

The aim of this dissertation, titled “Multilateralism in discourse: USA, EU and Japan” is to pinpoint differences in perceptions of basic policy concepts across various intellectual traditions. The dissertation is based in the presumption that cultural, intellectual and language context are inseparable parts of our perception of reality and terms, through which we describe it. For the interpretation of these cultural differences, the thesis chose three actors with different cultural, historical and language traditions. In their respective discourses, the thesis interpreted the perception of a basic term of international relations – multilateralism. The discursive perception of multilateralism was connected to a theoretical typology of motivation for the priority for multilateralism over other forms of foreign policy behavior – instrumental, moral and social. This typology was tested against the interpretation of multilateralism on two case studies: the War on Terror and the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. By doing so, the thesis found out that although there is a single shared definition of multilateralism, individual perceptions on the concept’s value and role are significantly differing. The United States prefer instrumental logic, the European Union prefers moral logic and Japan oscillates between instrumental logic in high policy sphere and social logic in low policy sphere. Thus, the thesis showed how the context, culture, and language are indispensable parts of policy research, and how the perceptions of multilateralism vary among the three researched actors.