mentions, none can be considered nearly as "harsh" as the Indian mentions. For example, the most critical comment from the Russian side was made by FM Sergey Lavrov in May 2020 during a press conference in Oman in which he says "In his recently released report on food and energy security, the UN Secretary-General did not mention the enormous negative impact of Western sanctions on the situation. It is wrong for this universal international organisation to ignore the objective state of affairs and avoid providing an honest comprehensive analysis." This is quite different from going as far as comparing it to the League of Nations.

While its criticisms are mild, Russia's odes to the UN are quite passionate. Responding to a question in 2017 suggestion that the authority of IOs had declined, FM Sergey Lavrov responded by saying,

> *"In such situations some "well-wishers" like to say that the UN has outlived its usefulness because the right of veto is abused and so on. This is disingenuous. The veto was included in the UN Charter at the insistence of the US after the League of Nations came to a sad end precisely because its activities and mechanisms did not provide for a special role of the big powers. Because of this the US decided that it had no time to just listen to moralising without being able to exert decisive influence. That's why today the right of veto is not some kind of privilege, but an instrument for maintaining stability in international affairs which guarantees that no decision by the international community can be taken unless it is backed by the five permanent UN Security Council members. This needs to be understood."*

Within this statement by FM Lavrov lies the likely explanation for the different perceptions of the UN; namely that Russia benefits from the special privilege of being a

permanent member of the UNSC. This finding is consistent with previous findings such as Radin and Reach (2017) who determined that "Russia supports the United Nations system because it bolsters Russia's position as a great power."

India does make positive mentions but clearly believes that it is being underserved and deserves a greater role within the UN system. On one occasion in 2022 at a Valdai Club meeting President Vladimir Putin does claim that "it may be worth revising the structure of the United Nations, including its Security Council, to better reflect the world's diversity", however a Russian speaker is more likely to defend the status quo of the UN system.

Unsurprisingly both states have positive views of IOs they are members of, such as BRICS or G20. Furthermore, both countries make positive statements regarding ASEAN such as the Indian Foreign Secretary in 2018 who stated "The ASEAN has long functioned as an anchor of stability at its eastern end and its continuance in that role is critical. Its centrality and unity is an asset for the entire continent."

While India's negative mentions focus on the UN, Russia's are more scattered. Among them are 3 mentions about the OSCE, 2 about AUKUS, and one about the G20. The OSCE is a particularly interesting case as there are also 3 positive mentions of it. The contention here appears to be not that the OSCE, which Russia is a member of, is an undesirable institution but rather as an ineffective and subverted one. In 2010 during a news conference, in response to an answer about how European security architecture can solve the situation in Cyprus, President Medvedev stated "The OSCE is also not a universal platform for resolving serious problems that have long, sensitive and complex history. We know this through our own experience." In contrast, FM Lavrov responding to a question about the Minsk agreements and security in the Donbass region stated, "regarding security on the dividing line, we stand firmly for strengthening the role and responsibility of the OSCE mission, for increasing the number of its observers so that they oversee the creation of a safe distance between the conflicting parties, as was agreed, and also monitor the sides' permanent sites where heavy weapons are stored."

Compared to other institutions that make up European security architecture, such as NATO or the EU, Russia is actually a member of the OSCE. Furthermore, since the OSCE makes decisions on a consensus basis, no decision can be made without Russian approval.

In theory this gives Russia an incentive to focus European into the OSCE. And in fact, Kropatcheva (2015) notes that "In 1995–1997, there were discussions on 'A Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the Twenty-First Century', known as the Security Model Exercise. Russia promoted these discussions, having vain hopes that the OSCE would become the main coordinating IGO among all other European security IGOs." By 1999 "Russia began to perceive the OSCE not as a co-owned organization, but rather as a Western organization, where it was given a marginal role of the 'led'" (Kropatcheva 2015). By 2014 during the Ukraine crisis Kropatcheva characterized Russia's involvement within the OSCE as "ambivalent". The mentions of the OSCE in the analyzed documents lend credence to this characterization as a result Russia's belief, not that the OSCE is too overbearing, but rather ineffective and subverted.

Moving on from mentions of specific IOs to multilateralism, international law, and the role of IOs within the system in general we observe 76 total instances of 'Importance of Multilateralism and IOs' (RP = 30, RFM = 15, IPM = 10, MEA = 21) and 86 instances of 'Importance of International Law' (RP = 41, RFM = 25, IPM =3, MEA = 17). For Russia these two codes combined make up 13.4% of instances and 14.8% for India. In comparison, as explained further in the methodology section, the code of 'Importance of Sovereignty' – while not a logical opposite – can act as an opposing principle if we accept that IOs, multilateralism, and international law carry 'sovereignty costs' with them; an emphasis on sovereignty can signal an unwillingness to pay these costs while an emphasis on multilateralism and international law can signal a willingness to do so. We observe 81 total instances of the 'Importance of Sovereignty' (RP = 33, RFM = 22, IPM=12, MEA = 14), making up 6.6% of Russia's instances and 7.6% of India's. We notice here that mentions reflecting a willingness to pay sovereignty costs occur roughly twice as often for both states.

Of course, the question naturally arises of how India and Russia understand multilateralism and international law. Narine (in Murray 2016) argues that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a weak and unstable Russia "saw international law and institutions as valuable hedges against the predation of larger powers"; i.e. they are protections against hegemony. This logic was further solidified after the NATO bombings in Yugoslavia, which famously did not have UNSC support, and which Russia perceived as the West's willingness to interfere in the affairs of a sovereign state. In fact within the

corpus of mentions of 'Importance of International Law' there are 4 instances where sovereignty is also mentioned such as in 2009 during a Q&A in Helsinki when President Medvedev states "today as in the past the real challenge involves strengthening the values that are fundamental for all of us who live in Europe, namely: adherence to international law, non-use of force, respect for sovereignty, commitment to peaceful methods of conflict resolution and the principles of arms control." In this instance President Medvedev appears to characterize sovereignty and international law as separate but complementing principles.

By contrast FM Lavrov, responding to a question regarding Western reaction to Russian delivery of aid to Ukraine and their violation of Ukraine's sovereignty during a Q&A in 2014, answers with a more peculiar relationship between sovereignty and international law: "first, sovereignty and territorial integrity are things that, above all, must be secured by the state itself. Numerous UN documents explicitly state that everyone must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a state which ensures the right of its people to self-determination and does not use force to deprive citizens of this right. This has to be the point of departure. I'm referring to the declaration on principles of international law concerning friendly relations and cooperation among states in accordance with the UN charter of 1970, which is still valid today." What exactly this means is a bit unclear as the first sentence seems to contradict the second, but it does demonstrate that Russia perceives international law and the role of IOs like the UN as a check on Western hegemony. This is an instrumental view of international law and does not ascribe to it the moral character found in progressive liberalism. But the argument of this thesis is not that Russia will promote or adhere to international law because they believe in its moral merits, but because they have concrete self-interest to do so.

And if only for this reason alone, Russia, as demonstrated by the greater frequency of Importance of Multilateralism and International Law codes compared to the Importance of Sovereignty codes, remains willing to support multilateral (when they are included) efforts and international law; namely because it checks Western hegemony and gives them a voice. To further demonstrate this point, FM Lavrov, in response to a question about sanctions and the use of the US dollar in 2021 stated, "we are not looking to pull out of the existing system, which largely relies on the dollar. …as we continue to make the point that everyone must honour the universal multilateral approach and not politicise the

mechanisms that have been agreed on once and for all but rather use them to achieve objectives that underlie these mechanisms…"

Likewise, President Putin, in response to a question regarding Russia-Sino cooperation and its implications for the international system, characterized their cooperation within multilateral formats which they are members of by saying "the commonality of our approaches to fundamental issues of world order and key international problems has become an important stabilising factor in world politics. Within the framework of the UN, the Group of Twenty, BRICS, the SCO, APEC and other multilateral formats, we are working together, helping to shape a new, more just world order, ensure peace and security, defend basic principles of international law."

India's logic does not appear to differ much. Mukherjee and Malone (2011) write that "For many Indian practitioners and analysts, multilateralism is at best a defense against the unilateralism of others, just as arguments for multipolarity have been largely articulated with reference to a unipolar order centered on Washington, DC, that perhaps reminds too many Indians of the colonial dispensation to which they were once subjected." Multilateralism as means of counterbalancing great powers is precisely why India helped established the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961. Additionally, as a developing country, economic interests diverge from more advanced economies, participation in multilateral frameworks like the WTO and G20 allow it to shape global finance and trade policy such as in the run-up to the Doha negotiation round as "India challenged the efforts of developed nations to introduce competition, investment, trade facilitation, and government procurement into discussions" (Mukherjee, Malone 2011).

The role that multilateralism plays in promoting a balanced system (multipolar) is made quite clear by Foreign Secretary Subrahmanyam Jaishankar (now MEA) during the Raisina Dialogue in 2017; "Contemporary multilateral institutions have been devised on multipolar principles, even if they were not taken seriously in practice. Reality could well catch up one day. Accepting the limitations and constraints in international relations in an inter-dependent world will surely promote both multilateralism and multipolarity. Indeed, the two could well feed on each other as greater players need agreed formats to reach common outcomes. The big dangers confronting the world can only be addressed through multilateralism."

As shown above, India and Russia speak of sovereignty at similar rates. In five instances sovereignty is mentioned along with multilateralism or international law one such instance is during an address by Minister of State for External Affairs, Meenakashi Lekhi at the Raisina Dialogue in 2023; "in the years to come, India will remain committed to strengthening respect for shared values of multilateralism, rules-based international order, international law and sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations."

Both states display nearly twice as many codes for the importance of multilateralism and international law than that of the importance of sovereignty; sovereignty is still a salient principle. These results seem to support Mukherjee and Malone's (2011) conclusion that "India does take its international legal obligations very seriously if, as do other countries, occasionally in the breach" but is not interested in "pooled or shared sovereignty." Further research through a similar analysis of published statements of countries which can be considered fully incorporated members of the Western liberal order, such as Germany or Canada, can shed further light in the premium Russia and India place on sovereignty in comparison.

India's counterbalancing does differ in one particular way from Russia's. As will be further explained later in this section, India walks a wire between the West and rising powers. They promote their interest while not positioning themselves against established powers; "it promotes the notion of Brazil, India, Russia, and China (BRIC) as a coalition of emerging economies championing developing nation causes, but is careful not to antagonize Washington by endorsing an alternative international currency to the dollar, something for which China and Russia have expressed support" (Mukherjee, Malone 2011).

For Russia we observe 26 of 'Western Disregard for International Law' (RP = 4, RFM = 22), while not a single instance for India. For the 'Western Degradation of Global Institutions' code we observe 21 instances from Russia and 6 from India (RP = 8, RFM = 13, IPM = 2, MEA = 4). Russia's relative condemnation of the West is likely a consequence of its conflictual relationship with the West. German (2019) echoes Narine's argument by concluding "The reverberations from NATO's air campaign over Kosovo continue to be felt in relations between Russia and the West to this day. The intervention brought an end to the post–Cold War optimism that had prevailed since 1991 and led to a

renewed period of strategic competition. NATO's actions triggered a sustained rise in anti-Western sentiment…." The NATO issue, which has only become more contentious, has acted as a persistent obstruction to cooperation between the West and Russia even in areas where cooperation might have been pragmatic. The minimal possibility of cooperation leaves little reason to abstain from condemnation.

With no comparable obstruction, the door to greater pragmatic cooperation between India and the West has remained open. India can engage all major powers in fulfilling their foreign policy aspirations. In examining Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy strategy Kukreja (2020) concludes that, "[Modi] focused on strengthening cooperative relations with South Asian neighbours and regional integration. India is also moving close to the US's main strategic partners in the Asia-Pacific region—Japan and Australia without losing its strategic autonomy to extract gains from China and the USA.5 The ambit of India's development partnership continue to remain a way of gaining support for India's global ambition, for example, attaining seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)." When opportunity for beneficial cooperation exists, plain condemnation makes little strategic sense and can only sour relationships.

When India does make a condemnation, they only allude to their Western counterparts instead of direct callouts which is more common for Russia. For example, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the 66th UNGA in 2011; "declining global demand and availability of capital, increasing barriers to free trade and mounting debt pose a threat to the international monetary and financial system. Questions are being asked about the efficacy of the Bretton Woods institutions." For comparison, a typical Russian condemnation from FM Lavrov in 2022; "although these principles are set out in the organisation's founding documents, the West has been working hard to privatise the OSCE secretariat and all the other institutions."

For the 'Importance of Norms' code we observe a total of 62 instances (RP = 29, RFM = 15, IPM = 8, MEA = 10), making up 5.19% of Russian instances and 5.23% of Indian instances. Once again, we notice a very similar distribution between the two states. Following previous patterns, for the 'Western Degradation of Norms' code we observe 25 instances from Russia, but only 4 from India (RP = 14, RFM = 11, IPM = 2, MEA = 2), again we see direct condemnations of the West from Russia but few from India.

It is important to keep in mind that in accordance to the discussion about liberalism in the previous section, this code does not select for any particular liberal 'values' but rather a desire for there to be norms of behavior; i.e. rules and principles that constrain acceptable behavior, which, as outlined previously, I believe to be the true role of norms within international liberalism rather than the promotion of particular, often domestically orientated, values.

Of the 44 codes instances of the 'Importance of Norms' code from Russia, 16 of them make some reference to the UN or the UN charter which Russia seems to believe is the foundation of global norms. In certain instances, they will contrast the norms enshrined within the UN charter to the concept of the 'rules-based order'. Such an instance is offered by FM Lavrov in 2021 while answering questions at the he Primakov Readings International Forum; "the zeal, with which our Western colleagues started promoting the notorious "rules-based world order" concept, looks even more irrational and devoid of prospects. Rules are always needed. Let me remind you that the UN Charter is also a body of rules, but these rules have been universally accepted and coordinated by all members of the international community, and they are not called into question by anyone." FM Lavrov reiterated this during a press meeting after a G20 meeting in 2022; "we have the UN charter and the Western concepts of a so-called rules-based order set to undermine the charter. Nobody has seen these rules. They have been shown to nobody." President Putin likewise relates a similar sentiment during a Valdai Club meeting in 2022 when asked a question about the need for rules in a post-hegemonic world, to which President Putin replies that there in fact do exist such rules in the UN Charter, they may need to be changed to reflect current circumstances but that it "should be done quietly, without haste and on the basis of clear principles, rather than rules invented by someone."

Russia appears to narrate that it does believe in the role of norms but that these norms should be clear, preferably written, and agreed upon. During the 10th Moscow Conference on International Security in 2022 President Putin proclaimed that "We need to restore respect for international law, for its fundamental norms and principles." Likewise, at the 75th session of the UNGA he states, "I would like to reiterate that in an interrelated, interdependent world, amid the whirlpool of international developments, we need to work together drawing on the principles and norms of international law enshrined in the UN Charter."

India, while not directly condemning the West, does also convey the message that norms and rules need to be applied equally and according to consent. However, unlike Russia they do not condemn the concept of a rules-based order and in fact use it themselves. While outlining their approach to the to the Indo-Pacific region at a Shangri La Dialogue in 2018 PM Narendra Modi stated "we believe that our common prosperity and security require us to evolve, through dialogue, a common rules-based order for the region. And, it must equally apply to all individually as well as to the global commons. Such an order must believe in sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as equality of all nations, irrespective of size and strength. These rules and norms should be based on the consent of all, not on the power of the few. This must be based on faith in dialogue, and not dependence on force." Another such instance of emphasizing the necessity of consent comes from PM Manmohan Singh at the inauguration of the ASSOCHAM assembly in 2008 who stated, "Open economies and open societies functioning within consensually arrived rules of the game alone can deal with the challenge of globalization and economic growth."

According to the statements of Indian politicians, norms are certainly necessities within the global order. MEA Secretary (East) Riva Ganguly Das in 2021 during a virtual seminar on the Indo-Pacific stated "The first and foremost is a common and universally applicable rules-based world order, which upholds sovereignty, territorial integrity and equality of all nations. All nations must respect their international commitments." The idea of universal consensus is again emphasized through the use of concepts like "universally applicable" and "equality of all nations". India claims to perceive itself as a rule abiding power according to MEA Jaishankar's address at the Indian Ocean Conference in 2019 addressing India's greater footprint in the region; "a conceptual justification therefore centers around the expanding interest of India. It is buttressed by its self-perception by a rule abiding power that contributes positively to global commons." An interesting observation is that three of the previous codes are about the Indo-pacific. This may explain why India expresses relative support for norms. As India seeks to become the power it believes it deserves to be, and steps up its role in the region, norms can contribute to predictability and stability.

Of the 4 'Western Degradation of Norms' occurrences from India, 3 regard trade norms and the perceived rise of protectionism as opposed to the liberal norm of greater

international trade. The following quote from Subrahmanyam Jaishankar as the Foreign Secretary at the second Raisina Dialogue in 2017 sums up these instances; "In the Western world, voices of inter-dependence and globalization have become more muted. Optimism that trade and investment overcome political divides has also faded. More dangers than convenience are perceived from connectivity." Accordingly, for the 'Importance of Fair Trade' code we observe more instances from India, even in absolute terms, at 20 than for Russia at 11.

The final codes to be examined in some detail are the positive and negative 'Mentions of Liberalism or Democracy'. Here we observe a total of 38 positive mentions (RP = 10, RFM = 10, IPM = 12, MEA = 6) and 20 negative mentions (RP = 18, RFM = 1, IPM = 1, MEA = 0). Positive mentions make up a greater portion of all Indian mentions at 5.23% than of all Russian mentions at 2.42%. The most obvious observation is that there is practically a negative mention for every positive Russian mention, while there is only one negative Indian mention.

Russia's positive mentions can be summarized in two themes which account for 15 of the 20 instances; democracy at the international level, and liberal economics. Every mention of democracy refers to it only at the international level. In this case we can safely assume that what is meant by a democratic world order is the end of US hegemony. This is illustrated by President Putin during a Valdai Club meeting in 2022; "so currently, an overwhelming majority of the international community is demanding democracy in international affairs and rejecting all forms of authoritarian dictate by individual countries or groups of countries." In the same document he also states, "I stand for what I just said, for democratic relations with regard to the interests of all participants in international communication, not just the interests of the so-called golden billion." One does need to be particularly insightful to figure out who the "individual countries or group of countries" and the "golden billion" are, namely the US, EU, and a few other allied states.

Two instances are particularly interesting. During the previously mention Valdai Club meeting President Putin makes a statement in which, after referring to Western cancel-culture and the cancelling of Russian historical figures, he makes a simultaneous positive and negative mention; "today, liberal ideology itself has changed beyond recognition. If initially, classic liberalism was understood to mean the freedom of every

person to do and say as they pleased, in the 20th century the liberals started saying that the so-called open society had enemies and that the freedom of these enemies could and should be restricted if not cancelled." Another peculiar mention comes from a Financial Times interview in 2019. After being asked if the time of liberalism has come to an end, President Putin answers that all ideas should exist, but they should not be dictated and "for this reason, I am not a fan of quickly shutting, tying, closing, disbanding everything, arresting everybody or dispersing everybody. Of course, not. The liberal idea cannot be destroyed either; it has the right to exist and it should even be supported in some things. But you should not think that it has the right to be the absolute dominating factor. That is the point."

As mentioned, there is virtually a negative mention for every positive mention which does not make it possible to state that Russia portrays an explicitly positive or negative view of liberalism and democracy. Of the negative views, liberalism is preceded by "so-called" in 4 instances and modified with "neo-" in 5. In two instances President Putin goes as far as to identify neoliberalism with totalitarianism like in this address to the 10th Moscow Conference on International Security in 2022; "their [Western global elite] hegemony means stagnation for the rest of the world and for the entire civilisation; it means obscurantism, cancellation of culture, and neoliberal totalitarianism."

In stark contrast, India makes overwhelmingly positive mentions of liberalism and democracy. India does use its status as a democracy as a form of legitimization. One such instance occurs during PM Singh's address to a joint session of the Ethiopian parliament in 2011; "we share the belief that democracy and respect for the free will of the people are the only durable basis to find solutions to our problems. We believe that similar principles should be applied in the conduct of international governance." Similar to Russia, India uses the narrative of a democratic order to suggest that there must be a greater role of rising and small power, but unlike Russia, does not ever accuse a group of elites of subverting democracy. For example, at the editors' forum for the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit in 2015, PM Modi suggested that because the world has changed, "that is why India advocates reforms in global political, economic and security institutions. They must become more democratic, inclusive and representative of our world."

Also similar to Russia, of the 5 explicit mentions of liberalism from Indian offices, all five refer to liberalism in the economic dimension, such as PM Singh at the 2008 ASSOCHAM meeting; "developing countries like ours, recognise the importance of a liberal and rule based international trading system." The one negative mention of liberalism, offered by PM Modi at the Sixth Global Focal Point Conference on Asset Recovery in 2015, is also about economic liberalism; "economic liberalism and globalization have drastically increased the ability to park profits of crime anywhere in the world." However, the fact that there is only one negative instance allows us to conclude that India does present a positive view of liberalism and democracy.

The rest of this section will provide a brief overview of the codes not mentioned in Figure 1 or the preceding analysis. These codes do not generally occur as often, are less theoretically rich, or reflect patterns which we have already noticed. Nevertheless, they can still provide us with helpful insight and context.

The distribution of the remaining codes can be seen in Figure 2. Immediately one notices that Russia dominates the codes that accuse the West of negative behaviors. Not once does India accuse the West of Imperialism, Hypocrisy, Dishonesty, Degeneracy, or Aggression. All 5 combined, we observe a total of 139 instances from Russia, making up a staggering 16.79% of all Russian instances. This is consistent with patterns already observed, namely that Russia is willing to condemn and criticize the West while India prefers to avoid doing so, in accordance with its historical tradition of non-alignment. It can be said that while Russia perceives the creation of a multipolar world as an endeavor *against* the West, India frames it as an endeavor mainly *for* Indian interests.

The contents of these instances reflect common perceptions of Russia's attitudes towards the West; that the West lies and dishonors its agreements, they seek to control other states, they threaten others and are the reason why relations have become bitter. One example of the most frequent of these codes, 'Western Imperialism' comes from FM Lavrov's remarks at a meeting of the United Russia General Council's Commission on International Cooperation and Support for Compatriots Abroad, in 2023; "the United States would like to spread the philosophy of the notorious Monroe Doctrine, which was designed for the Western Hemisphere, throughout the world. Their wish is to turn the planet into their back yard." An example from the second most common of these codes, 'Western

Aggression', comes from President Putin at an address to the Federal Assembly in 2023 in which he blames the invasion of Ukraine on Western policies; "In fact, the anti-Russia project is part of the revanchist policy towards our country to create flashpoints of instability and conflicts next to our borders. Back then, in the 1930s, and now the design remains the same and it is to direct aggression to the East, to spark a war in Europe, and to eliminate competitors by using a proxy force."

**Figure 2. Frequency of codes regarding multipolarity and the West.**
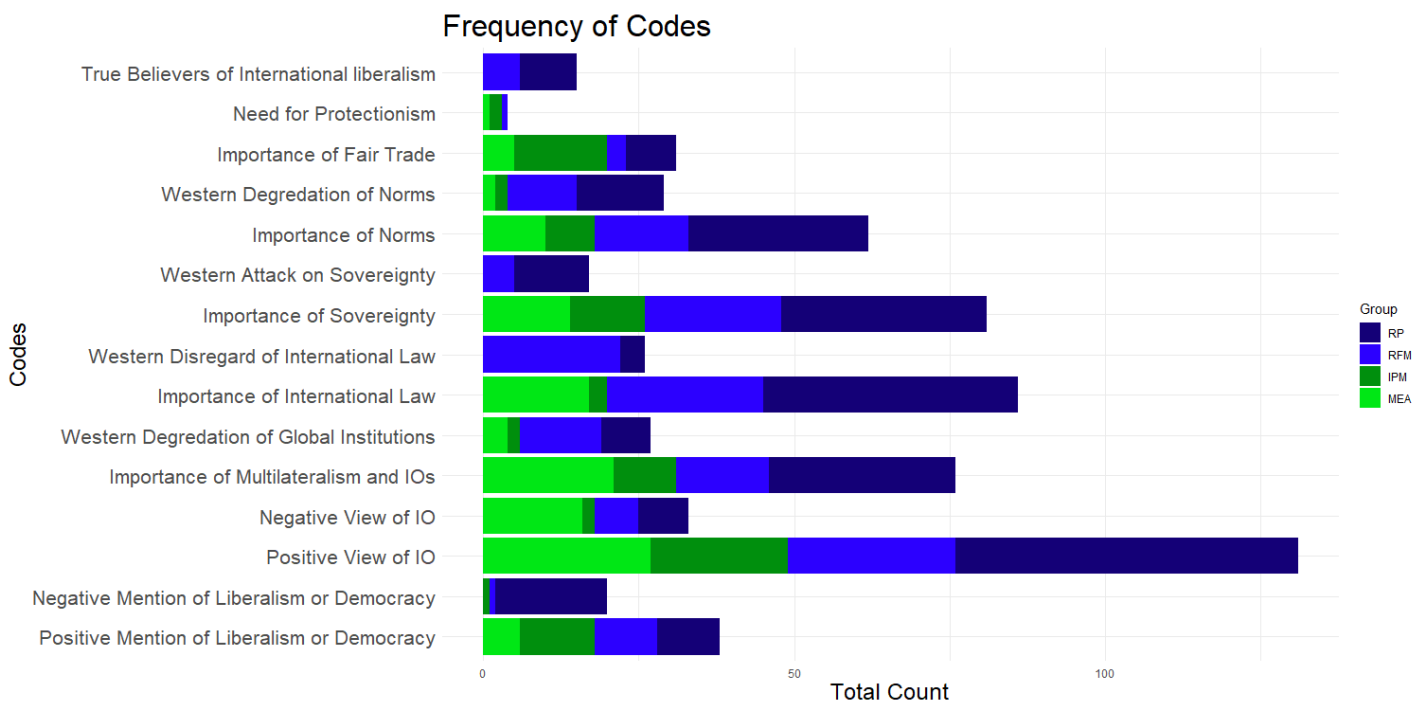


Somewhat related to the previous example, 22 of the 25 'Locked Out' instances directly regard security issues in which Russia claims to have initiated or been willing to reach agreements on security but was ignored by the West. Within the same Federal assembly as just mentioned, President Putin claims that "back in 2008, Russia put forth an initiative to conclude a European Security Treaty under which not a single Euro-Atlantic state or international organisation could strengthen their security at the expense of the security of others. However, our proposal was rejected right off the bat on the pretext that Russia should not be allowed to put limits on NATO activities." During the now-infamous nearly one-hour long address before the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, President Putin admitted that "Moreover, I will say something I have never said publicly, I will say it now for the first time. When then outgoing US President Bill Clinton visited Moscow in 2000, I asked him how America would feel about admitting Russia to NATO. I will not reveal all

the details of that conversation, but the reaction to my question was, let us say, quite restrained…."

The final codes to be looked at are those that deal with the question of multipolarity and world order most directly. 56 total mentions of multipolarity and its syllables are recorded (RP = 21, RFM = 14, IPM = 6, MEA = 15) are observed, 49 of 'Change Needed' (RP = 18, RFM = 3, IPM =14, MEA =14), and 16 of 'Impending Collapse of Western Order' (RP = 8, RFM = 7, IPM = 0, MEA = 1). 'Multipolarity' and "Change Needed' comprise a slightly greater proportion of Indian codes at 6.1% and 8.14% respectfully, compared to 4.22% and 2.57%. However, following previous patterns, India is unlikely to frame multipolarity and the necessity for change as a collapse of the Western order compared to Russia. However, considering that mentions of multipolarity and the need for change do make up 14.25% of all Indian instances, the notion of reforming the order does appear to be rather salient. The one 'Impending Collapse' instance from India was given by the MEA Secretary (West) at the inauguration of AKAM Special Course on Foreign Policy for Indian Media is rather diplomatic in tone; "a shift in economic power from the western Atlantic system toward the Indo-Pacific is inevitable. So is the evolution of a multi-polar Asia." Compare this to a typical Russian quote such as this one from President Putin at the 10th Moscow Conference on International Security in 2022; "I reiterate that the era of the unipolar world is becoming a thing of the past. No matter how strongly the beneficiaries of the current globalist model cling to the familiar state of affairs, it is doomed. The historic geopolitical changes are going in a totally different direction."

In summary, we observe that both states relay support for tenets of a liberal order such as multilateralism, IOs, norms, and international law, but still maintain a pivotal role for sovereignty. In fact, they place sovereignty amongst the norms necessary for a multilateral order based on international law. Research on similar narratives from established members of the liberal order would better contextualize the premium Russia and India place on sovereignty. When it comes to the prominence of these codes among all narratives, we do not notice a considerable difference in proportionality supporting my hypothesis that the difference in domestic political order (democracy vs. autocracy) does not play a critical role in shaping attitudes about international liberalism.

While Russia does express support for tenets of liberalism, it does not express a positive view of liberalism as such, however, since the positive and negative mentions of

liberalism and democracy are practically equal, it cannot be said that they have a negative view of it either. By contrast, of India's mentions of liberalism and democracy, only one was negative suggesting that India does not mind operating within the framework of liberalism and democracy.

The greatest point of departure between the two states is when it comes to attitudes of the West. Russia does not shy away from openly condemning and accusing the West of dishonest, hypocritical, aggressive, and subversive behavior. India avoids doing so. On the rare occasions that it does, it uses rather indirect and 'mild' language and avoids singling out any specific actor.

The narratives, and thereby their perceptions of the world order and its future, of each state can be summed up in a few sentences if some reductionism is permitted. For Russia the narrative can be considered as follows: "Russia believes in the central role of the UN and adherence to international law, we are willing to work in multilateral frameworks so long as our sovereignty is respected. It is dishonest, hypocritical, aggressive, imperialist West which has subverted the norm, organizations, and laws of the order. We have tried to cooperate with them, but they will not let us." India's follows along the lines of "India believes in a democratic world order which must be reformed to incorporate the interests of new powers. We are willing to work in multilateral frameworks so long as our sovereignty is respected. We are willing to and do cooperate with all partners."

Returning to Ikenberry's liberal convictions, this analysis demonstrates that there are expressions of support for a commitment to some sort of rule-based order, willingness for security and trade cooperation, and certainly a desire for the order to be corrigible. While Russia takes a neutral stance on liberalism and democracy, India speaks positively of it. There is adequate reason to believe that in a post-hegemonic world, liberalism does not need to become a fossil.

# Conclusion

In a world which some believe is becoming increasingly multipolar, questions have risen about whether the future world order will continue to operate by means of liberal cooperation. Hegemonic Stability theorists are doubtful while most realists believe a liberal order was a delusion in the first place. Institutional Liberals hold out hope by arguing that the present order has created sufficient incentives, based on self-interest, for future poles to continue and maintain the liberal order the US has created. My research concerns two of these potential future poles: Russia and India. Russia has piqued the interest of many scholars due to its flamboyant anti-Westernism which has caused many to suggest that Russia poses an existential threat to the world order. Since independence, India has been steadily rising as and economic power and accounts for nearly 17% of the global population. As India's economic power grows, and it consumes a greater piece of the global-power pie, it is worth knowing their preferences regarding the world order. Are the communicated preferences of India, the world's largest democracy, really that different from Russia's, an autocracy?

My research – a qualitative content analysis of public speeches and statements – indicates that both states express similar levels of support for individual tenets of the liberal order, while pointing out ways they would like to see it reformed. India supports multilateralism and IOs but suggests that the structure of the UN particularly must be changed to reflect changing power distributions, preferably by making India a permanent member of the UNSC. As a permanent member, Russia communicates high levels of support for the UN and its centrality to the global order. Norms and international law also receive support but both states argue that they must be constructed through multilateral cooperation and not by a handful of powerful states. As for liberalism and democracy as such, Russia will claim that they desire a democratic world order but make a roughly equal amount of negative statements about liberalism. India on the other hand is mostly positive about liberalism and democracy, with only one negative mention. Characteristic of Russia is anti-Western rhetoric; Russia will often accuse the West of damaging the order and being aggressive imperialistic hypocrites. Such rhetoric is very rare from India. Future research on narratives of well-established liberal powers could better contextualize the significance Russia and India put on certain principles and demonstrates the differences in narrative distributions between fully integrated states and those at the edges.

Of course, words can sometimes contradict actions. But this does not mean that words are meaningless. Narratives play a critical role in shaping expectations for the global order. Preferences communicated through narratives cannot be totally disconnected from true intent as they would then form expectations not in line with the honest desire of the narrator.

Previous research on China, as discussed in the section on liberalism, has also concluded that China is more reminiscent of a Status quo power than a revisionist one. This seems to be the case for Russia and India as well. The internal political structures do not appear to make a significant difference.

What does this mean for the international order? My findings support the argument of some institutional liberals that liberalism can go on post-hegemony if only out of sheer self-interest. Of course, it does not *guarantee* that the future order will be as liberal as it is today or even liberal at all. It only suggests that there are reasons to believe the liberal order is not doomed in a multipolar future. The analyzed states do indicate support for changing the order, but they cannot be characterized as changes which would throw the baby out with the bath water. Instead of revision, reform appears to be the goal; but even reform indicates a certain level of adherence to the basic structure.

Furthermore, this research is also relevant for scholars of neoclassical realism who believe that through intervening variables predictions can be made about foreign policy outcomes. One of those intervening variables is the leader image, i.e., what the leaders believe and say. One means of defining that variable is through the speeches and professions of leaders. This research can be used to assist in filling in that piece of the puzzle.

Despite the current state of affairs, policymakers in the West should not give up on trying to integrate Russia into the liberal order. They certainly should not actively pursue policies of exclusion. If a post-hegemonic world does come to pass, changes to the world order are inevitable. The further incorporated Russia is into the liberal order, the easier it will be to maintain the order post-hegemony. As Russia appears willing to participate in a liberal system, all opportunities of cooperation should be seized. Likewise, it may be time to consider allowing India to play a greater role in IOs to maintain their dedication to the liberal order. How Western states approach a changing distribution of powers will be just

as vital as how new poles do. It will take the highest degree of diplomacy to appropriately deal with the challenges of a world with more evenly distributed power. If a liberal order is their goal, there is reason to believe that this can be pursued. But they should not make the mistake of confusing a liberal order with an "Our Order".

## Summary

This thesis employs a qualitative content analysis of speeches and statements made by the offices of the Russian President, Indian Prime Minister, and their respective foreign ministries to define their preferences for the role of liberalism, as defined by Ikenberry, in a post-hegemonic multipolar world. Applying the framework of strategic narratives, I argue that the rhetoric of a state can reveal considerable information about a state's preferences, even if their actions may at times contradict their words. I find that within their narratives there is considerable support from both states for certain tenets of liberalism such as multilateralism, norms, international law, and international organizations. The extent to which they desire to change the system is better characterized as reform rather than revision. The point of departure between Russia and India is their narration of Western states. While Russia frequently employs anti-Western narratives, India does not. My findings support theories of institutional liberals who argue liberalism can continue in a post-hegemonic world due to the socialization and incentivization of its regimes. The espoused preferences of the examine state suggest that they have incentive enough to maintain a liberal order. This does not guarantee that liberalism will continue in a multipolar world, only that there is potential for it to.

## Souhrn

Tato práce využívá kvalitativní obsahovou analýzu projevů a prohlášení pronesených kancelářemi ruského prezidenta, indického premiéra a jejich ministerstvy zahraničí, aby definovala jejich preference pro roli liberalismu, jak ji definuje Ikenberry, v posthegemonickém multipolárním svět. Aplikuji-li rámec strategických narativů, tvrdím, že rétorika státu může odhalit značné informace o preferencích státu, i když jejich činy mohou někdy odporovat jejich slovům. Zjišťuji, že v jejich narativech existuje značná podpora ze strany obou států pro určité principy liberalismu, jako je multilateralismus, normy, mezinárodní právo a mezinárodní organizace. Rozsah, v jakém si přejí změnit systém, je lépe charakterizovat jako reforma spíše než revize. Výchozím bodem mezi Ruskem a Indií je jejich vyprávění o západních státech. Zatímco Rusko často používá protizápadní narativy, Indie nikoli. Moje zjištění podporují teorie institucionálních liberálů, kteří tvrdí, že liberalismus může pokračovat v posthegemonickém světě díky socializaci a stimulaci jeho režimů. Podporované preference zkoumaného státu naznačují, že mají dostatečnou motivaci k udržení liberálního řádu. To nezaručuje, že liberalismus bude pokračovat v multipolárním světě, pouze to, že pro něj existuje potenciál.

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# List of Appendices

Appendix no. 1: Codes and definitions (table)