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## International Organization

**John Gerard Ruggie, James A. Caporaso,  
Steve Weber, and Miles Kahler**  
Symposium: Multilateralism

**Kevin Hartigan**  
Refugee Policies in Mexico and Honduras

**Edward D. Mansfield**  
Capabilities and International Trade

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# International Organization

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## **Symposium: Multilateralism**

Multilateralism: the anatomy of an institution 561  
*John Gerard Ruggie*

International relations theory and multilateralism: 599  
the search for foundations *James A. Caporaso*

Shaping the postwar balance of power: multilateralism 633  
in NATO *Steve Weber*

Multilateralism with small and large numbers 681  
*Miles Kahler*

## **Articles**

Matching humanitarian norms with cold, hard interests: 709  
the making of refugee policies in Mexico and Honduras,  
1980–89 *Kevin Hartigan*

The concentration of capabilities and international trade 731  
*Edward D. Mansfield*

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# Abstracts

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## **Multilateralism: the anatomy of an institution**

by John Gerard Ruggie

Parts of the international institutional order today appear quite robust and adaptive. This is true not only in economic but also in security affairs; and it is true not only in Europe but also at the global level. The reason goes beyond the fact that these are institutions and that institutions are “in demand.” A core feature of the international institutional order is its multilateral form. The multilateral form, under certain circumstances, appears to have characteristics that enhance its durability and ability to adapt to change. Yet the concept of multilateralism is poorly defined and therefore poorly understood in the literature. This article recovers its principled meanings from historical practice, shows how and why these principled meanings have come to be institutionalized, and suggests why multilateralism may continue to play a significant role today even as some of the postwar conditions that gave rise to it have changed.

## **International relations theory and multilateralism: the search for foundations**

by James A. Caporaso

While international relations scholars have studied particular multilateral organizations, they have paid surprisingly little attention to multilateralism as an organizing principle of international political economy. A working hypothesis is that part of this inattention is due to the structure of international relations theory. How far can theories based solely on isolated (asocial) states relating anarchically take us? This article examines three broad categories of theories—individualist, social-communicative, and institutional theories—and assesses their implications for international relations theorizing.

## **Shaping the postwar balance of power: multilateralism in NATO**

by Steve Weber

States ally to gain security against potential adversaries. The principles on which an alliance is constructed and the institutional form of the alliance may not, however, follow directly from the nature of the balance-of-power challenge facing states. At the end of the 1940s, the United States and several states of Western Europe allied within

the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to defend themselves against the Soviet threat. Although NATO did not distribute decision-making power and responsibility equally among the allies, it did provide security to its members according to principles that reflect multilateralism: security was indivisible, the external borders of alliance territory were equally inviolable, and diffuse reciprocity was the norm. This article argues that this was a result of American policy decisions that were driven by two sets of ideas. The first set was political and concerned the relationship between stability and the number of powerful actors in the international system, while the second was military and concerned the exigencies of deterring invasion. The article explores the struggle between these two sets of ideas in the Truman and particularly the Eisenhower administrations, where the President spearheaded a direct move toward greater multilateralism in NATO through efforts to share nuclear weapons within the alliance. Changing ideas about deterrence brought this venture to an end in the early 1960s but did not erase the political ideas that lay behind it or some of the consequences of those ideas. Multilateralism in NATO created new possibilities that states did not foresee and fundamentally changed their conceptions of self-interest, rather than simply altering the strategies that they could use to realize their predetermined preferences. Even in the issue-area of security, these effects are not marginalized over time or as the distribution of power changes.

### **Multilateralism with small and large numbers**

by Miles Kahler

Multilateral institutions as a mode of governance have attracted the skepticism of both neorealists and neoliberals. Neorealists argue that multilateral institutions do not reflect the international hierarchy of power; neoliberals emphasize the obstacles to cooperation in groups with large memberships. The theoretical barriers to large-number cooperation have been overstated. The historical record of postwar multilateralism suggests that great power unilateralism did form the core of most multilateral regimes, although those regimes frequently violated multilateral norms. Unilateral governance through great power collaboration has become increasingly inadequate in several issue-areas, however. Recent experience in the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and the construction of global environmental regimes suggests that the necessary incorporation of larger numbers in regime construction and governance is not fatal to cooperation. Institutional devices such as voting rules, representation, delegation, and horizontal unilateralism provide avenues for successful multilateral collaboration with large numbers.

### **Matching humanitarian norms with cold, hard interests: the making of refugee policies in Mexico and Honduras, 1980–89**

by Kevin Hartigan

Interest-based theoretical models of policymaking generally fail to consider the effects of institutionalized norms on policymakers' interest calculations. Institutionalist approaches to international relations posit that norms and interests interact, but they

provide little description of how the interaction produces policy decisions. This article attempts to incorporate the role of institutionalized norms within an interest-based analysis of policymaking by exploring the interactive relationship between norms and interests. The refugee protection policies of Mexico and Honduras are analyzed to reveal the mechanisms through which policymakers' interest calculations are altered by incentives and policy options provided by an international norm-promoting institution.

### **The concentration of capabilities and international trade** by Edward D. Mansfield

A voluminous literature has been produced on the influence of a hegemonic distribution of power on international commerce. However, little research has been conducted on the effects that other features of the distribution of power have on trade. Further, few studies have compared the impact of international political and economic variables on the level of global trade. This study provides some of the first statistical results bearing on these issues. The results indicate that both international political and economic variables help shape patterns of global commerce. Among the political determinants of trade, the distribution of power is of considerable importance. But it is important to distinguish among various features of the distribution of power, since different features of this distribution are related to trade in markedly different ways. The relationship between hegemony and trade is highly sensitive to which classifications of hegemony are analyzed. There is also substantial evidence that the concentration of capabilities is related at least as strongly to trade as hegemony is and that the nature of the relationship between concentration and commerce is much more complex and richer than is commonly thought. Rather than being linear, there is a quadratic relationship between the concentration of capabilities and global trade. Moreover, concentration itself is a function of the number of major powers in the international system and the relative inequality in their capabilities. When the number of major powers is held constant, there is a quadratic relationship between relative inequality and trade. And when relative inequality is held constant, there is a direct relationship between the number of major powers and international commerce.