Polarizing the United Nations: China's Rise and the Dimensions of Ideological Change

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Abstract

Rather than overturning the liberal order or maintaining the status quo, China pursues more subtle strategies of ideological change that rest on persuasion and "discourse power." This research explores change through China's motivation to reshape the information order governing the internet from a liberal to statist ideology. To institutionalize and lock in change, China pursues rhetorical strategies designed to convince and persuade. By developing a theory of ideological persuasion, I speculate that China's message of cyber sovereignty is widely attractive, but China's leadership creates polarization between liberal and non-liberal states. By building an original corpus of texts from prominent cybersecurity negotiations at the United Nations and conducting an elite experiment with diplomats, I test the degree and causes of support for a statist ideology. Text analysis uncovers widespread ideological polarization, and the experiment identifies the cause. China's leadership, rather than the values of the statist order, creates liberal backlash while maintaining the support of non-liberal states. This research concludes with a discussion of the implications of polarization. Given many liberal institutional designs favor a majority, polarization may not be enough to hold China back from institutionalizing ideological shifts.

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Introduction

To what degree do ideological alternatives to liberalism gain international legitimacy? China's ascent offers insights into the degree of ideological shifts during power transitions. In many issue areas, Beijing pushes for a reorientation of the liberal status quo toward a "statist ideology" that elevates the rights of nation-states, including the right to sovereignty and non-interference, over the rights of individuals.[1] The modern international system increasingly involves a great power ideological competition to "win hearts and minds."

Despite the prominence of ideological competition throughout history, few social scientists have explored a rising power's approach to changing order beyond overturning or maintaining the status quo. I contend that persuasion is a key element of ideological change as it is required to lock-in changes and codify shifts.[2] As a country once exposed to socialization, China now uses persuasion as a centerpiece of its rise. Chinese officials at the highest echelons of power commend investments in discourse power (*huayuquan*). By seeking to mobilize coalitions through attractive rhetoric, China follows a familiar script the United States wrote when Washington codified a dense system of liberal rules and institutions.[3]

A paradigmatic case of ideological persuasion occurs in the Liberal International Information Order (LIIO), where China acts as a dedicated ideological entrepreneur.[4] Although the United States established a vision of a "borderless internet" to extend liberal values of free expression beyond the reach of politics and national borders,[5] China contests the status quo and seeks to return to an earlier statist ideology grounded in sovereignty, territory, and state control. By strategically drawing from sovereignty — a universal value of statehood — China seeks to codify new rules and institutions for the internet and calls on the United Nations membership to support shifts that would institutionalize ideological change.[6]

Hegemonic persuasion presents the possibility for a great power to create change when other states buy into the new ideology and support its institutionalization. I develop a theory explaining the degree to which member states accept new ideologies. Two factors influence the degree of support: the values and leadership of international order. Statist values of cyber sovereignty and non-interference are widely attractive. Most states accept the application of sovereignty to cyberspace and collaboration within the United Nations as familiar, commonplace, and worthy of support. However, China's leadership of a statist order is not universally accepted. Liberal states perceive China's leadership of a statist order as a normative threat with the potential to legitimize censorship and repression, whereas non-liberal states continue to accept it. I hypothesize China's use of persuasion will be highly polarizing.

To observe China's influence, I map support for China's ideology in negotiations to develop and codify interna-

[1] Voeten (2021), 24.
[2] Ikenberry (2000).
[3] Ikenberry and Kupchan (1990).
[4] Johnston (2019); Weiss and Wallace (2021).
[5] Farrell and Newman (2020).
[6] Paris (2020).

tional order in cyberspace. Using voice-to-text methods, this research develops the United Nations Cyber Debates (UNCD) corpus from the prominent cybersecurity negotiations streamed on United Nations TV, where governments debate how to develop international order. Through text analysis, I examine which countries mobilize for a statist versus liberal ideology. By analyzing movement over time, text analysis reveals that preferences for international order in cyberspace are characterized by a wide degree of contestation between liberal and authoritarian states that maintain rather than resolve ideological polarization. I conduct an original elite survey experiment with international diplomats to further test the causes of polarization under China's use of hegemonic persuasion. I find that China's leadership of a statist order is the cause of polarization.

The result is a highly polarized United Nations, but one where China can advance shifts away from the status quo of liberalism to codify and lock in changes toward a statist ideology. Since the existing liberal order often allows for changes when a majority approves, I discuss polarization and its implications for China achieving its goals. When existing rules allow for changes through approval by a majority of member states rather than consensus, China can transform the liberal international order toward a statist ideology by relying on persuasion and rhetorical appeals. This research suggests as China finds its voice, ideological changes in other liberal sub-orders are likely to abound.

1 The Liberal International Information Order

Ideology, in many ways, is the glue that holds international order together. Ideology defines the social purpose of rules and institutions and the reasons for collaboration. Voeten defines ideology "as a widely understood set of interconnected propositions about how a set of issues should be resolved and who should resolve them."[7] The social purposes of a liberal international order are associated with freedom from arbitrary authority, the protection of human rights and civil liberties, and the elevation of democratic participation.[8]

Although liberalism varies in its recognition of individual rights across sub-orders, cyberspace is an area that definitively extends a liberal ideology.[9] The internet is one issue area where the US gained immense control as a first mover to instill a liberal vision into the fabric of rules and institutions. The early history of the internet's creation in the United States is significant for the design of institutions and its norms as it results in "virtually every major aspect of the internet is linked to the United States."[10] Two components define the ideology of the information order: the beneficiaries of legal protections and the transparency and inclusion of institutions.

The Liberal International Information Order (LIIO) that governs the internet promotes the rights of individuals. The protection of free expression is elevated by the internet's ignorance of geography and territorial boundaries.

[7] Voeten (2021), 21.
[8] Doyle (2011) See also Doyle (2005); Keohane (2012); Ikenberry (2011); Allan et al. (2018).
[9] Farrell and Newman (2021).
[10] Hollis and Raustiala, Working Paper on File with Author.

Regardless of location, all have the right to send and receive information. As Goldsmith notes, many saw the internet as a force for democracy promotion as "the internet was an American invention that, in its very code, seemed to embody the American values of free speech."[11] Government control of the internet, according to Washington, is inimical to First Amendment ideas of an open internet and the free and unadulterated data flow. US foreign policy sought to limit government control over information flows by painting such control analogous to "digital walls" threatening fundamental values of freedom of speech and association online.[12] The 2023 United States cybersecurity policy directs foreign policy to ensure the internet "promotes secure and trusted data flows, respects privacy, and promotes human rights."[13]

To extend liberalism, international institutions governing the internet are highly decentralized private or multi-stakeholder organizations that heavily involve civil society, engineers, and technology firms while keeping government involvement at a minimum.[14] The more limited collaboration through traditional intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations, is intentional.[15] For many years, one of the most important institutions to the functions of the internet — the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) — operated through a contract with the US Department of Commerce. Although states have found methods for censorship to occur within national boundaries, the United States argued private control over international domain name allocation and the root file of websites prevents governments from circumventing global internet access since non-state actors have an economic interest in preserving connectivity.[16] The anxiety over the involvement of governments is reflected in the institutional design of ICANN, as states are relegated to a Governmental Advisory Committee that makes recommendations to the ICANN board.

2 International Order, Power Transitions, and Ideological Change

Challenges to the liberal international order are the subject of intense inquiry.[17] Many theories focus on the opportunities for order to change in the advent of power transitions.[18] As such, all eyes and analytical attention consider China's potential to influence international order by overturning or maintaining its ideology. In a review of each dominant expectation, I consider how both fail to adequately explain the possible scenarios for China to impact the status quo. More importantly, the longstanding dichotomy of China overturning or maintaining order leaves a more limited understanding of China's strategy for change and variation in its efficacy. China may be actively working to transform

[11] Goldsmith (2018).
[12] Clinton (2010).
[13] United States Cybersecurity Strategy, *see* here
[14] Simmons (2011); Raymond and DeNardis (2015), 573; Nye Jr (2010).
[15] Drezner (2004), 495
[16] Raustiala (2017).
[17] Lake et al. (2021), Simmons and Goemans (2021).
[18] Weiss and Wallace (2021).

order in ways not captured by the extant literature but have broad implications for the operation and longevity of the liberal order.

2.1 Maintaining Ideology

Some argue that China could be co-opted to participate in the liberal international order and maintain its rules. Chinese politics traditionally adhered to a realpolitik culture.[19] As China joined international institutions during a period of reform and opening, officials faced social pressure within the organization to conform.[20] By participating in the social environment of international security organizations, Johnston demonstrated that Chinese officials began to adopt collective security norms and describe the principles as appropriate. Participation in international organizations has the potential to socialize China to accept the status quo.[21]

China, however, is overtly motivated to reshape the LIIO due to perceived security threats from the current system. China denounces US control as a form of cyber hegemony and fears the United States could weaponize the highly commercialized and decentralized order to disconnect internet service from adversaries during a conflict.[22] China argues security threats are bound to continue as the United States has outsized influence over core enterprises that formulate and manage Internet standards.[23] China has long perceived ICANN as an extension of the US government.[24] Even after privatizing ICANN, the operations remain in California, offering the possibility that the United States could strategically disrupt connectivity and disable the Internet connections of adversaries. Ukraine's appeal to ICANN to revoke Russian top-level domain names fed into long-standing suspicions that private Internet institutions can be weaponized to cut off internet access during a conflict. Recently, China reflected frustration with US influence and control by arguing that the "organization charged with the management of critical resources such as Root Servers should be truly independent of any state's control."[25]

More broadly, China is motivated to set its own stamp on institutions and shape the normative foundation. China's role as a great power is fulfilled by "China not simply adapting to, but instead more actively shaping, the world in which it is rising."[26] In cyberspace, China directly acknowledges dissatisfaction with the status quo and highly decentralized modes of collaboration.[27] At the Third World Internet Conference (WIC), China's President Xi Jinping underscored China's intention to "promote global internet governance towards a more just and reasonable direction."[28]

[19] Johnston (1995)
[20] Johnston (2003).
[21] Johnston (2014).
[22] Daily (2010); Galloway and Baogang (2014).
[23] Segal (2017), 3; Galloway (2015); Lu Chuanying, "The International Cyberspace Rule-based System and the China-U.S. New Type of Great Power Relations," People's Daily—Theory Channel, December 2, 2016
[24] Creemers (2020)
[25] China's Submissions to the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, *see* here.
[26] Goldstein (2020), 178.
[27] Weiss and Wallace (2021); Johnston (2019).
[28] WIC Corpus, Xi Jinping, Opening 2016 Speech, *see* here

China's intentions to pursue change are especially evident in the Wuzhen Declaration.[29] In the declaration, China calls on the international community "to work together to build an international internet governance system of multilateralism, democracy, and transparency." The language is forward-looking and suggests the international community must construct and build international order rather than continue to operate in the existing decentralized structure. China's efforts to mitigate security threats and desire to transform the status quo to a more just order point to a need to consider how China is actively working to change rather than maintain order.

2.2 Overturning Ideology

With China's direct acknowledgment of dissatisfaction, most theories consider the pathways for change. The dominant expectation is that a rising power possesses the appropriate capabilities to overturn existing ideologies and establish new channels for collaboration.[30] Powerful states create order, and change is likely when that country begins to lose power relative to a challenger. This process often occurs in the aftermath of a major war where the victor is awarded the spoils of setting the rules of the game and shaping the normative foundation for collaboration.[31] Such was the case for the United States, which built a liberal order out of the rubble of World War II.[32]

There is reason to believe that ideological change is much less likely to occur in a manner conceptualized by hegemonic realists. In the modern era of nuclear weapons, conflict between the United States and China to settle the score would be unthinkable and irrational.[33] Since the nuclear revolution eliminated the major tool that rising powers have to overturn the system[34], China must orient its rise to other strategies for shaping the existing liberal international order to better conform to its interests and preferences for collaboration. The existing literature, however, has yet to fully identify China's strategies for change and the degree to which it successfully reshapes ideology. Many point to the need for China to pursue alternative pathways to mobilize change from within institutions rather than working to topple or overthrow the existing order. Recent work focuses on delegitimation strategies that undermine the legitimacy of the existing ideology [35] and legitimation strategies that work within the rules of the existing order to pursue dramatic changes in operation.[36] Since most of the work is historic, scholars are only beginning to map the strategies of China's rise and theorize the impact on the liberal international order.

[29] Wuzhen Declaration, *see* here
[30] Gilpin (1981).
[31] Ikenberry (2000).
[32] Ikenberry (2011).
[33] Schweller and Pu (2011), 44.
[34] Ikenberry (2008), 24.
[35] Walt (2005); Schweller and Pu (2011).
[36] Goddard (2009); Goddard and Krebs (2015); Goddard (2018); Ikenberry and Lim (2017). This is also similar to the concept of rightful resistance O'brien (1996).

3 A Theory of Ideological Persuasion

I develop a theory explaining the impact of China championing ideological change. China pursues ideological persuasion to reshape the ideology of the liberal international information order.[37] Persuasion is a strategy designed to close the gap between opposing beliefs.[38] Through the power of argumentation and rhetoric, great powers strategically use norm-based arguments to diffuse preferred ideologies and generate acceptance. By advancing attractive concepts, a rising power can more subtly achieve its goals by causing others to "want what it wants."[39]

Ideological persuasion is not specific to China but builds from a long history of great powers using social strategies to diffuse ideologies and encourage their acceptance.[40] Persuasion is an attractive strategy to reshape international order from within by working through "voice" rather than "exit" strategies.[41] Although "voice" is largely conceptualized as a feature that preserves the longevity of existing institutions by offering opportunities for the dissatisfied to express grievances rather than exit the order,[42], it is also a channel for a rising power to mobilize coalitions to reform and reshape order.

Persuasion is necessary because shifting the ideology of order involves institutionalizing change. Ikenberry describes the potential of institutions to bind and lock in ideologies.[43] A key component of ideological strength is the level to which it is institutionalized.[44] Creating new binding treaties and fleshing out new norms is important to codify the ideological shifts a great power wishes to impart. To create these shifts, persuasion is important to convince other member states to support the adoption of new rules of the game.[45] Persuasion is especially important for great powers since collaboration within international order relies on the voluntary participation of secondary states.[46]

China's domestic parlance for using strategies of voice is discourse power.[47] Through this strategy, China uses rhetoric to encourage acceptance of an alternative approach to internet governance. China identifies the importance of developing attractive ideas to communicate on the world stage as a component of China's broader power and influence. During a speech at the National Propaganda and Ideology Work Conference, President Xi directed officials to "strengthen our discourse power internationally."[48] Recognizing that changing the status quo in cyberspace is not simply a product of superiority in innovation, President Xi argued the "cybersecurity game of major countries is not only a technical game but also a game of ideas and a game of discourse power."[49]

[37] Ikenberry and Kupchan (1990), Finnemore and Hollis (2016).
[38] Coppock (2023); Johnston (2014), Chapter 4.
[39] Lukes (1974).
[40] Ikenberry and Kupchan (1990).
[41] Hirschman (1970).
[42] Ikenberry (2000), 41.
[43] Ikenberry (2000), 41.
[44] Dixon (2015).
[45] Finnemore and Hollis (2016).
[46] Stone (2011).
[47] Yang (2021).
[48] Xi Jinping August 19 Speech *see* here.
[49] Party Symposium on Public Opinion, *see* here.

3.1 China's Statist Order

China's ideological persuasion specifically encourages officials to accept a shift from liberalism as the guiding ideology in cyberspace. In contrast to the liberal status quo, China promotes an alternative statist ideology. Statism "emphasizes self-determination as ethically good, reserves a prominent role for the state in domestic political economy, favors redistributing resources away from the West, and advocates for the restoration of non-interference in the domestic affairs of states."[50] Statism is motivated by a set of collective ideas undergirded by the principles of sovereignty and non-interference.[51] Rather than making prescriptions about how domestic politics should be organized, a statist ideology contends world politics should instead be oriented around protecting the right of sovereignty. As such, institutions that demand incursions in domestic affairs, such as the Responsibility to Protect, sit uncomfortably with statist values.[52]

The statist approach to internet governance diffuses new norms that grant the state outsized — if not complete — decision-making power over internet policies.[53] When forming new collaborations to enhance cybersecurity, China promotes a vision of sovereignty and government rights that builds from China's own domestic focus on defending its cyber borders and claiming national jurisdiction of China's cyberspace.[54] China promotes sovereignty on the world stage and calls for incorporating a respect for sovereignty in cyberspace as an important principle in the reform of the global Internet governance system.[55] Beginning in 2011, China, Russia, and other members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization submitted a Code of Conduct to the United Nations General Assembly, calling for an alternative approach to constructing rules and institutions for cyberspace.[56] In a key change from the liberal emphasis on private control over networks, China and co-authors of the code of conduct affirmed the "policy authority for Internet-related public issues is the sovereign right of States, which have rights and responsibilities for international Internet-related public policy issues."[57] States, rather than firms, are key actors in carrying out activities and maintaining order in cyberspace.[58]

A statist approach also encourages shifts in the design of institutions. For instance, in the lending regime, China argues against distributing loans conditional on making domestic political changes to respect the statist emphasis on protecting sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs. When building new institutions to structure digital collaboration, China argues for defending the principles of sovereignty and elevating the role of the United Nations. China argues that internet governance should be shared among states. As such, the United Nations, as the preeminent

[50] Voeten (2021), 24.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Fung (2020).
[53] Maurer and Morgus (2014).
[54] International Strategy for Cooperation in Cyberspace, *see* here.
[55] Johnston (2019); Creemers (2020); Segal (2017).
[56] Although China worked with partners, China's diplomat Wang Lei was largely responsible for crafting the Code of Conduct
[57] A/69/723, Page 3.
[58] Sovereignty in Cyberspace: Theory and Practice, *see* here.

global intergovernmental institution, should play the leading role.[59] By allowing only nation-states seats at the internet governance negotiation table, China asserts internet governance will be more democratic to governments by fulfilling the sovereign right of all nations to participate in global governance. States, rather than civil society, should lead the development of rules and solutions to solve common threats. China contends this design also builds greater fairness and equity as all sovereign states work together under the UN framework and "uphold the principles of engaging in discussions as equals."[60]

3.2 Ideological Polarization

I predict that China's rise creates polarization in the United Nations among liberal and non-liberal states. Under strategies of hegemonic persuasion, two factors influence the acceptance of new ideologies: the values and leadership of a new international order. Part of the challenge of disentangling the mechanisms of attraction to China's hegemonic persuasion involves understanding how the sub-components of order relate. For example, the existing order has been described as a hegemonic American-led order but also as a liberal order extending values of freedom.[61] By disentangling international order into authority and values, this research advances understanding of the components of ideology and the attractive force of each factor. I hypothesize that China's message of cyber sovereignty is persuasive, but China's leadership of the emerging cyber order is highly polarizing. China's message of sovereignty in cyberspace convinces the majority of the United Nations to shift from a decentralized and highly commercialized order to one that is more highly centralized and grounded in state's rights. Due to China's leadership, I predict liberal states strongly contest China's leadership of a statist order. The resulting order appears more state-centric but is highly polarized between liberal and non-liberal states.

3.2.1 Values

Order is not based on hierarchy alone. Instead, it is comprised of the "packages of ideas and rules that inform the nature of a given order and govern social relations within that order."[62] Even power transition theorists, with their laser focus on changes in material capabilities, leave room for variation among the values of orders. For instance, Gilpin notes that "Rome and Britain each created a world order, but the oppressive rule of the Pax Romana was in most respects very different from the generally liberal rule of Pax Britannica."[63]

As China promotes an alternative statist ideology in cyberspace, China has a lighter burden because values at the heart of the ideology — sovereignty and non-interference — are deeply treasured universal rights at the heart of what

[59] State Council Information Office briefing on white paper 'Jointly Build a Community with a Shared Future in Cyberspace,' *see* here
[60] Sovereignty in Cyberspace: Theory and Practice, *see* here.
[61] Glaser (2019), 52.
[62] Kupchan (2014), 221.
[63] Gilpin (1981), 37.

it means to be a state. As a result, the values, institutions, and rules that China advances lead to ideological shifts that appear familiar. Paris describes the benefits of using strategies of "norm retrieval" rather than developing an entirely new ideology.[64] Rather than building a new ideology, China calls for elevating universal values. China's proposal for shifting order in cyberspace should be attractive and even commonplace. China's proposals should attract support by asking governments to emphasize values and institutions that already enjoy legitimacy in other issue areas.

In many ways, China calls for a return rather than a movement to an entirely new ideology. Simmons and Goemans describe liberalism as layered on top of an earlier Sovereign Territorial Order.[65] Rather than extending universal human rights and privileging the role of global markets, the Sovereign Territorial Order elevates the concept of place and the value of borders. China's call for sovereignty in cyberspace and elevation of the role of the United Nations marks a return to earlier ideas and institutions that enjoy widespread acceptance in issue areas outside of cyberspace. In this way, the mechanism of returning order to earlier concepts allows a rising power to strategically appear to be operating within the confines of the rules-based order even while changing them.[66]

China's efforts to draw attention to sovereignty are especially attractive in cyberspace. A message of government rights attracts states who have long felt that American Tech Giants, such as Twitter and Google, are running roughshod over state sovereignty. Developing states, especially, contest the data colonization of American firms, which holds up the ability of national industries to use data as a productive input. China's sovereignty message is likely to encourage support by indicating a departure away from the liberal international information order that many officials criticized for failing to protect national interests.[67] A vision of cyber sovereignty highly resonates with authoritarian leaders[68] who especially contest the way that the internet challenges domestic stability.[69]

3.2.2 Leadership

Some see leadership as central to decisions about order by describing the current order as the *American-led* liberal order. The order's leadership is at stake when a great power other than the United States proposes developing new rules and institutions. Communication scholars consider leadership changes through the lens of source cues. Source cues, or the political actors behind a policy issue, provide important heuristics.[70] Source cues that signal leadership changes can create polarization around otherwise universal values and institutions.[71]

Polarization is likely to occur in cyberspace because of China's leadership and reactions to China's source cues. Liberal states perceive China as a normative threat.[72] Although liberal officials may see China's values of sovereignty

[64] Paris (2020).
[65] Simmons and Goemans (2021).
[66] Goddard (2018); Paris (2020).
[67] Farrell and Newman (2020).
[68] Ginsburg (2020).
[69] Milner (2006).
[70] Druckman (2001); Carmines and Stimson (1990); Bowler and Donovan (2000); Arceneaux and Kolodny (2009); Arceneaux (2008).
[71] Nicholson (2012).
[72] Chu (2021).

as acceptable, they view China's leadership over a statist order as untenable. China's Great Firewall is a prominent symbol that sovereignty is possible and serves as a challenge to the borderless vision of the liberal international information order. In the wake of the Arab Spring and rising threats of cyber terrorism, China's domestic policies indicate the possibility of preserving and strengthening state control in a medium where the United States once argued regulation would be "like trying to nail JELL-O to the wall." Given China demonstrated the JELL-O of data could be nailed to the wall of state control, it represents more than a rising power, but a specific approach to governing the internet. China's Great Firewall symbolically represents a territorial vision of state control and sovereignty over information flows. As China has long claimed, "Within Chinese territory, the Internet is under the jurisdiction of Chinese sovereignty."[73] Coupled with China's promotion, sovereignty raises fears of China's order supporting repression and censorship. Liberal states are likely to mobilize away from China's vision, given the normative threat China presents to a vision of internet freedom. On the other hand, authoritarian states, who have long demanded greater state control over information flows, see China's approach as a strategy to be applauded rather than feared to manage the threats emanating from open data flows.

I hypothesize that China's persuasion results in polarization rather than full persuasion of the United Nations membership: the value of sovereignty is universally attractive, but China's promotion of the value lowers support.[74] Despite relying on a universal norm of sovereignty, China's discourse power is not universally attractive. In cyberspace, cyber sovereignty is wrapped up in cues and heuristics that indicate China's intention to challenge the liberal international order. China's emphasis on sovereignty presents a normative threat to democracies while attracting the remainder of the United Nations. When China frames new rules as supporting sovereignty, democracies are more likely to reject the proposal, whereas other officials gravitate towards state-centric institutions.

4 Research Design: Ideological Shifts

To examine the degree to which governments support ideological shifts, I focus on the elaboration of order in the United Nations Open Ended Working Group for Information and Communications Technology (OEWG).[75] Since governments are currently developing rules to mitigate security threats emanating from the use of digital technologies, the OEWG offers a fertile space to explore how rules develop according to a liberal or statist ideology.

The United Nations is especially suitable for examining the influence of China's ideological entrepreneurship as China proposed the OEWG to develop new rules of the game. The OEWG represents a shift from an earlier period of collaborating through highly commercialized or expert-led forums. At the opening of the OEWG, China's diplomat Wang Lei argued that the Chair's call not to be emotional during the negotiations should be momentarily disregarded

[73] The Internet in China White Paper 2010.
[74] This is similar to Voeten's prediction, see Voeten (2021), 181.
[75] For background on the OEWG, *see* here.

as there is "every reason to be emotional because this is the first time ever when all sovereign states in the world have an opportunity to discuss the order and norms of cyberspace."[76] The OEWG is of special significance, he argued, because it advances a vision of sovereign equality by departing from previous forums that only invited a small number of governmental experts.

The OEWG is also ideal for examining China's power of persuasion, as the OEWG is described as a forum for socialization.[77] Governments widely reinforce the importance of rhetorical strategies to mobilize support in favor of proposed initiatives. At an event organized around the margins of the OEWG negotiations, the Cyber Ambassador from Poland argued that those in the room must invest in "convincing the unconvinced." In an interview with China's delegation, China describes its efforts to rely on the power of its rhetorical example at the OEWG to attract support.[78] It is also an area where China is dedicated to diffusing a statist ideology. By submitting policy papers and delivering lengthy speeches, China sets a distinctly statist vision for elevating the role of states in internet governance.[79]

4.1 United Nations Cyber Debates Corpus

To capture ideological preferences for developing international order, this study developed the United Nations Cyber Corpus (UNCD). During the OEWG, each country delivered statements expressing their national position on how order should develop in cyberspace. The setting is ripe for China to influence behavior through discourse power because each official actively engages in the debate to signal their national positions.[80] Participation in the OEWG reveals each nation's willingness to learn and understand the preferences of others to move toward a mutually acceptable solution. As El Salvador noted, the open dialogue of the OEWG allows governments "the opportunity to know the position of other states" through the information exchange and preferences conveyed in speeches.[81] Rather than merely making symbolic speeches, however, the OEWG is important for representing each government's preferences for how order should develop.

The United Nations Secretariat streams videos of the deliberations on United Nations TV but does not publish transcripts of the negotiations. To capture the text of each official's speech, I rely on automatic speech recognition (ASR) systems to overcome this challenge and build the first comprehensive database of government statements specifying national preferences for developing international order. To my knowledge, the UNCD is unique because no other corpus commonly used to study patterns of speech involves actively elaborating preferences for how order should develop and the rules and institutions that should structure behavior when new orders develop. The UNCD allows for observation of the process of ideological persuasion. To observe each government's preferences, I match each text to a speaker

[76] OEWG Corpus, China, Substantive Session One, Meeting One, September 2019

[77] Author's interview with Heli Tiirmaa-Klaar, Estonia's Ambassador at Large for Cyber Diplomacy, Friday, October 8, 2021.

[78] Author's interview with Chinese delegation at the OEWG, July 2022.

[79] China's Submissions to the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, *see* here.

[80] See work on the "discursive practice of exchanging reasons in multilateralism" Mitzen (2013), 53.

[81] El Salvador, Second OEWG, Second Session, Meeting 9.

and the specific agenda item to develop a country-agenda-speech level corpus spanning the length of negotiations of the OEWG meetings. This process builds on the work of others to create corpora from live-streamed negotiations that overcome analyzing debates when international organizations do not produce transcripts.[82] The UNCD captures 1622 officials' speeches at the OEWG from 2018-2023. Although the OEWG dedicates one informal meeting to stakeholders, non-state actors are not included in the sample.

4.2 Dependent Variable: Support for Statist Ideology

To analyze ideological preferences, I operationalize support for a statist ideology through text analytic methods deployed to capture alignment with the positions of great powers.[83] Many studies of institutions use methodological innovations to map policy positions and speakers' preferences. Although legislative roll-call voting is one of the most common methods of analyzing the degree of similarity between political actors, others focus on locating the policy positions of political actors by analyzing the texts. As Laver et al. note, texts provide researchers with "collections of word data containing information about the position of the texts' authors on predefined policy dimensions."[84] Scholars are beginning to capture alignments through the speeches made in the United Nations General Assembly Debates.[85]

To specifically measure ideological preferences within OEWG speeches, I use the Wordscores text scaling algorithm that captures underlying latent preferences for a statist or liberal vision of order. I define the training set as publications by China and the United States, setting an ideological vision. At the World Internet Conference, China published a highly statist manifesto, "Sovereignty in Cyberspace: Theory and Practice." The United States also published its own liberal manifesto through the document, "Declaration on the Future of the Internet." Both documents present an ideological vision on the world stage. For instance, the US calls for "the use of digital technologies to reinforce, not weaken, democracy and respect for human rights." On the other hand, China argues elevating sovereignty, or the "supremacy and independence that a state enjoys, on the basis of its national sovereignty, over cyber infrastructure, entities, behavior as well as relevant data and information in its territory" will "create a just and equitable global Internet governance." In addition to normative assertions about the appropriate rights to protect, these documents also contain prescriptions for how the internet should be governed. In the US liberal manifesto, the United States supports a vision of the internet as a "single, decentralized network of networks" that is governed through a "multistakeholder approach, whereby governments and relevant authorities partner with academics, civil society, the private sector, technical community, and others." On the other hand, China calls for government involvement and outlines a series of norms emphasizing the rights and responsibilities of states to lead digital governance that extends and further define the concept of sovereignty online.

[82] Wratil et al. (2022).
[83] Carmody et al. (2020).
[84] Laver et al. (2003).
[85] Carmody et al. (2020).

Scholars are beginning to use text scaling approaches specifically to measure ideological alignments.[86] The Wordscores method uses the relative frequencies for each word within China and United States manifestos to calculate the probability of reading each reference text, which generates a numerical score for each word. Then the latent position of each document in the test set is calculated as the arithmetic mean of the posterior probabilities. The other speeches within the corpus are compared to the reference texts to place ideologies along a spectrum ranging from those expressing liberal versus statist preferences. I take a series of measures to reduce the noise in the corpus before producing the WordScores. Pre-processing of the source documents removes common stopwords to mitigate non-informative words pushing the estimates toward the middle of the scale. First, I remove diplomatic rhetoric accompanying speeches, such as common introductory and closing messages (e.g., "thank you, Mr. Chair", "excellencies, distinguished delegates"). Second, I remove other dimensions likely to introduce noise in the data, such as country names often repeated within the text (e.g., Sweden supports). Next, I calculate the Wordscores using the agenda items coded in the metadata to hold constant the issue that countries debate. By simultaneously conducting a content analysis of government statements and speeches, I can use this step as verification and a robustness check on the patterns revealed by the Wordscores analysis.

4.3 Measuring Coalitions

This study uses existing measures of ideological preferences to determine which governments align with China. My theory predicts that alignments are based on ideological preferences, where liberal governments reject China's vision while non-liberal states mobilize for sovereignty. To capture liberal versus non-liberal states, I use Polity scores, which measure a state's domestic commitment to protecting liberal values through constitutional protections of individuals and checks and balances on the government. Following standard practices, I define a democratic coalition as states with a liberal democracy score of 6 or higher on the 21-point scale ranging from -10 to 10.

5 Test One: Hegemonic Persuasion and Ideological Legitimacy

The first study tests the legitimacy of a statist ideology during a period when China heavily deployed its discourse power in the Open Ended Working Group. China encourages the development of institutions and rules by focusing on the rights of governments. Rather than continuing to apply rules developed by experts or small groupings of states, China argues for creating a process that is more democratic to nation-states that build new rules and institutionalize a shift to a statist ideology.

[86] Catalinac 2018.

5.1 International Law

China underscores the need for governments to develop a cyber-specific treaty to support a statist ideology. Equality between governments means all states should enjoy the right to participate in international governance and set collaboration rules. Jointly developing new legal instruments "tailored to the attributes of ICTs and evolving realities" will promote "fairness and justice" among all United Nations member states.[87]

China's focus on extending a statist ideology also justifies the creation of new rules to impose obligations on states. By developing legal obligations on governments to play a role in internet governance, new rules shift the ideological focus to governments rather than firms or technical experts. As China mentions, "states should step up cooperation against cyber terrorism" and lead efforts to fight common security threats.[88] Through higher forms of legal obligation, the interests and rights of states are supported, as law requires governments to lead and manage responses to emerging harms. Governments should commit to "standard-setting" rather than "providing guidance" through voluntary recommendations. According to China, voluntary norms may send an "unconstructive message" about the unwillingness of governments to abide by international rules. Instead, the international community should translate norms into a more binding international legal instrument to strengthen state sovereignty.[89]

Content analysis reveals democracies strongly rejected the need for developing new rules of the game in cyberspace. Liberal governments broadly argued against developing new rules sponsored by China. According to the United States, the decentralized nature of internet governance should be maintained, as attempting to develop binding legal instruments and taking an arms control approach to ICTs would effectively "suppress all the revolutionary and positive developments that this technology could provide to the world."[90] Democracies argued traditional bodies of law are sufficient and voluntary codes of conduct could be developed as a supplement. The Netherlands summarized the liberal position that the world has "traffic regulations," and countries do not need to change the rules of the road when innovations are developed.[91] The liberal body of international law already contains all the necessary boundaries, so there is no need to elaborate a new convention tailored to cyberspace.

On the other hand, China's discourse power compels and attracts other states in cyberspace. Despite being known as governments that wish to escape their commitments, authoritarian states called for clear and binding rules of the game. Using elements of China's government-focused discourse power as a justification, Iran acknowledged the need to develop new rules to codify the principle that "states have rights and obligations in the ICT environment."[92] Authoritarian states explicitly call for binding legal commitments. The Russian delegate bluntly asked if international

[87] China's Submissions to the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, *see* here.
[88] China's Position on International Rule-Making in Cyberspace, *see* here.
[89] China's Contribution to the Initial Pre-Draft of OEWG Report, *see* here.
[90] UNCD Corpus, United States, Emerging and Existing Threats Agenda, First OEWG, Substantive Session 1, Meeting 4, September 2019
[91] UNCD Corpus, Netherlands, International Law Agenda, Substantive Session 1, Meeting 5, September 2019
[92] UNCD Corpus, Iran, International Law Agenda, First OEWG, Substantive Session 1, Meeting 5, September 2019

law applies to cyberspace, "what are we doing here? Why is the number of cyber-attacks in the billions?" The delegate continued, "if international law is voluntary and we emphasize that voluntary nature, then some people are free to apply it, some people are obligated to apply it, whereas others aren't."[93] But authoritarian states were not alone in their calls for law. China attracted the 101 body membership of the Non-aligned Movement coalition to support the call for law.

Text analysis in Figure (1) confirms these rends. Polarization holds over time and grows more intense despite China drawing from universal values in its appeal. By the second OEWG (meetings 3 and 4), authoritarian states continued to support China's position on the need for new rules. Egypt, for instance, argued that governments "should focus on translating the existing norms and recommendations into more operational and binding measures tailored to specific scenarios in the ICT environment, pending the conclusion of appropriate multilateral legally binding obligations." These rules should emphasize "sovereignty, sovereign equality, and political independence."[94] Russia expressed surprise that liberal governments would prefer to rely on voluntary norms as this proposal "is similar to making sure that their traffic rules are optional. I think this only benefits those who travel down roads in tanks."[95] Liberal states remained steadfast in beliefs that existing bodies of international law are sufficient to govern interstate relations in cyberspace. As South Korea noted, although there is some "desirability of having a set of clear, binding rules governing cyberspace," seeking a legally binding instrument at this stage is both "impractical and potentially misleading."[96] Referencing existing international division, South Korea noted gaining agreement from 193 member states for a multilateral convention "has become a rarity, let alone their universal acceptance."[97] In addition, new rules would also be misleading as it might give the impression that a "legal vacuum governs the digital domain."[98] In other words, liberal states perceive developing a new body of international law, especially when proposed by China, as creating division.

5.2 Norms

One of the main purposes of the OEWG is to develop norms and principles of responsible state behavior in cyberspace. To encourage the development of an order that supports the interest of governments, China advanced several new international norms specifying the rights and responsibilities of governments. China argued that governments should "enrich and elaborate" the concept of sovereignty to "lay the foundation of order in cyberspace." The sovereignty norm extends a statist ideology by emphasizing the state as the ultimate authority in international affairs and recommends governments control ICTs. All states should share "in the management and distribution of international Internet resources on equal footing." China encourages developing additional OEWG norms that elevate the government's role

[93] UNCD Corpus, Russia, International Law Agenda, First OEWG, Substantive Session 1, Meeting 5, September 2019
[94] UNCD Corpus, Egypt, Second OEWG, First Session, Meeting 7.
[95] UNCD Corpus, Russia, Second OEWG, First Substantive Session, Meeting 5.
[96] UNCD Corpus, South Korea, Second OEWG, First Substantive Session, Meeting 7.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.

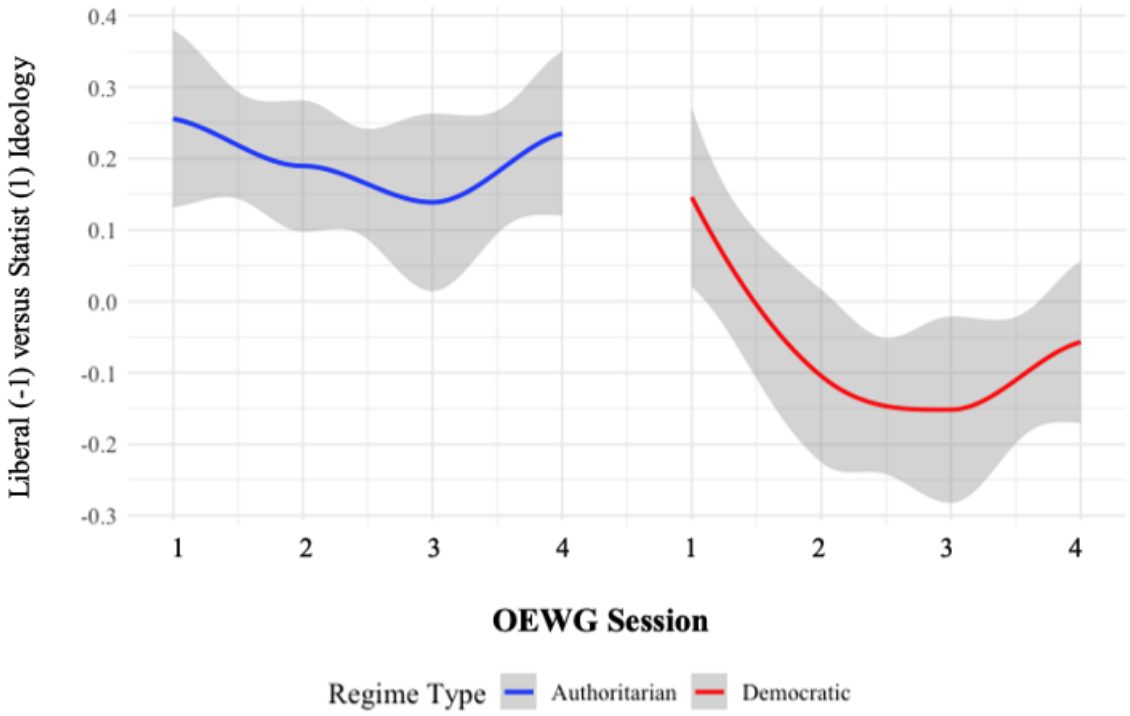

Figure 1: Alignment with China's Vision of International Law. The figure indicates growing polarization as liberal democracies shift away from China's vision while authoritarian states maintain strong support.

in specific areas of combating threats. Critically, each of the norms strengthens the government's role in securing the ICT environment.[99]

- State sovereignty in cyberspace: States have the right to make ICT-related public policies consistent with national circumstances to manage their own ICT affairs and protect their citizens' legitimate interests in cyberspace.
- Critical infrastructure protection: States have the rights and responsibilities regarding legal protection of their critical ICT infrastructures against damage resulting from threats, interference, attack and sabotage.
- Data security: States have the rights and responsibilities to ensure the security of personal information and important data relevant to their national security, public security, economic security and social stability.
- Supply chain security: States should prohibit ICT goods and services providers from illegal obtainment of users' data, control and manipulation of users' devices and systems by installing backdoors in goods.

[99] China's Submissions to the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, *see* here.

- Counter-terrorism: States should prohibit terrorist organizations from using the Internet to set up websites, online forums and blogs to conduct terrorist activities, including manufacturing, publication, storage, and broadcasting of terrorist audio and video documents, disseminating violent terrorist rhetoric and ideology, fundraising, recruiting, inciting terrorist activities etc.

Liberalism, theoretically, includes the protection of sovereignty. However, many democratic states instead focused on implementing norms from the previous GGE discussions rather than developing new norms promoted by China. As Estonia mentioned, "there may be emerging the need for new norms maybe over the years to come, but currently, we should focus on the implementation of the existing norms that already constitute the international standard of state behavior."[100] In other words, states should focus on capacity-building and confidence-building measures to strengthen global commitments to existing standards. Liberal governments also argued for prioritizing the role of civil society in norm implementation. The European Union recommended the OEWG should implement existing norms in multi-stakeholder forums, such as the Global Commission for the Stability of Cyberspace, an organization established by a former United States official.[101] On the other hand, authoritarian governments use rhetoric similar to China's discourse power to justify support for its norms. Iran argued that "states have rights and responsibilities in the ICT environment" that includes respect for state sovereignty and sovereign equality.[102] Zimbabwe directly mentioned the need for China's norms on supply chain security and protecting the "right to make ICT-related public policies consistent with national circumstances."[103] Other authoritarian officials argued that China's norms are timely and justified their stance by arguing the need to address cyber threats. Syria supported developing new norms promoted by China because "the world doesn't stop at the stage of the 2015 GGE report," and several of the norms that focus on counter-terrorism are highly timely.

Text analysis of ideological alignments (2) confirms states end negotiations in a highly polarized place. By the second OEWG, in meetings 3 and 4, authoritarian states remained at a relatively consistent place. Many of the same debates about international law resurfaced in the agenda item on norms when authoritarian states recommended translating norms into binding rules. Cuba argued that the norms China proposed on sovereignty and non-interference "should be binding and should establish guidelines for states when it comes to protecting cyberspace."[104] Russia mentioned, similar to China, the need for international guidance to bind large technology companies, such as Facebook and Google, that "governments should also be looking at the possible ways over regulating the activity of the IT companies in the digital area."[105] Liberal states argued against developing any new norms. The European Union described the "urgent need" to implement rather than develop norms of responsible state behavior from the prior GGE

[100] UNCD Corpus, Estonia, First OEWG, Second Substantive Session, Meeting 2.
[101] UNCD Corpus, European Union, First OEWG, Second Substantive Session, Meeting 2.
[102] UNCD Corpus, Iran, Substantive Session 1, Meeting 7, December 2021
[103] Zimbabwe Contribution, *see* here.
[104] UNCD Corpus, Cuba, Second OEWG, Second Session, Meeting 5.
[105] UNCD Corpus, Cuba, Second OEWG, First Session, Meeting 5.

meetings. South Korea mirrored the call for a focus on GGE decisions as these "norms embody what is expected of every state in its behavior in cyberspace, and also determines whether such behavior is responsible or reprehensible."[106] According to Seoul, existing norms should be prioritized because "GGE norms were a result of an expert-driven process." To encourage implementation, Australia proposed "the national survey of implementation" for states to voluntarily "self assess our actions that each of us have taken towards implementation, and what actions are still required." The survey commits institutional resources to evaluate government implementation of norms.[107] For the Netherlands, focusing on implementing norms has a liberal purpose. The existing norms "ensure that everyone can enjoy the benefits of the digital world securely while knowing that their human rights and fundamental freedoms are protected."[108] Like South Korea, many democracies ended the negotiations strongly contesting a statist approach that would develop new norms focused on states' rights.

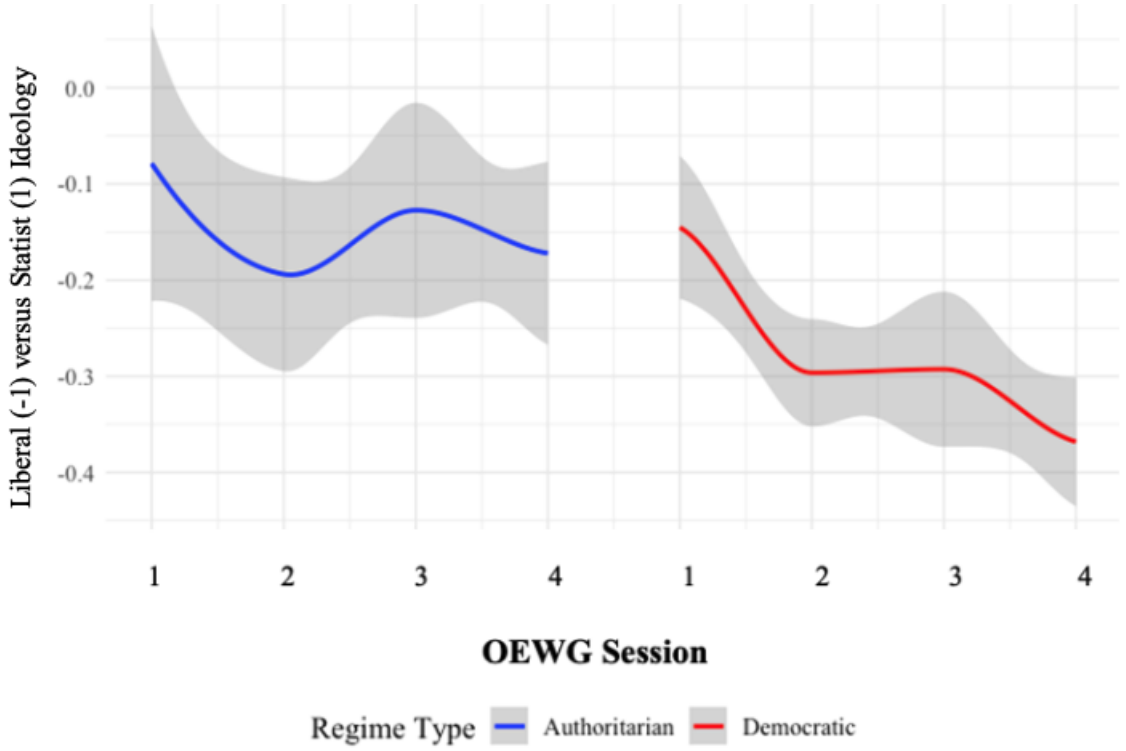

Figure 2: Alignment with China's Vision of Norms. The figure indicates democracies mobilize away from China. Authoritarian and democratic states end in different places.

[106] South Korea, Second OEWG, First Session, Meeting 9.
[107] Australia, Second OEWG, First Session, Meeting 9.
[108] Netherlands, Second OEWG, First Session, Meeting 9.

6 Test Two: The Causes of Polarization

Observational data suggests that China's promotion of a statist ideology polarizes the United Nations. Liberal states eschew, whereas the rest of the UN supports developing institutions proposed by China. In addition, the polarization of preferences does not narrow as China continues to emphasize a vision of sovereignty and government rights. Is China's discourse power the cause of this polarization? To analyze how China's promotion of a statist ideology impacts institutional mobilization, I conduct an original elite experiment with diplomats.

6.1 Recruiting the Diplomatic Elite

Recruiting elites is theoretically essential for understanding the impact of China's promotion of a statist ideology within international organizations. To test the impacts of cues and frames on preferences for a rules-based order, I target the population China attempts to recruit within international organizations — the diplomats empowered to represent their countries in international negotiations. Although many public opinion studies test their expectations with a mass audience, successful coalition building depends on a rising power attracting support by convincing elites, thus indicating the value of determining how elites respond when exposed to the influence of frames and cues in an experimental setting. Likewise, an experiment helps explain the mechanisms of ideological persuasion at the micro-level, or as labeled by Ruggie, at the level of "innovative micro-practices."[109] Johnston more forcefully argues that examining the impact of social strategies "allows (even demands) that the unit is the individual or small group."[110]

I use digital advertising to recruit diplomatic elites following the approach pioneered by Clark, who uses LinkedIn advertisements to recruit elites working for international organizations.[111] To recruit diplomats, I used digital advertising to message officials working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Permanent Missions among United Nations member states. Since the observational data reveals high polarization of preferences for international order along the lines of political ideology, I block elites into authoritarian and democratic states. I group elites by the Polity measure of regime type. Countries with scores of six or greater are classified as liberal democracies, and those with scores below negative six are classified as authoritarian regimes.[112] Through LinkedIn, I recruited 212 diplomats to participate, which included 141 democratic and 71 authoritarian officials. Overall, the diplomats recruited are experienced in foreign affairs, as the median experience of the diplomats in my sample is six, and the mean is nine years.

[109] Ruggie (1982), 27
[110] Johnston (2014), 27.
[111] Clark (2021).
[112] For others who use these cutpoints see Voeten (2021).

6.2 Design and Measurement

To test how discourse power shapes institutional mobilization, I present a vignette proposing the creation of international law within international organizations for emerging technologies and implementing treatments to understand how ideological shifts impact support. The vignette in the control condition explains the development of rules for information and communications technologies similar to the ongoing process in the United Nations. The sovereignty frames I developed for the experiment use language from China's policy position papers for cybersecurity rules presented at the United Nations to extend a statist vision of order. I create four different treatments: (1) a control condition to create a rules-based order for emerging technologies at the United Nations, (2) a vision of a rules-based order promoting sovereignty (statist values), (3) China promoting a vision of a rules-based order promoting sovereignty (statist values and China leadership), and (4) China proposing rules without sovereignty (China leadership).

To test the impact of China promoting ideology on institutional coalition building, I developed several measurements of mobilization where diplomats express support for proposals. The first dependent variable, consensus mobilization, measures agreement on the need for international rules and collaboration through a rules-based order. The second dependent variable, action mobilization (foreign), measures whether the diplomat will encourage or discourage foreign officials from supporting the rules within international organizations. To capture the common international "two-level game" where diplomats need to coordinate support with their capitols to convince domestic officials to support international proposals, I measure action mobilization (domestic) by asking participants whether they will encourage or discourage the support of officials at home.[113] Respondents selected responses on a seven-point Likert scale: Strongly support / Support/ Somewhat support / Neither support nor oppose / Somewhat oppose / Oppose / Highly oppose. Finally, to understand how elites developed opinions, I asked respondents to describe their decision-making around the rules by considering what their delegation would say if asked to take the floor and offer their country's position to glean insights on how frames impact mobilization within institutions. Given the high levels of consistency in mobilization answers across these three items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$), they were combined into the MOBILIZATION INDEX. I rescale the index on a 0-1 scale for ease of interpretation.

6.3 Polarizing Leadership

First, I analyze the impact of China's leadership on mobilization (Figure 3). Among democratic elites, I find that China's source cue significantly lowers mobilization for a rules-based order. Exposure to information that China proposed rules in the United Nations leads democratic officials to reduce their support for cooperating through a rules-based order in cyberspace by roughly 22.4 percentage points ($p<0.001$). The results show that democratic officials strongly reject China's leadership of order. On the other hand, there is a one percent increase for authoritarian states

[113] Putnam (1988).

Table 1: Experimental Treatments

Conditions	**Treatment Text**
Control	Over the next few years, United Nations member states will be developing international rules for information and communications technologies (ICTs). One proposal includes creating a new international legal instrument tailored to the attributes of ICTs and evolving technological developments.
China Leadership	Over the next few years, United Nations member states will be developing international rules for information and communications technologies (ICTs). China proposes creating a new international legal instrument tailored to the attributes of ICTs and evolving technological developments.
Statist Values & China	Over the next few years, United Nations member states will be developing international rules for information and communications technologies (ICTs). China proposes creating a new international legal instrument tailored to the attributes of ICTs and evolving technological developments. China notes one goal of the new rules is to strengthen sovereignty. For example: • States should be free to govern the Internet inside their borders as they see fit and make public policies consistent with national interests. • States should exercise jurisdiction over the ICT infrastructure, resources as well as ICT-related activities within their territories. • States have the rights and responsibilities to ensure the security of personal information and important data relevant to their national security, public security, economic security and social stability.
Statist Values	Over the next few years, United Nations member states will be developing international rules for information and communications technologies (ICTs). One proposal includes creating a new international legal instrument tailored to the attributes of ICTs and evolving technological developments. One goal of the new rules is to strengthen sovereignty. For example: • States should be free to govern the Internet inside their borders as they see fit and make public policies consistent with national interests. • States should exercise jurisdiction over the ICT infrastructure, resources as well as ICT-related activities within their territories. • States have the rights and responsibilities to ensure the security of personal information and important data relevant to their national security, public security, economic security and social stability.

between the control condition and the source cue, but this difference is not significant. This suggests that authoritarian states are just as amendable to collaboration in the United Nations with China's cue as without.

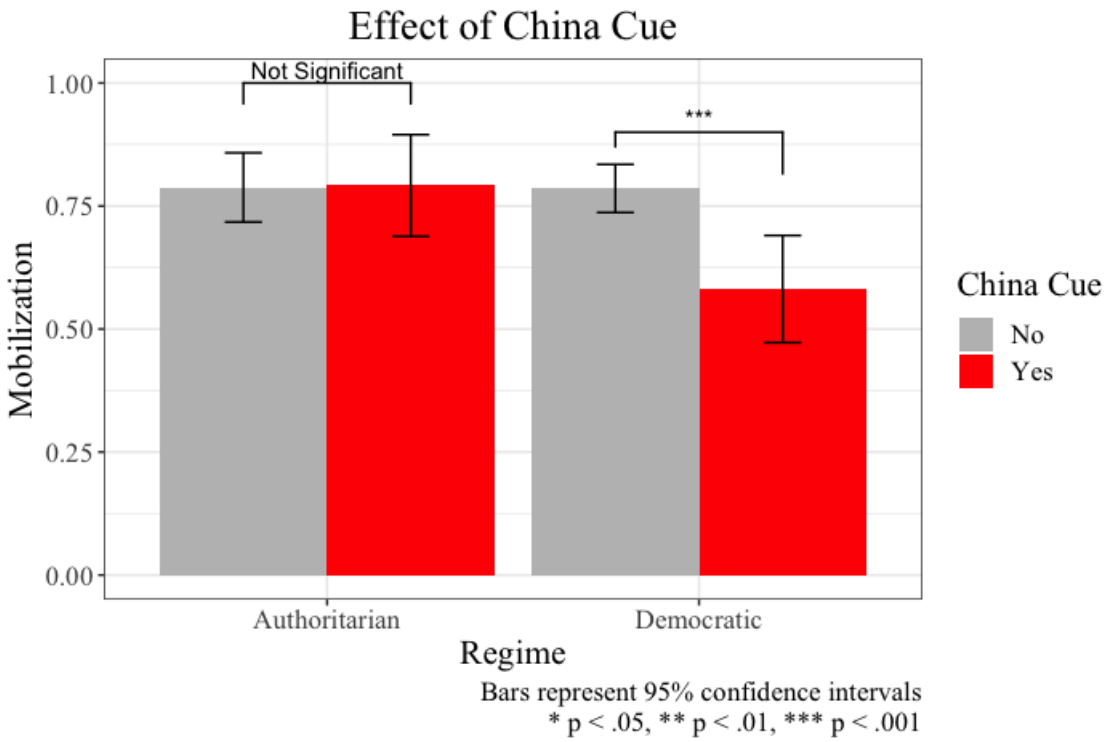

Figure 3: China's promotion of international rules polarizes support.

Open ended responses confirmed the polarization from China's leadership. A Canadian official exposed to China's cue frankly responded, "Our delegation would not support these rules because they are presented by China." China's image raised the vision of sovereignty without needing to bring in a frame. One democratic official argued in response that "National governments should not have sole ownership of the internet in their countries, because this would increase risk of political abuse in regards to their own citizens." As expected by the theory of ideological persuasion, many democratic responses focused on the normative threat that China generates. Without directly mentioning China's Great Firewall, a democratic official argued, "The countries who fail to protect basic human rights may use these regulations to further oppress their populations and violate free and secure communication right, a fundamental human right." China's image alone was enough to raise fears about censorship, repression, and what it would mean for a rules-based order to be led by China. A United Kingdom diplomat argued that even though the United Kingdom strongly supports the rules-based order, China's rise complicates this support. When China proposes rules, the UK would not support "China having full jurisdiction over their own ICT space."

On the other hand, authoritarian states expressed appreciation for China's proposal. One diplomat from Egypt empathically argued that Egypt is likely to "strongly support the rules." Other officials reiterated support using China's

rhetoric. When justifying support, an authoritarian official argued, "the international community should understand that no model suits all" which reflects China's message of sovereign equality. When an official from Zimbabwe was exposed to China's promotion of the rules, the delegate argued China's proposal is desirable. Even though the content did not contain any messages about multilateral versus multi-stakeholder, the official from Zimbabwe argued China's leadership would help monitor the actions of the multi-stakeholder model where civil society largely operates outside of the watchful eyes of governments.

6.4 Polarizing Values and Leadership

Next, I consider the treatment combining China's leadership and statist ideology (Figure 4). China's promotion of a statist ideology leads to a roughly 21.3 percentage point decrease in democratic officials' support for a rules-based order ($p<0.001$). Rather than increasing the willingness of democratic officials to mobilize by drawing from the foundational values at the heart of the United Nations Charter (that is also supported by a liberal vision of order[114]) focusing attention on sovereignty and the freedom of states to govern the Internet "within their borders as they see fit" has the opposite effect of reducing support.

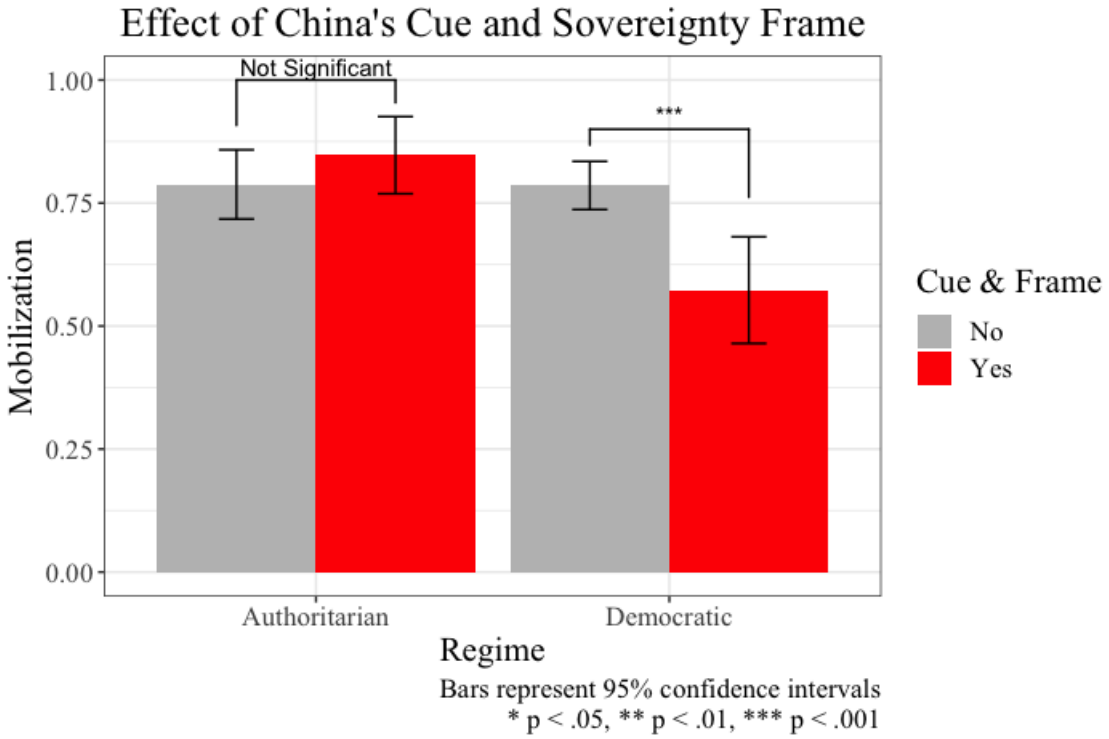

Figure 4: China championing a vision of international rules elevating sovereignty polarizes support.

The role of ideology was especially evident in the open-ended comments offered in response to the thought-

[114]Lake et al. (2021).

listing question. When exposed to China's statist ideology and leadership, I find that democracies voluntarily redirect attention to the need for strengthening human rights and incorporating a focus on protecting individuals. Rather than unifying the Nations, China's use of sovereignty normatively threatens liberal countries. One Czech Republic official exposed to China's discourse power argued the rules propose a direction that would "limit the freedom of the internet and potentially endanger human rights." The diplomat argued that the global community should instead " embrace a human-centric approach to setting up international rules." Exposure to China's leadership of a statist order caused an official from Australia to redirect the focus to civil liberties. Australia emphasized the need to protect liberal values, despite having no indication of liberalism within the treatment. This official recommended member states should instead direct attention toward "the rights of free speech, freedom of the media and a cautious approach to national regulation of domains." Likewise, when exposed to the treatment, Japan argued for redirecting a focus toward human rights: "even though it is within the internal affairs of a country, a violation against universal norms such as human rights is what the international society should govern."

On the other hand, authoritarian states largely kept support on the table and are amendable to China's leadership of a statist order. Authoritarian officials raise their support by roughly five percentage points but this difference is not significant. The open ended responses provide more clarity on the ideological intent. An official from Belarus noted the probability of strong support from his delegation. China's rules would be supported as, "ensuring a state's sovereignty in cyberspace is a national security issue." Similarly, a diplomat from Uganda noted the rules are ideologically aligned with the views of the Ugandan delegation and supported "for the purposes of National security and sovereignty of the Country." Many of the responses reflected strong certainty of granting China support. One official from the United Arab Emirates regarded China's sovereignty framing as desirable, noting the UAE "shall recognize the new policy and surely shall be in favor and not against." Many connected China's discourse power of sovereignty with better security conditions online. Thailand's diplomat argued that supporting China's proposals within international organizations is desirable from the standpoint of securing data.

To better understand the impact of China's discourse power, I created a WordCloud, a visual representation of the Open Ended Responses, in which words that are mentioned more often are plotted with a larger font size (Figure 5). The Wordcloud reflects the polarization in rhetoric between officials exposed to China's cue and sovereignty frame. When exposed to China's message of sovereignty, authoritarian officials overwhelmingly accept China's appeal to focus on states, as evidenced by the high use of words such as country and national. On the other hand, democratic nations forcefully direct attention away from sovereignty to human rights, as reflected by the high frequency of "rights" appearing within democratic speech. Words such as human, society, and freedom are frequently deployed. In conjunction with the content analysis, the results suggest China's discourse power represents a normative threat that causes democracies to remove support of a rules-based order.

Figure 5: Polarized Rhetoric

6.5 Statist Values

Interestingly, it is not the values of the order that polarizes (Figure 6). When exposed to the statist values emphasizing sovereignty, democratic officials lower support by a roughly four percentage point, but the decrease is not significant. The results confirm the expectation of the theory of ideological persuasion that anticipates China's leadership drives polarization. When China uses a message of sovereignty, democratic officials undoubtedly take their support off the table. Future research should consider the extent to which even the message of sovereignty becomes polarized over time as cyber sovereignty becomes wrapped up in a vision of China's order rather than remaining exclusive to the United Nations. The results suggest that it is China's cue the reshapes a statist ideology into an untenable order for liberal democracies to support.

6.6 Alternative Explanations

Although this research has thus far presented evidence that China and China's leadership of statist values polarize, I have not fully ruled out alternative socialization explanations that sovereignty improves China's position. To test these alternative theories that rhetoric has a positive effect, I take the difference between the condition where China uses sovereignty frames (statist values and leadership) and the condition where China proposes collaboration without framing (leadership). I do not find evidence for alternative theories of socialization that anticipate sovereignty frames raise support for China's new rules of the game. Among democracies, the level of support for China versus the level

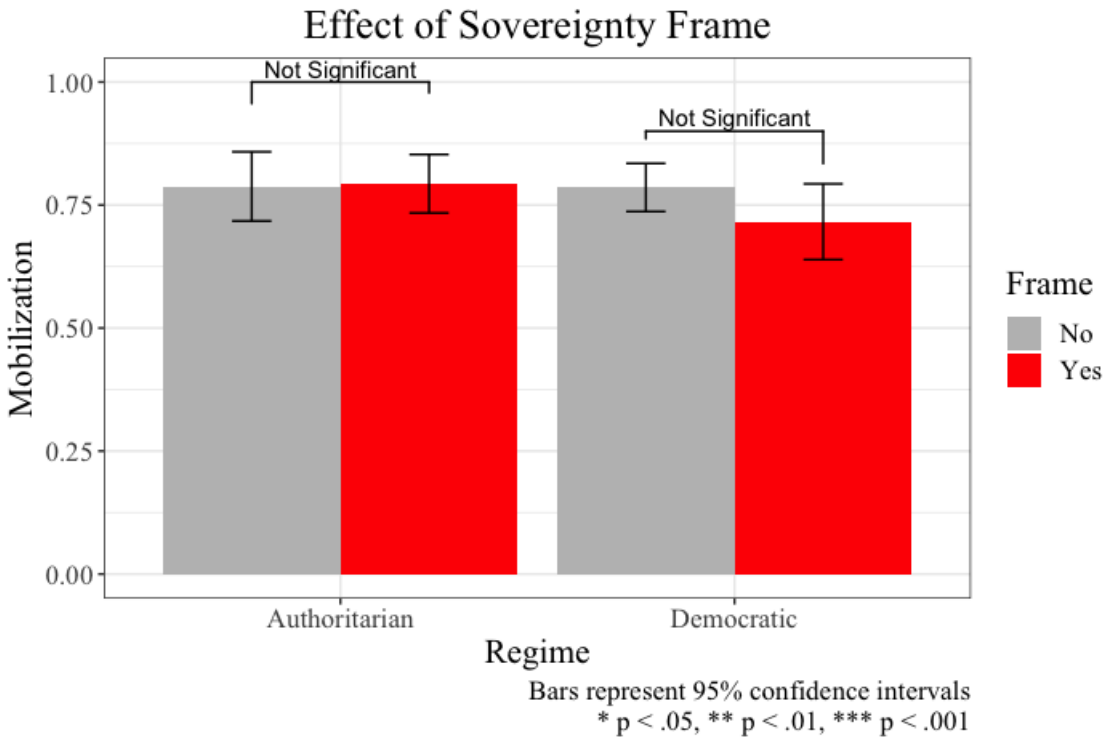

Figure 6: A vision of sovereignty does not polarize.

of support for China, once it uses sovereignty to legitimate its rise, is roughly one percent lower (although not significant). The results suggest that China's discourse power does not augment China's ability to attract and persuade, and China's source cue overpowers China's frame. Rather than soft power helping China better approach adversaries, China's frames and cues work together to frustrate China's ability to mobilize support from liberal democracies while preserving support from authoritarian states. The results lend further support to my theory's expectations of polarization. The lack of statistically significant differences suggests that respondents think China's proposal would be about sovereignty even when they see the source cue without the frame. In other words, China's image is wrapped up in values of sovereignty and non-interference.

7 Discussion: The Peril of Polarization?

Is polarization a problem for China to achieve its goals and lead international order as a "Sovereign Leviathan" similar to the US acting as a Liberal Leviathan? Although voting on internet issues is rare, two votes suggest China may achieve its goals to implement ideological shifts

7.1 Creating State-Centric Institutional Dialogue

First, the OEWG is itself a testament to China's ability to convince and attract a sufficient group of states to shift toward a statist ideology. To develop guidance on norms of responsible state behavior, governments historically met within the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) format to elaborate consensus reports that provide greater detail and clarity on appropriate behavior. Typically, UN GGE negotiations involve 15-25 experts selected by region. The GGE format grew into a relatively institutionalized process for cyber negotiations, with the group succeeding in delivering consensus reports to the General Assembly in 2010, 2013, and 2015. Within the GGE, the United States led efforts to establish norms for cyberspace.[115]

Working with other partners, China proposed a separate United Nations process, the Open Ended Working Group format, to shift collaboration in the area of cybersecurity toward a state-driven approach that includes all member states rather than a select few.[116] China and Russia argued for anchoring the development of rules for cyberspace in a United Nations forum that is open to all countries. Language within the resolution framed the OEWG as a "more democratic, inclusive, and transparent" process of developing a common understanding that opens negotiations to all member states rather than a select group.[117] The resolution argues for a shift away, from "club agreements" that, unlike the UN GGE, will encourage an "inclusive, open, and democratic negotiation process" with democratic indicating the wide participation of all UN member states.[118]

Liberal states described the proposal for the OEWG as a "strange turn of events" and largely contested the proposal as an ideological shift.[119] In a letter led by Canada, but also supported by Australia, Estonia, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom, the group called for a continuation of the "expert-led" format of the GGE. The group is also critical of the OEWG resolution for introducing the potential for changes that could overwrite the expert-led norms. Most liberal states view the OEWG as a threat to liberalism as represented by the voting data for the resolution: only Costa Rica and Uruguay voted for the OEWG.

Despite the resistance of liberal states, China was able to launch the OEWG and establish a precedent for cyberspace because only a small coalition of 24 liberal states contested the resolution, whereas 119 states voted in favor. The universal statist language that promotes sovereign equality by calling for opening collaboration to all states is widely appealing. The United Nations is seen as a legitimate forum to collaborate and discuss cyber threats. After the launch of the OEWG, many governments applauded the shift in focus toward states. Iran noted the OEWG is significant as "the first inclusive and transparent multilateral process under the auspices of the United Nations" and

[115] Hollis (2017).
[116] NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, "A surprising turn of events: UN creates two working groups on cyberspace" *see* here
[117] Draft Resolution A/73/505.
[118] Draft Resolution A/73/505.
[119] Explanation of vote on Resolution L.27/rev1: Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security *see* here

for serving as a "state-driven process."[120] Thailand also emphasized the need for the "OEWG should remain a cornerstone for fostering inclusive dialogue and international cooperation on the use of ICTs by states."[121] Due to this widespread support, the United Nations membership renewed the OEWG for a second term from 2021-2025. China must contest liberal states' continued drive to open the OEWG and negotiations to civil society, but the OEWG itself is an institutional change that extends a statist ideology.

7.2 Creating Binding Global Treaties

China's ability to mobilize a winning coalition to support a statist ideology is also available in vote counts related to cybercrime. By working with Russia, China proposed a new process to develop a Cybercrime Convention under the auspices of the United Nations. The proposal is significant as the Council of Europe already ratified the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime to govern the space. A United Nations Cybercrime Convention effectively supersedes any existing treaties and allows China an opportunity to codify more state-centric norms of behavior. During the General Assembly presentation of the Ad Hoc Committee on Cybercrime, China argued the treaty will strengthen state sovereignty and framed launching United Nations processes as creating opportunities for fairness and equality under China's call to create a community of a shared future. A community of shared future is an important concept within Chinese foreign policy that extols the need for mutual benefits and "win-win cooperation." China argued that new treaties provide an important way to fill gaps in existing international law under the existing inequitable system largely established by the West. Establishing new rules also promotes greater equality by "addressing the needs of all countries, particularly developing countries."[122]

Most United Nations members applauded international efforts to address cybercrime under the United Nations using the same rationale that China presented. These countries argued that new rules are necessary to protect sovereignty and overcome the challenges associated with the status quo. Nicaragua argued that the UN General Assembly should vote in favor of the resolution because of its association with the United Nations and the emphasis on protecting the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. In addition, Nicaragua supported the convention and deemed existing measures, like the Budapest Convention, insufficient to address the modern challenges of the information age.[123] Indonesia argued that the resolution should be supported because the proposal includes work under the auspices of the United Nations with the equal participation of all Member States. Given the immense cost of cybercrime to the international community, Indonesia argued existing approaches are insufficient. A statist ideology that demands participation in the United Nations seems acceptable and worthy of support to a majority of countries.

[120] UNCD Corpus, Iran, Substantive Session 1, Session 3, Meeting 9, March 2021.
[121] UNCD Corpus, Thailand, Substantive Session 2, Session 2, Meeting 9, March 2022.
[122] A/C.3/74/SR.50, Paragraph 43.
[123] A/C.3/74/SR.50, Paragraph 40.

Liberal democracies, however, argued that the status quo should be preserved. Remarkably no liberal democracies voted for launching the process of developing a Cybercrime Convention and contested it on normative grounds. The United States contested developing a new convention and urged member states to vote against the resolution. Washington argued that undertaking work "through a divisive and non-inclusive process only serves to stifle global efforts to combat cybercrime."[124] Developing a new draft resolution is premature and would undermine the ongoing efforts of expert groups and be less inclusive of civil society. In a statement explaining a vote against the convention, Canada, speaking on behalf of Australia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, and Norway, reiterated US arguments that a draft convention duplicates existing efforts.[125] Pursuing a new global convention would distract stakeholders and duplicate work already undertaken by intergovernmental expert groups. Australia noted that a vote against the resolution is a vote "in support of the existing international framework"'[126] which includes the Council of Europe's Budapest Convention. Other liberal governments went a step further and argued that although the new convention proposes to fight the threat of cybercrime and strengthen sovereignty, China's proposals represent an affront to liberal values. Speaking to the press, one European official justified opposition on normative grounds, expressing concern that "Russia and China are seeking to establish a set of global norms that support their view of how the Internet and information should be controlled."[127]

Despite the backlash from liberal democracies over the ideological shift, China and Russia were able to launch the process of developing a Cybercrime Convention. In the cybercrime convention, 79 states voted yes, 33 abstained, and 60 countries opposed. The voting records reflect the intense ideological contestation between liberal and non-liberal states. Despite differences over whether new bodies of international law should be developed, China and Russia were able to pass the resolution and launch a five-year treaty negotiation aiming to conclude with the launch of a new body of law under the United Nations. The approval of the resolution begins to shift international order toward a more statist approach that will codify a shift from the liberal Budapest Convention to a more statist approach in the United Nations. Although more evidence is needed as rules and resolutions develop to govern the internet, the initial voting records suggests that when a majority is required, China is able to advance a vision of ideological change, even in the face of widespread backlash from liberal states.

8 Conclusion

There is no end of history for ideological struggle and contestation. Although communism was liberalism's preeminent ideological contender during the Cold War, China now presents a lighter statist ideology that calls for a reorientation

[124] A/C.3/74/SR.50, Paragraph 46.
[125] A/C.3/74/SR.50, Paragraph 54.
[126] A/C.3/74/SR.50, Paragraph 58.
[127] Washington Post, *see* here.

of liberalism's focus on individual freedoms to better protect the rights of states. China's role as an ideological entrepreneur, however, has been all but overlooked in stories of international socialization and persuasion.[128] Most theories focus on whether China has been socialized without yet tracing how China deploys strategies of socialization and persuasion to attract support for ideological shifts and the efficacy of China's efforts. Rather than maintaining or overturning order, China is working within established rules of the game to create ideological changes.

Most theories of soft power anticipate China lacks the ability to attract.[129] Nye argues China's domestic political system and its lack of emphasis on civil society will hold up its ability to exert any type of gravitational pull on behavior through soft power strategies. A growing body of research suggests the limits of Beijing's investments in non-material strategies that seek to convince and persuade recipients that China's model is attractive and worthy of support.[130] This research strongly challenges this view. At the United Nations, China does have the power to attract. With its emphasis on state rights and championship of sovereignty, China pulls many governments to support a statist ideology in cyberspace because China promotes highly universal norms that enjoy support in issue areas outside of cyberspace. By asking governments to walk the liberal international order back to a statist order, China achieves high levels of support from all but liberal states.

China's ability to persuade, however, does not reach full consensus. Observational data confirm the theoretical prediction that China's ideological persuasion creates widespread polarization between liberal and non-liberal states. During the development of order for cyberspace, although liberal states have supported sovereignty and the need to cooperate through binding international rules in other issue areas, when China proposes the elevation of state rights and the need to codify protections for governments in cyberspace, backlash ensues from liberal states. Liberal states strongly and vocally contest any movement toward China's statist ideology. On the other hand, authoritarian states commend China's vision and emphasize support for strengthening the role of the United Nations and institutionalizing the right of sovereignty in cyberspace. To many governments, China's calls for a statist vision of collaboration appear commonplace, familiar, and not worth holding up collaboration in the field of cybersecurity.

This research has implications for the way that we understand attraction to ideology by disentangling the components to include leadership and values. The experimental results demonstrate China, rather than its vision of order, is polarizing. Surprisingly for many theories that expect authoritarian and democratic states to have significant differences in their approach to international law, the results demonstrate that authoritarian and democratic states start from a place of similar support for international law. Once China promotes a statist vision of order, however, democratic officials take support of developing a rules-based cyber order off the table, whereas authoritarian officials maintain. The lack of significant findings for authoritarian states increasing their support for China or China's vision of sovereignty suggests these countries find little to contest as the promotion of sovereignty is familiar and universal. The findings

[128] Notable exceptions include Fung (2020); Yang (2021) and Chinese scholarship about China's leadership and extension of morality Yan (2015).
[129] Nye (2012).
[130] Green-Riley (2021).

of polarization have implications for how countries mobilize to aid or frustrate China's rise. When leveraging the universal and widely respected value of sovereignty, China's reliance on the attractive message of sovereignty and non-interference is unable to produce consensus that most theories expect at the end of a norm life cycle.

Despite polarization, China may be successful at shifting ideology and gaining a role as a Sovereign Leviathan. This finding has implications for the way that we understand the vitality of the liberal order. Most anticipate the institutional design works in favor of the liberal order's longevity and will hold up any movement toward alternative ideologies. Ikenberry argues the liberal international order is constitutional in nature, Allan et al argue liberal principles are attractive among the public and elites, and Lipscy argues it is possible to reform institutions only in policy areas where great powers can create credible outside options, which should not be possible in cyberspace due to powerful network effects.[131] When China uses persuasion, however, democratic and majoritarian institutional designs, may be a feature that allows China to advance a more statist agenda. In contrast to theories of socialization that focus on consensus as the end goal, the work of building new forms of international order often relies on majorities. Democracies comprise a small coalition of states at the United Nations relative to authoritarian states and developing countries. Although many have found that democratic support for the liberal order is likely to shackle China's attempts at change[132], this study suggests the need to understand the degree and dimensions of polarization. Since China polarizes support between liberal states and the rest of the United Nations, it is able to advance ideological change. This research suggests the need for continued research on coalition building and ideological change. As China finds its voice through an emphasis on discourse power, ideological change may ensue in other liberal issue areas.

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[131] Ikenberry (2000); Allan et al. (2018); Lipscy (2017).
[132] Allan et al. (2018).

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9 Appendix

9.1 UNCD Corpus

To develop the UNCD Corpus, I rely on text-to-speech tools to develop transcripts from the most prominent cyber-security negotiations. I argue the UNCD Corpus is necessary to develop as other corpora include a limited focus on governments. The Internet Governance Forum, for instance, widely includes the voices of civil society, academics, and other non-state actors. In addition, previous United Nations cybersecurity negotiations are closed to the public. These negotiations only include a select number of countries, which necessitates the need to collect statements on government preferences.

9.1.1 Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR)

To begin, I develop a list of all of the United Nations video links of the OEWG negotiations. The corpus represents 156 hours of speeches and deliberations about how to develop international order for information and communications technologies. I record each UN TV session using commercial speech-to-text services, which research shows vastly outperforms anything that researchers might train on their own. We collect meta-data on the agenda item. Since the agenda-item sometimes switches mid-meeting, we are carefully to accurately assign metadata about the topic delegates discuss. I work with a team of research assistants to assign countries to speakers and verify any problems with the recordings. This is necessary because the same translator handles all of the English translation for all Spanish speakers, for example, limiting the ability to pick out the distinctions of each individual speaker. The text is broken into speakers to produce a speaker-agenda item corpus.

One unique function of UN TV is that all of the meetings are offered in the six official languages of the United Nations, which means that even the preferences non-English speakers are fully represented through the United Nations translators. There are some instances, however, when the translator audio might not have been clearly audible due to technical error. In the very rare instance when an English recording was not available, we used Google translate to capture the audio from non-English speakers. To validate the accuracy of recording the UN TV videos, I also used a transcription service to hand transcribe a sample of videos and compared the similarity of those recorded via ASR.

After validating the UNCD Corpus, I conducted general summary statistics to understand who speaks at the United Nations negotiations. Although the OEWG represents one of the most preeminent cyber negotiation, using government speeches to reflect preferences for order is not without bias. First, there are differences between the governments that

speak and the governments that remain silent. Contrary to the United Nations General Assembly speeches, the OEWG does not require every government to deliver a speech. The OEWG represents the first occasion when all members states of the United Nations have the opportunity to jointly develop cybersecurity rules. For many governments, developing a national position on rules and institutions for cybersecurity is a relatively new task. Previous forums to develop rules only invited 15-25 experts to develop rules, norms, and principles of responsible state behavior. Second, power may influence the length of time that governments speak. The OEWG does not set a length of time on the speeches so many powerful governments often speak longer than governments with less capacity. Despite these challenges, I argue the OEWG is the ideal forum for understanding coalition politics as speeches are dominated by democratic and authoritarian coalitions. Since these governments participate the most, the OEWG presents the opportunity to understand whether democracies and authoritarian states move closer or further apart as China champions building a cyber order grounded in sovereignty.

9.1.2 Cleaning Speeches

In order to implement the Wordscores method, I proceed with cleaning the UNCD Corpus. I merge agenda and political information about each speaker into this database. I then take the following steps to clean the speeches. After this phase of cleaning and pre-proecessing, each speech is treated as a "bag of words", allowing researchers to examine how frequently a term appears across all speeches.

1. Remove punctuation
2. Remove non-alpha numeric characters and numbers
3. Change to lowercase
4. Strip white space
5. Remove stop words
6. Remove diplomatic stop words for the United Nations. These are words that appear frequently in UN speeches like "chairman," "delegation," and "excellencies." I also remove a list of country names as this information is also repeated frequently within each country speech (e.g. Sweden supports). Research examining networks should refrain from taking the last step as understanding which governments are cited can be used to map coalitions.

9.2 Measuring Ideology

I segment the data by "country-agenda item" (i.e. How closely does the United Kingdom's speech at the second session of the OEWG align with China).

9.2.1 Wordscores

I analyze the data by calculating Wordscores. Wordscores[133] is a method of automated content analysis that assigns policy positions or "scores" to documents on the basis of word counts. The Wordscores method involves selecting "reference texts" with known positions on a policy dimension to estimate the score of out-of-sample documents ("virgin texts"). Similar to other unsupervised methods, wordscores makes the "bag-of-words" assumption by treating individual words as "data" irrespective of their context. Wordscores computes the estimated score for a document as the average of the scores of the words contained in it. Wordscores computes the probability for word w as an average of document scores, weighted by the posterior probability of each document given that w occurs within it.

By using "reference texts" with known positions or scores on a policy dimension, the Wordscores method estimates the scores of the rest of the sample. To make these calculations, the method first involves estimating the scores for each word type occurring in the reference texts and then combining these wordscores into a score for each virgin document. The researcher then scales these scores along a continuum, in this case -1 to 1. The method has been used for several purposes. Some researchers, for instance, use Wordscores to scale journalists and media outlets from liberal to conservative.[134] Below I list China's statist manifesto and the US liberal manifesto that present ideological visions on the world stage about how the internet should be governed.

Several steps are taken to validate my measure of Wordscores following calls to investigate the accuracy of the scaling.[135] I confirm that many of the alignments of the WordScores text generally match the coalitions identified through content analysis. For instance, in the international law debates, I find that the Russian Federation and the Republic of Iran are closest to China's speeches and emphasize similar to positions as China. On the other hand, Ireland, Mexico, and Switzerland, support a focus on human rights within their speeches, similar to the US. Reading the sample of speeches provides an additional degree of confidence that the scaling is indicating an underlying latent dimension about proximity to China's state-centric rhetoric versus the US's individual focus. This reveals new patterns that may have originally been overlooked. Even though Inida is a democracy, I find that India presents highly state-centric demands at the OEWG.

- China's manifesto: Sovereignty in Cyberspace: Theory and Practice
- US manifesto: Declaration for the Future of the Internet

[133] Benoit and Laver 2003; Laver et al. 2003
[134] Barberá Sood, 2015
[135] Grimmer Stewart, 2013, p. 271

9.2.2 Comparison to Other Methods

Other ways to measure alignment with China through texts are diverse. Some have taken steps to measure the polarization of texts rather than alignment with a reference text.[136] Myrick uses a supervised machine learning method from Peterson and Spirling (2018) to predict the likelihood that a speech was given by a Republican or a Democrat. The level of polarization within each session is proxied by the average predictive accuracy of the best performing algorithm. While this is also a viable method, using Wordscores is ideal for allowing me to capture the dependent variable of interest: alignment with China. By examining the alignment with China, I am able to see whether existing coalitions move closer or further away from China during a negotiation when China heavily deployed the power of discourse. In addition, by analyzing preferences along a continuum, I am able to see when a government moves away from China whether they are moving toward a liberal position.

9.3 Experiment

9.3.1 Recruitment

I use LinkedIn to advertise my survey to individuals working for the foreign service or those with experience in diplomacy via a sponsored message requesting participation in academic research. My LinkedIn advertisement emphasizes that the survey is anonymous, reviewed by the IRB, and non-identifiable, following best practices for working with elite populations.[137] Diplomats are offered a chance to review the high-level results and the findings as an incentive to participate.

I recruit authoritarian and democratic states through blocking. Blocking is an element of experimental design in which a researcher uses observed covariates to create pre-assignment groups of similar units to preserve power, even in relatively small groups. One advantage of using a blocked randomized design is allowing researchers to detect and estimate heterogeneous treatment effects.[138] For instance, if China's frames positively affect authoritarian countries but negatively impact democratic countries, these differential effects can be efficiently estimated. Without blocking, too few democratic or authoritarian countries may receive treatment, and average inferences will fail to yield the true effects or may even bias the results towards inferences from one small population of governments.[139] Second, blocking allows me to estimate the causal effects within each block to analyze how existing identities moderate the impact of China's socialization. Blocking produces a better balance between treatment conditions and more precision in estimating treatment effects.

Although the population in authoritarian regimes might not use LinkedIn widely or be blocked from LinkedIn, I

[136] Myrick (2021).
[137] Kertzer and Renshon (2022).
[138] Kalla and Broockman (2016).
[139] Moore (2012).

find that diplomats from authoritarian countries are highly active on career-oriented social media platforms. Consider United Arab Emirates, for instance, which has 864 employees registered as working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The message used to recruit diplomats is below:

> Dear FIRST NAME:
> I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Pennsylvania researching how collaboration forms around emerging technologies at the United Nations. I want to learn how experts, like yourself, working at the COMPANY NAME think about developing international rules for the internet. The survey, via Qualtrics, is anonymous and will take less than 5 minutes to complete. I sincerely appreciate your help with my dissertation research!
> Survey link
> Best,
> Rachel

9.4 Survey

As part of my dissertation research, I developed a brief 5-minute survey to understand preferences for international law among foreign affairs experts. The survey is anonymous, non-identifiable, and approved by the University of Pennsylvania ethics board. I will use the high-level results for academic publication to build global knowledge about collaboration at the United Nations. To begin, I would like to know a little bit about your background.

9.4.1 Pre-Treatment Questions

1. Which country do you represent?
2. Which sector of government do you work in?
    (a) Foreign Affairs
    (b) Defense
    (c) Trade and Commerce
    (d) Other (please specify)
3. How many years of experience do you have working on foreign policy for your country?
4. Do you have experience working on international issues related to information and communications technologies (ICTs)?
    (a) Yes
    (b) No
5. If yes, which ICT-related global forum did you attend?
    (a) Internet governance forum (IGF)

(b) World Summit on Information Society (WSIS)

(c) Group of Governmental Experts (GGE)

(d) Open Ended Working Group (OEWG)

(e) RightsCon

(f) Ad Hoc Committee on Cybercrime

(g) World Internet Conference

(h) Other (please specify)

9.4.2 Treatment

In the following questions, I will describe types of international rules for information and communications technologies. There are no right or wrong answers; I just want to know what you think as a foreign affairs leader.

[RANDOM ASSIGNMENT TO ONE CONDITION]

9.4.3 Outcomes

1. Regardless of your personal opinion or beliefs, do you think your country would support or oppose these proposed rules?

   (a) Strongly support these rules

   (b) Support these rules

   (c) Somewhat support these rules

   (d) Neither support nor oppose these rules

   (e) Somewhat oppose these rules

   (f) Oppose these rules

   (g) Strongly oppose these rules

2. Now consider how you would interact with officials from other countries. Would you encourage or discourage foreign officials to support these rules?

   (a) Strongly encourage foreign officials to support

   (b) Encourage foreign officials to support

   (c) Somewhat encourage foreign officials to support

   (d) Neither encourage nor discourage foreign officials to support

(e) Somewhat discourage foreign officials from supporting

(f) Discourage foreign officials from supporting

(g) Strongly discourage foreign officials from supporting

3. Now consider how you would interact with officials from your country. Would you encourage or discourage national officials to support these rules?

(a) Strongly encourage national officials to support

(b) Encourage national officials to support

(c) Somewhat encourage national officials to support

(d) Neither encourage nor discourage national officials to support

(e) Somewhat discourage national officials from supporting

(f) Discourage national officials from supporting

(g) Strongly discourage national officials from supporting

9.4.4 Open Ended Response

1. What would you expect your delegation to say when delivering a statement about these rules during international negotiations? Why would your country be in favor or against the rules?

9.4.5 Manipulation Checks

1. Think back to the proposal to develop a new treaty described to you earlier in the survey. Which country proposed developing the treaty?

(a) United States

(b) Estonia

(c) Indonesia

(d) China

(e) Other (please specify)

2. Think back to the proposed international rules described earlier in the survey. What was the stated goal of developing a new legal instrument for ICTs?

(a) Improve Sovereignty

(b) None

Thank you very much for your time. Would you be willing to speak with me more about your opinion on developing rules for ICTs in an interview? If so, please leave your email address below:

[END OF SURVEY]

9.4.6 Full Results

Table 2: Experiment Results

	Dependent variable:		
	Mobilization Index		
	Full Model	Authoritarian	Democratic
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Sovereignty Frame	0.009	−0.003	−0.036
	(0.062)	(0.041)	(0.054)
Cue and Frame	0.042	0.052	−0.213***
	(0.075)	(0.051)	(0.055)
Cue	0.036	0.010	−0.224***
	(0.077)	(0.052)	(0.058)
Democratic	0.001		
	(0.077)		
Digital Silk Road	0.050**	0.042	0.049*
	(0.018)	(0.027)	(0.025)
Diplomatic Capacity	−0.029*	−0.046	−0.024
	(0.012)	(0.023)	(0.017)
GDP per Capita	−0.045*	−0.042	−0.061*
	(0.019)	(0.031)	(0.025)
Technical Capacity	−0.015	0.041	−0.031
	(0.022)	(0.041)	(0.029)
Regulatory Capacity	−0.008	−0.052	0.023
	(0.033)	(0.035)	(0.051)
Misinformation	−0.045**	−0.044*	−0.055*
	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.026)
Frame:Regime	−0.049		
	(0.078)		
Cue and Frame:Regime	−0.257**		
	(0.089)		
Cue:Regime	−0.264**		
	(0.092)		
Constant	1.130***	1.143***	1.280***
	(0.178)	(0.271)	(0.227)
Observations	212	71	141
R^2	0.285	0.309	0.246
Adjusted R^2	0.238	0.207	0.194
Residual Std. Error	0.206 (df = 198)	0.131 (df = 61)	0.234 (df = 131)
F Statistic	6.081*** (df = 13; 198)	3.030** (df = 9; 61)	4.755*** (df = 9; 131)

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001