1 Explaining Regional Multilateral Cooperation

Arab and Israeli participants in the multilateral peace talks invariably would describe their endeavor as *cooperative*, a novel exercise in cooperation. How else to describe the hundreds of meetings, dozens of projects, tens of activities aimed at solving regional problems? And yet, what formal institutions and policy adjustments have they to show for their work? Have they successfully solved any specific, major regional problem? Indeed, how can one define a process as cooperation if the tangible outcomes are few, the actual adjustments in policy modest? Could it be that, despite the participants' own understanding of their activities, they were not cooperating? Or is it that they were cooperating, but political scientists do not have a vocabulary to explain it?

The emergence and development of the multilateral track of the Arab-Israeli peace process challenge the predominant theories of International Relations (IR). Across the spectrum, IR theory would downplay, ignore, or dismiss the multilaterals. Realists—who often equate the region with balance of power politics[1]—are unlikely to focus on nascent cooperative processes. Liberal Institutionalists might dismiss the theoretical impact of the multilaterals because they do not seem to produce cooperative outcomes (i.e., functioning international institutions or regimes). In fact, IR theorists have spent far more time considering *why* cooperative processes form, endure, and decline than *how* they develop, work, and affect the ideas and policies of those who participate in them. This study will illustrate why the "how" question becomes so critical in understanding interactive forums in inter-

national politics, be they formal institutions or informal negotiating processes like the Arab-Israeli multilaterals.

I argue that to explain and appreciate different forums of regional cooperation we need an alternative understanding of cooperation, viewing it not just as an outcome but also as a *process*. Seeing cooperation as a process suggests that we examine how cooperation works. Because IR theorists have generally accepted the definition of cooperation as policy adjustment (an outcome-oriented definition), the literature tends to overlook the process element of cooperation and therefore its implications for how international actors think and behave.

In this book, I draw on certain constructivist lessons to show how participant interactions within multilateral cooperative processes shape their perceptions of, and commitment to, the process itself. At times, such interactions made the participants aware that they shared joint interests and could pursue them through multilateral forums. In other cases, interactions exacerbated preexisting tensions, reinforcing participants' perceptions that they did not share particular interests. I do not (and cannot) claim that participants' interests, traditionally understood, changed within the course of the process studied here. To be sure, over the long term the process may facilitate changes in interests and policy adjustments, but there is little evidence for such changes at this point; indeed, such changes are not the subject of this study. The focus here is on the nature of the participants' interactions within a multilateral setting and the extent to which they were able to reach common understandings about the value of the cooperative process and the issue areas under discussion.

The chapter proceeds as follows: First, I summarize the theoretical argument. Second, I consider the advantages of reconceptualizing cooperation as a process. In particular, I focus on why such a redefinition is critical when considering multilateral cooperation as opposed to other cooperative forums (e.g., bilateral negotiations). Third, I review several alternative approaches that might be employed to explain multilateral cooperation and describe their limitations in explaining cooperative processes like the Arab-Israeli multilaterals. At the same time I argue that different forces may be at work to varying degrees at different stages of the process. Thus, a modification of a structural power argument focused on leadership does provide insight into the origins of the multilaterals. But in the fourth section, to explain the subsequent development stage of the process, I turn to a consideration of constructivism. The final section outlines the study's theoretical framework

for explaining both the origins and most significantly the varied development of the multilateral process. This framework draws on constructivist methods to illustrate how interactions can shape how actors view the cooperative process, leading to both successful and unsuccessful multilateral cooperation. In the remainder of the book, I apply this framework to explain the empirical cases of regional multilateral cooperation.

The Argument in Brief

To explain how the Arab-Israeli multilateral working groups developed in varied ways, I examine how the regional actors themselves viewed the cooperative process and the extent to which this process facilitated common understandings or failed to do so. In all cases, I seek to explain rather than assume regional views of this process. The empirical examples in the following chapters illustrate how this cooperative process affected regional support for multilateral cooperation in both positive and negative directions. All groups struggled with varying degrees of success to depoliticize the "technical" issues on their agendas. In the pursuit of the broader goal of facilitating interactions, they all attempted to use the cooperative process to define otherwise politically charged issues (at least in the Middle East context) as technical. Indeed, the relative ability of the working groups to reconceptualize their issue areas as technical rather than political problems explains a large part of the variation among the more and less successful groups.

I suggest several mechanisms by which cooperative processes can facilitate or impede such transformations from the political to the technical. Not all of these mechanisms are evident in each empirical case, but the list represents the range of forces which can enhance or undermine successful multilateral cooperation. Facilitating mechanisms include the redefinition of problems as integrative—as opposed to distributive—issues; shifting understandings of acceptable policy options; acceptance of new partners and coalitions; the development of new vocabulary and shared beliefs surrounding the issue area; and intensified interactions among regional participants, including smaller and more informal negotiating sessions involving issue area experts. Impeding mechanisms include a polarizing outside political process that infringes on and spotlights the working group's activities; domestic pressure and sensitivity to public opinion opposing the cooperative

process; existing national identities that feel threatened by the process; perceptions that the process is inequitable; and changing perceptions about the external environment (security or economic) which challenge the consensual knowledge developed in the working groups.

For example, while ACRS made some progress in redefining the arms control problem and the value of security cooperation in more consensual ways, that group ultimately failed because it could never overcome the politically divisive and publicly explosive issue of Israel's nuclear capabilities, in part because of Egypt's perception that the working group had developed in ways that threatened its traditional regional leadership role. In contrast, the other working groups—while facing numerous obstacles—proved more successful in reaching common understandings about the value of their cooperation and the nature of their issue area because, through their interactions, they were better able to define their issues in technical terms and appreciate the value of multilateral cooperation in serving other regional interests.

The book's focus on the process of cooperation, or the "how" aspect of the workings of international forums, does not preclude "why" questions or suggest they are unimportant. It is often necessary to recognize those forces that create a cooperative process before examining its development. Many scholars have found that the forces driving an institution's formation may not be the same ones that drive its development or decline.[2] The research on the Arab-Israeli multilaterals contained here supports this finding. Chapter 3, which considers the origins of the multilateral peace process, argues that extraregional actors—most prominently, the United States—were responsible for the formation of this process.

To explain why the multilaterals emerged, I argue that we need to understand how significant actors like the United States saw the process, holding views which were more closely tied to nonmaterial, ideational factors than to assumed structural concerns offered by traditional theories like realism or neoliberalism. I draw on modifications of power arguments that focus on the role of leadership, and the ideas of leaders, in creating and shaping new international forums. Specifically, a small group of policy elites within the administration—who were part of a larger community of Middle East experts in Washington, D.C.—shared similar notions about how to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict and greatly influenced American policy in this region, including the formation of the multilateral peace process track. That said, once the multilaterals were formed, the cooperative process itself

and the views of regional participants toward it became the critical forces in determining how the process proceeded.

Rethinking the Meaning of Cooperation in Multilateral Settings

Most IR literature does not problematize cooperation but rather accepts cooperation as an outcome based on mutual interests which leads to policy adjustment among international actors. Robert O. Keohane best represents this view of international cooperation. Keohane "takes the existence of mutual interests as given and examines the conditions under which they will lead to cooperation" and does not "concentrate on the question of how fundamental common interests can be created among states."[3] Thus, Keohane is interested less in the cooperative process than in cooperative outcomes defined largely as policy adjustment. As Keohane explains, "Cooperation, as compared to harmony, requires active attempts to adjust policies to meet the demand of others."[4] Drawing on Charles E. Lindblom's definition of policy coordination,[5] Keohane argues, "Cooperation occurs when actors adjust their behavior to the actual or anticipated preferences of others, through a process of policy coordination."[6] For cooperation to take place according to Keohane's conception, "patterns of behavior must be altered."[7] This outcome-based notion of cooperation focused on policy adjustment has become generally accepted in IR scholarship, even among those arguing from different theoretical perspectives.[8]

Keohane applied his definition of cooperation to case studies involving economic coordination among advanced industrial powers. But if these were the standards set to examine other parts of the world (e.g., the Middle East) and different issue areas (e.g., security politics), we might conclude that cooperation (defined as policy adjustment) scarcely if ever takes place. Perhaps many IR scholars, particularly from the realist tradition, would have little difficulty with this observation since they tend not to expect much cooperation regardless of what area of the world is under discussion.[9] Yet a major problem arises with this line of thinking. Might we be missing major empirical developments by limiting our conception of cooperation to policy outcomes? What if policymakers themselves believe they are engaging in cooperation? How can we explain the gap between what political scien-

tists call cooperation and what many policymakers believe cooperation to be?

The Middle East multilateral cases suggest a need to reconceptualize cooperation in order to address important processes occurring in a critical area of the world. Such a reconceptualization should enhance studies of other regions and institutions by highlighting dynamics that the current definition of cooperation misses. It also narrows the gap between what participants involved in international negotiations view as cooperation and how IR scholars study the phenomenon. The criteria for success and failure also change because cooperation is not just about producing specific policy outcomes but also about efforts to reach common understandings.

Viewing cooperation as a process rather than an outcome emphasizes actor perceptions of interests, a step that precedes Keohane's outcome-driven definition of cooperation and one which he "black-boxes." The process definition of cooperation therefore does not subsume or substitute itself for Keohane's notion of cooperation. Indeed, the formulation of common understandings may be an important step in the process of producing adjustment of policies, or specific policy outcomes, although this study is not suggesting it is a necessary condition. In other words, I am not arguing that cooperative outcomes do not matter; after all, those involved in cooperative processes would like to see "facts on the ground," concrete results that they might show to their domestic constituents. Still, the Middle East multilaterals demonstrate the value of conceptualizing a different type of cooperation based on process.

But how can we define cooperation as a process rather than an outcome? The anthropologist Stacia E. Zabusky's approach to cooperation in her study of the European Space Agency—which draws on social and cultural forces rather than individual motivations or interests—is useful in understanding cooperation in social institutional settings.[10] Citing Jürgen Habermas, Zabusky observes that participants in cooperative arenas are not just trying to produce something, they are also *trying to reach common understandings*.[11] Zabusky notes how other disciplines, including political science, tend to black-box cooperation (as opposed to examining how it works) and in doing so view cooperation as something you can identify and can compare to other phenomena, like "competition" or "conflict." In contrast, Zabusky opens up the black-box of cooperation to see what it means to participants involved in such processes, arguing that "cooperation is, in essence, a *process* of production."[12] An important aspect of cooperative processes is Margaret Mead's

notion of "working together."[13] But cooperation is not easily obtained just by working together. Indeed, conflict and controversy are integral aspects of the cooperative process: "The practice of cooperation . . . consists of the ongoing negotiation of the often irreconcilable differences put into play by the division of labor, a negotiation that proceeds through conflict and ambiguity as much as through solidarity and orderliness."[14] For Zabusky, cooperation and conflict are not separable concepts; they are part of the same interactive process. Such a conception of cooperation is useful for understanding and explaining cases of multilateral cooperation in the Middle East.

I therefore define cooperation in this study as *a process of working together in an effort to achieve common understandings*. "Common understandings" in this study do not suggest that actors have fundamentally altered core beliefs—also referred to as "learning" in some contexts.[15] Actors may reach common understandings for purely instrumental and material reasons (although once these understandings are reached the actors may maintain a normative commitment to maintaining them). Rather, I use "common understandings" in a more limited sense, namely when the actors commonly perceive the value of a cooperative endeavor and the substantive problems on the negotiating agenda. It is also important to note that not all cooperative processes succeed. Many such efforts, including cases in the Arab-Israeli multilaterals, fail in their efforts to achieve common understandings.

Viewed in this way, many international negotiations would constitute elements of cooperation provided the negotiations involve dialogue and efforts to achieve common understandings rather than unilateral initiatives imposed on various actors. Thus, all of the Arab-Israeli multilateral working groups are examples of cooperation. Once we see that the parties are working together, trying to achieve common understandings, the inquiry shifts to the extent to which the working groups were able to reach common understandings as a result of this often contentious process. Shared ideas and agreements are possible, but the question for these cases of Middle East multilateral cooperation is how the participants reach such agreement. This is especially problematic because the participants involved in cooperative processes often assume negative views of the process, and may even resist it. Cooperative processes are full of contention and debate.

Cooperation is not tantamount to success (as an outcome definition might suggest) and does not preclude failure. What determines the level of success is the extent to which the participants reach common understandings

of problems on the agenda. Of course, one would expect to find a correlation between successful cooperative processes and the creation of new institutions or policy adjustments among the actors. But the fundamental challenge of the process definition of cooperation is that outcomes are not the only way to judge the value of cooperation—efforts to reach new understandings can be just as critical in changing the nature of regional relations.

Once the definition of cooperation is broadened to include its process elements, we may ask which factors in the process affect how or whether actors can reach common understandings. Most critical is the establishment of a process that allows for interaction among participants. Rather than serving as "teachers,"[16] institutions or cooperative processes can also serve as points of contact for interaction that would not otherwise take place. At certain stages, such interactions will resemble a teaching process—when, for example, participants share previous experiences and lessons with the larger group in a seminar format, a dynamic that Emanuel Adler has labeled "seminar diplomacy."[17] Referring to the experience of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Adler explains, "Because what matters most is not the outcome but the pedagogical process, not all seminars produce final documents and reports. The expectation is that . . . delegates will later disseminate the ideas raised at the seminar in their respective political systems, thus spreading the seeds of shared understandings across national borders."[18] Indeed, extraregional participants like the United States and the Europeans conducted such seminars in the Arab-Israeli multilateral working groups, particularly at the early stages of the process when the actors were trying to define basic concepts and working agendas but were not yet prepared to engage one another in serious dialogue.

The process of *talking* among participants is another central component of working together both in formal and informal settings, and meetings allow the participants to understand what they are doing and to become "socialized" into the process.[19] Meetings allow participants to make connections, both in terms of understanding the substantive problems on the agenda and in order to build social relationships. Of course, these interactions can also highlight differences among participants, which is why cooperation often fails. In the case of the Arab-Israeli multilaterals, we will see how meetings and the process of talking through problems led to both understandings and divisions on similar issues.

The particular interactive setting in which Arabs and Israelis found themselves—multilateral—presents an interesting dimension to the defini-

tion of cooperation as a process. I suggest that multilateral negotiations or forums are more conducive to definitions of cooperation focusing on process rather than outcomes. To understand why this is the case, it is important to understand why multilateral forums are not just quantitatively (involving three or more parties) but *qualitatively* different than bilateral forums.[20] According to Hampson and Hart's study of multilateral negotiations across a variety of issue areas (security, economic, and environmental), multilateral negotiations differ from bilateral interactions because they are more complex, often involve nonstate actors including expert communities who try to shape the agenda, and tend to be more protracted. The protracted nature of multilateral forums suggests more room for actor positions to change over time as perceptions of the process change. Hampson and Hart observe that because firm or "bottom line" preferences are rarely known at the outset in multilateral negotiations, utility maximizing models (such as game theory) are less useful than process models because the latter can better evaluate how preferences change over the course of protracted negotiations. Such a process approach does not view "bargaining outcomes and payoffs as fixed and as a distributive form of negotiation (i.e., zero-sum)" but rather treats "negotiation as an integrative or positive-sum game and as an exercise in value and norm-creation where the evolution of trust and reciprocity and the creation of new values may be more crucial to negotiation success or failure than the way payoffs are arranged and structured."[21]

Another study of multilateral negotiation also contends that multilateral negotiations focus on process more than outcomes because they are often about developing a consensus rather than bargaining over policy adjustments.[22] That is to say, there are often no clear interests at the outset which are bargained over as in many bilateral negotiations. Multilateral forums are useful arenas to explore how actor positions develop in both consensual and conflictual ways, an examination which requires a conception of cooperation that focuses on the process rather than the outcome of such interactions.

Thus, multilateral cooperation is defined in this study as *the process of three or more actors working together in an effort to achieve common understandings*. This definition is limited to multilateral cooperation and distinct from the term "multilateralism." John Ruggie, for example, defines multilateralism as "an institutional form which coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of 'generalized' principles of conduct." [23] These generalized principles of conduct are expected to extend beyond the partic-

ular interests of states that are committed to the norm of multilateralism. Examples of such principles include diffuse reciprocity (as in MFN arrangements in the GATT) or indivisibility (such as collective security principles in NATO). What matters, Ruggie argues, is not the number of states involved in an institution but rather "the *kind of relations* that are instituted among them."[24] Moreover, Ruggie argues prescriptively that multilateralism can enhance peaceful interstate relations through its "adaptive and even reproductive capacities which other institutional forms may lack and which may, therefore, explain the roles that multilateral arrangements play in stabilizing the current international transformation."[25]

While Ruggie's definition is useful for characterizing the nature of political relations in Europe, this definition of multilateralism is closer to an outcome definition because it characterizes a set of relationships to which multilateral cooperation in other regions may or may not lead. In other words, multilateralism as defined by Ruggie is a possible *outcome* of multilateral cooperation processes, but it is not the only possible outcome. Ruggie's multilateralism is an outcome to which regional actors may aspire given its stabilizing implications, but destabilizing outcomes are also possible. The interesting aspect of multilateral cooperation, in my view, is its potential to *create* "generalized principles of conduct" or new common understandings in often conflictual and contentious processes like the Arab-Israeli multilaterals.

Alternative Explanations for Multilateral Cooperation

Why is a process conception of cooperation most appropriate for explaining the Arab-Israeli multilaterals? To answer this question fully, we must address some of the alternative frameworks in the IR literature and assess the extent to which they can explain either the origins or development of this process. The theories can be grouped into those which assume actor interests and/or base interests on material conditions (structural power, contractual approaches, domestic political determinants, and cognitive rationalists) and those that seek to explain actor interests drawing on social, often nonmaterial factors (constructivists). This review will demonstrate the value of modified power arguments based on leadership for explaining the multilateral's origins and the leverage gained through constructivist approaches for explaining how such processes develop.

Power Approaches: Hegemons and Leaders

One explanation for the Arab-Israeli multilaterals focuses on power arguments. These approaches suggest that powerful actors explain how new institutions emerge and how they function once established. I consider two variants of this argument: hegemonic stability and power through leadership. I find the second variant of greater relevance for this study because it best explains the origins of the multilateral talks.

The school of thought most closely associated with the power variable, neorealism, does not tend to focus on questions of institutionalized cooperation, because in an anarchic, self-help environment, states are more concerned about balancing powers or threats to their survival[26] and thus cooperation is usually expressed through short-lived alliances or coalitions. The emergence of more enduring forums for cooperation that do not rest on specified threats (like the multilaterals) poses empirical challenges for this line of thinking. However, a variant of neorealism, hegemonic stability theory, does attempt to explain the apparent anomaly of international institutions in a realist self-help world. Hegemonic stability arguments posit that the presence of a dominant power is necessary for the provision of collective goods that international regimes or institutions offer, such as an open liberal economic system.[27] Hegemons, global or regional, impose institutions or regimes on weaker states and tolerate free riders because these institutions serve their own long-term interests. If hegemonic stability explained the emergence of multilateral cooperation in the Middle East, we would expect the extraregional hegemon, the United States, to have created this process to serve its own general interests over time, regardless of what other players in the process demanded or contributed.

Hegemonic stability theory is not particularly helpful in understanding the multilaterals.[28] First, the multilateral working groups do not provide collective goods (resources are limited and membership is restricted). Second, the incentives to create this process were ambiguous, and the American crafters of the multilaterals did not have a clear idea of where this particular process would lead. Moreover, U.S. Secretary of State Baker was willing to sacrifice the multilaterals if initiating them meant the Syrians would boycott the entire Madrid process, which suggests that the Americans were sensitive to the demands and constraints of regional parties. So why bother expending the energy to create this additional process? Traditional structural power arguments do not answer this question well. The ambiguity and uncertainty

of outcomes typical in multilateral forums weakens the argument that such institutions are simply tools for major power players to fulfill their own parochial interests.

The weakness of the hegemonic stability thesis in explaining the multilaterals does not rule out the role of power in different forms. While the leadership of a great power (the United States) might have been necessary to create the multilateral process, leadership is not always practiced for hegemonic purposes. Oran Young has argued that the hegemonic stability thesis, while parsimonious, has obscured the study of different forms of political leadership that may be critical to the creation of international institutions or regimes.[29] Rather than focusing on the presence or absence of a great power, Young shifts attention to individual leaders, who may, but need not, represent the great powers. Leadership by individuals may be particularly important in negotiations to create new institutions because

> regime formation in international society typically involves a large element of integrative (or productive) bargaining in contrast to distributive (or positional) bargaining and proceeds under a (more or less thick) veil of uncertainty. The participants in institutional bargaining do not begin with a clear picture of the locus and shape of a welfare frontier or contract curve, and they ordinarily seek to reach agreement on institutional arrangements encompassing enough issues or expected to remain in place long enough so that it is difficult for those negotiating on behalf of an individual participant to make confident predictions about the impact of particular options on that participant's own welfare.[30]

Indeed, the origins of the Arab-Israeli multilaterals largely followed such logic.

Helpful to our understanding of the role of leadership in the establishment of the multilaterals is Young's distinction between leadership types, two of which are relevant to this study: structural and intellectual. A structural leader represents a powerful state and is able to "translate power resources into bargaining leverage in an effort to bring pressure to bear on others to assent to the terms of proposed constitutional contracts."[31] Thus, it is not just the presence of a great power (hegemon) that brings about new regimes, it is the ability of particular leaders to project the material power they represent to achieve *agreed upon* (not imposed) ends. In general, struc-

tural leadership may be utilized more where there is a great asymmetry of power, so that the leader of the powerful state has the tools to influence others' behavior. These tools may include "arm twisting and bribery"[32] or side payments and other rewards to weaker parties agreeing to engage in the new arrangements the structural leader prefers. Yet the structural leader must use these resources skillfully, because, unlike what is assumed in hegemonic theorizing, the weaker parties will always carry some leverage of their own.

In the Middle East case, the structural leaders representing the United States (e.g., Secretary of State Baker) may have engaged in some arm twisting and side payments to get the regional parties to the Madrid peace process, but each of these parties had its own leverage against the United States, raising the threat that the conference might not take place if Baker pushed too hard or failed to utilize American influence skillfully. Often, structural leaders are not exercising power to serve their own (or their country's) material interests. Rather, "their incentives to strive toward agreement . . . are apt to center on more intangible rewards, such as the satisfaction of seeing progress toward goals they espouse, the receipt of accolades from their peers, or the achievement of a place for themselves in history."[33]

Intellectual leaders may also play a significant role in bringing about new institutions, by relying on the "power of ideas" rather than negotiating skills to "shape the thinking of the principals in processes of institutional bargaining."[34] These intellectual leaders may but need not be the same individuals who serve the other leadership roles. For instance, intellectual leadership can emerge from outside governments, from international organizations, think tanks, interest groups, or academia where new ideas and ways of framing problems may be generated and influence decision makers. Sometimes, as with the economic theories of John Maynard Keynes, the ideas produced by an individual can develop into a school of thought that carries significant influence in policy circles.[35] In Middle East peacemaking, many institutes and individuals attempt to influence the policy community, and some leaders within the region have attempted to express intellectual leadership through books and memoirs.[36] In the case of the multilaterals, we need to discern the extent to which intellectual leadership has played a role in forming this process and the way in which it was structured. I draw on these ideas about leadership to explain the origins of the multilaterals, arguing that the exercise of structural and intellectual leadership by the United States was most critical at this beginning stage. Chapter 3 provides empirical support for these arguments.

Interest-Based Approaches: Functionalism and Interdependence

A second explanation that may potentially account for the multilaterals focuses on the interdependence among regional parties that can produce new forums and institutions to deal with common problems. Once in place, these institutions can provide further incentives for Arab-Israeli cooperation. Accordingly, the multilaterals should be the outcome of a need to solve common problems shared by both Israelis and Arabs and should create institutions that will produce further cooperation, perhaps even in the political realm. A review of the two most important schools associated with this line of thinking—neofunctionalism and neoliberal institutionalism—will underscore their deficiency in explaining either the origins or development of the multilateral process. Still, because neofunctionalism[37] was developed to explain the European integration process in the late 1950s, it can provide useful lessons for other regions establishing new regional institutions.

Neofunctionalists argued that growing levels of interdependence and economic cooperation in Europe would lead to new interactions that would produce greater cooperation, and even "spill over" to the political realm, producing political integration through supranational governance. They believed that solving common problems (beginning with technical issues) would lead to new interactions that would redefine actors' interests, particularly their loyalty to national units. However, given its shortcomings in explaining even the European case,[38] neofunctionalism's generalizability to other regions is questionable. In particular, the notion that actors would over time shift loyalties to a supranational unit is a highly unlikely and farfetched scenario in regions like the Middle East.[39]

That said, neofunctionalists' more limited arguments, particularly those suggesting that ongoing interaction can shape actors' views of the region, will prove important in explaining the development of the multilaterals and their potential to bring about different types of regional relations. Moreover, American policymakers adapted the neofunctional lesson regarding the importance of technical cooperation to the multilateral working groups, although they were under no illusions that this type of technical cooperation would be sufficient to bring about political accommodation. But in limited ways, the interaction within the context of technical cooperation around issue areas of common concern did move the political process forward, both by building relationships among elites who would also negotiate at the political (bilateral) level and by creating proposals that would be integrated

into peace treaties. While the core of the neofunctional argument as applied to Europe (the shift from national to supranational identities) is inapplicable to the Arab-Israeli context, its arguments about the ability of interactive forums to facilitate new conceptions of regional relations are useful for understanding other regional cooperation processes like the multilaterals. Indeed, the framework I employ in the study draws on the lessons of this earlier literature.

A more recent liberal variant drawing on functionalist arguments—neoliberalism—pursues a more systemic logic, emphasizing the role of institutions in promoting cooperation and enhancing interdependence. Unlike the neofunctionalists, this approach relies on a contractual conception of interests (which are assumed) and thus is less useful for explaining the Arab-Israeli multilaterals. Rather than explain the supply of international institutions and cooperation, neoliberals focus on the demand for institutions as a solution to market failures that lead to inefficient results because agreements that would benefit all parties are not made. The attributes of the system impose transaction and information costs that create barriers to cooperation. Institutions can reduce transaction and information costs for the realization of joint gains.[40] Therefore, if states have shared interests, they will have the incentive to form and maintain cooperative relations and create institutions if existing forums of cooperation are not satisfying these interests.

Underlying the contractual approach are several basic assumptions, all of which are problematic in the case of the Arab-Israeli multilaterals. First, it assumes that institutionalized cooperation is a response to states' demand for this solution. While demand for solutions to coordination problems[41]—those that respond to common aversions—were certainly present in the Middle East with regard to specific issues in areas such as water (to avoid a depletion of scarce resources) and the environment (to avoid regional catastrophes like oil spills), this demand was present long before the multilateral process began. Earlier efforts to launch cooperative regional efforts on the water problem, for example, failed because the political climate was not ripe or the initiatives lacked the backing of the American government. In other words, the demand for cooperation is not sufficient to bring it about. In such circumstances, structural leadership and international political conditions play a more critical role. Moreover, some issue areas, like arms control and refugees, did not generate a demand for solutions by regional parties, but rather were promoted and included on the agenda by the United States. Finally, some institutions that emerged from the multilaterals—such as a Middle

East development bank—were not created in response to a demand by either the United States or most regional parties, and existing institutions already served many of the functions used to justify the bank's formation.[42]

Another assumption of the contractual approach is the instrumental nature of cooperation, whereby states enter cooperative relations to serve a defined need. As we will see in chapter 3, however, the American originators of the multilaterals did not focus on solving the substantive problems that could bring joint gains to regional parties across issue areas, but rather were concerned with the political utility of the multilaterals in enhancing Israeli normalization. The actual issues eventually included in the process were less important to U.S. policymakers than initiating the process itself. Moreover, many regional players were coaxed into joining the multilaterals by the United States through political and monetary incentives. At the start, the Arabs viewed this process as an American-Israeli initiative and saw little gain from cooperating with Israel in such an unprecedented manner.

Contractual approaches also underscore the efficiency of institutionalized cooperation that can lower transaction costs, or the costs of making agreements that would benefit all parties. Even if power is essential to the formation of international institutions, the functional purpose of institutions in making cooperation cheaper and easier so that states may overcome collective action problems[43] and realize shared interests explains why such institutions persist. Thus, even if the foundations of the Arab-Israeli process were based on power, its continuation after Moscow may be attributable to the functional purpose it served in coordinating cooperative efforts in efficient ways. This assumption carries some explanatory value for the multilateral process, which certainly increased communication, information on substantive issue areas, and regular meetings among regional parties (many of whom had never met Israelis before in official capacities). This functional purpose was particularly useful in the Environment and Water working groups where multilateral solutions facilitate agreements that could not be made on a bilateral basis and increase the sources for information and research on common problems.

However, this explanation is indeterminate, given that for some of the issue areas alternative bilateral and subregional solutions might have proved more efficient. But such alternatives lacked the political and cognitive purpose the multilateral format provided in making Israel a "normal" part of the larger region. Moreover, the actual operations of the multilaterals did not demonstrate an efficient organization: the meetings of each group ro-

tated among different capitals; no overall permanent secretariat was created, and there was little interaction and issue linkage among the working groups and much confusion about where to obtain information that came out of the process (since five different extraregional players chaired the groups, the sources of information were decentralized).

Finally, the instrumental approach suggests more about how to produce cooperative outcomes than about how conflict might emerge even if institutions are serving all the important functions for which they are designed. One gets the impression that once an institution is established, the actors can transcend the politics surrounding the particular issue area because the incentives to cooperate are great and the means for doing so easy. But as discussed earlier, conflict can be an integral component of cooperative processes, as was certainly the case in the Arab-Israeli multilaterals.

Domestic Politics

One of the major critiques of both power and interest-based approaches like neoliberalism has been these theories' relative neglect of domestic politics.[44] Because these approaches are committed to a rationalist social science methodology, they often adopt the assumption of unitary state actors where the state is black-boxed. States, as unitary actors, enter cooperative relationships when it is to their benefit and they can gain from this interaction. Interests, or rather preferences, are assumed rather than explained by the theorist. Critics of this approach observe that the preferences of states and their decision to enter into or defect from cooperative relations are affected by what occurs within the state as much as by what occurs from without.[45] The solution, these critics argue, is to bring domestic politics into explanations of cooperation to understand why states hold the preferences they do. However, like the previous approaches, domestic explanations do not consider how cooperative processes themselves influence these preferences. Instead, they focus on internal, often material, forces that explain actor preferences. Following this agenda, some scholars drawing on the Middle East consider internal state processes—such as coalition building, political-economic considerations, public opinion, or preferences of institutions like the military—to enhance our understanding of nations' motivations for going to war or for deciding to cooperate.

Michael Barnett argues, for example, that states preparing for war look

not only to their external security environment but also to their internal political and economic environment and conduct their security policies within the confines of these domestic constraints.[46] Examining both Egypt and Israel, Barnett finds that each (despite vastly different regime types and cultural, historical experiences) must calculate its war strategies based on domestic political economic considerations, bringing state-society relations into national security calculations. Likewise, Etel Solingen looks at the domestic environment and argues that political coalitions favoring domestic economic reform policies (i.e., liberalizing coalitions) will pursue regional cooperation, particularly if they face "similarly committed regional partners."[47] Steven David argues that in considering alliance formation, Middle East states often are more concerned with balancing internal threats to the governing regime than with external state-based threats, thus explaining apparently anomalous alliance behavior.[48]

While bringing in domestic politics improves the application of international relations theory to Middle Eastern politics, it is not a panacea. Because the multilateral track is a low-profile process receiving little media and public attention and does not threaten the core (borders and sovereignty) interests of the participants, the range of options is greater for the elites driving this process forward (or backward). While the bilateral tracks are greatly influenced by public opinion, domestic coalitions, security, or even regime survival considerations, the multilaterals are much more insulated from these forces. While this insulation is not absolute (e.g., negative public opinion can slow cooperation efforts), the issues under discussion in the multilaterals are further removed from the public's concerns and understanding. While the general Israeli public, for example, can easily grasp the costs and benefits associated with giving up land or serving less military time in the West Bank, the benefits of regional security regimes or specific confidence-building measures are not readily apparent. At a later stage in the process—if and when durable institutions are established that influence national politics—the public may weigh into the process to a greater extent. But at this nascent stage of Arab-Israeli regional cooperation, the process was by and large elite-driven and does not require the inclusion of such domestic politics explanations as might be necessary for other processes and policy outcomes.

At a normative level, one may argue that domestic constituencies *should* be better educated about regional cooperation processes, and that the difficulties in the normalization process are the result of the elite focus of the

peace process that neglects the people-to-people requisite for enduring peace. But the central purpose of this chapter is to explain the origins and development of Arab-Israeli multilateral cooperation, not to prescribe solutions to the difficulties. In such an explanation, domestic politics does not weigh heavily.

Rational Cognitivists

In response to dissatisfaction with static and structural accounts of international relations, and the failure of these approaches to account for the end of the Cold War,[49] international relations scholars have increasingly turned to ideational variables to enhance explanations of policy choice and change.[50] Even traditionally rationalist literatures, such as regime theory, have considered the role of cognitive forces in bringing about new institutions.[51]

The Goldstein and Keohane volume, *Ideas and Foreign Policy*, best exemplifies the rationalist approach to ideas.[52] While they criticize other rationalist approaches for neglecting ideational forces, Goldstein and Keohane do not cede their rationalist assumptions. Rather, they move to the unit level of analysis (individual beliefs) to determine the causal role of ideas on policy outcomes. As they explain, "we seek to show that ideas matter for policy, even when human beings behave rationally to achieve their ends. . . . Hence this volume criticizes approaches that deny the significance of ideas, but does not challenge the premise that people behave in self-interested and broadly rational ways."[53] Thus, while ideas are more than "hooks" used by powerful players to achieve their goals, they still serve rational purposes to achieve desired ends.

Specifically, Goldstein and Keohane point to three scenarios when ideas can bring about particular policy outcomes: when they "[1] provide road maps that increase actors' clarity about goals or ends-means relationships, [2] when they affect outcomes of strategic situations in which there is no unique equilibrium, and [3] when they become embedded in institutions."[54] They then proceed to structure the empirical cases included in their volume around these three functions in an effort to demonstrate the independent role of ideas in shaping outcomes, in addition to power and interest variables. They argue "that ideas *as well* as interests have causal weight in explanations of human action."[55] Like the approaches discussed above, this methodology

assumes interests and thus would not allow for the notion that a cooperative process, and the ideas discussed within it, could alter or shape (not just compete) with interests. One critic, who generally supports cognitive analysis, explains the "theoretical snarl" of such an approach: "The strong case—that the power of the idea itself explains its acceptance—first must demonstrate that interests are interpenetrated by ideas, but then ideas must be shown to exert influence untainted by the interests they have just been shown to interpenetrate. The move is untenable and, in any case, is not required to establish the utility of an ideas-focused approach."[56] Constructivists share this critique and have advanced an alternative method for analyzing the relationship among ideas, culture and norms (nonmaterial forces), and actor interests. While the rational cognitivists attempt to demonstrate the causal effect of ideas on policy, constructivists are more concerned with demonstrating how ideas shape interests—or the source of interests and identity.[57]

Constructivist Advantages

Despite its diversity, the body of literature under the rubric of constructivism has come to signify a particular approach that is, on the one hand, critical of rational choice approaches (particularly neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism) and, on the other, proscientific (thus distinguishing itself from other interpretive or postmodernist theories).[58] This school of thought also shares some general assumptions that sound familiar themes from the earlier European integration literature.[59] However, constructivism is not yet an alternative theory of international politics but rather an approach or method for explaining international politics.[60] I argue that extensions of this approach can be useful for understanding and explaining Arab-Israeli multilateral cooperation.

The most basic assumption of constructivists is the notion that the international environment is social and ideational, not just material.[61] Constructivists argue that material conditions cannot be divorced from the social foundations and collective sets of ideas about the nature of international politics. Constructivists believe that social, ideational factors can constitute interests and that interests cannot simply be assumed based on material conditions like power and wealth. Because politics are socially constructed, the structure of the international environment and its material possessions

cannot be understood apart from the actors (states and the individuals who represent them) of which it is made—agent and structure are mutually constitutive.[62] Social structures in international politics, such as sovereignty, international institutions, or other interactive settings, can affect and shape state identities and interests. The construction of these interests and identities is not a static process because the meaning and significance of collective ideas is related to, and influenced by, time and place.[63] This recognition allows us to see how interactive processes may shape and change interests and identity over time.

Constructivism presents significant advantages when studying processes like the Arab-Israeli multilaterals. First, the constructivist method can explain why such processes originate by showing that even if a powerful player is necessary to create new institutions, one must understand why the power holds particular interests that lead to this outcome. Such interests may be based on ideational as well as material factors. Chapter 3 illustrates empirically, for example, how ideational forces contributed to the construction of American interests in creating the multilateral peace process. Second, a constructivist approach helps explain why the multilateral working groups developed as they did because it allows the explanation to focus on the cooperative process itself. We cannot understand how the activity of these groups progressed without understanding the interactions within this cooperative process.

Constructivism has been applied to a number of empirical studies.[64] Jeffrey T. Checkel argues that constructivist work has largely succeeded in demonstrating that nonmaterial factors like norms and identity matter in the construction of state interests and international structures. What is missing, in his view, are the questions when, why, and how such construction takes place. Moreover, Checkel observes that constructivists tend to look at successes—places where identity and interests *do* change—rather than cases where they do not.[65] Thus, the central critique of constructivism is the problem of scope. Constructivism needs to go beyond showing "social construction matters" to demonstrating when, why, and how social construction occurs and, subsequently, why sometimes it fails to occur.[66]

By focusing on the cooperative process of multilateral interaction, this book seeks to address some of these critiques. The "when question" is answered by deferring to modified power arguments based on leadership. Thus, the possibility for social construction occurs when a powerful actor creates an interactive process. The "how question" is addressed by emphasizing

interaction in the cooperative process itself—particularly a multilateral process—as a mechanism by which actor views and positions may change, at times allowing participants to recognize they share joint interests. However, constructivists have been subjected to criticism for appearing to focus on cases where interests have changed (usually for "the better").[67] While I do not focus on a change of interests, this study demonstrates how interactions may *facilitate as well as impede* common understandings.

A Framework for Analysis of Multilateral Cooperation

The analytic framework for this book consists of three parts. The first explains the origins of regional multilateral processes, in which the predominant forces are distinct from those influencing how such processes develop. The second part presents the dynamics involved in explaining successful multilateral cooperation based on the process conception of cooperation. The third suggests the dynamics by which such processes can fail as a result of a number of impediments to cooperation. Together, these parts explain both the origins and varied development of regional multilateral cooperation in the Middle East, and potentially in other regions engaging in similar cooperative dialogues.

The Origins of Regional Cooperation

The concept of structural and intellectual leadership as a variant of power explanations is key to understanding why and how an Arab-Israeli multilateral cooperative process emerged. Leaders who represent powerful actors project their power to create, or "supply," new institutions. Often, such leadership is supplied from extraregional actors (in the Arab-Israeli case, by the United States) exercising sources of leverage over regional actors who may not be enthusiastic about new interactive forums. Indeed, Israel and Arab parties expressed serious reservations about engaging in the multilateral talks. Without the structural leadership of the United States, it is unlikely such a process could have emerged.

That said, to understand the particular shape of new cooperative forums we also must examine the source of interests motivating the powerful leader.

As constructivists would expect, the source of these interests is not only material but also ideational. This explains the link between structural and intellectual leadership. The ideas of powerful players matter and affect the nature of new institutions or processes. For example, a small group of American policy elites within the administration—who were part of a larger network, or community, of Middle East experts in Washington, D.C.—shared similar notions about how to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict and greatly influenced American policy in this region, including the formation of the multilateral peace process track.

To explain the creation of new interactive forums, it is necessary to identify the critical power upon whose leadership the process depends and the ideas motivating the policies of that power. One needs to demonstrate that regional demand alone would not have been sufficient to bring about a new process without the leadership of such a power. Chapter 3 presents empirical support for this dynamic.

The Development of Successful Cooperation

This study defines cooperation as the process of parties working together in an effort to achieve common understandings. Successful cooperation occurs when a particular interactive process leads actors to develop common understandings with respect to a given issue area. I am not saying that it takes a change of broad, national interests to mark the success of multilateral cooperation. Rather, I am referring to the parties' support for cooperative dialogue across issue areas and achievement of common understandings within them. The process can change perceptions about the value of such activity. Thus, parties can come to a consensus about the utility of the cooperative process and reach common understandings even if they do so to serve different strategic interests.

What are the indicators, or mechanisms, by which we can evaluate the extent to which the parties are reaching common understandings, or engaging in successful cooperation? A key component of this transformative process is the ability of various working groups to frame a politically divisive process into a technical problem that may be addressed in a cooperative manner. In the Middle East cases, all issues began as political issues because of the unprecedented involvement of Israel. This explains why the Syrians, for example, chose to boycott the multilateral working groups from the out-

set. Moreover, the particular working groups were all associated with divisive issues focused on Arab concerns about Israeli military or economic advantages. Arms control, for example, was linked to the question of Israel's nuclear capability and the military balance of power between Israel and the Arab states. Economic development was perceived by many as an Israeli design to impose its hegemony on the region. Water and the environment were viewed from a distribution perspective that touched on charged questions like land and sovereignty. In short, none of the issues on the multilateral agenda were inherently "technical." The parties had to transform these issues into solvable problems conducive to multilateral cooperation.

What are the specific mechanisms that can facilitate cooperation as defined here? I suggest five such mechanisms which operated in the Arab-Israeli multilateral cases and may be generalizable to other cooperative processes: 1) problem identification; 2) shifting understandings of acceptable policy options; 3) acceptance of new partners and coalitions; 4) the development of new vocabulary and shared "myths" surrounding the issue area; and 5) intensified interactions among regional participants, including the participation of technical experts. All of these cooperation facilitators assume the establishment of a process where dialogue, meetings, and continual interactions are taking place.

Defining problems differently as a result of a cooperative process is an important facilitator in the effort to reach common understandings among the participants. The ability to frame problems as integrative ("we all have a stake in solving this") rather than distributive ("who will gain more if we address this problem") is an important component of problem identification. For example, the Water working group was able to make significant progress once the parties understood that the group would only address issues of increasing and improving the region's existing water supply as opposed to deciding how this scarce resource would be distributed among the regional parties. In the arms control group, the Gulf states were more willing to accept the process once they understood that the problem of arms control was not just about restricting the number of arms shipped to the region but also about building confidence among the regional parties to avoid, in part, unintentional conflict.

Shifting understandings of acceptable policy options is also an important dynamic that can facilitate positive cooperation. For example, in the Economic Development working group, actors came to see the establishment of new regional institutions as serving their interests, even though before the

multilaterals the creation of such Arab-Israeli forums would have been unthinkable. The discussions to create such institutions, like a regional development bank, fostered common understandings of the economic problems plaguing the region and also intensified elite contacts, another facilitator of cooperation as discussed below.

The ability to view other regional players as acceptable partners for cooperative ventures allows new coalitions to form, again enhancing the prospects for broader agreement on regional problems. In the Middle East cases, the most critical development was the Arab parties' growing acceptance of Israel as a legitimate partner. Some Gulf states, for example, no longer viewed Israel only as the occupier of Palestinian land, but saw it also as a useful partner in creating new water development schemes like desalination centers. Indeed, the slow integration of Israel into regional partnerships is an important ingredient not just for the success of the multilateral working groups but also for the normalization of regional relations more broadly.

All groups also attempted to create a shared set of vocabulary and consensual (though not necessarily scientific) knowledge surrounding their issue area in order to reach common understandings of their problems. For example, the first sessions of the working groups often took on a "seminar diplomacy" format, with extraregional parties lecturing the regional participants about the nature of the issue area and creating a common language for working group activities. Many Arabs and Israelis were not well versed in arms control vocabulary before the multilaterals, and were introduced to important concepts like confidence-building measures (CBMs) which would later constitute a central element of their working group activity. In the economic realm, constant discussions regarding the dynamics of globalization helped frame regional economic problems in common ways.

Finally, increased interactions among regional elites help facilitate more successful cooperation. A good indication of this was the movement of the working group activity from large and more formal plenary sessions to smaller, more informal "intersessional" activities. Often, the intersessional meetings would include nonpolitical specialists in order to address the more technical aspects of a given issue area (a good illustration of moving the issues from the political to the technical realm). Moreover, the more informal sessions allowed regional elites to develop personal relationships and a sense of a common stake in the success of their efforts. Some elites com-

mented in interviews that at times they saw their Arab or Israeli counterparts more often than their own spouses. These personal relationships can play a critical role in developing common understandings that cut across national boundaries.

When assessing empirical cases, it is useful to evaluate how actors view the process and the extent to which the cooperation in the working groups has led to new and more consensual understandings of similar problems and the value of the cooperative process itself based on indicators like those outlined above. Often, the results may be mixed, with some elements of success and failure apparent in all groups. It is critical to keep in mind that all cooperative processes are tenuous and even those issues that are more successful at transforming themselves into "technical" problems still have political salience to the actors involved. Indeed, a number of impediments to successful cooperation are possible at various points in the process.

The Development of Unsuccessful Cooperation

When actors do not reach common understandings as a result of a cooperative process or when they view the process in negative, conflictual ways, cooperation has failed. The absence of some facilitators like those outlined above can lead to cooperation failures. For example, Egyptians and Israelis could ultimately not define the arms control problem or frame the nuclear issue differently enough to lead to common understandings, leading to a deadlock in the arms control group.

However, the impediments to cooperation extend beyond the mere absence of certain facilitating factors related to the process. Other developments—both within and outside the process—can impede cooperation, slowing or even halting efforts to reach common understandings. By specifying the impediments to cooperation—again derived from the Arab-Israeli cases—we might be better equipped to suggest prescriptions for how to improve such processes. Impeding mechanisms include: 1) a polarizing external political process; 2) domestic pressure and sensitivity to public opinion; 3) a sense of threat to pre-existing national identities; 4) perceptions that the process is inequitable; and 5) changing perceptions about the external environment. Not all of these impediments appeared in each case of Arab-Israeli multilateral cooperation, and some proved to be more critical than others in particular cases. Still, the list suggests the range of forces that may

block cooperative efforts. The lack of funding for regional projects is also a critical impediment to cooperation, but this factor affects the prospects for actual projects more than the cooperative process itself.

It is not uncommon for outside political developments to infringe on positive developments within a cooperative process. In the Middle East multilaterals, the most obvious political development affecting the working groups was the Israeli-Palestinian bilateral negotiating track. While the bilateral and multilateral tracks did not move in tandem at all times, negative bilateral developments did make the process of reaching common understandings across multilateral issue areas more difficult. Even if regional elites desired to continue sessions in the aftermath of a political crisis, they were often impeded from doing so because of political sensitivities and the potential for such meetings to be read as insensitivity to the Palestinian track. Another example of an outside political process impeding a working group's activity was the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) renewal conference in the spring of 1995. This conference was viewed by the Egyptians as a useful opportunity to highlight the issue of Israel's nuclear capability (Israel is not a signatory to the NPT and maintains a policy of nuclear ambiguity), which subsequently led to a stalemate in the multilateral arms control group.

Another potential problem for multilateral cooperation is resistance from domestic constituencies and concern about how the cooperation will play out in public opinion. Certain domestic groups will always have a stake in particular issue areas, such as the agriculture sector in water development schemes, and may object to how elites are defining the problem (e.g., a focus on water use). In certain cases, like the Arab-Israeli multilaterals, general public opinion may not look favorably upon cooperative efforts with states they feel are not legitimate partners. One reason the multilaterals were kept so low profile, for example, was to protect the process from anticipated negative public reactions (particularly in the Arab world) to Arab-Israeli cooperation before the bilateral peace process was resolved. At times, press coverage of multilateral initiatives led to the cancellation of certain activities, such as a joint Arab-Israeli naval exercise in the region sponsored by the arms control group. Sensitivity to negative public reactions among Arab leaders has proved a constraining—though not debilitating—force in moving cooperation forward.

Strong national identities among key participants in multilateral cooperation can also prove an impeding factor if the cooperative process is viewed by these actors as developing in ways that challenge their roles in the region.

Multilateral cooperation often gives smaller states a stronger voice vis-à-vis their larger regional neighbors than they would maintain in a bilateral setting, a possibly disturbing development to powers who view themselves as regional leaders. Egypt, for example, views its leadership position in the Arab world as an important element of its national identity, and does not look favorably upon processes which threaten this sense of self. The arms control case demonstrates how Egypt sought to focus on the divisive nuclear issue because it represented an area in which Egypt has traditionally taken a leadership role and was one which it thought it could use to counter what it viewed as a multilateral process that was diminishing, rather than enhancing, Egypt's leadership status.

Perceptions among regional participants about the equity of the process can also impede progress. If regional parties perceive a cooperative process as benefiting others—particularly regional rivals—more than themselves, they may be less inclined to continue the process of reaching common understandings. For example, Egypt and Jordan often competed to house new regional centers and institutions and, when they failed to secure them, were apt to become reluctant to engage in cooperation. Arab parties also held persistent fears that Israel was gaining more out of multilateral cooperation (particularly political recognition) than they were earning, leading to boycotts of certain multilateral activities like the regional economic summit in Doha in the fall of 1997.

Finally, changing perceptions of the external environment—security or economic—can potentially impede cooperation because the parties may no longer view regional problems in common ways. For example, interactions within the economic working group fostered common understandings about globalization and its relationship to regional relations (namely, that regional cooperation would serve globalization objectives). However, altered understandings of the global economic environment may lead to negative views of the value of a continued cooperative process. Likewise, changing perceptions of the strategic environment as the common dangers of the Gulf War grow more distant may also reduce the incentives for regional parties to engage in cooperation on regional arms control in the future.

In sum, for each empirical case in chapters 4 through 6 we must assess the extent to which the cooperative process succeeded in creating common understandings as well as the types of impediments which disrupted the process. The cases of Arab-Israeli multilateral cooperation illustrate both dynamics. This framework for analyzing multilateral cooperation provides

explanatory leverage by reconceptualizing cooperation as a process, not just an outcome. Without such a framework, we would not only have difficulty in explaining and understanding the value of multilateral cooperation in the Middle East, but we also might be precluding analysis of important cooperative processes occurring in other parts of the world.