Against the Tide: The Resilience of Liberal Norms in Regional Organizations

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Abstract

How robust is the Liberal International Order (LIO) to challenge, and why (not)? Scholars and practitioners agree that the liberal international order (LIO) is in crisis due to the ascendancy of states with autocratic regimes and the rise of nationalist populism within core liberal states. While these challenges are well recognized, systematic empirical analyses of their impact remain sparse. Addressing this gap, this paper examines the commitment to liberal norms among regional international organizations (IOs). We utilize a novel dataset detailing the declaratory and substantive commitment of 28 regional IOs to liberal norms from 1980 to 2019, presenting the first comprehensive empirical and theoretical exploration of IO's adherence to these norms. Our findings reveal a surprising resilience among many regional IOs, which uphold liberal commitments despite autocratic and nationalist populist challenges. This resilience appears significantly linked to institutional design, norm entrepreneurs operating from within the IO, and a supportive organizational environment. Our analysis challenges prevailing assumptions about the decline of the LIO and highlights the critical role of robust institutional frameworks in sustaining the order's liberal principles.

Keywords: liberal international order (LIO); international organizations (IOs); liberal norms; autocracy; nationalist populism

I.   Introduction[1]

How robust is the Liberal International Order (LIO) to challenge, and why (not)? Since World War II, the United States (U.S.) and its allies have successfully established, consolidated, and, after the Cold War, expanded outward an international order that rests on liberal norms. Over the past two decades, however, policymakers and scholars alike have diagnosed that the LIO "is troubled" (Ikenberry 2010, 509). From the outside, the rise of challenger states with a distinct vision of international order and autocratic political regimes threatens the liberal orientation of the order (Cottiero et al. 2024; Ikenberry 2008; Weiss and Wallace 2021). From the inside, the growing influence of nationalist populism in core liberal democracies threatens the LIO's continued vitality (Börzel et al. 2024; De Vries, Hobolt, and Walter 2021; Wajner, Destradi, and Zürn 2024).

Despite broad agreement on the nature of these challenges, predictions about the LIO's robustness diverge. According to the prominent 'decline thesis,' many believe that as the power and purpose of states in the international system shift away from liberalism, the LIO is bound to decay and "retract to its original core states" (Lake 2020, 462).[2] In contrast, representatives of a resilience perspective insist that the order is robust to challenge due to its deep institutional roots and expect it to survive largely unscathed (Ikenberry 2010; 2018b). This paper theoretically relates these contending predictions and puts them to a systematic test.

While the literature on the LIO is extensive, there is a notable lack of systematic empirical analysis addressing the order's response to challenges and the underlying sources contributing to its potential resilience. Descriptively, current assessments of the LIO's fate and

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[1] A previous version of this paper was presented at the workshop "International Cooperation in Turbulent Times: Internal and External Challenges for IOs", LMU Munich, February 2024, the conference "Legitimacy in International Relations", European University Institute, May 2024 and the American Political Science Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, September 2024. We thank the participants at these events for useful feedback.

[2] Within this group, since the LIO's decline seems imminent, much of the debate has focused on what form and how long the transition to a new international order will take.

future often rely on anecdotal evidence and single cases, such as China's international institutional engagement, President Trump's withdrawal from several international agreements, or Brexit (Chan 2021; Colantone and Stanig 2018; Kastner, Pearson, and Rector 2018). Conceptually, few studies ground their diagnoses in clearly circumscribed analytical dimensions central to the concept and directly tap the LIO's supposed decline.[3] Analytically, few studies plausibly operationalize and systematically explore the effects of the inside and outside challenges in a comprehensive analysis. As Chandam (2024, 46) notes for the inside challenge, "the analysis of populism's implications on the liberal order is limited" (for an exception, see Destradi and Vüllers 2024). This paper aims to advance descriptive and analytical research on the LIO by offering clear, well-grounded conceptualizations and new data to diagnose the LIO's recent fate while specifying, relating, and systematically testing contending theoretical expectations about its drivers.

Particularly, the paper sets out to provide methodological, empirical, and theoretical contributions to the LIO literature. First, we provide novel data that gauges the commitment of 28 (cross-)regional IOs from all major world regions to the classical *triad* of politically liberal norms – democracy, human rights, and the rule of law – over 40 years (1980–2019). In line with recent research (Tallberg et al. 2020), we distinguish substantive and declaratory norm commitment, yet we use an IO's public communication rather than actual policies to gauge the former.

Second, these data reveal that the LIO's constitutive norms have demonstrated remarkable persistence over the past twenty years in the face of growing illiberal challenges. Contrary to the expectation of the decline thesis, most regional IOs have either maintained or even increased their commitment to liberal norms at levels comparable to those seen during the LIO's height in the 1990s. While some IOs have seen a decline in their commitment to liberal

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[3] The economic dimension of the LIO related to openness has drawn more sustained empirical inquiry, not least by economists (for a good overview, see Amadi 2020).

norms, others have been stably committed or increased their liberal commitment. Overall, we find no evidence of a widespread weakening of both substantive and declaratory commitments to liberal norms among regional IOs.

Third, we systematically develop and empirically test the resilience perspective (Dijkstra et al. 2025; Hirschmann 2021; Holling and Gunderson 2002) to explain the continued commitment of regional IOs to liberal norms. This perspective centers on the factors that allow IO behavior to persist despite deteriorating fundamentals. Accordingly, we treat external and internal challenges to IOs' liberal norm commitments as the underlying fundamentals and theorize three theoretically distinct sources of resilience – liberal institutional design (institutional resilience), liberal norm entrepreneurs inside the IO (entrepreneurial resilience), and a liberal organizational environment (organizational resilience) – that prevent IO behavior from smoothly adapting to these challenges. Our comprehensive statistical analysis reveals that the rise of autocratic member states undermines IOs' commitment to liberal norms, whereas the growing government participation of nationalist populist parties in core liberal states does not. Furthermore, we find that institutional, entrepreneurial, and organizational resilience mitigate the impact of the autocratic challenge.

These findings suggest, in the spirit of Ikenberry's (2001; 2010) historical institutionalist account of the durability of the LIO, that the discussion about the order's decline has focused too much on changes in the power and purpose of member states and too little on IOs as autonomous and organizationally embedded entities. International orders and the norms that underpin them are often deeply institutionalized, have spirited defenders in key positions, and are embedded in wider organizational structures that are less visible at first sight. These features may halt an order's decline for extended periods even as underlying fundamentals, that is, member state preferences and power distributions, deteriorate.

The paper proceeds in three parts. In the next part, we conceptualize liberal norm commitment by IOs, introduce the data, and describe core patterns (part II). Subsequently, we

develop the decline thesis and our resilience argument (part III). Finally, we present the empirical analysis and probe its robustness (part IV). In the conclusion, we summarize our argument and speculate about the time it may take for underlying fundamentals to "overpower" the various sources of resilience.

II. The persistence of liberal norm commitments in regional international organizations, 1980-2019

The LIO's core forms a set of liberal norms that determine the substantive orientation of the order. In this section, we conceptualize the order's liberal distinctiveness with a focus on its political dimension and present our measurement and dataset. These data show that liberal norm commitment has proven surprisingly persistent among regional IOs across the world.

Conceptualization

The LIO is a distinctive type of international order, defined by its commitment to a set of liberal norms that encompass political, economic, and institutional dimensions (Börzel, Gerschewski, and Zürn 2025; Chandam 2024; Lake, Martin, and Risse 2021). These norms establish shared standards of appropriate behavior in international relations, shaping the expectations of states, private actors, and IOs (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Tallberg et al. 2020). However, since the LIO's creation, the acceptance of these norms has been neither universal nor uncontested. As our analysis will reveal, the commitment to liberal norms has varied significantly throughout different periods.

The LIO's political dimension generally refers to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. The economic dimension encompasses the idea of open markets, and the institutional dimension concerns multilateralism and (collective) security (Börzel, Gerschewski, and Zürn 2025; Ikenberry 2020; Lake, Martin, and Risse 2021). Whereas not all conceptualizations of the LIO include all three dimensions, and there is some variation in the specific norms that

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scholars use to characterize each, the political *triad* of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law constitutes the hard core of the bulk of definitions of the LIO and its distinctiveness. For example, Börzel and Zürn (2021, 287) unequivocally note that the LIO "pushes states to respect human rights, the rule of law, and democratic principles."

Definitions of a specifically liberal understanding of the political *triad* vary. However, they share a broad understanding of liberalism that centers – as David Lake puts it – the aspiration towards "human equality: that all humans are created equal and deserve the same rights and respect as all other humans" (Lake 2020, 465).[4] We adopt a formal conceptualization of the political liberal norms as codified in widely accepted international legal frameworks of the United Nations (UN) Charter and subsequent conventions and resolutions. It is summarized in Table 1.

Regarding democracy, the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights accords every citizen the right "to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives" (Art. 21), which suggests an understanding of democracy that emphasizes popular participation and representation and highlights the role of "genuine elections" as the mechanism to translate "the will of the people" into government authority (Art. 21), also emphasizing accountability.

Concerning human rights, the Charter codifies "faith in fundamental human rights, and dignity and worth of the human person" (preamble) and commits its members to promote "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all" (Art. 1, 55). This suggests an understanding of human rights that emphasizes equality in both civil and economic rights, as specified in later covenants.

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[4] This understanding is expressed in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which declares in Art. 1: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

Table 1. Political liberalism in the LIO

Elements	Operationalization
Democracy	Commitment to democracy as a "system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by the citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives" (Schmitter and Karl 1996, 76) (e.g., popular participation, representation, accountability)
Human rights	Commitment to equal rights and freedoms of citizens (e.g., civic rights, economic rights, individual freedom, liberty)
Rule of law	Commitment to tying political action to formally codified rules that render it predictable to citizens (e.g., international law, legality, legalization)

Concerning the rule of law, the Charter emphasizes the importance of international law as the basis of a rules-based order, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that "human rights should be protected by the rule of law" (preamble). Thus, the rule of law is seen as tying political action to formal and transparent rules that constrain power, and it also attains substance through its close connection to democracy and human rights (see Chesterman 2008, 340–41).

In sum, the LIO constitutes a distinct international order centered around democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Global IOs have traditionally been the main carriers of these norms (Barnett and Finnemore 2005; Dingwerth, Schmidtke, and Weise 2020; Tallberg et al. 2020). However, their commitment is said to be waning. In contrast, the universal ambitions and commitment to liberal norms of regional IOs have received little systematic research (Long

2018; Stapel 2022). Accordingly, we aim to empirically assess regional IOs' commitment to the liberal norms that underpin the LIO.

Measurement

International Relations scholars typically measure liberal norm commitment using one of two approaches: focusing on liberal policies or examining liberal rhetoric. The policy-centered approach assesses whether a liberal norm has been integrated into policies that allocate resources and establish implementation rules (Kelley 2008; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). The rhetoric-centered approach evaluates references to liberal norms in public discourse, often called "norm recognition" (Tallberg et al. 2020, 628). Each approach has distinct advantages: policy measures emphasize the costly commitments required to implement norms, while rhetoric can reveal underlying values, priorities, and justifications for norm endorsement (for example, Halliday, Block-Lieb, and Carruthers 2010).

Whereas most scholars rely on one approach or the other, we combine these methods to leverage their respective strengths while mitigating their weaknesses. Specifically, our two-fold measure captures (1) whether an IO deems liberal norms significant enough to emphasize and (2) the policies the IO identifies as advancing these norms. As detailed below, we derive this information from the opening paragraphs of documents central to IOs' public communication, allowing the organization – not the researcher – to determine which norms and policies it emphasizes. By doing so, our method avoids imposing predefined assumptions about which policies qualify as advancing liberal norms. Instead, it lets IOs articulate their commitments and priorities, ensuring a more inclusive and authentic representation of their engagement with liberal norms.

Our two measures draw on a novel dataset that gauges the norms IO representatives use in public communication to justify the organization's right to rule from 1980 to 2019 (Schmidtke et al. 2024). The first measure – *substantive commitment* – uses the count of

statements in which IO representatives portray their organization as a guardian of liberal norms *and* highlight a behavior or institutional design feature of the IO devoted to implementing or promoting the norm. The second measure – *declaratory commitment* – represents the count of statements in which an IO's representatives embrace liberal norms as a defining feature of the organization's purpose, performance, and procedures, irrespective of a particular behavior and institutional design feature that substantiates the claim. These statements indicate that an IO considers the norm important enough to declare its commitment publicly.

Substantive and declaratory commitment measures capture different levels of norm commitment. Substantive commitment identifies when IOs not only express support for liberal norms but also tie this support to concrete actions or institutional features, demonstrating an active integration of these norms into their operations. This offers an understanding of how IOs implement liberal norms beyond public communication. Declaratory commitment complements this picture by capturing broader, surface-level instances where IOs emphasize liberal norms as part of their identity or mission without linking them to specific actions. Nevertheless, this is significant because IOs portray specific norms, not others, as relevant. Combining both measures offers a comprehensive picture of IOs' commitment to liberal norms.

Our dataset includes 28 regional IOs, defined as a formal international organization composed of three or more geographically proximate states (Pevehouse, Nordstrom, and Warnke 2004). The sample is broad in coverage, encompassing IOs from four world regions (Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe) as well as cross-regional ones and including, as members, all but a handful of states in the international system today (see Appendix A1). These regions constitute geographically – rather than functionally – defined sub-orders of the LIO that are institutionalized to different degrees (Lake and Morgan 1997; see also Goddard et al. 2024). The organizations in our sample include the most authoritative ones providing regional governance in different parts of the world (Hooghe et al. 2017).

The sample includes crucial cases for assessing IOs' commitment to liberal norms amidst rising illiberal challenges. Regional IOs act as canaries in the coal mine for liberal norm decline: if such a decline occurs, it should become evident in these organizations first. If we do not observe the depressing effect of rising autocratic and nationalist populist challenges within this sample, it is unlikely to appear in other types of IOs. Three characteristics make regional IOs most-likely cases for the decline thesis. First, their smaller size results in lower transaction costs, making it easier for challenger states to exert influence (Debre 2022). Second, they are typically more member-state-driven and possess less de facto autonomy than many global IOs (Acharya and Johnston 2007), increasing their vulnerability to illiberal member states. Third, many regional IOs occupy a peripheral position within the LIO, making them less visible and thus less constrained by the LIO's core supporters (Obydenkova and Libman 2019).

We derive our measurements of liberal norm commitment – substantive and declaratory commitment – from the analysis of two sources: (1) annual reports from IO secretariats and (2) final communiqués from meetings of heads of state and government (see Appendix A2 for details). The selected sources offer advantages over alternatives like press releases, speeches, or social media. First, they systematically "record the legitimation warrants of the IO" (Halliday, Block-Lieb, and Carruthers 2010, 84), reflecting the time and resources invested in drafting them. Unlike event-driven press releases and social media posts, these documents provide comprehensive overviews and justifications of an IO's normative commitments, identity, and desired public image. As such, they contain fewer strategic silences than alternative sources.[5] Second, the documents are generally publicly accessible or available through IO archives, making them easier to analyze. Third, they are comparable across time and space because they are published regularly and in similar intervals, available over long periods (unlike online sources), and broadly similar in structure. Fourth, both sources are

[5] Speeches, while less event-driven than other forms of public communication, are still selective in what they highlight about an IO. They are tailored to the specific audience being addressed.

written for a broad audience, including donors, media, experts, and the public, minimizing audience bias (Bexell, Jönsson, and Uhlin 2022, 124; see also Symons 2011).[6] Finally, they reflect the views of both member states and IO bureaucracies. Each of these key actor groups may prioritize an IO's commitment to liberal norms differently. By incorporating input from both groups, we reduce bias and can evaluate a more unified commitment. Since bureaucrats and member state representatives typically contribute to the drafting process, we can treat these documents as reflecting a shared commitment to liberal norms.[7] In short, our text corpus is comprehensive, credible, and coherent, providing a solid foundation for empirical analysis.

The unit of analysis is the IO-year (n=974), with paragraphs as coding units (n=32,675). We manually code relevant paragraphs to balance "the competing objectives of reliability and validity" (Däubler et al. 2012, 939). First, paragraphs, as 'natural' coding units defined by physical and syntactical distinctions, provide greater reliability and efficiency than thematic units like quasi-sentences, which rely on complex meaning structures (Krippendorff 2018, 113–14). Since single paragraphs usually contain norm commitments, this choice maximizes reliability with minimal impact on validity.

Second, we chose hand coding over automated text analysis to maximize validity. Identifying norm commitments is "a complex act of interpretation," requiring nuanced judgments about meaning (Mayring 2014, 30), which even advanced automated methods struggle to capture effectively. In this context, hand coding enhances validity but reduces reliability. To address this, we follow best practices in content analysis, using precise coding categories, explicit rules for category boundaries, and clear positive and negative examples

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[6] Speeches are generally geared towards the specific audience addressed, while social media communication is directed towards younger people and those with an affinity towards the internet. In many Global South IOs, where internet penetration is lower than elsewhere, this may generate particularly intense audience-effects.

[7] Email exchanges with many IOs in our sample revealed that member states generally must agree to the annual reports before they are published, while secretariat officials often participate in preparing and drafting the final communiqués.

(Mayring 2014; Krippendorff 2018). We honed this coding scheme through multiple trials with four expert coders. Systematic tests show acceptable inter-coder reliability for all coding categories (Krippendorff's Alpha coefficient of 0.669 or higher).

Our coding procedure follows four steps. First, given the length of documents in our corpus, we select paragraphs particularly rich in expressing normative commitments. These paragraphs cluster in general overviews, summaries, forewords, and introductions. Since the number of paragraphs in these sections varies, we calculate a 25 percent range around the average number of paragraphs in these sections. We code between 16 and 28 paragraphs per document and 32 and 56 paragraphs per IO-year.[8]

This procedure has two critical implications. First, the number of coded statements represents only a fraction of all norm commitments in a document. The actual number is likely to be significantly higher because the selected documents typically contain hundreds of paragraphs. Second, the statements found by our coding are particularly significant. IO representatives prioritize the normative commitments they want to highlight, placing the most prominent ones at the front. Likewise, most readers pay particular attention to statements appearing on the first page (Bogart 1984).

Consequently, even a few statements on liberal norms indicate a significant normative commitment. For example, in the Pacific Islands Forum's (PIF) 2016 annual report, the first paragraph emphasizes the organization's vision for "a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives." Subsequent paragraphs reinforce this commitment to liberal norms by emphasizing that the organization "embraces the full observance of democratic values, the rule of law, the defense and promotion of all human rights, gender equality, and commitment to just societies" and

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[8] For some IO-years, we could not obtain both types of documents. For these years, an IO-year is generally represented by 16 to 28 paragraphs. In some cases, documents are shorter than the minimum threshold.

supports "full inclusivity, equity and equality for all people of the Pacific." (2016, 2) While the number of statements may seem small, their prominent placement underscores their importance.

In the next step, we determine whether the selected paragraphs present a norm-based justification for an IO's right to rule. To this end, we apply two stylized grammars – the OES and the OIS. In these grammars, "O" stands for evaluation *object*, "S" for normative *standard*, "E" for *evaluation,* and "I" for *identity* (Dingwerth, Schmidtke, and Weise 2020; Schmidtke and Nullmeier 2011).[9] The evaluation object refers to the organization as a whole, not IO representatives or specific policies.[10] In the OES grammar, we identify positive evaluations of the organization by searching for positive evaluative terms like "good," "great," or "improve." The OIS grammar, on the other hand, focuses on statements that highlight an organization's identity, purpose, or guiding principles (Dingwerth, Schmidtke, and Weise 2020; Koopmans and Statham 1999). These statements are typically descriptive and do not necessarily contain an explicitly positive tone.

In the third step, we code each statement to determine whether it refers to a political liberal norm, as defined in Table 1.[11] In doing so, we distinguish liberal norms from communitarian norms, which emphasize the importance of human communities, and technocratic norms, which focus on the functional benefits of international cooperation (Schmidtke et al. 2024).

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[9] We thank Klaus Dingwerth for suggesting these labels.

[10] Our focus on the normative appropriateness of IOs as a whole, as opposed to policies or incumbents, builds on Easton (1965) and Weber (1978) who maintained that the notion of legitimacy should be reserved for political institutions that establish political authority.

[11] The resulting index of liberal norm commitment reaches acceptable levels of internal consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.74, suggesting that they tap a single underlying concept.

Table 2. Coding scheme and examples

Normative Standard	Substantive commitment	Declaratory commitment
Democracy	*OES grammar* "*Bringing the Union closer to the people* means both achieving greater openness and ensuring that decisions are taken at a level as close as possible to the citizen. With this in mind the institutions of *the Union improved access to their documents and stepped up their information activities* […]." (European Union 1998, 5, own emphasis)	*OIS grammar* "We seek a Pacific region that is respected for […] *the full observance of democratic values*." (Pacific Island Forum 2012, i, own emphasis)
Human Rights	*OIS grammar* "In order *to promote human rights* and inclusive governance mainly with regards to women and youths, *the Authority decides to set aside the 16th January of every year as the ECOWAS Human Rights day*." (Economic Community of West African States 2016, 6, own emphasis)	*OIS grammar* "*We have an abiding respect for human rights*, […] and take action to ensure social and economic justice for the people of the Community" (Caribbean Community 2015, 6, own emphasis).
Rule of law	*OIS grammar* "In effect, t*he Charter is expected* to move ASEAN from being a loosely-organized political grouping *to a rules-based international organization*" (Association of Southeast Asian Nations 2006, 2, own emphasis).	*OES grammar* […] the Arab leaders *affirm their determination* to reinforce Arab solidarity […], based on respect for the cardinal principles of the Arab order, mainly, respect for […] *the peaceful settlement of bilateral disputes in accordance with the principles of International law, and* respect for the Charters of the United Nations and the League of Arab States and the agreements concluded within the framework of the League of Arab States. (League of Arab States 1996, 5, own emphasis)

Finally, we distinguish between statements representing declaratory or substantive norm commitments. Declaratory commitments exclusively emphasize a liberal norm, whereas substantive commitments emphasize a norm and substantiate it by highlighting an IO's actions or institutional features designed to promote it. Thus, substantive commitments form a subset of declaratory commitments. Table 2 provides examples of the coding scheme.

Empirical patterns

Using our twofold measure, Figure 1 displays the temporal evolution in our data, plotting the average number of commitments to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law per year for the full sample. Three observations stick out. First, the trajectories of substantive and declaratory commitments are broadly similar. The trend exhibits some volatility but shows a strong upward trajectory from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s, stabilizing at the levels achieved during this period. Between 1985 and 1999, the incidence of liberal norm commitment rose roughly eight-fold, from 0.4 to 3.3 for declaratory commitments and 0.17 to 1.5 for substantive commitments. By the late 1990s, commitments to liberal norms, as declared and substantiated by reference to specific behaviors and policies on the opening pages of their most prominent publications, had become an established standard in the public communication of IOs. This trajectory accords with the conventional narrative: whereas security considerations dominated liberal norms during the Cold War, they quickly rose in relevance during the unipolar moment of liberal U.S. dominance in the 1990s (Ikenberry 2004).
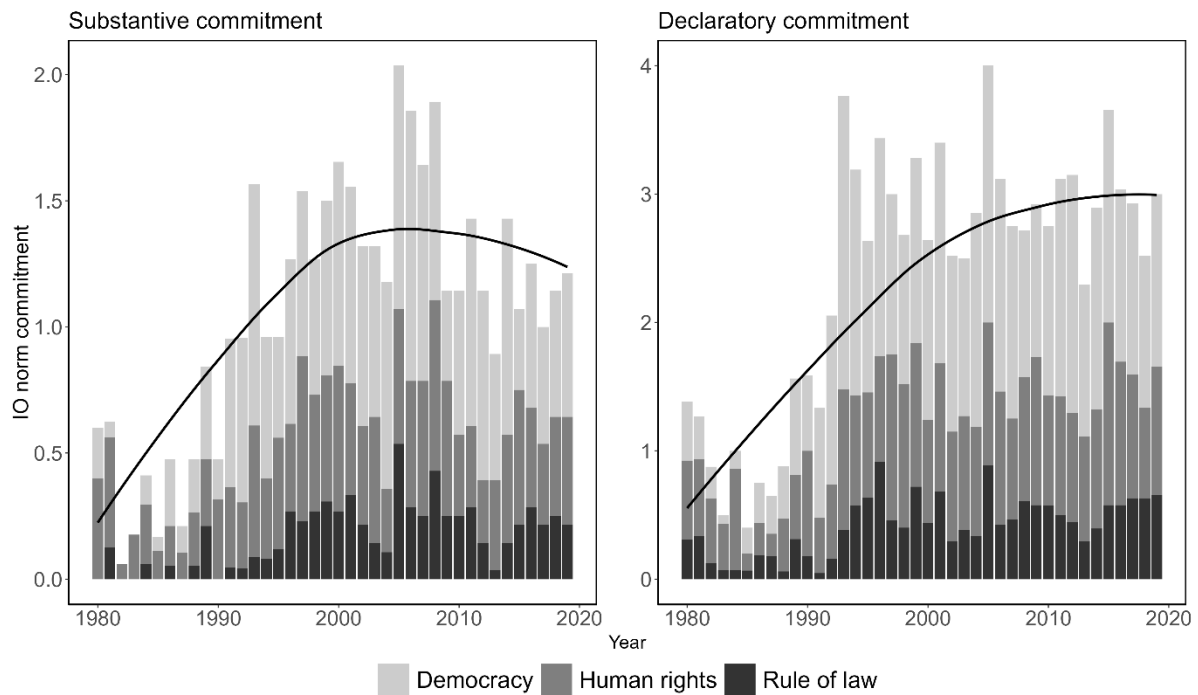
Figure 1. Two types of liberal norm commitment in 28 regional IOs, 1980-2019

Second, all liberal norms – democracy, human rights, and the rule of law – contribute to this pattern. For declaratory commitments, there is not a single year in our dataset where all three norms were absent. Substantive commitments, meanwhile, show only a few such instances, all occurring before 1991. Overall, commitments to democracy dominate (with an average of 0.8 for declaratory and 0.5 for substantive commitments over the observation period), followed by human rights (0.8/0.4) and the rule of law (0.4/0.2). During the Cold War, however, commitments to human rights dominated by some margin, being overtaken by democracy in the early 1990s; commitments to the rule of law norm have become well-established since the mid-1990s.

Third, despite growing pressure on the LIO from the inside and the outside since the early 2000s, regional IOs largely maintained the levels of commitment to liberal norms reached in the 1990s. Declaratory commitments have even continued to increase since that period, albeit

at a lower rate, and hovered around three commitments during the past two decades.[12] 17 out of the 28 IOs demonstrated an equal or even stronger commitment to liberal norms in 2019 compared to 2000. Substantive commitments have slightly declined in the last decade but retain the levels reached during the mid-1990s, a period of growing liberal enthusiasm. The three highest values of substantive liberal norm commitment occurred in 2005, 2006, and 2008 – an observation difficult to reconcile with the decline narrative in the past two decades. Even here, 18 out of the 28 IOs in the sample are as committed to liberal norms in 2019 as they were in 2000. However, Figure 1 also confirms the intuition that, since substantive commitments entail a higher level of commitment, they are likely to decline earlier than less ambitious declaratory commitments.
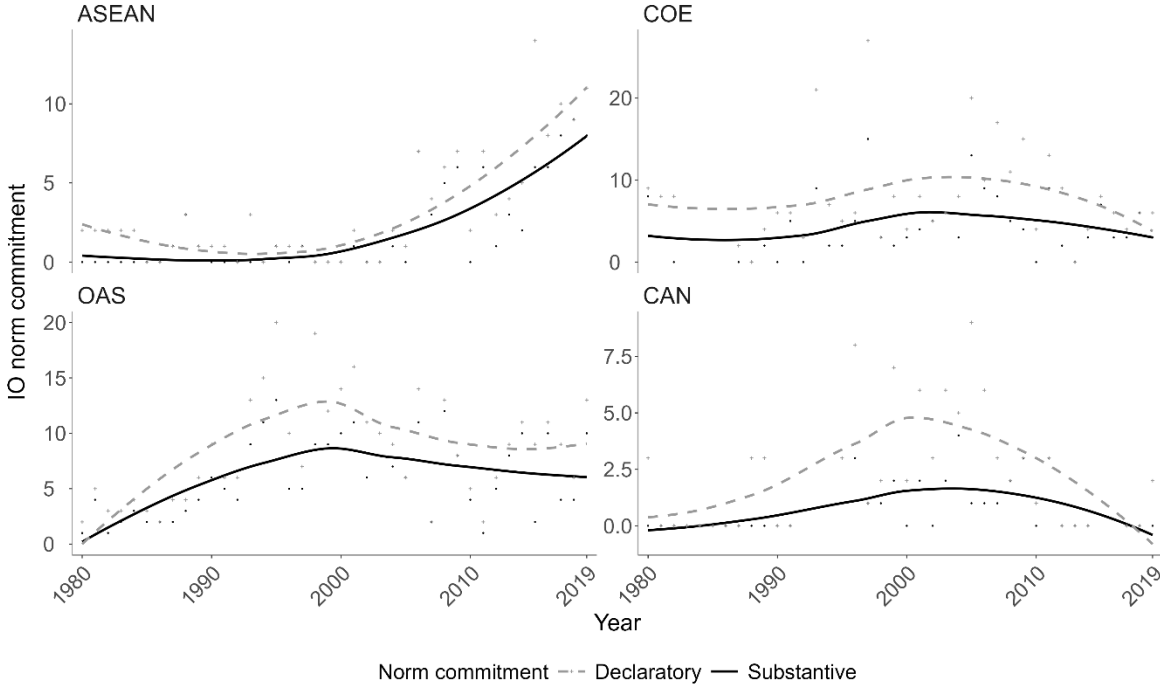
Figure 2. Typical cases of liberal IO norm commitment across types, 1980-2019

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[12] Two of the three highest values of our measure (more than 3.5 mentions) occurred after 2001 when, as a result of the 9/11 attacks, security considerations once more took precedence over liberal norms in international relations (Bigo and Tsukala 2008; Nuruzzaman 2008).

Disaggregating by IOs, we observe four trajectories of liberal norm commitment across the two types, illustrated through representative cases in Figure 2. Several IOs, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), witnessed a steady increase in liberal norm commitment during the observation period. The second group displays a continuous trajectory of liberal norm commitment, typified by the Council of Europe (COE). The third group generates a pattern, shown by the Organization of American States (OAS), where a stark increase in liberal commitment is followed by a leveling off in later periods. The fourth group, typified by the Andean Community (CAN), displays a bell-shaped pattern, where a decrease follows an increase in liberal norm commitment. Overall, IOs that have increased their commitment to liberal norms and those that have decreased it during the past two decades are roughly in balance, indicating the continued relevance and resilience of liberal norms.

III. Explaining liberal norm resilience in the international order: Theories and hypotheses

What explains IOs' continued commitment to liberal norms? We explore the premise that the persistence of liberal norms in the face of illiberal challenges results from three theoretically distinct and operationally complementary sources of resilience: institutional, entrepreneurial, and organizational. We choose the term resilience to denote such dynamics because the concept emphasizes factors that enable systems to persist despite deteriorating fundamentals (Holling 1973). Accordingly, we treat member state preferences and the challenges they may pose to IOs' liberal norm commitments as the exogenous fundamentals. We theorize resilience factors – distinct but partly endogenous to these fundamentals – that prevent IO behavior from smoothly adapting to changing member state preferences and power shifts. Next, we detail each theoretical argument and derive testable hypotheses.

The 'decline thesis': Autocratic and nationalist populist challenges to the Liberal

International Order

Many agree that the LIO is in crisis. External and internal challenges, so the argument goes, undermine the two ingredients needed to maintain it: material power and a liberal social purpose (Ruggie 1982). Externally, material power increasingly shifts towards states that seek an international order with a less liberal social purpose; internally, the support for liberal internationalism is waning in core liberal states. This conventional story is rooted in liberal theories of international relations, for which state preferences reflect domestic social pressures and institutions (Moravcsik 1997).[13] These theories rest on an equilibrium view of politics: to the extent that domestically determined state preferences and the nature of IOs align, international cooperation is stable. When divergence occurs, IOs are expected to adapt smoothly to new state preferences, eventually reaching a new equilibrium. From this perspective, the core prediction regarding the prevalence of liberal norms in the LIO is one of decline: as state preferences shift away from liberalism, IO behavior is expected to follow suit.

Externally, the LIO faces challenges from the increasing influence of autocratic powers with illiberal or less liberal preferences than those that established and sustain its central institutions (Adler-Nissen and Zarakol 2021; Ikenberry 2018a; Weiss and Wallace 2021). The argument is two-fold. First, a significant power shift from the 'West' to the 'Rest' is underway (Layne 2012; Mahbubani 2008), allowing rising states like China to assert their international preferences with greater influence and authority. Simultaneously, the architects of the LIO – the U.S., along with key partners in Europe and Japan – are experiencing a relative decline (Chu and Zheng 2021; Hoge 2004), diminishing their capacity to defend the order against challengers. Second, many rising powers are not liberal democracies but relatively closed

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[13] This generates some overlap with liberal constructivist theories that view ideational dynamics as being rooted in domestic structures (Risse-Kappen 1995).

autocracies and have less liberal, even illiberal, preferences regarding the nature and purpose of international order. These autocratic powers are said to challenge the core norms and institutions of the LIO, including democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Since each of these norms is intrinsically linked to the internal constitution of states, autocratic regimes often promote traditional international norms like national sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs (Cottiero et al. 2024; Paris 2020). The distinct preferences of rising autocratic powers render their challenge a threat to the liberal norm commitment of IOs.

It follows from this argument that the liberal norms at the heart of the LIO weaken due to the rise of autocratic regimes with illiberal preferences. These dynamics are likely to be more pronounced among regional IOs, where autocratic powers face fewer constraints from core liberal states.

H_{1a}: *The rise of autocratic regimes erodes IOs' commitment to liberal norms.*

Internally, the LIO faces challenges from core liberal states. In the domestic politics of Western states, support for the LIO is eroding because power is shifting away from mainstream political parties that have traditionally upheld the LIO's liberal norms towards nationalist-populist parties that challenge its core principles (Carnegie, Clark, and Kaya 2024; Copelovitch and Pevehouse 2019; Wajner, Destradi, and Zürn 2024). U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has made it abundantly clear that he does not support liberal internationalism. As Ikenberry (2018a, 7) notes, "President Trump has made statements that, if acted upon, would effectively bring to an end America's role as leader of the liberal world order." Nationalist populist parties are on the rise in virtually all European states, and their foreign policy outlook is, by and large, non-LIO-friendly. Populist parties, especially on the right, question contemporary multilateralism and international authority and seek a different type of international cooperation that protects national sovereignty (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017; Norris and Inglehart 2019; Söderbaum, Spandler, and Pacciardi 2021). They emphasize what Spandler and Söderbaum

(2023) call "representational frames," depicting IOs as unrepresentative of the popular will and pitch populist leaders as defenders of this will in essentialized national communities by taking back control of 'run-away' IOs. To the extent that nationalist populist parties shape their state's foreign policy decisions, liberal norms are expected to weaken.

H_{1b}: *The rise of nationalist populism in core liberal states erodes IOs' commitment to liberal norms.*

The resilience perspective: Institutional, entrepreneurial and organizational sources of resilience

Our argument focuses on resilience, which we define as the capacity of a system "to successfully resist sudden, unexpected environmental change" (Aligica and Tarko 2014, 56). The resilience perspective differs from the decline thesis in rejecting the assumption that political systems generally operate in equilibrium and that disequilibrium leads to smooth adaptation. Instead, it shifts "emphasis from the equilibrium states to the conditions for persistence" (Holling 1973, 2). Accordingly, we explore the premise that political systems can exist in disequilibrium – IO behavior and member state preferences are incongruent – for extended periods due to factors that impede rapid alignment between them. We posit three sources of resilience: institutional, entrepreneurial and organizational.

Institutional resilience. Political institutions serve as a crucial source of resilience, impeding the seamless adaptation of IO behavior to shifting member state preferences. According to the (historical) institutionalist literature, the primary purpose of a political institution is to lock in commitments amid uncertainty about the future. Those who design institutions may seek to bind their successors – who may have different preferences – to a specific course of action. Alternatively, they may aim to bind themselves and others, anticipating that the incentives to sustain a particular policy could weaken over time (Hall and Taylor 1996; Pierson 2000). In both cases, political institutions' freeze' the outcomes of a

political struggle and preserve it through time (Mahoney and Thelen 2010). By safeguarding the normative choices established by an initial political majority, institutions constrain the ability of future political actors with differing preferences to deviate from those choices. In this vein, the creation of international institutions serves to entrench norms of economic efficiency, legal impartiality, or democratic governance and maintains a commitment to these principles even as the favorable conditions that initially supported their adoption may disappear (Fioretos 2011).

The norm literature similarly theorizes how institutionalization enhances a norm's robustness. Norms embedded within political institutions are less vulnerable because they structure actors' incentives, compel actors to justify their behavior within the institution's established parameters, and enhance the bindingness of a norm. Additionally, compliance with these norms may be enforced through institutional mechanisms (Abbott et al. 2000; Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2019; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). Thus, institutionalizing a norm makes it more resilient to opposition, thereby increasing its persistence.

From both perspectives, political institutions bolster a norm's resilience by binding actors to the norm, even as the propitious circumstances that originally supported its institutionalization may change dramatically. Institutions empower an IO to remain 'truthful' to a norm by tying decision-makers' hands despite changing member state preferences. In this view, the persistence of IOs' commitment to liberal norms may not reflect a stable pro-liberal equilibrium among key political actors. Instead, it suggests that even those with illiberal preferences are constrained by political institutions that embody liberal norms (Ikenberry 2008).

H_{2a}: IOs with liberal institutional design features more robustly defend their commitment to liberal norms against illiberal challenges.

Entrepreneurial resilience. While institutions may enhance IOs' resilience, so may human agency. The norm literature is replete with memorable descriptions of norm entrepreneurs who promote a norm's spread and institutionalization by persuading states to adopt it (Price 1995; Stefan 2021). Norm entrepreneurship is more likely to be successful when individuals draw on their ideational and material resources and operate from and through organizational platforms, which provide networks, information, and expertise (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 899–900). Empirical research amply documents how the leadership of IO bureaucrats shapes these organizations' behavior, even without extensive formal authority (Copelovitch and Rickard 2021; Lang, Wellner, and Kentikelenis 2024). While this literature focuses on processes of norm adoption, a similar logic may be operative in the defence of existing norms. Entrepreneurial individuals may work to conserve existing norms against their weakening. Organizational platforms and their resources enable individual entrepreneurship geared towards defending liberal norms in the face of mounting challenges from member states.

From this perspective, entrepreneurs operating from organizational platforms enhance a norm's resilience by acting as its defenders when member states become less supportive. These entrepreneurial supporters stabilize norms amidst adverse conditions by leveraging networks, information, and expertise. The persistence of liberal norms may not reflect a stable pro-liberal equilibrium among member states but rather stem from the steadfast defense provided by committed norm entrepreneurs. We theorize that international bureaucracies serve as crucial organizational platforms for entrepreneurs to actively defend liberal norms. These bureaucracies embody an IO's independence from member states, allowing them to leverage their autonomy to pursue actions beyond their official mandate and member states' preferences (Bauer and Ege 2016; Haftel and Thompson 2006; Hawkins et al. 2006). The staff within these bureaucracies not only cherishes the values of impartiality and objectivity at the heart of IOs' rational-legal authority (Barnett and Finnemore 2004; Liese et al. 2021) but also commit to the organization's overarching purpose of fostering international cooperation (von Billerbeck

2023). To the extent that entrepreneurs within international bureaucracies have internalized liberal norms, they are likely to defend them against illiberal challenges.

H2b: IOs supported by liberal norm entrepreneurs in international bureaucracies more robustly defend their commitment to liberal norms against illiberal challenges.

Organizational resilience. While institutional design features and norm entrepreneurs within international bureaucracies can bolster an IO's liberal resilience internally, the broader organizational environment in which an IO operates serves as an external source of resilience. Organizations rarely function in isolation; they are typically embedded within organizational fields comprising similar organizations with comparable purposes (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Early entrants often set that standard in such fields by promoting their organizational forms and guiding norms for others to emulate (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Later entrants, in turn, face incentives to adopt these established forms and norms to enhance their legitimacy and improve their chances of survival (Deephouse 1996; DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Institutional complexity is a central structural feature of contemporary global governance, and IOs are subject to dynamics similar to those characterizing other organizational fields (Alter and Raustiala 2018).

These studies frame organizational and ecological dynamics as a source of normative and institutional change. Nevertheless, they can also stabilize existing norms and institutions. DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 155) argue that once an organizational field becomes highly structured, the resulting homogeneity in organizational forms serves as a stabilizing force since deviation becomes costly for organizations. This stability arises from the meta-norms within organizational fields, which continue to structure the behavior of their constituent units. Regular interactions between organizations within fields reinforce this stabilizing effect. As Faude (2020, 47) succinctly observes: "growing levels of institutional complexity are conducive to the resilience of global governance." Thus, even when an IO is in internal disequilibrium, the

organizational field that surrounds it can help stabilize its normative commitments.[14] From this perspective, the persistence of liberal norms is due to the stabilizing role of the wider environment that envelops an IO.

Building on this argument, we theorize that such isomorphic adaptations operate through diffuse pressures on the level of the organizational field as a whole (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Sommerer and Tallberg 2019). When a field matures, certain discourses and practices are considered widely legitimate or taken for granted. When this is the case, IOs adopt them to legitimize their own IO. This logic could also be operative for IOs' commitment to liberal norms. As a growing number of IOs commit to liberal norms, other IOs follow suit and thus help to stabilize liberal norms commitment throughout the organizational field.

H_{2c}: *IOs embedded in a liberal organizational environment more robustly defend their commitment to liberal norms against illiberal challenges.*

IV. Determinants of liberal norm commitment in the LIO's periphery: A multivariate analysis

We conduct a multivariate analysis to test our expectations about IOs' commitment to liberal norms. The following sections describe measurements and models before presenting empirical findings.

Operationalization of independent variables

The decline thesis posits that the rise of autocratic regimes (H_{1a}) and nationalist populism in core liberal states (H_{1b}) erodes IOs' commitment to liberal norms. We assess this argument based on two variables. The first – *autocratic power* – captures the strength of the autocratic challenge by combining member states' regime type with their economic power. First, we

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[14] This is similar to the idea that individual norms embedded in a larger norm cluster tend to be more resilient to outside challenges (Lantis and Wunderlich 2018).

identify autocratic member states using the Regimes of the World typology from the Varieties of Democracy Project (Lührmann, Tannenberg, and Lindberg 2018), merging "closed autocracy" and "electoral autocracy" into one category. We then calculate the share of GDP contributed by these autocratic members relative to all IO members (Feenstra, Inklaar, and Timmer 2015). The variable ranges from zero (no autocratic influence) to one (complete autocratic dominance).

The second variable – *nationalist populist power* – measures the strength of the nationalist populist challenge from core liberal states by combining these states' governments' political ideology with their economic power. First, we identify core founding members of the LIO based on Trubowitz and Burgoon (2022, Fn 5). Next, we determine if these members have nationalist populist parties in government using the Anti-Pluralism Index from the V-Party dataset (Medzihorsky and Lindberg 2024). Finally, we calculate the share of GDP contributed by these nationalist populist-led member states relative to all members of an IO. This variable ranges from zero (no nationalist populist influence) to one (dominant nationalist populist influence).

Our complementary argument emphasizes an IO's institutional, entrepreneurial, and organizational sources of resilience in fending off these challenges and upholding liberal norm commitments. We assess each source's independent and mediating effects with the following variables: liberal mandate, liberal Secretary-General, and liberal regional environment. First, to test whether liberal institutional design features make an IO resilient to mounting pressures from autocratic and nationalist populist governments (H_{2a}), we use the variable *liberal mandate*. It captures the degree to which an IO's formal mandate includes commitments to liberal norms. Using our coding scheme (see above), we count the explicit liberal norm commitments in each IO's mandate. Scores remain constant until an IO updates its mandate, at which point we code the new mandate. This variable ranges from zero (no liberal norm commitment) to 23 (strong liberal norm commitment).

26

Second, we use the variable *liberal Secretary-General* to test whether having a liberal norm entrepreneur as the chief executive contributes to an IO's resilience against illiberal challenges (H$_{2b}$). We identify the Secretary-General's home country using the IO BIO dataset (Reinalda, Bob, Kille, and Eisenberg 2020) and then draw on the Liberal Democracy Index from the V-Dem dataset (Coppedge et al. 2016) to measure the liberal democratic quality of that country, ranging from 0 (least liberal) to 1 (most liberal), as a proxy for the Secretary-General's commitment to liberal norms. This measure follows the established premise that domestic context plays a crucial role in political socialization (Hooghe 2005; Sapiro 2004), thereby capturing the structural likelihood that an IO's chief executive will act as a liberal norm entrepreneur (Tallberg et al. 2020, 631).

Third, we introduce the variable *liberal regional environment* to assess whether being surrounded by other liberal IOs in the same region enhances resilience against illiberal challenges (H$_{2c}$). We calculate this by averaging the liberal norm commitments of all IOs within four macro-regions (Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe) based on our coding (see above) and excluding the IO under assessment. Table 3 contains the descriptive statistics for all variables included in the analysis (see Appendix A2.2 for details).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	St. Dev.
Substantive commitment	903	0	15	1.231	2.262
Declaratory commitment	903	0	27	2.546	3.704
Autocratic power	935	0.000	1.000	0.459	0.424
Nationalist populist power	974	0.000	0.649	0.017	0.067
Liberal mandate	973	0	23	3.860	4.982
Liberal Secretary-General	860	0.016	0.882	0.427	0.292
Liberal regional environment	959	0.000	11.000	2.442	1.844

Model choice

To investigate the relationship between the explanatory variables and IOs' commitment to liberal norms, we employ two sets of negative binomial regressions with exposure and IO-fixed effects (see Appendix A3 for diagnostics). Methodological and theoretical considerations motivate this approach. First, we measure our dependent variables – substantive and declaratory commitment – as the count of statements in which an IO affirms its commitment to liberal norms, necessitating a count model. However, a simple Poisson model is unsuitable due to the over-dispersion of the data and because such models assume discrete numbers of events occurring in a given time. We address these issues by applying negative binomial regression with exposure, using the number of coded paragraphs per year to account for the frequency with which an IO *could* have expressed its commitment to liberal norms (Cameron and Trivedi 2013). This approach effectively controls for the number of paragraphs coded per IO-year.

Second, our unbalanced panel consists of 947 observations clustered by IOs, with varying observations per IO because not all IOs in the sample existed throughout the entire observation period. Since we are interested in change over time, we apply IO-fixed effects to account for unobserved, unit-specific confounders, allowing us to isolate the impact of specific variables on the dependent variable. To mitigate simultaneity bias, we lag all explanatory variables by one year. The first set of models (Table 4) explores the relationship between challenges to the LIO and IOs' commitment to liberal norms, thereby evaluating the impact of underlying fundamentals. The second set of models (Table 5) assesses our resilience argument. To this end, we estimate the relationship between liberal norm commitment and the two-way interactions between illiberal challenges and the – distinct but partly endogenous – factors of institutional, entrepreneurial, and organizational resilience. Contrary to widely held expectations, we do not find evidence supporting the hypothesis that the rise of nationalist populism in core liberal states diminishes IOs' commitment to liberal norms (H_{1b}). Consequently, the analysis in Table 5 emphasizes the interaction effects between autocratic power and resilience factors.

Results

We first turn to the decline thesis and examine arguments about autocratic (H_{1a}) and nationalist populist (H_{1b}) challenges to the LIO. Empirical support for these hypotheses would require negative and statistically significant coefficients for both autocratic and nationalist populist power in the models presented in Table 4. The first two models for both dependent variables – substantive and declaratory commitment – show unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses, examining the relationship between illiberal challenges and liberal norm commitment separately. Supporting H_{1a}, M1 and M4 show a statistically significant negative relationship between autocratic power and liberal norm commitment. This suggests that the rise of autocratic regimes undermines an IO's substantive and declaratory liberal norm commitments. In contrast, M2 and M5 reveal that nationalist populist power has a positive but statistically non-significant coefficient, providing no support for H_{1b}. M3 and M6 include both illiberal challenges, showing results consistent with the other models. Autocratic power remains significantly negative, while nationalist power is statistically non-significant and positive.

Table 4. Challenges to IO's commitment to liberal norms

	Substantive commitment			Declaratory commitment		
	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge (M1)	H_{1b} Nationalist challenge (M2)	Both challenges (M3)	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge (M4)	H_{1b} Nationalist challenge (M5)	Both challenges (M6)
Autocratic power	-1.136***		-1.148***	-0.988***		-0.997***
	(0.322)		(0.322)	(0.246)		(0.245)
Nationalist power		0.561	0.627		0.440	0.508
		(0.576)	(0.565)		(0.469)	(0.463)
Constant	-3.637***	-4.060***	-3.695***	-2.618***	-2.977***	-2.664***
	(0.268)	(0.258)	(0.272)	(0.186)	(0.176)	(0.189)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	858	897	858	858	897	858
theta	1.747***	1.671***	1.750***	2.440***	2.373***	2.447***
	(0.261)	(0.244)	(0.261)	(0.286)	(0.276)	(0.286)
AIC	2,134.521	2,166.371	2,135.442	3,044.899	3,098.477	3,045.801

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$
Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

These findings offer valuable insights into the ongoing debate about the LIO. The rise of autocratic powers is associated with a decline in IOs' commitment to liberal norms, both declaratory and substantive. However, our empirical analysis finds no evidence that the rise of nationalist populism in core liberal states also weakens these commitments. These mixed findings on the "decline thesis" suggest that the current crisis of the LIO may not be as severe as many observers claim. This challenges arguments portraying the convergence of rising authoritarianism and nationalist populism as an unprecedented destabilizing force (Lake, Martin, and Risse 2021). It also adds nuance to the claim that more democratic IOs are inherently more likely to commit to liberal norms (Tallberg et al. 2020). While the rise of authoritarianism presents a clear and present danger to the LIO, the impact of nationalist

populism within core liberal states may be overstated. This finding partially explains why IOs'
commitment to liberal norms has remained relatively stable since the 1990s.

Building on these insights, the second step of the analysis tests our argument that IOs
are better able to defend their commitment to liberal norms against illiberal challenges when
they possess specific institutional (H2a), entrepreneurial (H2b), and organizational (H2c)
capacities. Support for these hypotheses about IO resilience would require negative and
statistically significant coefficients for autocratic power and positive and statistically significant
coefficients for the interaction terms between autocratic power and each resilience factor. Table
5 presents models for each resilience factor and the two dependent variables.

The results provide robust support for the resilience hypotheses. In M7 and M10, which
examine institutional resilience, the coefficients for autocratic power are negative and
statistically significant, while the interaction terms between autocratic power and the extent to
which an IO's mandate contains commitments to liberal norms are positive and statistically
significant. This suggests that IOs with liberal institutional design features – evidenced by a
liberal mandate – are better equipped to resist autocratic pressures, supporting H_{2a}.

Turning to entrepreneurial resilience, M8 and M11 also display negative and statistically
significant coefficients for autocratic power and positive and statistically significant
coefficients for the interaction term between autocratic power and a liberal Secretary-General.
This provides strong evidence for H_{2b}, indicating that the presence of liberally minded norm
entrepreneurs within IOs, particularly those in leadership positions, plays a crucial role in
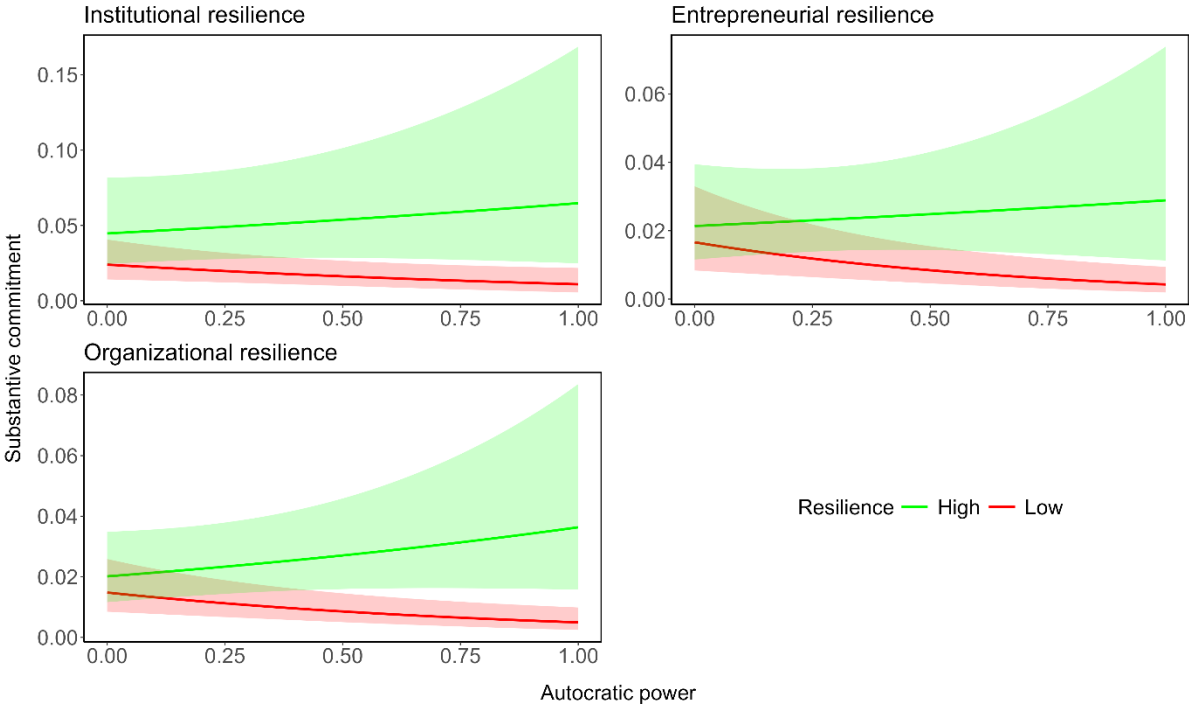defending liberal norm commitments against autocratic challenges.

Table 5. Sources of resilience in IO's commitment to liberal norms

	Substantive commitment			Declaratory commitment		
	H$_{2a}$ Inst. resilience (M7)	H$_{2b}$ Entr. resilience (M8)	H$_{2c}$ Org. resilience (M9)	H$_{2a}$ Inst. resilience (M10)	H$_{2b}$ Entr. resilience (M11)	H$_{2c}$ Org. resilience (M12)
Autocratic power	-0.782*	-1.485**	-1.224***	-0.536*	-1.312***	-1.202***
	(0.365)	(0.466)	(0.354)	(0.273)	(0.342)	(0.267)
Liberal mandate	0.057**			0.078***		
	(0.018)			(0.015)		
Liberal Secretary-General		0.324			0.113	
		(0.426)			(0.322)	
Liberal regional environment			0.070*			0.063*
			(0.035)			(0.025)
Autocratic power*Liberal mandate	0.105*			0.064*		
	(0.042)			(0.032)		
Autocratic power*Liberal Secretary-General		2.137*			1.941**	
		(0.921)			(0.692)	
Autocratic power*Liberal regional environment			0.382***			0.280***
			(0.100)			(0.068)
Constant	-3.730***	-4.117***	-4.237***	-2.739***	-2.926***	-3.033***
	(0.268)	(0.365)	(0.288)	(0.182)	(0.255)	(0.198)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	854	788	846	854	788	846
theta	2.127***	2.114***	2.171***	3.187***	3.088***	2.939***
	(0.346)	(0.360)	(0.363)	(0.418)	(0.415)	(0.376)
AIC	2,097.946	1,929.302	2,087.497	2,975.769	2,720.631	2,970.791

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Finally, M9 and M12 confirm the relevance of organizational resilience. The coefficient for autocratic power is negative and statistically significant, while the interaction between autocratic power and the liberal regional environment is positive and statistically significant. This supports H_{2c}, demonstrating that IOs embedded in a regional organizational environment that upholds liberal norms are more resilient to autocratic pressures.

Figure 3. Interaction of autocratic challenges and sources of resilience, with 95% CI

Figure 3 visualizes the interaction between the autocratic challenges and the three sources of resilience in influencing IOs' substantive commitments to liberal norms (see Appendix A3 for visualizations of declaratory commitment), highlighting the protective role that institutional, entrepreneurial, and organizational factors play in sustaining liberal norms in the face of rising autocratic challenges. The plots illustrate how substantive commitments (y-axis) change as autocratic power (x-axis) increases, contrasting IOs with high (green line) and

low (red line) levels of resilience.[15] Confidence intervals (CI, shaded areas) indicate the statistical uncertainty around these estimates.

Starting with the top-left panel, institutional resilience, we see that, as autocratic power increases, IOs with a robust liberal mandate, on average, show a positive association with substantive liberal norm commitments. In contrast, IOs with a weak liberal mandate negatively associate with substantive liberal norm commitments. This highlights the stabilizing role of institutional resilience in countering autocratic challenges. Notably, confidence intervals begin to diverge substantially as autocratic power exceeds 0.3. This indicates that institutional resilience becomes increasingly effective in supporting substantive liberal commitments already under medium levels of autocratic power.

The top-right panel, entrepreneurial resilience, shows the divergence between IOs with high and low levels of liberal norm entrepreneurship by the Secretary-General. The contrast is stark: IOs with a highly liberal Secretary-General experience a slight rise in substantive liberal norm commitments as autocratic power increases. Conversely, IOs with low entrepreneurial resilience experience a significant decline in these commitments under rising autocratic influence. The confidence intervals diverge significantly when autocratic power exceeds 0.5, highlighting that the protective effect of a liberal Secretary-General becomes statistically significant at higher levels of autocratic power, which is when it is arguably needed most.

The bottom-left panel, organizational resilience, examines the role of regional environments. IOs embedded in highly liberal regions increase substantive liberal commitments as autocratic power rises, whereas IOs in less liberal regions fail to show meaningful substantive commitments. Statistical differentiation becomes clearer at medium levels of autocratic power (from around 0.4 onward), suggesting that organizational resilience is most impactful under significant autocratic pressures.

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[15] We use the 10th and 90th percentiles of resilience factors as cutoffs to distinguish low and high levels of resilience, focusing the analysis on distinct ranges for a clearer comparison of interaction effects.

Robustness checks

To strengthen confidence in our findings, we conducted robustness checks to ensure that specific choices in model specification do not drive our results (see Appendix A4). Specifically, we tested different versions of our dependent and independent variables and alternative model specifications.

First, we re-estimated models using alternative versions of both dependent and independent variables. Our dependent variables measure an IO's commitment to three liberal norms: democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. To account for the possibility that each norm may contribute differently to our results, we also tested a disaggregated version of our dependent variables (Tables A4.1-A4.3 and A5.1-A5.3). The results add some nuance to our findings. While our core findings on autocratic and nationalist challenges are robust for democracy, we observe differences in human rights and the rule of law. Notably, the coefficients for autocratic power were negative across models but not statistically significant for declaratory commitment to the rule of law and human rights. This suggests that autocratic pressures may primarily target democracy, while effects on human rights and the rule of law are less consistent. Additionally, the two-way interaction between autocratic power and liberal mandate is not statistically significant in models focusing on human rights commitments. This indicates that an IO's mandate may be less effective at mitigating challenges to human rights commitments than to democracy commitments.

We also tested the robustness of our findings to alternative data sources for independent variables. We used the Polity5 dataset for autocratic power, categorizing countries with a Polity2 score between -10 and -6 as autocracies (Marshall and Gurr 2020). For nationalist populist power, we relied on the Database of Political Institutions (DPI) to identify core LIO members governed by nationalist parties (Cruz, Keefer, and Scartascini 2021). Institutional resilience was alternatively operationalized in terms of an IO's liberal policy portfolio using

data from the Measure of International Authority (MIA) dataset (Hooghe et al. 2017; Hooghe, Lenz, and Marks 2019). Entrepreneurial resilience was reassessed by identifying Secretaries-General whose home countries are classified as liberal democracies according to V-Dem's Regimes of the World typology (Lührmann, Tannenberg, and Lindberg 2018). Organizational resilience was reevaluated by calculating the number of IOs in each region with a liberal mandate, drawing on the Correlates of War (COW) dataset (Pevehouse et al. 2020) and coding by von Borzyskowski and Vabulas (2019). Across these alternative specifications, results remained highly robust, reinforcing the reliability of our main findings (Tables A4.4-A4.5 and A5.4-A5.5).

Lastly, we tested three alternative model specifications to check the robustness of our results. We applied a two-year lag to all independent variables, controlled for the availability of annual reports and communiqués in our coding of norm commitment (given that only one of these document types was available for some cases), and re-estimated models using Poisson count models. The findings hold across these specifications, except for the two-way interaction between autocratic challenge and liberal mandate, which was not statistically significant under the two-year lag structure (Tables A4.6-A4.8 and A5.6-A5.8).

V.   Conclusion

This paper examines IOs' commitment to three liberal norms – democracy, human rights, and the rule of law – among regional IOs. Qualifying the widespread decline thesis, which posits that the rise of autocratic regimes with a distinct vision of international order and the growing influence of nationalist populist parties within liberal states erode the continued vitality of liberal norms, we show that IOs' liberal norm commitment is surprisingly resilient to these challenges. Whereas the rise of autocratic regimes, but not of nationalist parties' participation in government in liberal states, weakens an IO's liberal norm commitment, institutional,

entrepreneurial, and organizational characteristics block or weaken the seamless translation of increasingly unfavorable member state preferences and power shifts into IO behavior.

These findings imply that the discussion about the LIO's decline has focused too much on changes away from liberalism in the preferences of powerful member states while largely neglecting the role of IOs as (partly) autonomous and organizationally embedded entities. Extensive theoretical literature – in international institutions and constructivist norm research – grounds testable expectations about the important influence of the institutionalization of normative commitments, the role of committed defenders in relevant organizational positions, and the organizational environment in which an IO is embedded. None of these features are as clearly visible as powerful governments' widely reported decisions to retrench liberal norms. Still, we show that they systematically stabilize liberal norms in the LIO's periphery, as a few scholars have suspected. As Ikenberry (2010, 511) notes, "the pathway to the future [of the LIO] still runs through institutions and relationships created over the last 60 years." Resilient IOs can function as a bulwark of liberal internationalism and may thus impede, or even thwart, the LIO's unraveling even as its traditional pillars rooted in the power and purpose of Western hegemony weaken.

However, this is not to suggest that organizational fundamentals, that is, member state's preferences, will never "overpower" IOs' sources of resilience; their resistance to change is systematic and significant but may be temporary. Eventually, a new, less liberal equilibrium will likely be found in IOs if the fundamentals continue deteriorating. Our analysis implies, however, that this will require a sufficiently powerful coalition of autocratic members from within the IO that (1) changes an IO's design and makes it less liberal, (2) installs a new Secretary-General and other high-level bureaucrats that are less liberally inclined, and (3) shapes in an illiberal fashion or goes against the grain of the liberal regional environment. Whereas (2) may be easiest to accomplish since the institutional barriers to change are lowest, (1) and (3) appear like more momentous tasks due to the supermajority requirements for

constitutional change, the significant legitimacy consequences that may ensue, and potentially unfavorable power distributions. These "repairs" are likely to take considerable time and organizational skill from autocratic member states, which explains why liberal norms may be less doomed than many observers believe.

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Data Appendix

Against the Tide: The Resilience of Liberal Norms in Regional Organizations

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This appendix supplements the information provided in Lenz & Schmidtke's "Against the Tide: The Resilience of Liberal Norms in Regional Organizations." The document presents the sample of IOs, details the operationalization of variables, and shows alternative models that we do not present in the paper.

Table of Contents

A1 Sample of international organizations (IOs)

Acronym	Name	Inception (years in the sample)
Africa		
AU/OAU	Organization of African Unity/African Union	1963 (40)
CEMAC	Central African Economic and Monetary Union	1994 (26)
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	1994 (26)
EAC	East African Community	1996 (24)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	1975 (40)
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development	1986 (34)
SACU	Southern African Customs Union	2002 (18)
SADC	Southern African Development Community	1980 (40)
Asia-Pacific		
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	1967 (40)
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council	1981 (39)
PIF	Pacific Island Forum	1973 (40)
SAARC	South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation	1985 (35)
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization	2001 (19)
Americas		
CAN	Andean Pact/Andean Community	1969 (40)
CARICOM	Caribbean Community	1968 (40)
Mercosur	Common Market of the South	1991 (40)
OAS	Organization of American States	1951 (40)
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States	1982 (38)
SICA	Central American Integration System	1952 (40)
Europe		
EFTA	European Free Trade Association	1960 (40)
EU	European Union	1952 (40)
NordC	Nordic Council	1952 (40)
COE	Council of Europe	1949 (40)
Cross-Regional		
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation	1991 (29)
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States	1991 (29)
LoAS	League of Arab States	1945 (40)
OAPEC	Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries	1968 (40)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe	1992 (28)

A2 Operationalization of variables

A2.1 Dependent variable: Liberal norm commitment

We measure an IO's commitment to liberal norms with the help of data generated in a large data-gathering effort within the research project "Sources and Consequences of Legitimation Strategies of Regional Organizations (LegRO)" (Schmidtke et al. 2024).[1] The following sections detail the data generation process.

Coded Documents and coding unit

We use IO annual reports and communiqués of heads of state and government meetings as sources. The coding unit is the paragraph, as printed in these documents. For each document, we apply a sampling procedure by which we select a specific number of paragraphs for coding. Within the selected documents, we focus on sections that provide an overview of normative commitments, present the organizations' identity and desired public image, and showcase achievements. These sections encompass general overviews, summaries, forewords, and introductions, usually at the beginning of a document. Since the number of paragraphs in the selected sections varies across organizations, we calculate a 25 percent range around the mean number of paragraphs in these sections. As a result, we code a minimum of 16 and a maximum of 28 paragraphs per document. Given that we use two types of documents per IO-year, the communication of an IO in a given year is represented by a minimum of 32 and a maximum of 56 paragraphs.[2]

Identifying a legitimation statement

In the second step of the coding process, we determine whether a paragraph makes a legitimation statement based on a stylized legitimation grammar. This grammar takes two different forms. The first one (OES) assumes that legitimation requires a normative evaluation of an IO, which contains two components. The first component is a positive evaluation (E) of the IO, its core bodies, the entirety of member states, or a core work program (evaluation object). The second component is a normative standard (S), which explains why the IO is legitimate. This leads to the following grammar:

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[1] For more information on the project, see: https://www.giga-hamburg.de/de/project/sources-and-consequences-of-legitimation-strategies-of-regional-organizations-legro.

[2] For some IO-years, we were not able to obtain both types of documents. For these years, an IO-year is generally represented by a minimum of 16 and a maximum of 28 paragraphs. In some cases, entire documents are shorter than the minimum.

The [evaluation object (O)] is legitimate [normative evaluation (E)] because [normative standard (S)].

The second grammar (OIS) follows the idea that legitimation can also be an expression of identity, a claim based on what an IO stands for or represents.

The [evaluation object (O)] is committed [expression of identity (I)] to [normative standard (S)].

Identifying normative standards

In the third step of the coding process, we code the normative standards that underpin positive evaluations (OES) and identity statements (OIS). The following rules and definitions apply to the coding of liberal norms.

Democracy

Democracy standards include justifications that highlight democratic procedures within IOs (decision-making rules or improvement in the democratic quality of procedures), democratic purposes (the goal of promoting democracy within and between states), and performance (the actual success in promoting democracy within and between states). Our coding of these standards builds on the following broad definition of democracy: A "system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by the citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives" (Schmitter and Karl 1996, 76). Democratic procedure standards emphasize the democratic quality of the IO's decision-making procedures. Democratic purpose standards express the IO's goal to promote and strengthen democratic institutions within and among states. Legitimation via democratic performance standards entails that the IO contributes to and strengthens democratic institutions within and among member states. Following this definition, democracy standards may highlight popular democracy, representation, participation, transparency, and accountability.

Rule of law

The rule of law standards refer to the formal character of a decision-making process, measured against the legal rules' background. The rules themselves need not fulfill any substantive criteria. The requirement of the rule of law ensures that all decisions are taken in compliance with the law, thus guaranteeing legal security and preventing unlawful action. The standard contains normative arguments about rule of law procedures, purpose, and performance. For

procedure, an IO is legitimate because it acts in accordance with the rule of law and legal procedures as laid down in international treaties and agreements. Referring to performance, an IO is legitimate because it aims to promote and strengthen legal institutions within and among member states. For rule of law performance, an IO is legitimate because it contributes to promoting and strengthening legal institutions and the rule of law within and among member states.

Human rights

Human rights standards offer normative arguments referring to the purpose and performance of an IO. An IO is legitimate because it aims to or contributes to establishing, advancing, or protecting human rights. This standard is framed in terms of rights-based arguments, and it includes political rights, economic rights, and references to individual freedom and liberty.

Identifying substantive commitments

In the final step of the coding process, we differentiate between declaratory and substantive commitments to liberal norms. The following coding rules apply:

We identify declaratory and substantive commitments based on paragraphs that contain one or more legitimation statement(s). Paragraphs that do not include a legitimation statement are not considered. We ask whether the respective legitimation statement contains one or more substantiation by which the IO instantiates a declaratory norm commitment. This coding step constitutes an extension of our legitimation grammar introduced above:

OEC: The [evaluation object (O)] is legitimate [normative evaluation (E)] because [normative standard (S)], which is shown by [substantiation (I)].

OIS: The [evaluation object (O)] is committed [expression of identity (I)] to [normative standard (S)], which is shown by [substantiation (I)].

We use the following rules to identify a substantiation:

Link rule

The substantiation must be linked to a specific normative standard, identified within a single paragraph – our unit of analysis – and relate to the IO itself. Substantiations that explicitly relate to entities other than the IO, such as member states or other IOs, are not coded. The link between a normative standard and the substantiation may take one of two related forms.

a. Textual link: First, there may be a clear textual link, which can often be captured in a limited number of textual expressions or keywords.

Keywords: Demonstrate, signify, signal, show, display, exhibit, express, evince, evidence, an indication of, testify to, illustrate, exemplify, reflect, expression of, a testament to, a sign of, underscore, for example/instance, in particular, this includes, encapsulate, represent, through, by doing something, in line with, such as, thus, consequently, hence, therefore, based on, focused on, in this regard/context, contribute, concrete initiatives, this was made possible by, this is visible in, being a manifestation of, we see these in, with support from.

b. Substantive link: A substantive link exists when the substantiation and the normative standard belong to the same normative and institutional source. Nevertheless, the substantiation must be separable from the normative standard (see the no-overlap rule mentioned below). In case of doubt, we opt for an inclusive approach to identifying substantiation. In some cases, "umbrella" terms may indicate a substantive link between the normative standard and the substantiation.

No-overlap rule

Substantiations must be distinct from the legitimation statement itself. We do not code a substantiation if the substantiation and the normative standard overlap. This includes, for example, the fact that the respective evaluation object (O) cannot simultaneously be a substantiation. This rule also applies when a sentence contains a list of items that hint toward a specific normative standard. Even though the list is partially redundant in that we could identify the standard based on only one of the items listed, the items are grammatically equal, and we, therefore, do not distinguish elements that belong to the normative standard and elements that may indicate a substantiation.

No-future-talk rule

Substantiations generally cannot refer to future states of the world ("future talk") or contain mere intentions. This rule does not apply when the legitimation statement contains a purpose statement because purposes are often directed toward the future.

We distinguish two types of substantiations:

Institution (organizational bodies and rules)

This category refers to formal organizational bodies and the codified rules that specify the rules of the game in an IO. This category includes references to IO bodies, such as a general secretariat, a tribunal, a parliament, an advisory body, or smaller organizational units, such as specific secretariat departments, and generic mentions of the institutional framework. It also entails codified rules constituting organizational bodies and generic issues such as membership

and decision-making. References to the foundational documents of an IO also fall into this category.

Policy output, behavior, and practices

This category refers to policies, behavior, and routinized practices. The category captures the bread-and-butter of most IOs, namely, trying to solve transnational problems by coordinating behavior, adopting policies, and enacting behaviors and practices. Such actions may be general and consist of strategic frameworks and principles guiding action in a policy area, or they may be specific, such as a work program on a concrete issue. Unlike organizational bodies and rules, which refer to how the IO operates, policies and actions aim to shape the behavior of governance targets (member states and private actors). This category contains behavior related to a policy's preparation, adoption, or modification.

<u>Data reliability</u>

All steps in the coding process build on a formal coding scheme that includes detailed definitions, keywords, positive examples, negative examples, and borderline examples for all coding decisions (Lenz et al. 2022). The expert coders in our team (PhD candidates or higher) received about 50 hours of intensive training. We implemented formal reliability tests for all steps of the coding process. The tests included all four coders, using a stratified random sample of about two percent of all coded paragraphs (585 of 32,675). In the following, we list the percent agreement scores and Krippendorff's Alpha values. All tests achieved acceptable or better results:

Identification of legitimation statements

Percent Agreement: 91.9
Krippendorff's Alpha: .886

Identification of normative standards

The presented results build on our full coding scheme that distinguishes 31 normative standards along two independent dimensions: their normative content (liberal, communitarian, and technocratic) and institutional focus (procedure, purpose, and performance). Since we do not distinguish the various institutional foci in our measure of liberal norms, we eliminate an important source of coder disagreement. As a result, reliability is bound to be higher for the measures used in this paper.
Percent Agreement: 52.2
Krippendorff's Alpha: .669

Identification of substantiations

Percent Agreement: 85

Krippendorff's Alpha: .721

Construction of dependent variables: Liberal norm commitment

Building on these coding steps, we construct two dependent variables – substantive commitment and declaratory commitment.

Substantive commitment

Our first measure captures a combination of an IO's rhetorical embracement of a liberal norm *and* a substantiation of this claim by reference to a specific institution or behavior that illustrates the commitment. The measure represents a count of statements in which an IO embraces liberal norms and highlights an institutional or behavioral substantiation. Statements that include a liberal normative standard without substantiation are not counted. As a result, our measure does not depend on a pre-classification of specific institutions or behaviors as liberal. It picks up what IO representatives consider a promising way to promote liberal norms.

Declaratory commitment

Our second measure aims to capture a broader understanding of commitment to liberal norms that shows whether these norms are important enough to warrant at least a declaratory reference in the opening paragraphs of an important document used for public communication. To this end, we draw on our coding of liberal norm commitments. The measure represents a count of statements in which an IO embraces liberal norms irrespective of concrete substantiations. Therefore, this variable includes substantive and purely declaratory commitments to liberal norms.

Distribution of dependent variables and descriptive plots

Substantive commitment · Declaratory commitment
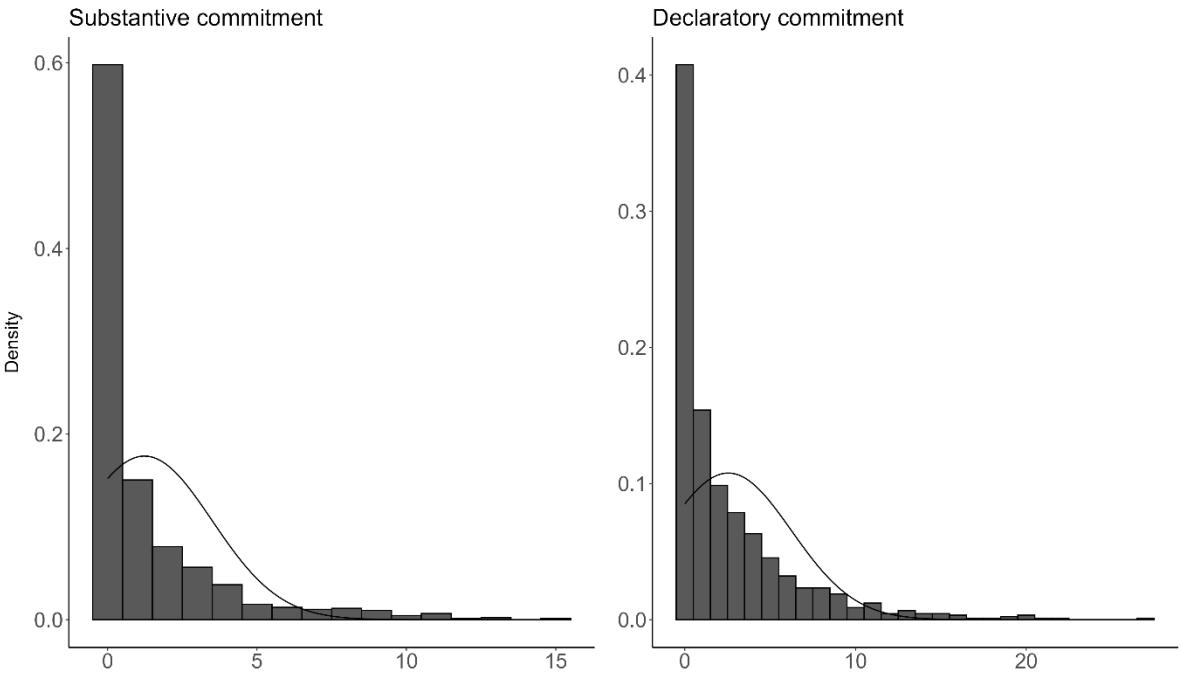
A2.1 Mean-to-Variance Ratios for Dependent Variables

Variable	Dispersion index (Mean-to-Variance Ratio)
Substantive commitment	4.156246
Declaratory commitment	5.388239

A2.2 Independent variables

Decline thesis

Autocratic power (main variable)

This variable quantifies the influence of autocratic member states within an IO by integrating regime-type classification with measures of states' economic power.

Identification of autocratic member states

We classify member states' regime types using the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project's Regimes of the World typology (v2x_regime), as documented in Version 14 (Lührmann, Tannenberg, and Lindberg 2018). This typology assigns countries into four categories: "closed autocracy," "electoral autocracy," "electoral democracy," and "liberal democracy." We combine "closed autocracy" and "electoral autocracy" into a single autocracy category.

Calculation of economic power

To measure the economic power of autocratic states, we calculate their share of the total GDP of all IO member states. We use the real output-side GDP at constant 2017 national prices in U.S. dollars for each country, sourced from the Penn World Table (PWT) Version 10.0 (Feenstra, Inklaar, and Timmer 2015). This GDP measure reflects the production possibilities of member states' economies, following Beckley's (2018) approach.

The resulting variable ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 means no autocratic influence within the IO, and 1 indicates an IO composed only of autocratic states. The Central African Economic and Monetary Union (CEMAC) serves as a real-world example, consistently achieving the maximum value of 1 throughout the observation period.

Autocratic power (alternative measure, robustness)

This alternative measure of autocratic power utilizes a similar approach as the main variable but a different data source to classify member states, using Polity5 instead of V-Dem data.

Identification of autocratic member states

In this robustness check, we identify autocratic IO member states using the Polity5 dataset's Combined Polity Score, which ranges from -10 (strongly autocratic) to +10 (strongly democratic). Following the dataset authors' recommended categorization, we code states as autocracies if their Polity score falls between -10 and -6 (Marshall and Gurr 2020).

Calculation of economic power

As in the main variable, we calculate the economic power of these autocratic states by determining their share of the total GDP among all IO members. Like the primary measure, this variable ranges from 0 to 1, indicating the proportion of economic power held by autocratic members.

Nationalist populist power (main variable)

This variable assesses the influence of nationalist populist ideology within an IO by integrating a government's ideology with its economic strength.

Identification of core LIO members

We identify core founding member states of the LIO following the classification in Trubowitz and Burgoon (2022, Fn 5), who list: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New

Zealand, Norway, Portugal, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States. They exclude the Central and Eastern European countries (e.g., Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland) because they joined the LIO only after the Cold War.

Identification of nationalist populist governments

Next, we identify nationalist populist influence within these core members using the Anti-Pluralism Index (v2xpa_antiplural) from the Varieties of Party Identity and Organization (V-Party, Version 2) dataset (Medzihorsky and Lindberg 2024). This index allows us to detect whether one or more nationalist populist parties, known for challenging liberal democratic norms (e.g., low commitment to democratic processes, demonization of opponents, disrespect for minority rights, and encouragement of political violence), participate in government. The variable is continuous, ranging from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate a more nationalist populist ideology. To classify parties as nationalist populists, we follow Lührmann et al. (2021, Fn. 20) and consider parties scoring more than 0.378 on the index as nationalist populists. This is above the 75th percentile for governing parties in democracies in the V-Party sample.

Calculation of economic power

We then measure the economic power of these nationalist populist-led member states by calculating their share of the total GDP among all IO member states. This calculation follows the methodology outlined above, using real output-side GDP at constant 2017 national prices in U.S. dollars (Feenstra, Inklaar, and Timmer 2015).

The resulting variable ranges from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate a more substantial relative influence of nationalist populist members. The Organization of American States (OAS) reached the empirical maximum of 0.65 in 2019, reflecting the significant influence of nationalist populist governments within its membership at that time.

Nationalist populist power (alternative measure, robustness)

This alternative measure is constructed in analogy to the main variable described before but uses a different data source to classify governments as nationalist populists.

Identification of core LIO members

We identify core founding member states of the LIO following the classification in Trubowitz and Burgoon (see above).

Identification of nationalist populist governments

To identify member states with nationalist populist-led governments, we use indicators from an alternative source, the Database of Political Institutions (DPI) (Cruz, Keefer, and Scartascini 2021), which includes measures of the political ideology of each member state's government (GOV1NAT, GOV2NAT, GOV3NAT). We classify member states as nationalist populists if one or more parties in government have a nationalist populist ideology.

Calculation of economic power

Following the approach outlined for the main variable, we calculate the economic power of these nationalist populist-led member states by determining their share of the total GDP of all IO members, using real GDP at constant 2017 national prices in U.S. dollars.

The variable ranges from 0 to 1, where values closer to 1 indicate a greater concentration of economic power among nationalist populist-led members.

Resilience factors

Liberal mandate (main variable)

This variable assesses the presence of liberal norm commitments within an IO's formal mandate, quantifying these commitments to test the resilience of liberal institutional design against pressures from autocratic and nationalist populist members.

Coding procedure

We use the coding scheme developed to identify IOs' commitment to liberal norms in annual reports and communiqués of heads of state and government meetings to quantify an IO's formal mandates' commitment to liberal norms. For each mandate document, we code instances of commitments to liberal norms – human rights, democracy, and the rule of law – resulting in a count variable for each IO-year.

Score consistency and updates

Scores remain constant over time unless an IO formally updates its mandate. When a new mandate takes effect, we reapply our coding procedure to the new document, and the updated count of liberal norm commitments is used for subsequent IO years.

Liberal policy portfolio (alternative measure, robustness)

This variable evaluates whether an IO has incorporated liberal policies into its institutional design.

Data source

We draw on data from the *Measure of International Authority* (*MIA*) dataset (Hooghe et al. 2017; Hooghe, Lenz, and Marks 2019) to identify policy areas for which each IO is responsible. The MIA dataset covers 25 policy areas, ranging from agriculture to transport and codes, whether any of these have been formally codified in the IO's mandate, including in secondary law.

Variable construction

The dichotomous variable indicates whether an IO has any of the following liberal policies in its portfolio: human rights, democracy, rule of law, and non-discrimination. We code the variable as 1 if the IO includes any of these liberal policies, signifying a liberal policy portfolio, and 0 if it does not include any of them.

Liberal Secretary-General (main variable)

This variable evaluates whether the chief executive of an IO acts as a liberal norm entrepreneur, contributing to the organization's resilience against illiberal pressures.

Data sources and identification

We identify each IO's chief executive (Secretary-General) using the IO BIO dataset (Reinalda, Bob, Kille, and Eisenberg 2020), which provides comprehensive information on the leadership of IOs.

Measuring liberal commitment

To assess the Secretary-General's commitment to liberal norms, we determine their nationality (i.e., home country) from the IO BIO dataset. We then use the Liberal Democracy Index (v2x_libdem) from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem, Version 14) dataset (Coppedge et al. 2016) to measure the liberal democratic quality of the Secretary-General's home country. This index provides a continuous scale from 0 (least liberal) to 1 (most liberal), capturing dimensions such as individual liberties, rule of law, and executive constraints.

By using the Liberal Democracy Index score of the Secretary-General's home country as a proxy, this variable reflects the structural likelihood that the chief executive will seek to act as a norm entrepreneur trying to uphold liberal norms.

Liberal-democratic Secretary-General (alternative measure, robustness)

This alternative operationalization evaluates the likelihood that an IO's chief executive serves as a liberal norm entrepreneur by using a different source to identify whether the chief executive comes from a liberal democratic background.

In this version of the variable, we assess the Secretary-General's commitment to liberal norms using the regime type of their home country, classified according to the Regimes of the World typology (v2x_regime) from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem, Version 14) dataset (Lührmann, Tannenberg, and Lindberg 2018). This typology categorizes countries as "closed autocracy," "electoral autocracy," "electoral democracy," or "liberal democracy." For this variable, we code the Secretary-General as a liberal norm entrepreneur if s/he originates from a country classified as a "liberal democracy."

Liberal regional environment (main variable)

This variable evaluates whether an IO is more resilient to illiberal challenges when embedded in a regional context with a high level of liberal norm commitment.

Theoretical assumption

The variable assumes that IOs within the same macro-region engage in frequent interactions and share cultural and social similarities, which can foster mutual support and reinforce liberal norms (Panke and Stapel 2024; Simmons and Elkins 2004).

Construction of the variable

We measure the liberal regional environment by calculating the average level of liberal norm commitments for all IOs within four defined macro-regions: Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe. For each IO in our sample, we exclude the organization itself from the calculation to avoid self-influence. The data on liberal norm commitments for each IO come from our coding, which is used to measure our dependent variables.

This variable thus captures the extent to which an IO is embedded in a regional environment that supports liberal norms, reflecting the potential influence of this environment on the organization's resilience against illiberal pressures.

Liberal mandate per region (alternative measure, robustness)

This alternative variable evaluates whether an IO benefits from resilience against illiberal pressures when embedded in a regional context with significant liberal commitments among other IOs, using a different data source.

Theoretical assumption

The variable assumes that IOs within the same macro-region often interact and share cultural and social characteristics, which can encourage mutual support and strengthen liberal norms (Panke and Stapel 2024; Simmons and Elkins 2004).

Geographic classification

We classify all IOs covered by the Correlates of War (COW) dataset (Pevehouse et al. 2020) by macro-region (Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe).

Assessment of liberal norm commitment

We assess the liberal commitment of each IO in the COW dataset, using data from von Borzyskowski and Vabulas (2019), who code IO mandates based on their inclusion of democracy, human rights, and rule of law provisions. Specifically, the authors identify IOs' constitutive documents either showing no mandate, a weak mandate (liberal elements in opening articles), or a strong mandate (liberal commitments beyond the preamble).

Regional count of democratic IOs

For each region-year, we count the number of IOs with liberal commitments (weak or strong mandates combined into a single "liberal mandate" category), yielding a measure of the liberal IO density within each region.

A3 Diagnostics

A3.1 Goodness-of-fit measures for regression models

	Goodness of Fit Measures	
Model	**Deviance**	**Pearson Chi-Square**
M1	0.8990284	1.041198
M2	0.8727733	1.035895
M3	0.8993131	1.042694
M4	1.0845743	1.080193
M5	1.0672028	1.065824
M6	1.0855125	1.082287
M7	0.9075325	1.094119
M8	0.9080626	1.134986
M9	0.9184435	1.181512
M10	1.0995363	1.106032
M11	1.0879399	1.157802
M12	1.0990668	1.133139

A3.2 Multicollinearity assessment

Group	Variable	Adjusted Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)
M1 and M4	Autocratic power	1.781033
M1 and M4	IO fixed effects	1.022448
M2 and M5	Nationalist populist power	1.077635
M2 and M5	IO fixed effects	1.002773
M3 and M6	Autocratic power	1.781440
M3 and M6	Nationalist populist power	1.077077
M3 and M6	IO fixed effects	1.024937
M7 and M10	Autocratic power	1.864969
M7 and M10	Liberal mandate	1.632179
M7 and M10	IO fixed effects	1.045413
M7 and M10	Autocratic power*Liberal mandate	1.443795
M9 and M11	Autocratic power	2.059909
M9 and M11	Liberal Secretary-General	1.834865
M9 and M11	IO fixed effects	1.037102
M9 and M11	Autocratic power*Liberal Secretary-General	1.461576
M10 and M12	Autocratic power	1.825553
M10 and M12	Liberal regional environment	1.221208
M10 and M12	IO fixed effects	1.027345
M10 and M12	Autocratic power*Liberal regional environment	1.342899

A3.3 Residual diagnostics: influence and leverage
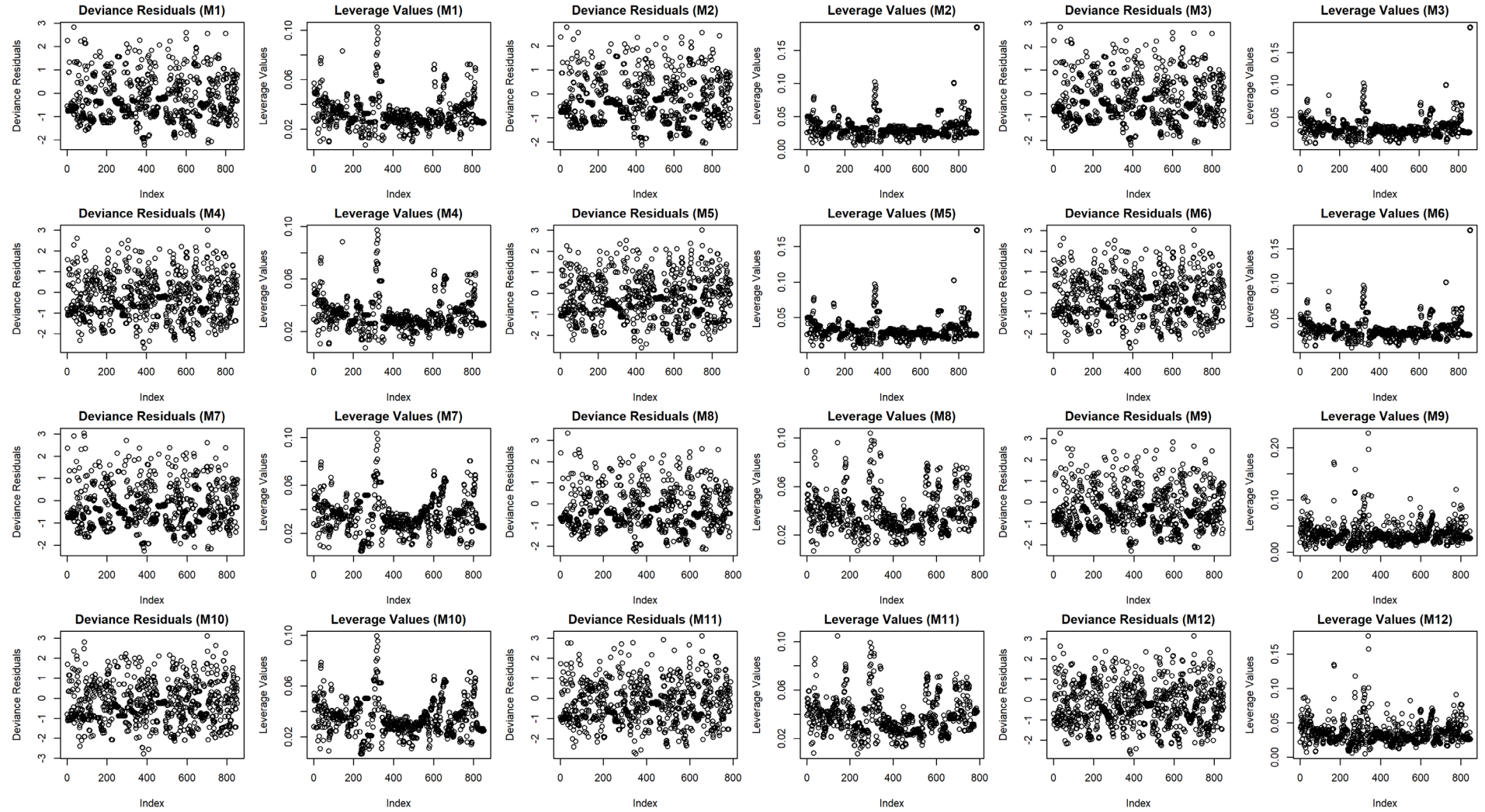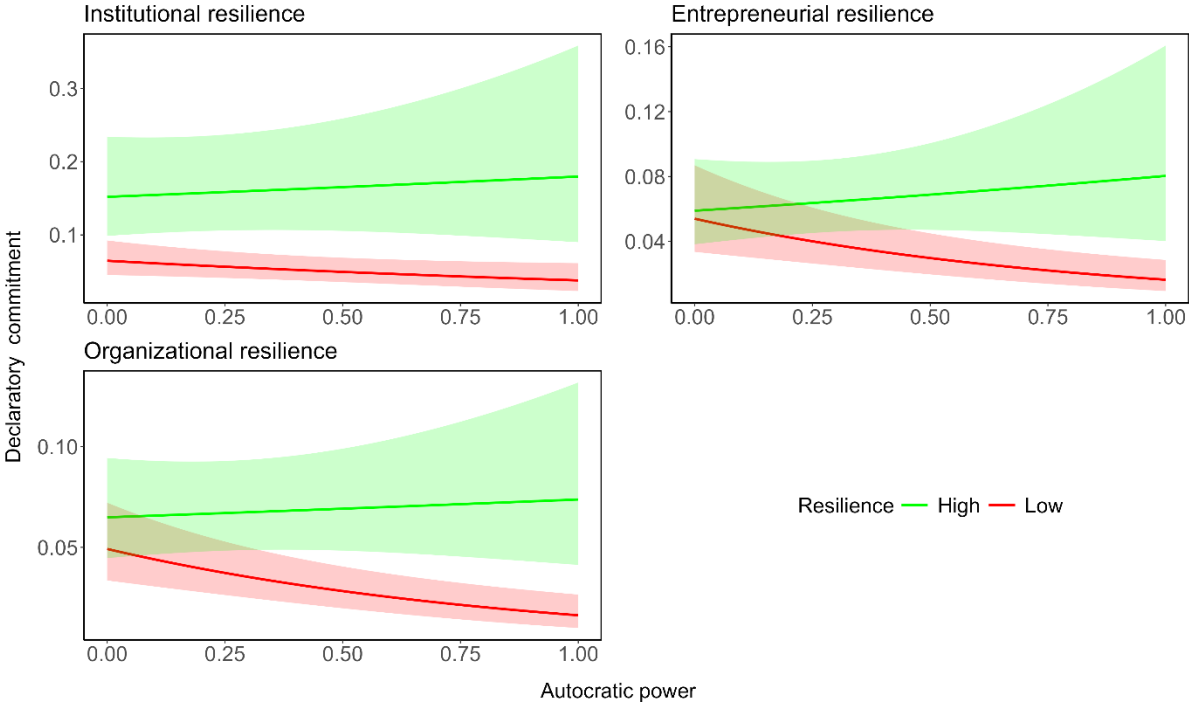
A4 Robustness/Alternative models

Table A4. Challenges to IO norm commitment

	Substantive commitment			Declaratory commitment		
	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge	H_{1b} Nationalist populist challenge	Both challenges	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge	H_{1b} Nationalist populist challenge	Both challenges
	(M1)	(M2)	(M3)	(M4)	(M5)	(M6)
Autocratic power	-1.136***		-1.148***	-0.988***		-0.997***
	(0.322)		(0.322)	(0.246)		(0.245)
Nationalist populist power		0.561	0.627		0.440	0.508
		(0.576)	(0.565)		(0.469)	(0.463)
Constant	-3.637***	-4.060***	-3.695***	-2.618***	-2.977***	-2.664***
	(0.268)	(0.258)	(0.272)	(0.186)	(0.176)	(0.189)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	858	897	858	858	897	858
theta	1.747***	1.671***	1.750***	2.440***	2.373***	2.447***
	(0.261)	(0.244)	(0.261)	(0.286)	(0.276)	(0.286)
AIC	2,134.521	2,166.371	2,135.442	3,044.899	3,098.477	3,045.801

$^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Table A5. Sources of resilience in IO's commitment to liberal norms

	Substantive commitment			Declaratory commitment		
	H_{2a} Inst. resilience (M7)	H_{2b} Entr. resilience (M8)	H_{2c} Org. resilience (M9)	H_{2a} Inst. resilience (M10)	H_{2b} Entr. resilience (M11)	H_{2c} Org. resilience (M12)
Autocratic power	-0.782[*]	-1.485[**]	-1.224[***]	-0.536[*]	-1.312[***]	-1.202[***]
	(0.365)	(0.466)	(0.354)	(0.273)	(0.342)	(0.267)
Liberal mandate	0.057[**]			0.078[***]		
	(0.018)			(0.015)		
Liberal Secretary-General		0.324			0.113	
		(0.426)			(0.322)	
Liberal regional environment			0.070[*]			0.063[*]
			(0.035)			(0.025)
Autocratic power*Liberal mandate	0.105[*]			0.064[*]		
	(0.042)			(0.032)		
Autocratic power*Liberal Secretary-General		2.137[*]			1.941[**]	
		(0.921)			(0.692)	
Autocratic power*Liberal regional environment			0.382[***]			0.280[***]
			(0.100)			(0.068)
Constant	-3.730[***]	-4.117[***]	-4.237[***]	-2.739[***]	-2.926[***]	-3.033[***]
	(0.268)	(0.365)	(0.288)	(0.182)	(0.255)	(0.198)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	854	788	846	854	788	846
theta	2.127[***]	2.114[***]	2.171[***]	3.187[***]	3.088[***]	2.939[***]
	(0.346)	(0.360)	(0.363)	(0.418)	(0.415)	(0.376)
AIC	2,097.946	1,929.302	2,087.497	2,975.769	2,720.631	2,970.791

[*]$p < .05$; [**]$p < .01$; [***]$p < .001$

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Table A4.1 Challenges to IO norm commitment
(disaggregated DV, only democratic norm commitment)

	Substantive commitment (democracy)			Declaratory commitment (democracy)		
	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge (M1)	H_{1b} Nationalist populist challenge (M2)	Both challenges (M3)	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge (M4)	H_{1b} Nationalist populist challenge (M5)	Both challenges (M6)
Autocratic power	-1.387***		-1.390***	-1.406***		-1.411***
	(0.378)		(0.377)	(0.278)		(0.278)
Nationalist populist power		0.493	0.517		0.311	0.360
		(0.647)	(0.634)		(0.517)	(0.504)
Constant	-3.966***	-4.453***	-4.012***	-3.022***	-3.493***	-3.051***
	(0.307)	(0.295)	(0.312)	(0.209)	(0.199)	(0.212)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	858	897	858	858	897	858
theta	1.898***	1.767***	1.903***	2.965***	2.733***	2.968***
	(0.408)	(0.363)	(0.409)	(0.501)	(0.446)	(0.502)
AIC	1,563.655	1,590.491	1,565.000	2,240.160	2,294.881	2,241.658

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Table A5.1 Sources of resilience in IO's commitment to liberal norms (disaggregated DV, only democratic norm commitment)

	Substantive commitment (democracy)			Declaratory commitment (democracy)		
	H2a Inst. resilience (M7)	H2b Entr. resilience (M8)	H2c Org. resilience (M9)	H2a Inst. resilience (M10)	H2b Entr. resilience (M11)	H2c Org. resilience (M12)
Autocratic power	-1.301**	-1.258*	-1.406***	-1.373***	-1.623***	-1.626***
	(0.441)	(0.556)	(0.426)	(0.327)	(0.411)	(0.316)
Liberal mandate	0.038			0.052**		
	(0.021)			(0.017)		
Liberal Secretary-General		1.300**			0.619	
		(0.488)			(0.371)	
Liberal regional environment			0.078			0.053
			(0.041)			(0.029)
Autocratic power*Liberal mandate	0.123*			0.123**		
	(0.050)			(0.038)		
Autocratic power*Liberal Secretary-General		1.022			1.723*	
		(1.096)			(0.824)	
Autocratic power*Liberal regional environment			0.274*			0.263**
			(0.127)			(0.087)
Constant	-3.971***	-4.989***	-4.494***	-3.009***	-3.637***	-3.381***
	(0.314)	(0.427)	(0.336)	(0.210)	(0.299)	(0.226)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	854	788	846	854	788	846
theta	2.138***	2.563***	2.220***	3.865***	3.553***	3.511***
	(0.484)	(0.673)	(0.522)	(0.752)	(0.683)	(0.653)
AIC	1,545.099	1,407.648	1,540.200	2,191.761	2,011.468	2,199.241

$^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Table A4.2 Challenges to IO norm commitment (disaggregated DV, only rule of law norm commitment)

	Substantive commitment (rule of law)			Declaratory commitment (rule of law)		
	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge (M1)	H_{1b} Nationalist populist challenge (M2)	Both challenges (M3)	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge (M4)	H_{1b} Nationalist populist challenge (M5)	Both challenges (M6)
Autocratic power	-1.643**		-1.642**	-0.187		-0.206
	(0.600)		(0.601)	(0.433)		(0.433)
Nationalist populist power		-0.167	-0.073		0.693	0.707
		(1.086)	(1.049)		(0.686)	(0.685)
Constant	-5.051***	-5.552***	-5.046***	-4.164***	-4.290***	-4.226***
	(0.512)	(0.490)	(0.517)	(0.293)	(0.268)	(0.300)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	858	897	858	858	897	858
theta	1.273**	1.144**	1.274**	2.332***	2.339***	2.337***
	(0.452)	(0.384)	(0.452)	(0.672)	(0.673)	(0.671)
AIC	819.089	827.581	821.084	1,358.205	1,360.023	1,359.234

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Table A5.2 Sources of resilience in IO's commitment to liberal norms (disaggregated DV, only rule of law norm commitment)

	Substantive commitment (rule of law)			Declaratory commitment (rule of law)		
	H_{2a}	H_{2b}	H_{2c}	H_{2a}	H_{2b}	H_{2c}
	Inst. resilience (M7)	Entr. resilience (M8)	Org. resilience (M9)	Inst. resilience (M10)	Entr. resilience (M11)	Org. resilience (M12)
Autocratic power	-1.289	-2.732**	-1.744*	0.570	-0.738	-0.365
	(0.777)	(0.877)	(0.706)	(0.564)	(0.620)	(0.489)
Liberal mandate	0.069			0.102**		
	(0.041)			(0.035)		
Liberal Secretary-General		-2.106**			-1.128*	
		(0.810)			(0.564)	
Liberal regional environment			0.142*			0.141**
			(0.066)			(0.043)
Autocratic power*Liberal mandate	0.204*			0.114		
	(0.085)			(0.060)		
Autocratic power*Liberal Secretary-General		5.359**			3.522**	
		(1.777)			(1.241)	
Autocratic power*Liberal regional environment			0.543**			0.384**
			(0.194)			(0.118)
Constant	-5.139***	-4.436***	-6.050***	-4.391***	-3.959***	-4.978***
	(0.523)	(0.655)	(0.552)	(0.305)	(0.420)	(0.323)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	854	788	846	854	788	846
theta	2.569	1.828*	2.326	4.870*	2.882**	4.289*
	(1.433)	(0.814)	(1.218)	(2.321)	(0.980)	(1.851)
AIC	792.568	757.892	795.447	1,313.660	1,225.440	1,304.380

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Table A4.3 Challenges to IO norm commitment (disaggregated DV, only human rights norm commitment)

	Substantive commitment (human rights)			Declaratory commitment (human rights)		
	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge (M1)	H_{1b} Nationalist populist challenge (M2)	Both challenges (M3)	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge (M4)	H_{1b} Nationalist populist challenge (M5)	Both challenges (M6)
Autocratic power	-0.200		-0.207	-0.270		-0.273
	(0.493)		(0.493)	(0.353)		(0.353)
Nationalist populist power		0.343	0.347		0.097	0.109
		(0.508)	(0.507)		(0.456)	(0.455)
Constant	-6.005***	-6.098***	-6.033***	-4.782***	-4.875***	-4.790***
	(0.601)	(0.583)	(0.603)	(0.343)	(0.327)	(0.345)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	858	897	858	858	897	858
theta	9.381	9.203	9.181	6.566**	6.532**	6.539**
	(7.087)	(6.824)	(6.792)	(2.542)	(2.525)	(2.521)
AIC	1,023.208	1,035.673	1,024.779	1,693.178	1,714.279	1,695.124

$^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Table A5.3 Sources of resilience in IO's commitment to liberal norms (disaggregated DV, only human rights norm commitment)

	Substantive commitment (human rights)			Declaratory commitment (human rights)		
	H$_{2a}$ Inst. resilience (M7)	H$_{2b}$ Entr. resilience (M8)	H$_{2c}$ Org. resilience (M9)	H$_{2a}$ Inst. resilience (M10)	H$_{2b}$ Entr. resilience (M11)	H$_{2c}$ Org. resilience (M12)
Autocratic power	0.584	-1.114	-0.430	0.673	-0.549	-0.563
	(0.565)	(0.776)	(0.565)	(0.410)	(0.508)	(0.401)
Liberal mandate	0.084**			0.108***		
	(0.026)			(0.022)		
Liberal Secretary-General		0.056			0.058	
		(0.455)			(0.361)	
Liberal regional environment			0.032			0.028
			(0.044)			(0.033)
Autocratic power*Liberal mandate	-0.030			-0.065		
	(0.057)			(0.043)		
Autocratic power*Liberal Secretary-General		2.737*			1.548	
		(1.271)			(0.930)	
Autocratic power*Liberal regional environment			0.521***			0.359***
			(0.151)			(0.103)
Constant	-6.241***	-6.247***	-6.591***	-5.067***	-4.979***	-5.153***
	(0.608)	(0.683)	(0.623)	(0.349)	(0.411)	(0.362)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	854	788	846	854	788	846
theta	11.956	20.950	16.732	8.794*	12.591	7.852*
	(10.968)	(31.295)	(20.523)	(4.089)	(7.603)	(3.415)
AIC	1,013.077	911.235	997.217	1,664.471	1,461.947	1,658.031

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Table A4.4 Challenges to IO norm commitment (alternative measure of autocratic challenge)

	Substantive commitment			Declaratory commitment		
	H₁ₐ Autocratic challenge (M1)	H₁ᵦ Nationalist populist challenge (M2)	Both challenges (M3)	H₁ₐ Autocratic challenge (M4)	H₁ᵦ Nationalist populist challenge (M5)	Both challenges (M6)
Autocratic power (polity5)	-1.136***		-1.148***	-0.988***		-0.997***
	(0.322)		(0.322)	(0.246)		(0.245)
Nationalist populist power		0.561	0.627		0.440	0.508
		(0.576)	(0.565)		(0.469)	(0.463)
Constant	-3.637***	-4.060***	-3.695***	-2.618***	-2.977***	-2.664***
	(0.268)	(0.258)	(0.272)	(0.186)	(0.176)	(0.189)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	858	897	858	858	897	858
theta	1.747***	1.671***	1.750***	2.440***	2.373***	2.447***
	(0.261)	(0.244)	(0.261)	(0.286)	(0.276)	(0.286)
AIC	2,134.521	2,166.371	2,135.442	3,044.899	3,098.477	3,045.801

$^{*}p < .05;$ $^{**}p < .01;$ $^{***}p < .001$

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Table A5.4 Sources of resilience in IO's commitment to liberal norms (alternative measure of autocratic challenge)

	Substantive commitment			Declaratory commitment		
	H$_{2a}$ Inst. resilience (M7)	H$_{2b}$ Entr. resilience (M8)	H$_{2c}$ Org. resilience (M9)	H$_{2a}$ Inst. resilience (M10)	H$_{2b}$ Entr. resilience (M11)	H$_{2c}$ Org. resilience (M12)
Autocratic power (polity5)	-0.782*	-1.485**	-1.224***	-0.536*	-1.312***	-1.202***
	(0.365)	(0.466)	(0.354)	(0.273)	(0.342)	(0.267)
Liberal mandate	0.057**			0.078***		
	(0.018)			(0.015)		
Liberal Secretary-General		0.324			0.113	
		(0.426)			(0.322)	
Liberal regional environment			0.070*			0.063*
			(0.035)			(0.025)
Autocratic power*Liberal mandate	0.105*			0.064*		
	(0.042)			(0.032)		
Autocratic power*Liberal Secretary-General		2.137*			1.941**	
		(0.921)			(0.692)	
Autocratic power*Liberal regional environment			0.382***			0.280***
			(0.100)			(0.068)
Constant	-3.730***	-4.117***	-4.237***	-2.739***	-2.926***	-3.033***
	(0.268)	(0.365)	(0.288)	(0.182)	(0.255)	(0.198)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	854	788	846	854	788	846
theta	2.127***	2.114***	2.171***	3.187***	3.088***	2.939***
	(0.346)	(0.360)	(0.363)	(0.418)	(0.415)	(0.376)
AIC	2,097.946	1,929.302	2,087.497	2,975.769	2,720.631	2,970.791

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Table A4.5 Challenges to IO norm commitment (alternative measure of nationalist populist challenge)

	Substantive commitment			Declaratory commitment		
	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge (M1)	H_{1b} Nationalist populist challenge (M2)	Both challenges (M3)	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge (M4)	H_{1b} Nationalist populist challenge (M5)	Both challenges (M6)
Autocratic power	-1.136***		-1.138***	-0.988***		-0.996***
	(0.322)		(0.323)	(0.246)		(0.246)
Nationalist populist power (DPI)		-0.334	0.091		0.154	0.530
		(1.447)	(1.424)		(1.153)	(1.139)
Constant	-3.637***	-4.003***	-3.637***	-2.618***	-2.934***	-2.615***
	(0.268)	(0.252)	(0.268)	(0.186)	(0.171)	(0.186)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	858	897	858	858	897	858
theta	1.747***	1.669***	1.747***	2.440***	2.368***	2.442***
	(0.261)	(0.244)	(0.261)	(0.286)	(0.276)	(0.286)
AIC	2,134.521	2,167.180	2,136.517	3,044.899	3,099.286	3,046.713

$^{*}p < .05; ^{**}p < .01; ^{***}p < .001$

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

As the alternative operationalization of the nationalist populist challenge does not result in negative, statistically significant coefficients, we do not test the interaction with resilience factors.

Table A5.5 Sources of resilience in IO's commitment to liberal norms (alternative measures of resilience factors)

	Substantive commitment			Declaratory commitment		
	H$_{2a}$ Inst. resilience (M7)	H$_{2b}$ Entr. resilience (M8)	H$_{2c}$ Org. resilience (M9)	H$_{2a}$ Inst. resilience (M10)	H$_{2b}$ Entr. resilience (M11)	H$_{2c}$ Org. resilience (M12)
Autocratic power	-0.829*	-1.436***	-1.809***	-0.614*	-1.186***	-1.091**
	(0.399)	(0.370)	(0.518)	(0.297)	(0.271)	(0.392)
Liberal policy portfolio	0.528**			0.626***		
	(0.201)			(0.147)		
Liberal-democratic Secretary-General		-0.088			-0.153	
		(0.198)			(0.150)	
Liberal mandate per region			-0.051			0.023
			(0.046)			(0.035)
Autocratic power*Liberal policy portfolio	1.010**			0.778**		
	(0.372)			(0.269)		
Autocratic power*Liberal-democratic Secretary-General		2.323***			2.116***	
		(0.601)			(0.457)	
Autocratic power*Liberal mandate per region			0.213***			0.143**
			(0.062)			(0.047)
Constant	-3.715***	-3.937***	-3.592***	-2.714***	-2.849***	-3.231***
	(0.273)	(0.294)	(0.485)	(0.186)	(0.201)	(0.360)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	851	788	858	851	788	858
theta	2.132***	2.157***	1.874***	3.155***	3.126***	2.721***
	(0.346)	(0.372)	(0.285)	(0.410)	(0.420)	(0.330)
AIC	2,095.000	1,923.482	2,118.343	2,966.325	2,711.129	3,009.103

$^*p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Table A4.6 Challenges to IO norm commitment (IVs with 2-year lag)

	Substantive commitment			Declaratory commitment		
	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge (M1)	H_{1b} Nationalist populist challenge (M2)	Both challenges (M3)	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge (M4)	H_{1b} Nationalist populist challenge (M5)	Both challenges (M6)
Autocratic power	-1.378***		-1.401***	-1.070***		-1.082***
	(0.319)		(0.318)	(0.243)		(0.242)
Nationalist populist power		1.352*	1.453*		0.771	0.860
		(0.641)	(0.620)		(0.533)	(0.524)
Constant	-3.574***	-4.121***	-3.689***	-2.603***	-2.996***	-2.668***
	(0.264)	(0.258)	(0.269)	(0.184)	(0.176)	(0.187)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	852	892	852	852	892	852
theta	1.802***	1.697***	1.842***	2.450***	2.374***	2.471***
	(0.274)	(0.250)	(0.282)	(0.289)	(0.277)	(0.292)
AIC	2,123.628	2,159.314	2,121.178	3,025.892	3,085.015	3,025.562

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Table A5.6 Sources of resilience in IO's commitment to liberal norms (IVs with 2-year lag)

	Substantive commitment			Declaratory commitment		
	H$_{2a}$ Inst. resilience (M7)	H$_{2b}$ Entr. resilience (M8)	H$_{2c}$ Org. resilience (M9)	H$_{2a}$ Inst. resilience (M10)	H$_{2b}$ Entr. resilience (M11)	H$_{2c}$ Org. resilience (M12)
Autocratic power	-1.016** (0.356)	-1.881*** (0.462)	-1.517*** (0.359)	-0.628* (0.269)	-1.325*** (0.337)	-1.192*** (0.268)
Liberal mandate	0.052** (0.018)			0.071*** (0.015)		
Liberal Secretary-General		-0.239 (0.433)			-0.117 (0.327)	
Liberal regional environment			0.037 (0.036)			0.063* (0.026)
Autocratic power*Liberal mandate	0.068 (0.041)			0.061 (0.031)		
Autocratic power*Liberal Secretary-General		2.367* (0.925)			1.783** (0.690)	
Autocratic power*Liberal regional environment			0.414*** (0.101)			0.279*** (0.068)
Constant	-3.634*** (0.267)	-3.618*** (0.359)	-4.073*** (0.290)	-2.687*** (0.182)	-2.691*** (0.253)	-3.040*** (0.199)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	845	774	828	845	774	828
theta	2.082*** (0.337)	2.049*** (0.345)	2.053*** (0.328)	3.130*** (0.408)	3.019*** (0.402)	2.828*** (0.353)
AIC	2,099.564	1,911.463	2,056.860	2,961.382	2,691.016	2,924.174

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Table A4.7 Challenges to IO norm commitment (main model with additional controls)

	Substantive commitment			Declaratory commitment		
	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge (M1)	H_{1b} Nationalist populist challenge (M2)	Both challenges (M3)	H_{1a} Autocratic challenge (M4)	H_{1b} Nationalist populist challenge (M5)	Both challenges (M6)
Autocratic power	-1.117***		-1.129***	-0.999***		-1.008***
	(0.326)		(0.326)	(0.247)		(0.247)
Nationalist populist power		0.543	0.606		0.409	0.475
		(0.573)	(0.562)		(0.462)	(0.456)
Only AR	-0.403	-0.407	-0.406	-0.225	-0.205	-0.226
	(0.257)	(0.259)	(0.257)	(0.161)	(0.162)	(0.161)
Only Com	-0.451*	-0.474*	-0.447*	-0.527***	-0.523***	-0.524***
	(0.200)	(0.202)	(0.200)	(0.138)	(0.138)	(0.138)
Constant	-3.629***	-4.044***	-3.685***	-2.598***	-2.959***	-2.641***
	(0.269)	(0.258)	(0.273)	(0.185)	(0.175)	(0.189)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	858	897	858	858	897	858
theta	1.773***	1.694***	1.777***	2.545***	2.468***	2.551***
	(0.267)	(0.248)	(0.267)	(0.302)	(0.291)	(0.303)
AIC	2,130.994	2,162.272	2,131.974	3,032.689	3,086.636	3,033.698

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Table A5.7 Sources of resilience in IO's commitment to liberal norms (main model with additional controls)

	Substantive commitment			Declaratory commitment		
	H_{2a} Inst. resilience (M7)	H_{2b} Entr. resilience (M8)	H_{2c} Org. resilience (M9)	H_{2a} Inst. resilience (M10)	H_{2b} Entr. resilience (M11)	H_{2c} Org. resilience (M12)
Autocratic power	-0.774* (0.366)	-1.506** (0.471)	-1.216*** (0.358)	-0.540* (0.274)	-1.334*** (0.344)	-1.213*** (0.270)
Liberal mandate	0.056** (0.018)			0.077*** (0.015)		
Liberal Secretary-General		0.326 (0.423)			0.146 (0.318)	
Liberal regional environment			0.066 (0.035)			0.063* (0.025)
Autocratic power*Liberal mandate	0.098* (0.042)			0.055 (0.032)		
Autocratic power*Liberal Secretary-General		2.013* (0.932)			1.791** (0.694)	
Autocratic power*Liberal regional environment			0.377*** (0.101)			0.276*** (0.069)
Only AR	-0.365 (0.252)	-0.387 (0.255)	-0.256 (0.252)	-0.175 (0.155)	-0.164 (0.161)	-0.043 (0.158)
Only Com	-0.293 (0.197)	-0.788** (0.256)	-0.385 (0.200)	-0.389** (0.134)	-0.673*** (0.161)	-0.512*** (0.138)
Constant	-3.727*** (0.268)	-4.069*** (0.362)	-4.213*** (0.290)	-2.732*** (0.182)	-2.897*** (0.251)	-3.011*** (0.199)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	854	788	846	854	788	846
theta	2.152*** (0.352)	2.200*** (0.381)	2.175*** (0.364)	3.270*** (0.432)	3.292*** (0.453)	3.020*** (0.388)
AIC	2,097.714	1,920.852	2,086.637	2,970.302	2,706.035	2,959.724

$^*p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$

Negative binomial count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

**Table A4.8 Challenges to IO norm commitment
(different model specification, Poisson count model)**

	Substantive commitment			Declaratory commitment		
	H1a Autocratic challenge	H1b Nationalist populist challenge	Both challenges	H1a Autocratic challenge	H1b Nationalist populist challenge	Both challenges
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Autocratic power	-1.114***		-1.115***	-0.774***		-0.778***
	(0.232)		(0.232)	(0.164)		(0.164)
Nationalist populist power		0.301	0.301		0.191	0.221
		(0.295)	(0.291)		(0.233)	(0.230)
Constant	-3.642***	-4.014***	-3.665***	-2.677***	-2.934***	-2.693***
	(0.216)	(0.206)	(0.218)	(0.130)	(0.121)	(0.131)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	858	897	858	858	897	858
AIC	2,277.793	2,321.643	2,278.762	3,313.988	3,374.260	3,315.088

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Poisson count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Table A5.8 Sources of resilience in IO's commitment to liberal norms (different model specification, Poisson count model)

	Substantive commitment			Declaratory commitment		
	H$_{2a}$ Inst. resilience (M7)	H$_{2b}$ Entr. resilience (M8)	H$_{2c}$ Org. resilience (M9)	H$_{2a}$ Inst. resilience (M10)	H$_{2b}$ Entr. resilience (M11)	H$_{2c}$ Org. resilience (M12)
Autocratic power	-0.810**	-1.485***	-1.296***	-0.430*	-1.037***	-1.102***
	(0.283)	(0.356)	(0.277)	(0.207)	(0.247)	(0.196)
Liberal mandate	0.058***			0.074***		
	(0.013)			(0.011)		
Liberal Secretary-General		0.281			0.134	
		(0.258)			(0.194)	
Liberal regional environment			0.072**			0.054***
			(0.023)			(0.016)
Autocratic power*Liberal mandate	0.091**			0.075***		
	(0.030)			(0.022)		
Autocratic power*Liberal Secretary-General		2.314***			1.916***	
		(0.654)			(0.469)	
Autocratic power*Liberal regional environment			0.428***			0.359***
			(0.079)			(0.052)
Constant	-3.719***	-4.100***	-4.266***	-2.768***	-3.010***	-3.122***
	(0.223)	(0.273)	(0.233)	(0.136)	(0.176)	(0.143)
IO Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	854	788	846	854	788	846
AIC	2,209.570	2,030.342	2,189.017	3,165.444	2,907.260	3,172.145

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Poisson count model with IO fixed effects, Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

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