

Thus, parties to a multilateral arrangement expect to get their share of benefits in the long run.⁴⁹

Multilateral institutions (MI) may comprise: 1) organizations with their resources, staffs and secretariats, structures and processes; 2) a set of persistent and connected rules. *Regimes* (used here as a type of institution), for example, may be defined as explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures agreed upon by actors and embodied in treaties or other documents.⁵⁰ Formal organisations, *per se*, regimes and even *international orders*⁵¹ may thus wear the label multilateral and belong to the category of multilateral institutions.

However, there is more to the institution of multilateralism (IM) than abstract notions like structures, processes, norms and rules. Indeed, multilateralism is also a normative conception of how the world ought to be organized. Multilateralism, in that sense, is a belief that international activities ought to be designed on a universal basis at least for a group of states and/or societies.⁵² Alternative conceptions of how the world should be organized would include bilateralism, unilateralism, imperial hierarchy and world government. More specifically, regime theory and multilateralism alike assume that between the state of anarchy and the notion of a World State there is a distinct prospect (space) for a type of international order where rights and obligations would not emanate exclusively from states but from voluntary agreements among state and non-state parties to play by a set of politically binding rules (in the sense that these rules would create expectations and influence policies).⁵³ This type of order, labelled *governance without government* by James Rosenau and Otto Czempel,⁵⁴ is characterized by the fact that the norms or the rules of a particular *regime* are not necessarily backed up by the threat or use of physical force. Instead, it is the legitimacy of norms and rules that ought to make international actors comply. Multilateralists and many regime theorists also assume that multilateral institutions are a highly desirable phenomenon, especially as the density of interactions among international actors have increased, resulting in a new quality of complex interdependence. In this sense, multilateralism is an ideology with normative designs of cooperative arrangements between many actors who agree to work out whatever problems that might arise in a peaceful manner.

Three factors have promoted multilateral cooperation in the current period. The first one is the globalization of the economy. The world has become increasingly globalized to the point where it is foolhardy to speak of total self-reliance and autarchy. Thus, collaboration and regulations are — in a sense — a matter of survival.

The second factor is also security related. Large-scale warfare between industrialized countries has become economically and politically less and less viable and thinkable.⁵⁵ Moreover, with the end of the Cold War many countries are considering the upkeep of armies as a net drain on their economy, and entire continents (Western/Central Europe, the Americas, etc.) are turning into vast *monitored security zones*.⁵⁶ This, in turn, requires the establishment and maintenance of interlocking security and arms control regimes such as *Partnership for Peace* and the CFE Treaty in Europe. On the global scene, the signing of the Chemical Weapon Convention and the indefinite extension of the NPT highlight this trend. In the area of peacekeeping and conflict resolution the picture is perhaps less impressive, but the continued activism of the UN and specifically of the Security Council in trying to dampen and moderate regional, low-intensity conflicts clearly shows that — on the eve of the 21st century — the international community no longer considers large scale violence as a legitimate instrument of policy. In all likelihood, efforts destined to stop and resolve "wars of conscience" — as opposed to "wars of interest" — will