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Faculty of International Relations and European Studies

Doctoral Thesis

The peace with Egypt as a breakthrough leading to the normalization agreement between the state of Israel and the UAE: Integrating Qualitative Research

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Abstract

This research investigates how the 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt served as a foundational framework for the later Abraham Accords, embodied by the normalization agreement between Israel and UAE, signed in 2020. By analyzing this historical progression, the study explores the mechanisms through which long-standing animosity between regional actors was gradually transformed into diplomatic cooperation. A central argument of the work is that interculturalism served as a framework for negotiation, mediation, compromise and bridging that, and eventually can be framed as an essential asset in achieving sustainable peace. The study seeks not only to trace the lineage between the two peace processes but also to develop a conceptual model for conflict resolution that may be applicable to other protracted international disputes.

The research adopts a qualitative methodology, with data gathered primarily through document analysis and in-depth interviews. Participants were selected based on their direct connection to the Middle East conflict and its resolution processes. Among them were diplomats, negotiators, and stakeholders who took part either in the peace process between Israel and Egypt or in the Abraham Accords. Their testimonies provide valuable insights into the interpersonal, cultural, and political dimensions of peace negotiations.

Key findings reveal that leadership and intercultural competence were decisive in facilitating breakthroughs. Preliminary conditions and mutual interests played a crucial role in guiding the negotiation process, while the removal of cultural and diplomatic obstacles was made possible through skilful intercultural navigation. These elements created a synergy that enabled normalization between Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

Ultimately, the research proposes a new thinking framework to understand Intercultural Negotiation Diplomacy through the case study of Israel and UAE normalization agreement. The escalation of violence in Gaza during 2023–2024, and its regional ramifications, underscored the urgency of such a framework. The study concludes by suggesting that the model developed may also offer a viable platform for addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and advancing long-term regional stability through diplomacy, leadership, and intercultural engagement.

Key words: Abraham accords, intercultural negotiation, diplomacy, Israel-Egypt peace process, normalization agreement.

Glossary

Abraham Accords

A series of normalization agreements between Israel and Arab states (UAE, Bahrain, later Sudan and Morocco), signed beginning in September 2020.

Al-Qaeda

A global jihadist terrorist organization founded by Osama bin Laden in 1988. It seeks to establish a pan-Islamic caliphate and has been responsible for numerous high-profile terrorist attacks, including those on September 11, 2001. Often cited as a destabilizing factor in the Middle East and a driver of regional security cooperation.

Arab League

A regional organization of Arab countries founded in 1945 to promote economic, cultural, and political cooperation. It opposed normalization with Israel until recent years.

Balfour Declaration

A 1917 British statement supporting the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.

Begin, Menachem

Prime Minister of Israel (1977–1983) who signed the peace treaty with Egypt in 1979.

Camp David Accords

A 1978 agreement brokered by U.S. President Jimmy Carter that led to the 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.

Cold Peace

A term used to describe peace agreements without warm public or social relations – often used to characterize Israel-Egypt or Israel-Jordan relations.

Constructivism

An international relations theory emphasizing the social construction of international politics, including identities, norms, and culture.

Dayan, Moshe

Israeli Foreign Minister involved in secret negotiations leading to the Israel-Egypt peace treaty.

Gulf States

Refers to the Arab states bordering the Persian Gulf, including UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait.

Infitah

Sadat's "opening" policy aimed at liberalizing Egypt's economy and attracting foreign investment.

ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria)

Also known as Daesh, a radical Sunni jihadist group that declared a caliphate in parts of Iraq and Syria in 2014. Known for extreme violence, it influenced regional geopolitics, spurred anti-terror coalitions, and impacted the strategic alignments in the Middle East.

Khartoum Resolution (1967)

Adopted by the Arab League, declaring "no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel."

Normalization

Establishment of diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations between states, especially used in the context of Israel-Arab state relations.

ONA (Office of Net Assessment)

A U.S. Department of Defense think tank that evaluates long-term strategic trends.

Pan-Arabism

A nationalist ideology promoting the political unity of Arab nations.

PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization)

An umbrella political organization claiming to represent the Palestinian people; often mentioned in negotiations.

(El-) Sadat, Anwar

President of Egypt (1970–1981) who initiated peace with Israel, ultimately leading to his assassination. Will be referred in this research as Sadat.

Track Two Diplomacy

Informal or non-governmental dialogue that complements official negotiations; includes academics, retired officials, or civil society.

UAE (United Arab Emirates)

One of the first Arab Gulf states to normalize relations with Israel under the Abraham Accords.

UNSCOP (United Nations Special Committee on Palestine)

A 1947 committee that recommended the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states.

White Paper (1939)

A British policy limiting Jewish immigration to Palestine, viewed as a betrayal of earlier promises in the Balfour Declaration.

Yom Kippur War (1973)

A surprise attack on Israel by Egypt and Syria; ultimately led to increased diplomatic efforts and peace negotiations.

Introduction

What is the research about?

This research addresses the cross-cultural and historical events involved in the negotiation processes that led signing the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1979. Additionally, the research examines how the ground-breaking peace agreements with Israel and Egypt enabled further agreements with reference to the normalization agreement with the United Arab Emirates (henceforth, UAE).

This research discusses the achievement of peace in the most extraordinary of conditions – peace between Israel and Egypt, and normalization between Israel and the UAE and Bahrain, also known as the Abraham Accords. At times one wishes every political issue can be solved mathematically or at least one can have a clear equation that can lead to a solution to problems that one encounters, yet this is not the case. As this research shows, in the research into the Abraham Accords there is a need to examine a plethora of issues such as historical analysis, understanding of motivations and aspirations, and research into the details of agreements. The accords, that led two officially adversary countries: Israel and the UAE, resulting in full normalization. This research demonstrates the reasons and motivations that brought leaders to take such historic steps and comparing them with other historical events like the unprecedented peace between Egypt and Israel and finally arguing that there is a direct linkage between them.

The overriding history shown indicates a unique moment in time, an alignment years in the making, and key players that knew how to seize the occasion. The dogmatic social stigmatization was set in deeply within Middle Eastern society, so entrenched that it became viewed with quasi-religious fervor. This was evidenced with a refusal, persisting to this day with some regimes, to even address Israel by name. To overcome the popular expression of disgust for Israel, the negotiations would have to triumph not merely setbacks and a series of trials for effective treaty resolution. Rather it would also need to point a way forward, to acknowledge the changes that the Abraham Accords would mean for Gulf societies. The moves of UAE and others would have to also face the history of tens of years of contrary narrative about the state of Israel, a social reckoning from within the intellectual societies to address the dissonance, of before and after, that the accords would bring.

There are many layers of complex steps and years of backchannel talks that enabled formal negotiations to be a starting point. What is explored is the mechanisms that led to a successful

starting point, the ongoing processes involved and most importantly the culmination of a formalized wide-ranging treaty. This study delves into some of the practical modeling of similar negotiations, allowing breakthroughs on various levels. It is shown that negotiations fail variously, whether on initial understandings, but most importantly can breakdown if the mechanism of pushing the details, from the great to the minutiae, are not efficiently streamlined for success. The Abraham Accords is a practical template which can serve sensitive diplomatic modeling for the future, paving way for other complex and fraught high-level negotiations.

Some of the insights, whether humanistic, normative or diplomatic, show that pitfalls of past negotiations can be avoided. In these talks a mixture of geopolitical realism with business acumen is exhibited, in addition there is active avoidance of emotional triggers or cumbersome bureaucratic procedures or bodies. Pragmatism, small group decision making, policy minded professionals proving framing guidelines, many important factors are explored in the making of the Abraham Accords. While for those historic minded, the occasion was momentous, indeed a regional paradigm shift in alignment and strategic thinking. Yet for the political observer, it was also a moment of reflection on the power of coherent pragmatism, of clearsighted leadership, even personal understanding of some leaders to recognize the ripening of conditions, the clarity of positioning in Middle Eastern hierarchies and willingness to embrace Israel as is.

Quantitative studies that rely on numerical or measurable data were found redundant in this research. Instead, a qualitative study that relies on personal accounts, and analysis of documents that illustrate in detail how people, leaders, relevant actors, societies thought, acted, or responded. For this reason, qualitative research was deemed appropriate for this research. Qualitative research is defined as a field of investigation that focuses on methods from various fields that are connected to studies of culture and their interpretation.[1] Therefore, this type of research enables examining the contribution of various actors, individuals as well as societies in the decision-making process and how these factors interacted with one another. To fully understand the motivation toward normalization between Israel and the UAE this research uses the tool of academic interview, which is inherent in qualitative research.

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[1] Denzin, D.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2005) "Introduction" in Denzin, D.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (third edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, p. 3

The Abraham accords signed in Washington September 2020 were a series of joint normalization statements between Israel, the UAE, and Bahrain, and followed by Morocco in December 2020. These agreements are arguably a game changer in the Middle East. Those accords provide the pathway to the end of the Arab-Israeli conflict and a future of peace, tolerance and opportunity in the Middle East and around the world. Those accords proved that there is a new path for negotiations in the Middle East. The purpose of this work is to show that there is a direct linkage between the peace treaty of Israel with Egypt signed in 1979, and the normalization accord with the UAE.

The research explains how the peace between Israel and Egypt, that was the ever agreement between Israel and an Arab state enabled the Abraham Accords on the long term. The treaty of peace between Egypt and Israel signed on 26 March 1979 was the fourth major Egyptian-Israeli agreement negotiated after the Yom Kippur War of 1973, with each previous understanding incrementally reduced the prospects of all-out war between Israel and Arab states.

Although both countries, Israel and Egypt, faced internal discontent and had to face internal adversaries to the agreement, the peace treaty has nevertheless remained intact over the years. It has especially survived the assassination of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat in 1981. This treaty was also meticulously observed by nine different Israeli prime ministers: "The treaty demonstrated that Middle East leaders and not just foreign powers, have the power to transform regional politics."[2]

Leadership ultimately catalyzed the Egyptian–Israeli peace treaty process. President Sadat wanted the return of land (Sinai) and prime minister Begin wanted to remove Egypt once and for all from the Arab military orbit confronting Israel. This provided for Israel an important breakthrough in its defense strategy: to take out a key Arab leader from the ideological Arab coalition, which declared its aim of the destruction of the state of Israel. But peace had its limits: "Sadat echoed the idea in 1975: 'don't ask me to establish normal relations with Israel. I'm willing to sign a peace treaty to be committed to it but is only natural that after many years of war, hostility and bloodshed. Natural ties cannot be established instantly.'"[3]

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[2] (2009) *The Egyptian-Israeli peace: lessons for today* [online]. Available at: https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/egyptian-israeli-peace-lessons-today (accessed 21/06/2025)

[3] Shamir, S. (2016) *A Newly Plucked Olive Leaf: The Story of the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo-Chapters of a Diary About the Meeting Between Israelis and Egyptians Following the Making of Peace*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press [in Hebrew], p. 128. Quoted and translated in: Podeh, E. (2022) *The Many Faces of Normalization: Models of Arab-Israeli Relations* [online]. Available at:

Although the treaty did not bring full normalization to Egyptian-Israeli relations, the "cold peace" between the countries has had the significant strategic benefit of removing Egypt from the circle of war with Israel. However, the major difference between the peace treaties that Israel signed with Egypt and Jordan to the Abraham Accords, on which this research focuses, is the aspect of normalization, which not only changes the status of relations between countries (war vs. peace) but also brought change to people-to-people relations. Nevertheless, this work argues that the unprecedented peace treaty between Israel and Egypt signed 40 years before the Abraham Accords was a pretext enabling this normalization.

The discussion of this research is twofold. It aims to present the historical aspect of that resulted in normalization – a dream that came true in a conflictual Middle East. But this research shall also show how the accords have changed perspective and paradigm in the international community. For example, the fact that Europeans countries hesitated in engaging to the accords, since they believed in the two-state solution as the primary objective for the region, as well as the fact that the American president Donald Trump was the motivating factor behind the agreements.

This research also discusses the idea of normalization from early skepticism to subsequent engagement with the aim of understanding the reasons for that positive evolution and the historical foundations allowing realism and engagement.

The motivation behind the research

The author of this research was in close contact with important events and officials, who participated in the negotiations between Israel and the Arab countries throughout the last three decades, both as a journalist and a diplomat. As a journalist he covered events in 16 Arabic states, including in Tunis and Jordan during the Oslo agreements, Syria during the Shepherdstown Summit in 2000. The author also covered events in Egypt during several chapters, including the agricultural cooperation between Israel and Egypt in the early 90s and the Arab Spring of 2011. As a diplomat he oversaw relations developing in Morocco and Mauritania (1999) – a country where he returned to in 2004 as the Israeli ambassador, thus not only covering events but also being active in their developments.

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https://www.inss.org.il/strategic_assessment/the-many-faces-of-normalization-models-of-arab-israeli-relations/ (accessed 21/06/2025)

The author was close to the American administration that signed the Abraham Accords in 2020. This allowed him to follow the unfolding events from proximity including attending meetings with the American president at the oval office. Finally, the author witnessed many historical events, talks and negotiations between Israel and Arab countries.

Research goals

This research has two main goals.

1. To analyze the cross-cultural and historical events involved in the negotiation processes that led signing the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.
2. To understand how the ground-breaking peace agreements with Israel and Egypt enabled further agreements with reference to the agreement with the United Arab Emirates.

The study also addresses the Palestinian issue and its implications on these agreements, the paradigm shift in the Arab world and the shattering of an existing notion that there cannot be any progress in the Middle east without the solution of the Palestinian conflict, and until then Israel will never be accepted by its Arab neighbors.[4]

Research questions

1. What were the cross-cultural and historical events involved in the negotiation processes that led signing the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt?

2. How did the groundbreaking peace agreement with Israel and Egypt enable further agreements with reference to the agreement with the United Arab Emirates?

The research questions follow other questions that derive from topics presented throughout the research concerning several elements in the region as well as questions related to the negotiation processes, the cultural and intercultural elements, and topics in international relations.

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[4] Podeh, *The Many Faces of Normalization*

The contribution of this research to the field of knowledge

This research contributed to the knowledge in the following fields of knowledge within the discipline of cultural studies and their conjuncture to international relations and adjacent topics such as history and political sciences:

1. Clarification of historical events - this research enlightens the historical context in which the Abraham Accords were signed and how the peace treaty with Egypt may have influenced the negotiations.
2. The research contributes to the field of international relations in the Middle East. The research provides insights into the subsequent influences of political agreements, and specifically to the question of how a signing of a peace treaty between two nations can impact the relationship between other nations on a wider scale.
3. Analysis of the impact of peace on conflict resolution. The research sheds light on the potential of peace treaties to resolve conflicts and promote peace, and ways to improve such efforts in the future.
4. The research also contributes to the evaluation of diplomatic efforts. It evaluates the effectiveness of diplomatic efforts to resolve conflicts and to promote peace and suggests ways to improve such efforts in the future.
5. Finally, the research identifies areas for further research topics such as the impact of the Abraham Accords in promoting peace and stability in the region. Since the accords may not be the end of the route but rather create impetus to future changing relations.

Chapter I: Historical perspectives of the Israeli-Arab conflict

I.1 Geopolitical overview

As this research addresses the moment of the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, it is imperative to contextualize the historical background in order of understanding the various initiatives toward a mutual coexistence that predate the agreement. It can be argued, that in most cases the initiatives and diplomacy have been one sided from the Israeli part, while the Arab world needed more time to grip the reality of Israel's existence. Nevertheless, over time, slow changes have developed into major trends. There are three distinct periods that define Arab attitudes toward the Zionist Jewish endeavor and Statehood: The early years, which were characterized essentially by denial to Israel's existence; the middle intermediate period, in which some states were moving toward acceptance and acted realistically in selective issues; and the current era of maturation, in which Arab states move toward normalization.

In psychology, there are two primary phases within denial and its resolution. In their study, Goldgeier and Tetlock allowed scholars in the field of international relations to analyze geopolitical trends through the prism of modern psychology.[5] Using this line of thought, lessons learned from psychology of the individual can enable drawing conclusions on both social as well as on national levels, thus helping to understand complex shifts in attitudes toward Israel among its neighbors and how they may further change.

One can propose a denial-and-acceptance model, which concludes in the internalization that the Israel will not disappear. An overwhelming majority of the Arab Palestinians, from the early *Yishuv* period to this day,[6] have failed to comprehend that the Jews are not going to leave. This phenomenon was common to most Arab peoples for much of the 20th century. Therefore, the Egypt-Israel peace agreement was the first regional paradigm which shifted these positions. That was the result of a learning curve, which signified the first 30 years of Israel's independence, before culminating in the Camp David Peace Accords signed by Israel's Prime minister Menachem Begin, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and presided over by US President Jimmy Carter.

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[5] Goldgeier, J. M. & Tetlock, P.E. (2001) "Psychology and international relations theory." *Annual Review of Political Sciences* 4, pp. 67-92; Tetlock would later achieved fame in his monumental works on prediction theory and how intelligence forecasting must be results based.
[6] The term refers to the Jewish population in Israel before its creation.

The ensuing 40 years allowed for a phase of warming to Israel, that led the greater Gulf and Arab states to be readier and more willing to hold personal and multifaceted relations. This development was hinted by Sadat in his statements during the signing of the agreement regarding peace and the time it takes for new ideas to settle in. Thus, after many years of denial, the result was eventually an acceptance of Israel's existence. The next phase led to eventual geopolitical warming toward Israel, which was the pretext for further regional peace accords. Therefore, the treaty signed by Sadat and Begin can be considered a tectonic shift within the geopolitical thinking of the Arab World. Subsequently, the Abraham Accords were no less a great tiding, resulting in a humanization of the Israeli side.

The initial phases of denial eventually gave way to a certain realism of the complicated situation, allowing Egypt to view the relations with Israel through the lens of national interest, rather than via Pan-Arab lens. This helps to illuminate that the Egyptian decision was not taken with haste, rather it was a psychological process. This process culminated with the Sadat's leadership and behavior and therefore allows understanding these geopolitical shifts through the prism of coming to terms or acceptance of the existence of Israel. The following steps were relatively straightforward and underscored how far a mutual relationship can benefit Egypt and its leaders versus the existing order.

Once the Egypt-Israel agreement was signed, a very slow, careful and elaborate shift occurred in the geopolitical level, can be said to be the first signs dawning realism of constructive lens of realism, which paved a way for new dialogue with other Arab nations. Unfortunately, Sadat did not feel that Egyptian society was ready for normalization. Lurking beyond the national motivation was perhaps a personal political fear of holding on to power. Sadat's assassination proved that for some, peace with Israel would never be accepted. However, the treaty was held and sustained, weathering the test of time and many crises.

The next major shift took forty years, yet it also is a significant turn from the previous situation. When the time was right, following Netanyahu's 2015 speech to the Joint houses of Congress to other emerging conditions, the UAE and other States began internalizing that Israel resonated with their problems and this cogently addressed some of their basic fears. This represents an important shift from a colder realistic and economic reasoning as the case was with Egypt, to a more personal realization of geopolitical friends and foes. This resonates with Goldgeier and Tetlock's work, which argued that decision makers will accept a change of their perceptions on

issues if they believe it was done out of a free choice.[7] This step was done when the Gulf countries became willing to move one step further toward normalization, instead of merely focusing on basic security arrangements. This research puts extra emphasis on all these developments.

I.2 The end of Ottoman period, the Balfour Declaration, and the British Mandate

Jews presence in the holy land was continuous throughout history. However, the influx of Jewish immigration that surged in the late 19th Century, created resentment within the local Arab population. The historical implications of the growing numbers of Jews returning to their ancestral land coincided with the events of the two world wars and the emergence of nationalism as a dominant movement within Europe and within the Arab world. At these stages, the official Arab policy in reaction to the rise of Zionism and the immigration of Jews to Israel was rejection of all compromise. This dominated much of the Pan-Arab position, including the Palestinians. At the time, the Arab identity has been a cultural and linguistical (but not national), the Ottoman identity was political, multiethnic and multireligious, and Islam was a religious identity but not ethnic.[8]

During the Ottoman Period there was no entity, administrative division or definition of an area called Palestine, on which an actual border could be defined.[9] These borders were mainly defined by the British and the French during the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 did not define clear plans for the future of the area the British controlled post-war, including Israel and Jordan of today, but expressed the countries favorable approach to a Jewish homeland.[10]

Following the First World War and the formation of the League of Nations, Britain received a mandate for Palestine, with an aim of developing the country toward Jewish national homeland. The Churchill White paper of 1922 was also based on similar ideas, in which a national home for the Jews and Arabs should be created, in which they both shall cooperate. This initiative

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[7] Ibid. p. 81
[8] Morris, B. (2008) *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War.* New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 5-6
[9] Rogan, E. (2012) *The Arabs: A History.* London: Penguin, pp. 48-74
[10] Schneer, J. (2010) *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab–Israeli Conflict.* New York: Random House, pp. 362-370

was accepted by the *Yishuv* and rejected by Arab leadership. From the early days of the Balfour declaration to the ill-fated Faisal – Weizmann agreement in 1919, there were numerous attempts to achieve breakthroughs and partitions in resolution to the contradicting aspirations of the Jewish and Arab populations. Most of these initiatives were rejected out of hand by the various Arab leaders.

The 1920s were characterized by Arab unease with the growing Jewish immigration and land purchase, while the British attempted appeasing both sides. By then end of the 1920s the British were moving toward restricting Jewish immigration and land purchases. While on a local, regional and even community level there were compromises and understanding between Jews and Arabs, the leading Husseini clan effectively prevented any broader agreements within the greater Palestinian Arab population. This culminated in the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939, and as result the British began removing the Husseini leadership.[11] The subsequent Woodhead Commission began discussing practical applications of a two-state solution. However, as noted by the Peel commission report of 1937, no Arab leader was willing to consider any negotiations with the Jewish population despite expressed hopes to the contrary by British and Zionist representatives.[12]

The various commissions that were instigated by subsequent British governments eventually resulted in the 1939 White Paper on Palestine.[13] This was in effect an almost complete reversal of the original Balfour Declaration. Thus, the *Yishuv* was deemed to remain Arab control and the idea of a national home for the Jews was abandoned by the British. This delivered the Arabs most of their wishes, including local governance and severely curtailed *Yishuv* settlement activity. Despite being rejected by the Arabs, the implications of the paper were disastrous from a Jewish perspective. The most difficult decision of the White Paper concerned the land purchase that hampered the *Yishuv*'s ability to expand, and unlike the constitutional issues that were rejected by the Arabs, they promptly embraced the Land Transfers Regulations. The British published these regulations on 28 February 1940.

The Arabs had favorably approved the regulations due to their long-term political implications and indeed demanded a more rigid enforcement of the regulations even though they also had a

[11] Segev, T. (2001) *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate.* New York: Henry Holt, pp. 354-365

[12] (1937) *Palestine Royal Commission Report,* pp. 78. Available at: https://ecf.org.il/media_items/290 (accessed 21/06/2025)

[13] (1939) The British White Paper, Available at: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/brwh1939.asp (accessed 21/06/2025)

negative economic effect due to the prevention of the flow of Jewish capital into Arab lands for use in agricultural or industrial development. The immigration limitations of the White Paper were also put into effect. The High Commissioner had the power to allow up to 75,000 people to immigrate to the country by 1944, with immigration after 1944 had to be in agreement with the Arabs.

I.3 The Jewish-Arab question following the Second World War

The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry of 1946 noted the area that covered British Mandate Palestine consisted of 689,000 people, of whom 85,000 were Jewish. The rest were a mixture of Arab group who were related linguistically and culturally to the plethora of Arab identities that existed at the time such as Syrians, Mesopotamians, Egyptians and Arabian Peninsula Bedouins.[14] However, the committee was not unite in finding a way forward to solve the issue of British mandate Palestine. As the British reached an impasse in finding a solution to the Jewish-Arab problem they transferred the issue to the newly created United Nations.

The Arab countries were overconfident toward the 1947 vote and failed to acknowledge the significance of various sympathetic views toward the Jews worldwide. This led to general Arab apathy toward the UNSCOP investigation in Palestine before its subsequent recommendation.[15] In a surprise for most, the Soviet Union attitude toward the Jewish plight culminated it its vote in favor of the proposed partition and statehood. Additionally, the horrors of the Holocaust were still fresh in the minds of many delegates. [16] Eventually the partition plan was suggested, accepted by the *Yishuv* leadership but rejected in its entirety by the Arab states. The British departure from Palestine in 1948 turned a civil war into a regional war. On this backdrop, the ensuing three decades followed the policy of pan-Arab rejection of Israel's right to exist, and Israel's insistence of negotiations on conditions of strength.[17]

Toward the end of the Second World War the Arabs began to organize a political post-war reality. This led to the founding of the Arab League, composed of independent states.[18] The

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[14] (1946) *Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry.* available at:
https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/angtoc.asp (accessed 21/06/2025)
[15] Texts of Arab League statements and UN debates, 1947, in: Laqueur, W. & Rubin, B. (eds.) (2008) *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict.* New York: Penguin, pp. 85-92
[16] Morris, *1948*, pp. 62–78
[17] Shlaim, A. (2001) *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World.* London: Allen Lane, pp. 29-36, and pp. 138-145
[18] Kerr, M.H. (1971) *The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958–1970.* London: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-18

manner the Palestinians defined themselves within the Arab league was not ascertained. An amendment to the Arab League Covenant was added, which declared that the League weighed these peculiar circumstances of Palestine and pending effective independence, the Council of the League allowed an Arab delegate from Palestine.[19] The league issued the Alexandria protocol, which also put focus on the demand to stop Jewish immigration and land sale and to work for an independent Palestinian state, while at the same time vied to fight all efforts of Jewish nationalism.

I.4 Israel's foundation and the boycott policy

With Israel's founding in 1948, the Arabs moved to declare war on the nascent Jewish State. The Palestinian Arabs were still forming their national identity. Although they considered the territory belonging to them and the Jewish claims to it as illegitimate and therefore considered this as an affront and vehemently rejection of the Jewish Zionist idea yet, there was no coherent *raison d'etre* that defined their unified solidarity and their role in the Arab world. As noted by Wolfers, external threats are often determined by the way the intents of the adversary are perceived.[20] In other words, peace between nations is often a viable framework when the lines of borders can be negotiated by two sides that have room to maneuver, but it becomes more complicated when both sides are engaged in wars of survival or identity. It would then take many years for the Arab leaders to acknowledge their defeat. Instead, it was often presented in public narrative as a temporary setback.

The policy that was adopted was boycott. This boycott has roots in the 1936-1939 revolt, yet this one officially that started in 1945, and continued in very strong fashion, and ultimately culminating in the 1970s standoff with OPEC and the US gas crisis.[21] The aim of the boycott was to discourage countries to contribute to Israeli economy via trade, as well as preventing any separate negotiations of Arabs countries with Israel.[22]

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[19] Gelvin, J.L. (2014) *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 126-131

[20] Wolfers, Arnold. (1969) "The pole of the power and the pole of indifference", in Rosenau, J. (ed.) *International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory*. New York: Macmillan, p. 180; See also: Wolfers, A. (1962) *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 150-157

[21] Podeh, E. (2011) *The Politics of National Celebrations in the Arab Middle East.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 217-224

[22] Turck, N. (1977) "The Arab boycott of Israel". *Foreign Affairs* 55:3, pp. 472–493

While first attempts of boycott failed, the boycott moved to a more formal and structured phase following Israel's independence. One serious manifestation of the boycott was the prevention of Israeli ships, and other flags carrying cargoes to Israel, to transit through the Suez Canal. At those times they faced a series of harassments including searches, confiscations and blacklisting effectively barring them from transiting the Canal. During this period, Egypt played a leading role in this policy.[23]

I.5 The informal years

Despite the official boycott policy, relations did exist informally in various levels. Mishali-Ram and Ginat noted that a government decision or an international agreement is not enough to end conflict, but there is a need for a "track two diplomacy,"[24] which is defined by people-to-people dialogue and a gradual change in public support toward peace initiatives.[25] This change of hearts was a process that began before the formal peace agreement with Egypt. Mishali-Ram and Ginat quote Elie Podeh's three model approach to Arab normalization with Israel: informal normalization, formal functional normalization and legitimate normalization.[26] The informal stage consists of clandestine meetings usually under the auspices of intelligence or military cooperation, but occasionally also in political and economic frameworks. The formal functional normalization refers to official and public communication between the two sides, while the legitimate normalization is when both sides share mutual interest and accept each other's existence.[27]

In the early years after the 1948 war, Morocco had an informal relationship with Israel that enabled the ease of the immigration process of Moroccan Jews to Israel. It is also known that the King of Jordan secretly held meetings with many Israeli prime ministers, even before the foundation of Israel,[28] while Oman held covert ties with Israel since the 1970s. Oman has long been well regarded as a diplomatic broker, and as such their narrative toward Israel is

[23] Gresh, A. (1988) *The PLO: The Struggle Within*. London: Zed Books, pp. 33 – 40; See also: Shwadran, B. (1959) *Jordan, A State of Tension*. New York: Council for Middle Eastern Affairs Press, pp. 245-252

[24] On track II diplomacy, see section II.1.2 of this research.

[25] Ginat, R. & Mishali-Ram, M. (2025) "Challenges in the conceptualization and implementation of normalization: insights from Egyptian–Israeli Relations." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 52:2, p. 446.

[26] Podeh, *The many faces of normalization*

[27] Bar-Siman-Tov, Y. (1994) *Israel and the Peace Process, 1977–1982: In Search of Legitimacy for Peace*. Albany: SUNY Press, pp. 110-115

[28] Shlaim, A. (1990) *The Politics of Partition: King Abdullah, the Zionists, and Palestine, 1921–1951*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 210-320

considerably more tolerant and lacks inflammatory rhetoric in comparison to other countries.[29] The country was working to coordinate diplomatic breakthroughs with other countries. At the same time, Oman worked with consensus and therefore never broke away from the official Arab league position regarding Israel. This is a constant trope of Oman's pragmatic foreign policy that was able to skillfully navigate between interests, challenges and opportunities.[30]

Clandestine relations also existed between Israel and the Gulf countries before the Abraham Accords. The 1990s saw a rise in informal relations, especially with the UAE and Qatar.[31] Qatar has had trade relations with Israel since 1996 without ever culminating in diplomatic formal ties. Bahrain also had some unofficial relations and like other Gulf states, with some high-level visits and trade missions. The Bahrain boycott of Israel ended in 2005, and they are part of the Abraham accords despite their conservative population. There is little doubt that the existence of informal normalization with these countries paved the way to the transition to formal relations in some cases.[32]

At the same time, there were cases on the contrary. Tunisia saw periods of clandestine connections with Israel in the shape of secret talks, while at international level showing public hostility in varying forms pending with public mood in concoction with the Palestinian issue. However, the 1990s saw a significant thaw in the relationship with a series of high-profile visits. Ultimately this process halted in 2000, with the start of the second Intifada, leading Tunisia to cut all ties with Israel. Lebanon has been in an almost continual state of war with Israel since 1948. The 17 May agreement with Lebanon in 1983 was an exception that represented the only time that Israel achieved, if fleetingly, a chance of breaking the cold impasse. However, this is primarily a response to the Lebanese civil war, rather than a full-fledged normalization or peace treaty. Finally, there was the Mauritanian case, in which official ties were signed, but severed later.

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[29] Al-Rasheed, M. (2010) *A History of Saudi Arabia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 211-214
[30] Kechichian, J. A. (1995) *Oman: A Unique Foreign Policy Produces a Key Player in Middle Eastern and Global Diplomacy*. Available at: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB2501.html (accessed 21/06/2025)
[31] Podeh, E. (2022) *From Mistress to Common-Law Wife: Israel's Secret Relations with Countries and Minorities in the Middle East, 1948-2020*. Tel Aviv: Am Oved, pp. 566-607
[32] Pardo, S. & Peters, J. (2012) *Israel and the European Union: A Documentary History*. Lanham: Lexington Books, pp. 193-198

I.6 Egypt as the major steppingstone and Sadat's leadership

The decision of Sadat to reassess relations with Israel was happening at the times of the restructuring of the Arab and Muslim world in the post-Ottoman period. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and subsequent secularism of Kemal Ataturk and the slow rise of the post-colonial Arab monarchies, Egypt was considered the crowning civilization within the Middle Eastern powers. Having achieved independence much earlier in the process then the pan-Arab and general trend within the post-cold war architecture, Egypt was at forefront of laying the terms, intellectually, culturally and financially and crucially, militarily. In contrast, Morocco would take until the 1950s, to achieve independence. The House of Saud, while tracing lineage back to the Emirate of Diriyah, the first Saudi State going back three hundred years. Thus, Ibn Saud founder of the modern Saudi state over a population of approximately 3 million in 1950. This in direct contrast to the population of 12 million in 1920, Egypt would reach 20 million in 1950. Thus, Arab statehood or the pan-Arab movements were mostly still in infancy or pre-infancy and Egypt was already a strong independent and populated entity. This comes to the portray the vast influential and soft power wielded by the Egyptian rulers, which is including the 1950s and 1960s at the heydays of the Arab League, the league having been formed in Cairo in 1945, a statement of Egypt's importance and its regional stature.[33]

Ultimately, the Egypt the most important Arab state, not only due to Egypt being Israel's toughest and most powerful adversary, but also because of its leading role in the Arab world and the implications of its decision to sign peace with Israel. This shift represents the settling of normative realism that allowed for a constructivist regional viewing of events and is subsequently expounded upon within international relations theory, as well as a new paradigm for cultural exchange or interculturalism. These are the theoretical lens within which this research views the building blocks by the emerging Egyptian position toward Israel and the conflict stasis. The first three decades of Israel's existence saw few formal peace initiatives, alternating wars with Egypt, ups and downs of clandestine diplomacy. Normalization could only happen when the conditions were ripe within each nation individually.

This was no easy decision. The Three No's of the Arab League were resolutions adopted at the Khartoum Arab Summit in 1967; this was the consensus Arab geopolitical outlook following the Six-Day War. Now, with Sadat threatening to normalize relations with Isreal, there began a running critique from vast swathes of these societies, against Sadat and the Egyptian

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[33] Heikal, M. (1983) *Autumn of Fury: The Assassination of Sadat.* London: André Deutsch, pp. 54-68

government who broke away from the mainstream Arab positioning on Israel's existence. The cultural seismic shock being so great, it is incumbent to explore what led to, and developed, the critical start of the eventual Camp David accords.[34]

A renowned Middle East scholar, Bernard Lewis, who supported Arab normalization with Israel, believed that the path for peace between the two countries was achieved thanks to Sadat's interest in having the United States on his side, instead of continuing to orbit around the Soviet Union, which had dominated its affairs. Lewis also predicted in 2013 that more Arab normalization with Israel would occur because of the rise of Iran and the continuous instability this brought to the region. Indeed, Arab and Israeli interests were converging due to Iran, in a similar fashion to how Egyptian-Israeli interests converged in the past due to the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, there one obstacle that Egypt, and the rest of the Arab World, had to overcome, which was the prevalent antisemitism within its society and its leadership.[35] This applied also to the UAE, who years before the Abraham Accords began re-educating its population to confront antisemitism.

Perhaps most illuminating of the Egyptian mindset was the Sadat's realism. After expressing a willingness to work with Israel, a bombshell at the time, he still went to war with Israel on Yom Kippur 1973. Some argue that the war was Sadat's way of forcing Israel to the negotiation table. Eventually, considering the sum of all possibilities including the effects of the position in power, Sadat took the first step from among the entire Arab world.[36] This means he was effectively able to separate Egyptian identity from the Arab league narrative, and in more broad terms, even from the Soviet Union. By the summer of 1977, the changing dynamics of the U.S.-Egypt relationship were becoming evident. The United States was replacing the Soviets as an influencing force in Egypt with a huge economic assistance pact.[37]

Thus, Sadat's approach was evidenced by a tempering over time toward a functional dialogue of intercultural exchange and pragmatism. Considering war losses and financial dividends of peace and relationship with the United States, the Egyptian leadership was ready to move away from the conventional rooted mindset. In 1975, Henry Kissinger succeeded in the Sinai Troop

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[34] Ibid, pp. 285-296

[35] See discussion on Lewis in: Benger, D., Olson, J., & Zaga, M. (2024). "From Arab-Israeli conflict to Arab-Israeli integration: a new curriculum for understanding the contemporary Middle East. *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 15:4, pp. 343–369

[36] Podeh, E. (1999) *The Decline of Arab Unity: The Rise and Fall of the United Arab Republic.* Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, pp. 198-205

[37] Friedlander, M. A. (1983) *Sadat and Begin: The Domestic Politics of Peacemaking.* Abingdon: Routledge, p. 68

Disengagement between Egypt and Israel. This can be marked a first step in successful bargaining that did lead to concrete results. What came after resonated with Goldgeier and Tetlock's argument that the decision makers will be willing to take daring steps when they are not obsessed with historical justness and when they don't focus on the chances of failure, but rather the possibilities their steps will unfold.[38]

Sadat was a military officer who turned into a politician and served in several key positions within the Nasser governments. He rose to presidential office and began a series of maneuvers that would subsequently end in the peace treaty. At the close the Yom Kippur War, with Egypt claiming a narrative of victory and restored national pride, Sadat became known as the hero of the crossing. This referred to the breach of the Bar-Lev defensive formation at the Suez Canal, which had been thought to have been impenetrable.

This ingrained narrative of victory, playing upon lost national pride, post the Yom Kippur War, referred to as the "October War," public opinion would foster a unique environment with excess political capital for Sadat. While eschewing the former Nasser positions on economics and Soviet involvement, hoping to build on previous success, financial stability had not come to Egypt. In the restructuring of Egypt's economy, the "*Infitah*," he attempted to transition the economy from the old Nasserite socialist model toward a freer market capitalist system. While Sadat and his governments tried to lure private capital investment, and deregulate stifling controls, the average citizen, poor and destitute, could not fathom any concrete changes. Thus, the bread riots came to symbolize a wealthy and perhaps insulated elite, an environment where striving for the middle class was out of reach for many, whose struggle for bare minimum subsistence was apparent.

The bread riots in early 1977 reflected a new reality with social issues coming to a head. Within the domestic Egyptian scene, in January of 1977, he faced broad riots regarding the annulment of subsidies. This had a major effect on Sadat's persona. While Nasser had been embraced as a man of the people, living with simplicity, Sadat was regarded as having a lifestyle of opulence when the average Egyptian struggled mightily for the necessities of life. This stark contrast angered the population, rupturing the fine social contract that had been in making. Sadat, for his part, was left feeling abandoned, isolated from the people, disillusioned by all the work he had put in for economic reform and for the implementation of the birth of a free market system. Within these events, shaping a strong desire for regional and economic breakthroughs helped

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[38] Goldgeier & Tetlock, *Psychology and international relations theory*, p. 81

crystalize, one can theorize, the advantages that a peace agreement would bring, the stability it could usher, the foreign investment that could result. It was within this context that Sadat would break with all traditional Egyptian approaches and pursue an independent peace with Israel.[39]

The culmination of these elements helped Sadat reach a conclusion concerning rapprochement with Israel. It had an immediate first impact, when Sadat's Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy resigned, despite having been a supporter, even a confidant of Sadat in the past. Hours later the designated replacement, Mohammed Riad would also resign. Sadat then appointed Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a Coptic Christian to the post. These sudden and drastic reactions would send reverberations within the echelons of Sadat's government. The citizens were extremely cognizant of their new status and derision within the Arab street. While some hoped for an end to the wars, there was broad skepticism and outright anger toward the process also. While there were celebrations following Sadat's return to Cairo, there are questions as to the authenticity or spontaneity of the gatherings President Sadat had hoped to implement reforms. Looking back, while elite, those in politics were skeptical if not outright hostile, most of the population, not being actively involved in political culture, were poised for cold peace. They were satisfied with an approach that would avoid sending their kids to war, without a development of friendly warm overture toward the Israelis. The populace was tired of war, can be said to be anti-war, Sadat's overtures to the United States and subsequently Israel can be said as to have been seen as by population willing to break with the Soviet influence and tradition, ready to embrace economic opportunity and a growing of the middle class. In this context Sadat's moves, while stunning and unexpected, allow for a viewing of cautious optimism.

On the American side, new frameworks were also brewing. In these first stages of talks, the American position on negotiations was evidenced by a desire to work with the Soviet Union on a general framework for peace in the Middle East, however Sadat and Begin would work to disabuse Carter and the United States of the usefulness of this notion. While the Egyptian-Israel issue was loaded for so many years, laden with emotions of Arab diaspora and the Jewish return, all this distinctly intermingled with the undefined role of the Palestinian Liberation Movement (PLO) within various Arab governments of the time.

The Israeli side also played its role in enabling these shifts. In the summer of 1977 Israeli intelligence had reliable information of an attempt, by the Libyan dictator, Muammar Qaddafi,

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[39] Telhami, S. (1990) *Power and Leadership in International Bargaining: The Path to the Camp David Accords.* New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 44-51

on Sadat's life. Prime Minister Menachem Begin had a decision to make, to utilize this information in a positive and effectual way. He authorized the release of this life-saving specialized intelligence. The subsequent issue would be how to confidentially contact appropriate Egyptian channels. Begin allowed a message to be sent via the King Hassan of Morocco to alert the Egyptians of the Libyan plot to assassinate Sadat.

As a result, Egyptian intelligence was able to preempt and successfully thwart this attempt on Sadat. This created a newfound respect from an Egyptian perspective, garnering Israel in wholly different light. While Labor governments had been in power, there had been no breakthrough or detente. However, Sadat, being personally thankful, was also able to view the new Likud government and Begin, in an entirely new light. Sadat decided to open a secret channel of communication between the Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan and Egypt's Deputy Prime Minister Hassan Tuhami and King Hassan of Morrocco. Over a four-hour conversation, the initial framework, discussing territory and normalization of relationship.

Thus, the first baby steps of the bilateral agreement with Morocco acting as a good faith host and interlocuter were cemented. There was a mutual understanding of Sadat's early need for Sinai Peninsula, without which he would not, and could not, politically be able to commit. On the Moroccan and Israeli sides there was understanding of the demographic issues, with which could cause a calamity to Israel. Dayan understood then the centrality of the problem. He also wanted to clarify the framing that Egypt wanted. He felt that trying to incorporate a greater Arab issue as one cause, separating this from various national governments would be ineffectual. Israel understood the power of a bilateral agreement, the effective mechanisms which could assure mutual implementation. [40]

While the Egyptians, on an emotional level, wanted the linkage toward the Palestinians as a Pan-Arab issue, the Israel position based on the realism, that making a deal requires a concrete partner. Therefore, the quasi-regional basis for a greater Arab resolution would be a doomed at implementation. Indeed, the mood of the Arab street at the time, would hardly have been ripe for the embrace of Israel by Arab countries. As the tentative first steps began to commence, subsequently developed a comprehension of red lines, maneuvering room, and the practical boundaries of what could be effectual. The United States was kept in the dark at that point.

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[40] Dayan, M. (1981) *Breakthrough: A Personal Account of the Egypt-Israel Peace Negotiations,* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 80

Both Egypt and Israel were left dismayed by the American bringing of the Soviets into the picture of a Geneva framework. The early secret meeting in Rabat, established the bilateral aspects, bringing the United States into the picture only at a later stage. Once Sadat declared he would visit Jerusalem, subsequently following through, Carter would eventually come to the realization of the desire of both parties, while embracing a prominent role for the United States in the negotiation, would not show affinity to Soviet involvement.[41]

The Egyptian elite were divided as can be seen by the divergent narratives and agendas. The fact that the presiding foreign minister's resignation would affect the new team, subsequently the deputy prime minister would resign at closing moments of Camp David. This dynamic of a hastily recruited foreign policy team, to take over, at speed the burgeoning new visit and subsequent deal, a massive paradigm shifts for Egyptian policy perspective. The Egyptian public was neither prepared nor essentially a willing partner. It was as if Sadat understood that he would not have internal political support but was determined and convinced of his path. Egypt was expelled from the Arab League, yet over time the Egyptian public began to feel the effects of economic development. This societal coming to terms, to a degree, led to the slow realization that peace was of permanence. Even post the Sadat assassination and fears of the treaty's collapse, nevertheless it has held, and each population can look back upon the tens of years of absence of wars between Israel and Egypt, the killing fields of those major wars had stopped.

From the Israeli perspective things were much different. While there were many overtures between Jews and Arabs over the years, since Israel's founding most practical initiatives had come to fraught halt. For thirty years, within the context of overt hostility and major wars, any communication focused on the bare minimums of varied ceasefire agreements, not touching on essential elements of harmony or mediation. Therefore, there was a landmark turning point in the relationship with Sadat's visit. As exhibited historically, Israel was a willing partner from the very beginning. Moreover, it was not for lack of goodwill on the part of Israel, having fought many battles, to have a concrete interest in reconciliation.

Sadat's decision to visit the Knesset in 1977 was a substantial moment. The largest and most significant Arab country was a massive diplomatic achievement. This was even more significant considering the serious wars that had been fought even up till recent history, thus there were two critical national considerations at play. Firstly, the perception among the

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[41] Telhami, *Power and Leadership in International Bargaining*, pp. 110-117

military echelons that if Egypt would go the way of peace would essentially be the ushering of a new era, where major wars against Israel would be a thing of the past, indeed in hindsight the ground invasion threat via Egypt and Syria would be quieted once the Treaty was signed. This may have ushered in the new era of guerrilla warfare starting with Lebanon soon afterwards. Secondly, the unabashed possibilities of peace with Israel's most significant enemy and neighbor, could unleash a major change in Israels regional posture.

Israel leaders from right to left remembered quite clearly the three famous "Nos" of the Khartoum conference, just a few years before. The No's to negotiation, recognition and peace with Israel was the ironclad conclusion, the impetus and driving force behind these momentous rules, had been Egypt. The Israeli political class, the fresh Begin led government, after close to thirty years in opposition, had the historic opportunity to do what no labor party had ever succeeded in accomplishing. This indeed was internalized with tremendous anticipation and emotion on one hand, but also with practical concerns on the other. What would be the outcomes and repercussions concerning the evacuation of Sinai and its villages? What about agreements regarding sovereignty for the Palestinians. Yet this was indeed a time to put aside thirty years, five wars, to perhaps put those memories to rest and work with Sadat toward the potential that the moment had brought. One of the youngest members of the team reflected on the arcs of history, whether ideas or personalities are the sources for change arguing that personal decision-making shaped the days and allowed the discussion of the complex questions in hand. [42]

To these very humanistic and societal concerns, the Abraham Accords would address a uniquely different trajectory from the very beginning. The UAE wanted to break that Iron Curtain of culture, religion, that huge distance in each population, by harnessing business, tourism and an increasing openness and tolerance for the other. However, back in 1978, the dream was to address personal motivations, aspirations on the elite policy level, to break through the ingrained and true fears. Boutros-Ghali remembered how he aimed at convincing two Israeli ministers that the Egyptians are serious, and this was not a tactical trick, realizing

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[42] Rubinstein, E. (2019) *The Players of Camp David: An insider Israeli view on the personalities and ideas that drove the history-making Camp David Accords*. Available at: https://www.thecairoreview.com/essays/the-players-of-camp-david/ (accessed 21/06/2025)

that there is a doubt among the Israelis concerning Egypt's sincerity, which also drew back on Jewish history.[43]

I.7 The Camp David talks

Looking back, historians have studied these 13 days in September from numerous angles. Some have even theorized a mood based on the bleakness of the weather and foliage. Aside from anecdotal evidence, the actual pacing of the days can be characterized as strange. First the Egyptian and Israeli teams were increasingly isolated from each other. With the first few days marred by constant deliberation and ideologies. The Americans were pushing for concrete progress, the Egyptians and Israelis alternatively threatening to leave and packing bags. In the end Mohammed Kamil, the deputy prime minister would resign, immediately at signing, feeling that the Egyptian side, only gaining Sinai, was not going to be sufficient at the price Egypt would pay.

There was an American decision to take all to a joint trip to Gettysburg National Battlefield monument, to give both teams a historical feel and perspective of the arc of history, war, peace and suffering. In the end it simply was a matter of most of the teams' isolations from the most complex back and forth of concessions and give-and-take, from the Egyptian side they felt that Sadat had personally decided to go ahead at all costs. On the Israeli side it was Begin who the most reservations about the status of settlements in the Sinai, bringing that toward a public vote in Knesset and separating the Palestinian issues. While Barak on the Israeli side and Osama al Baz on the Egyptian side collaborated with Carter to draft the actual document.

As Boutros-Ghali reflects about the final steps as the agreement was to be signed "That evening, in my room at the Madison Hotel, I reflected on the strange pattern of these negotiations. Sadat had been flexible while his delegation was rigid, and he used this leverage when confronting the Americans and Israelis. The Israeli side was the reverse; Begin was obstinate, while his accompanying delegation seemed flexible and even indulgent. As for the American side, they simply wanted the negotiations to succeed and were not ready to take into consideration the price Egypt would have to pay eventually. Carter could effectively pressure

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[43] Boutros-Ghali. B. (1997) *Egypt's Road to Jerusalem: a Diplomat's Story of the Struggle for Peace in the Middle East.* New York: Random House, pp. 23-24

Sadat by hinting at the possible end of his political career, while threatening Israel with future American support, thus touching each side's most acute concern.[44]

One of the consequential differences of viewpoints between the varied negotiators would be regarding each other's bottom lines. In fact, seemingly, some on the Israeli team believed that Sadat's true desire was to reclaim the Sinai within the context of Yom Kippur War losses. While some on the Egyptian team envisioned a greater Arab Peace, a vision that included not just the Palestinians, but Egypt leading the way and a greater Arab result. From an Israeli perspective, it was Sadat trying to reframe the Yom Kippur War, fitting into his narrative of winning the war, however the Americans, the third party to the negotiations had yet other ideas. President Carter came to the whole of the Camp David with a singular perspective. He wanted to link the Palestinian issue from the get-go and pushed for a land for peace structure regarding the Sinai settlement and the West Bank. Seeing that Begin would not consider the West Bank abandonment, he chose extensive shuttle diplomacy to then give Begin the West Bank win and allow Sadat the win of a comprehensive withdrawal of Israeli settlements within the entire Sinai Peninsula.[45]

Therefore, a genuinely curious phenomenon can be said to have occurred throughout the negotiations. While many on the Egyptian team may have hoped for much more comprehensive and multilateral nature of the talks, with United States cheering on the position together with Carter's classical hues of idealist geopolitics. However, the reality in hindsight may have been closer to a zero-sum game between Sadat and Begin. Setting aside personal dynamics. And the friction that has been commented on ad nauseum, some noted a level of respect, all in all perhaps only Begin and Sadat understood the terms of the deal. It may have been the notion of the bare knuckles of *realpolitik*, Sadat explaining that he could not do with anything less than the entire Sinai, Begin explaining the while the achievement of peace with Egypt, a first step to normalization, or coming in from the regional frost and isolation, there were limits beyond Sinai with which he could stretch the goodwill, political capital, or perhaps the personal willingness regarding portions of the Land of Israel or Palestinian sovereignty. Therefore, it is suggested, that the men understood each other quite well, with their teams playing catch up, to

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[44] Ibid. p. 151
[45] Quandt, W.B. (1986) *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, pp. 1-30, and p. 63

digest which points were most contested, which were peripheral, and which considerations had no starting point.

This can be contrasted with the very opposite dynamic from the third leader who would feature at Camp David, President Jimmy Carter. The two politicians from the Middle East. with a world of experience in geopolitics, diplomacy and military, were different than Carter. A political outsider, from the relative periphery of the American South, an outsider both to Washington and even to the fierce national political scene. His idealistic approach may have intersected with that of the other two leaders. That they, Begin and Sadat, may privately have concluded that the only realistic approach would feature primarily a bilateral agreement, to which Carter the notion may have only occurred much later in the process. Inasmuch as Carter was a necessary energy for the accords to come about, this enthusiasm that was indispensable, it was also members of his team who clearly saw the ripening of conditions between what was on offer form Sadat and the readiness on the Israeli side.

Sadat and Begin's interpersonal relations and readiness to communicate was apparent to Carter, and this also was reflected in Carter's feeling that if the mediation would fail, there would be no chance at similar breakthrough. Thus, the shuttle diplomacy, so often associated with Kissinger on his disengagement talks following the Yom Kippur War, now had been taken on by an understudy. Carter would try to quarterback the teams'; cognizant he saw that a breakthrough was possible. Indeed, this vision may have contributed to the very dynamic that allowed this diplomacy to work. The cultures and interpersonal dynamic, and essential features of interculturalism, were beginning to mesh.

Thus, the realism and savvy that allowed Begin and Sadat to know their red lines and areas with maneuver room, combined with Carter's vision that allowed him to see beyond the critiques, the limitation even the intransience that were the nature of many issues, allowed him to keep pushing, facing immense pressure from both sides, threats from both teams to abandon the talks, allowed him to push for his vision. While the product may have not resembled the vison for the Greater Arab -Israel treaties, nevertheless the substantial breaking of the ice with a genuine bilateral agreement, that would withstand the test of time was a paradigm shifting breakthrough.

The dynamics of the negotiations also required the Israeli team to explain the security implications of the PLO and any such negotiations. What may have seemed to be nuances to the Egyptians was in fact the life and death terror charter of the PLO. This Egyptian team had

distinct perspective which would need to be faced. The Israel team needed to impress upon their new potential partners that while Egypt's good standing within the nations of the world, a state could confer a certain legitimacy and reverence for a document and could give reality toward declaration with the context of the previous wars, the PLO in contrast, would need to be reframed for the Egyptian perspective. They viewed a series of historical injustices being inflicted upon the local Palestinians from their perspectives, which colored their view of the conflict.

As many reflect upon this time in history, there are those who would remember Carter as the President who would not back the Palestinian Statehood idea. Then there is the claim that the Egyptians wanted this resolution and only the Israelis held them back. It can be argued that while Sadat's primary objective was the reclaiming of the Sinai Peninsula, the other major objective, while some thought it was the Palestinian issue, in fact may have been alignment with the United States and the West. While Nasser and the previous Egyptian regime had been pro Soviet and had welcomed Soviet influence and willingly included itself into that sphere in the Cold War, Sadat had a genuinely unique perspective. Sadat viewed the Soviets not as the way forward for Egyptian progress he saw the Western model as the primary example that should be emulated. Thus, his road to Washington, as it could be speculated, was paved with the intentions he exhibited and finalized with the Camp David Treaty.

As such the Palestinian issue perhaps neither did not feature as a primary cause nor as a macro motivator, and when the Palestinians proved to be of utmost inflexibility, he may have decided that the issue was no worth the trouble. Furthermore, having no mandate from the Palestinian citizenry or leadership left the Egypt positioning quite uncertain in negotiating for such endeavors. This was understandably coupled with the very real reservation, security concerns of Israel. Thus, the Palestinian agenda was never more than a possibility, one floated and discussed but never making through the market of raw geopolitical currency. As one journalist reflects on this moment, from his perspective, Carter realized that Begin would not budge on the West Bank since he believed it was historically an essential part of Israel, and that focusing on the Palestinian issue would prevent the summit succeeding. Egypt, on the same note, was concerned about Sinai and would not give up the possibility of receiving it back due to Palestinian interests.[46]

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[46] Daigle, C. (2018) *The loser of the Camp David Accords*. Available at:
https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2018/09/19/loser-camp-david-accords (accessed at 21/05/2025)

Fundamentally, the fact that the two sides had enough common ground to be able move forward with the primary bilateral peace initiative was of such momentous nature, that Carter could allow other objectives, views of Palestinians self-determination to wait for occasions in history where the political players were closer to resolution. It would take many years until Oslo for the PLO and Arafat to begin to comprehend that their intransience would not bring them further, indeed although they achievement of some sovereignty did move forward with that Oslo process.

The Egyptian team, Sadat in particular, needed a major win coming back from Camp David. The fact that he was able to reacquire the entire Siani without any Israeli settlements, was a major achievement for him. Additionally, it provided a big boost to Egypt on the world stage and giving it a place in the United States regional posture and architecture via-a-vis the Soviet Union. The United States had effectively pulled Egypt into its sphere of influence. For the Carter team this was a significant win-win situation. The implication of the shaping of the Middle East is closer to a US design and away from Soviet orbit would have major implications. That this was accomplished while also bringing the Israel-Egypt wars to a close made the former achievement all the sweeter. From the Israeli perspective, the achievement of peace with their strongest adversary and new balance in the middle east was one significant factor. Considering the historical scope of the fact that just a few months later Iran would fall to revolution, Israel lost one of its most significant allies in the region.

I.8 Finalizing the peace agreement

Once the terms of the negotiations became clearer to both parties, the setting was ready for the final stretch. As noted by Bird,[47] Carter focused on the tactics and personas before Camp David. They found Sadat up in the clouds, but warm and effusive and Begin to be pedantic on the small or legalistic details. They felt that Sadat's hand was weaker and that Begin could emerge from Camp David and survive politically without a deal. Therefore, it can be summarized that Sadat needed the treaty, Carter, failing domestically and politically was also extremely invested in its success. The Israeli team was perhaps the only one where the players knew the bottoms lines clearly. That is, Sadat and Carter ideologically and personally had affinity for each other, which clouded their negotiations, as they both thought that the Palestinian issue must be linked,

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[47] Bird, K. (2021) *The Outlier: The Unfinished Presidency of Jimmy Carter.* New York: Crown, p. 329

each for their own reasons. It may be surmised that the Israeli position was much more nuanced for two reasons: The Egyptians had broken with the Arab world and demonstrated courage, they had concrete aims, but the Palestinian issue was in the clouds. There was no practical partner, not even to work with the United States or Egypt.

Later at implementation stage Dayan noted that Boutros-Ghali tried to coax Israel to help Sadat politically.[48] The Egyptians believed that if Israel could make concessions to the Palestinians, then it would go a long way to saving face regarding public opinion within the Arab world. To which Dayan responded in the negative, that Israel was prepared to go a long way in making a treaty with an Arab willing partner, however tying such effort to another deal, with an unwilling partner, whatever the motivations, was simply not in the realm of realism.

What Dayan had observed is a metaphor for the entire realm of negotiations and can be said to influence the thinking of framers of the Abraham Accords forty years later. He understood that red lines are practical boundaries. These form limitations not unlike physical fortifications. His observations were drawn from his varied, extensive and storied celebrated military career. Indeed, Boutros-Ghali notes throughout his book, that while initially put off by Dayan's firm rejection of the linkage, would eventually come around to understanding Dayan's reticence. It was not that Israel would not desire a genuine plan and resolution for the Palestinian issue, rather it was the nature of the representatives, their mindset and tactics, which invariably pushed any moderate discussion away, thus Israel would not legislate that could not be accomplished in the present time.[49]

Carter and the United States team along with Sadat and Egyptian team found Begin unmovable, this is because they believed that as Sadat had risked his career on this initiative, so Israel should give up on parts of Eretz Yisrael. However, repeatedly the Begin team explained that Sinai would be the maximum, and even that was momentous. In this light the American and Egyptian demands can be liked to those who strive for desired, not what is feasible. Boutros-Ghali's varied disappointments, as seen by Dayan, show that the Israelis were not ready or able for a greater change in thinking toward an Arab World that did not even acknowledge their existence.[50]

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[48] Dayan, *Breakthrough,* p. 207
[49] Ibid. pp. 245-260
[50] Ibid.

This was then, a more grounded approach dealing with Carter's idealism a blow. However, there was significant geopolitical Cold War architecture that was helpful to the United States. Because now Egypt would move firmly into the Western orbit, with Sadat's personal animosity to the Russians, and the massive financial strain that required new thinking on the Egyptian strategic planning front. From the Israeli perspective the Palestinian autonomy question would plague Begin throughout the Camp David negotiations. There was simply too much at stake. Nevertheless, at the finale, the document did not discuss Palestinian statehood or delf-determination. Critically, in the security sphere the status of Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria were left untouched.[51]

Egypt was brought along by the vision of Sadat and some select statesman, his assassination reflects a society rocked by the treaty. Thus, Egypt would get what it was ready for, a cold a stable and limited peace and the Sinai, for Israel could never deliver to or for, partners not at the table. This would be of some convenience for Begin and some on his team, as they did not have a broad mandate in dealing Palestinian autonomy. Inasmuch as the political risk or gamble for Sadat was more prominent, Begin was aware of the limits to what he can offer the Egyptians vis-à-vis Palestinians which would then be transferred the terrorist PLO camp. Thus, the Egyptian position and that of the United States to some extent, were left holding the Palestinian bag as the was no geopolitical reality, no commonness of ground toward a greater peace initiative between Palestinian representation, as such, and Israel. Sadat came to the negotiations with the goal of Sinai in mind, Begin came the table with the very treaty as the goal, can be surmised.

Looking back at these events from the vantage point of the Abraham Accords, these historical events perhaps had a way in shaping the character of the Gulf States, a genuine embrace of pragmatism, or a Singaporean detachment and warming of general ties with all, a look toward regional partnerships and major financial potential.[52] The Arab Street after all these tumultuous events, was no longer the Arab street of the seventies. Even the evolution of Saudia Arabia, as being shaped by the rise of Mohamed Bin Salman, saw strides in opening a cloistered shuttered society. The embrace of many liberal steps within the Saudi culture, and the rapid changes in the Gulf states posture and culture can be argued to directly impact the status of the cultural

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[51] For a wider discussion on internal opposition to aspect of the peace treaty, See: Bar-On, M. (1996) *In Pursuit of Peace: A History of the Israeli Peace Movement.* Washington, DC: USIP Press, pp.188-197
[52] Guzansky, Y. (2015) "Israel and the Arab Gulf States: From tacit cooperation to reconciliation*?" Israel Affairs* 21:1, pp. 131-147

mood of the regional Arab street and narrative. Thus, the steps had been taken to usher in a new era, of less partisanship, a search for the combined strengths of mutual values, traditions and norms. This was very different from reality in the late seventies, when the first accords were signed. As reminisced by one of the youngest attendees on the Israeli team. Rubinstein's account noted, in this context, that while there is an embassy in Cairo, it does not function like other embassies in the world and seldom promotes cultural or civil activities. Peace is valuable because it is strategic, especially in the field of anti-terrorism, but education for peace and the attitude of the media need improvement.[53]

I.9 The cold peace and the warm peace

Within the context of normalization, understanding the underpinnings of a warm peace one must consider the state of mind of Egyptian President Sadat in the years leading up to before he left for Jerusalem and paved the way for peace. As Podeh notes, the Egyptian president was reluctant to sign a peace treaty and preferred signing a peace agreement in order not to avoid immediate normalization.[54] As the ties between Egypt and Israel became a *fait accompli* in the Middle East, this would lead to the next monumental treaty, signed with Jordan in 1994. This agreement was markedly different from the previous, as cooperation and understanding leaning closer to an atmosphere of normalization were discussed. This, however, should not come as a surprise since there was an history of long informal relations between the countries even before Israel was created. In fact, King Hussein met at least 50 times with Israeli prime ministers before negotiations began and even warned Israel from the possibility of war in 1973. The countries held a long cooperation in security as well as water issues many years before the official agreement.[55]

In essence the acceptance phase ushered by Egypt was followed by a cooling period because of Sadat's murder, hence the term cold peace.[56] Aside from modeling and styles, the ensuing forty years left a very new world with which the starting points for negotiations would be of entirely different tone and style. After the Jordanian Peace treaty in 1996 and slow warming of ties, covert ties and security cooperations with varied Arab states, the starting points were

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[53] Rubinstein, *The players of Camp David*
[54] Podeh, *The Many faces of normalization*
[55] Ibid.
[56] For an up-to-date discussion on this term, see: Sallam, M. & Winter. O. (2017) "Egypt and Israel: forty years in the desert of cold peace," *Strategic Assessment* 20:3, pp. 21-34

exceedingly different. The major strains of a cold peace, cultural exchanges that never-to-people connection were almost nonexistent. Therefore, the temperature of the new developing dynamic would be critical. Would the UAE and Gulf States seek another cold peace, were they ready for something warmer peace drastically different, with full openness and cultural exchange, or would there be something in the medium between these two?

While the Jordanian peace had never been one of warm ties, an agreement of recognition, shared water and resources and the essential United States support. However, the relationship cannot be characterized as ever having been as one of warmth. Thus, the ensuing years did not foster any period of distinct breakthrough. However, there is the aspect of new breaking of the ice, when Jordan entered the pool of players, who deemed and deigned Israel as a worthy partner created a new precedent for legitimacy. While Israel has long enjoyed broad legitimacy internationally, the desire for regional acceptance was always present and a major asset to stability. Thus, Jordan joining the ranks of successful negotiation, with the stewardship of United States President Bill Clinton, the Wadi Araba agreements, between Jordan and Israel were signed.

This too helped usher a new paradigm of regional inevitability. The surrounding monarchies, states and regimes had taken notice of the new *status quo*. This also can be taken in the context of Israel's friendly relationship with Morocco. Thus, another Arab country had joined Egypt. The original formula of boycott had lost another key component. This may be in some ways considered form a domino effect perspective. The process of normalization had not only started but was slowly gathering momentum. However initially Jordan's move met with criticism from the establishment Arab perspective. This led to some ostracism from the Gulf, not quite ready for these developments, cutting of financial aid initiatives, yet was also welcomed by Egypt.

There was now another major Arab country which was willing to come to terms with Israel's existence publicly. The fostering of some ties, however progressive and future seeking, ultimately there was the familiar hue of the treaty, the same coldness devoid of the normative or humanistic, without the development of ties on social levels. This would be then seen, in direct contrast, in Camp David Accords in the people-to-people connections. Yet, over the ensuing 40 years major factors played a role in the changing landscape, with the rise of the Iranian Shia threat, the Jordanian Peace and westernization of the Gulf societies, to name a few. One cannot underestimate the role of the Iran Nuclear deal (JCPLA) in 2015. Western maneuvering proved to Arab Gulf countries that Western countries were not taking the Iran

threat with appropriate gravity. Yet, Israel was taking it seriously. This led to a dawning realization that Israel is not only a cold partner, but a potential warm partner, willing to confront the region's greatest bully, even if alone. This warm new attitude did not happen overnight. It was allowed to happen thanks to Egypt's landmark shift.

The Abraham Accords are another major fulfillment of Sadat's vision that peace between the Arab peoples and Israel can be achieved. The United Arab Emirates, a distant polity, yet exceedingly influential, chose a new paradigm of treaty. Indeed, all evidence indicate to the success of these agreements: the hordes of Israeli tourists travelling to Dubai with flights continuing despite of the 7 October war and increasing violent narratives in other Arab capitals, the massive trade agreements, security and business cooperation point to a new model of normalization.

More than the Egypt or Jordanian treaties, the Abraham Accords demonstrated a great shift in understanding between civilizations. After more than one hundred years of Jewish resurgent presence in the Holyland, Arab intelligentsia began to acknowledge Jewish history. A just understanding not only of Jewish suffering and the drive for a national homeland, but an internalization of equal opportunity. This is proven by the honest recognition of the Jew and his place in the Middle East and acknowledging hundreds of years of mutual history and harmonious coexistence. This directly contrasts and indeed combats popular narratives of colonialism.

This warm peace and normalization, then, moved efficiently to a vibrant thriving people-to-people connection on the ground level, in the malls and tourist frameworks. Without latent animosity, the Gulf Arabs were free to see Israeli's as fellow man, inevitably these personal connections only enhanced the thriving warm relations on the national levels. The people-to-people undercurrent fostered by the United Arab Emirates was perhaps a third phase in Arab Israel relations. This maturation stage could only be reached after historical processes evolved. The UAE overtures, such as creating a museum recognizing Jewish suffering,[57] shows a stage of internalization of Israel in the region. From the span of denial to recognition came the era of normalization. Thus, normalization is a result of maturity, sensitivity and mutual respect for

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[57] Staff, T. (30/01/2023), *As UAE embraces Holocaust studies, museum displays Torah scroll saved in genocide.* Available at: https://www.timesofisrael.com/as-uae-embraces-holocaust-studies-museum-displays-torah-scroll-saved-in-genocide (accessed 21/06/2025)

another's culture. This was only possible as each phase paved the way for the next, as a slow, steady process.

While the Egyptian accords were designed to help normalize relations including diplomatic, economic and cultural ties, people-to-people normalization failed to be reached. Two Academic Centers representing each culture were planned, the Israel Academic Center in Cairo has been all but banned, the Egypt Academic Center planned for Tel Aviv never opened. In contrast, the atmosphere in the Gulf countries is obviously different, with hundreds of memorandums, investments, and collaborations signed.[58] More importantly, research into Twitter (now X) has shown that this cooperation and the accords were extremely popular among the younger generations within the UAE.[59]

I.10 Conceptual and societal changes leading to the Abraham Accords

For all its regional resilience, its hard power and soft influence on global scale, Israel was still ostracized and unable to win the hearts and minds in the Middle East, even after the peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan. On occasion Israel would find some method to combat these instinctive prejudices by acts of goodwill, such as disaster relief and humanitarian assistance.[60] This, when given some public light and media attention, has fostered some questioning of narrative. The basic problem had not gone away, i.e. the problem of labeling, seen in schools and other social dynamics, where such that a normalization was an effort to alleviate the remoteness, or awkward socializations of an individual within a group. To remove the label and to move the remote to familiar. Once knowledge and familiarity are achieved, a level of humane behavior can be seen to be an outcome of normalization.

On a national level, within the regional framework, Israel had minimal tools to combat this isolation and achieve normalization, recognition and the social humane knowledge that arrives along with personal contact within two societies. Jordan, having broken another social barrier, helped this process along within a gradual tempering of conditions. This would not be a massive shift toward democratic awareness and embrace of the outcast, however the gradual approach,

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[58] Boms, N. & Khuzaie, A. (2022) "Warm peace in the making – examining P2P relations two years to the Abraham Accords." *Transatlantic Policy Quarterly* 21:3, pp. 127-132

[59] Fikrie, H., Pradana H.A., & Suhermanto, D.F. (2022) "Sentiments via #Abrahamaccords on the UAE and Israel normalization." *Jurnal Komunikasi Global* 11:2, pp. 227-247

[60] Rubin, B.M. (1983) *The Arab States and the Palestine Conflict.* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, pp. 213-225

whether intentional or historical process, can be seen to have a powerful effect and affect over time.

Over time, all these processes began to meet a new generation of Gulf youth. These individuals and groups had not grown up within the enmity of Arab Israel conflicts. Having less personal engagement with these hostilities helped foster an openness to something new, a possibility of engagement.[61] Within the knowledge of backchannel cooperation, positive perceptions of Israel were a growing young paradigm leaning toward engagement instead of fostering the old ostracism. It must be notes that within monarchies like the Gulf states, there can be contrary public opinion and a fostering of initiative that is not embraced by the people. However, as benign rulers, the Gulf states judged that enough time had passed, the people-to-people business ties having flourished, enabled a new beginning. Although Israel as a conceptual political idea or framework may be quite foreign and despised in context, meeting its people and fostering of the goodwill of relationship has not been hindered.

This can also be seen in hindsight within the partnerships, business cooperation and tourism which flourished. Had the historical context been one of simmering hostility, the mass of flight and hordes of tourists would never have been a viable reality. Thus, a look backward sheds light, while narratives and media may portray the average Gulf citizen as to be unsupportive of the Abaraham Accords, the facts on the ground, the cooperation and increased toleration and goodwill toward the visiting Israeli's show that the reality on the ground is nuanced, the erasing of old and fostered narratives take time to be erased.

While once the narrative of an evil Israel, was often the easy target, for Arab leaders to distract their populace from domestic failings, this narrative had come to a hundred eighty-degree turn. Those who would once influence the culture of hate were now at the forefront of fostering a new era of dialogue. Thus, when commentators note, with some caution, that the Gulf populations have not joined the bandwagon of positivity toward Abraham Accords, this must be viewed with some healthy skepticism. For key opinion leaders, and the shaping of new public positive norms, is gradual process, without heady or early results. However, the nuance and the new direction were present. Thus, in the context of positive people-to-people Gulf tourism interactions, can be said to be laying another layer of normative association for the ultimate acceptance of the former pariah State.

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[61] Gause, F.G. (2010) *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 198-203

Therefore, while there may be, mixed feeling in the gulf vis-à-vis Isreal as a whole, this has not stopped a trajectory of acceptance, bringing in from the cold isolation of embargo and boycott to a unique environment with lessened stigmas and a leaning toward engaging dialogue. As is portrayed, this was one of the inherent strengths of the framing of these accords while contrasting this social absence with the Camp David Accords. While the Abraham Accords could not achieve massive social normalization, it could allow conditions to improve. By allowing the average citizens to meet, it was a finite step in such a direction. While the average Gulf citizen may not deign and express interest in visit to Israel, as such the interactions are mostly one-sided. Nevertheless, the fact of integration lessening stigmatization and normalization are still fostered with these interactions. If the Gulf would not come to meet Israel, Israel came to meet it.

I.11 Framing of Abraham Accords: old model versus new model

Starting with a *tabula rasa*, the people involved in the accords envisioned the broad and comprehensive nature of a new peace agreement. The Accords were designed as an innovative new style of diplomacy, incorporating geoeconomics and working toward a wave of normalization. This was originally envisioned by some Egyptian and American framers of the Camp David treaty, however the moment in history did not allow implementation. It was the Israeli team realism, knowing thirty years of isolation, with deep realization of how far Egypt had come, with Sadat's prodding, that they instinctively knew that much of Arab world was not along on the diplomatic ride, they simply were not ready. On the Israeli side issues of sovereignty and autonomy were extremely complex then, as they remain to this day. [62]

However, the new Gulf mindset, and Israeli willingness, to build relationships trough technological partnerships, economic cooperation and cultural exchange avoiding the classical diplomatic channels for much of the breakthroughs. There was also the potential for security cooperation and focus on the common threat of Iran via reimagined regional security architecture.[63] The increased levels of trade, leveraging economic incentives, investments and joint ventures all played a more prominent role than in traditional diplomacy. An emphasis on

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[62] Ross, D. (2022) "The Abraham Accords and the Changing Middle East.". Available at: https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/abraham-accords-and-changing-shape-middle-east (accessed 21/06/2025)
[63] Alterman J.B. (2023) "Biden's Efforts to Bring Saudi Arabia into the Abraham Accords". Available at: http://csis.org/analysis/bidens-efforts-bring-saudi-arabia-abraham-accords (accessed at: 21/06/2025)

the cultural and personal connections between the average citizens was imagined breaking some barriers and forming a quite different model than the Camp David results. Although Bahrain and Morocco would join these initiatives, exhibiting widespread support, informal or tacit support or a nod from Saudi Arabia, and the blessings of Oman. Sudan however, initially a part of the normalization process because of the internal turmoil and war would not finalize these stages. In the perspective of the United States, accused by many for years, of slowly abandoning the region, addressed these concerns by acting as a patron, overseeing the steps of the Accord, and willingly embracing a new model of thinking about the conflict.

Classical foreign policy had worked with the assumption, backed by prominent accepted normative international relations theory and approaches, that there was no tool or method to approach reconciliation and rapprochement with any Arab state without dealing with the Palestinian issue. Over the course of tens of years, the accepted dogma was set almost in stone, no deals, negotiations without a long-term solution for the Palestinian issue. President Trumps electoral victory in 2017, set a new tone for thinking about diplomacy and the old theories of International Relations. They were interested to investigate if the issues could not be focused more upon financial aspects, the Trumpian dealmaking phenomenon, also viewed the Palestinian question as haven been stuck for so long, that a new approach was needed for a stale moribund process, this without the Palestinian issue in place, a viable starting ground.

Israel was more than willing to explore a new chapter in the regional relationships. The Sunni Arab states of the Gulf, led by UAE, with discreet approval of the Saudis, also felt the time was right for fresh thinking. A new theoretical framework was catching hold. The Gulf saw much common ground with Israel in facing the Iranian threat, that the gulf separating Israel and them was not as wide as imagined. The areas of mutual interests were ever growing, and a developing framework and partnership was viewed as good counterweight, strategic investment, and accounted for the Gulf frustrations with the Palestinians. Slowly the Gulf leadership began to lose patience with the varied Palestinian leadership and began to look for their own regional interests and security vis-a-via the lens of the Israel paradigm also.

Much like the Palestinian issue had plagued the initial Camp David accords, with perceived Israeli intransience from Arab quarters, the failures of Oslo and subsequent excesses, weakness, corruption and dysfunction of the Palestinian Authority led the Gulf to realization that there was a Palestinian lack of willing and pragmatic ability to move forward. Therefore, separation occurred. It was also a decline of centrality of the Palestinian conflict in the eyes of many

interlocuters, allowing for a greater integration of Israel into the region. According to Harari, the changes in the region sent the Palestinian issue to the limelight, rendering its solution as impractical, or based on an assumption that there is no real partner for solving it.[64]

Additionally in terms of public opinion in the newly cosmopolitan UAE, while there was still some popular sympathy for the Palestinian cause, it no longer ranked high on the list of Arab priorities. In the past this had translated into a paralysis of momentum for any initiative. The Gulf States, from a variety of calculations and considerations, undertook to move ahead with the feasible, linking this progress with a hope toward future possibilities for a negotiation or resolution vis-à-vis the Palestinians when the time would be ripe. Indeed, as of this writing, as Israel pummels the Iranian nuclear program, doing the regional and international work, the gulf states realize part of the investment within Israels regional security architecture.

Abu Dhabi created a new narrative, after which many countries found enthusiasm in this wake. The story must have a context and a part of a thinking within the foresighted foreign policy of the UAE. Within the evolving social and political triggers in the post-Arab spring, Global War on terror, and evolving American shift toward China, the UAE saw possibilities in forming greater partnership with the United States. As Al-Ketbi notes,[65] the United States in its search for shifting from a focus in the Middle East, did seek to work with and empower regional partners, access to superior US weaponry, this has led and shaped how the Emirates seeks to interact. Working together and focusing on regional development, partners who seek to develop locally, that is visibly providing regional strength by action, helping to shape the region in a new direction. This argues for the Unites Staes Israel and the UAE to be bringing change to the region from within, as opposed to old models of foisting change and ideas, building democracy from liberal American or European perspectives.

When the global superpower status whether unipolar or multipolar, the regional players look toward the most viable table and partners with whom one can make deals, security first, balance the rise of Iran or even the extremism of Muslim brotherhood support within Sunni Staes. Moderation, the new outgoing foreign policies, to counter extremism from within, opposition to all transnational radical ideologies, which cause some states to flounder or fail, this proactive approach, from support of moderation in Egypt to countering radicalism in Yemen, to counter

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[64] Harari, M. (2022) "Israeli foreign policy in light of dramatic changes in the region: diplomatic success and challenges ahead." *Transatlantic Policy Quarterly* 21:3, p. 73
[65] Al Ketbi E. (2020) "Contemporary shifts in the UAE foreign policy: from the liberation of Kuwait to the Abraham Accords." *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 14:3, p. 397

these violent forms and radical political agendas, thus a voice of contemporary governance, while Islamic, yet proactive in seeking to define and defend a moderation that had not been seen regionally.[66]

As the regional analysis has its strength, and all players have their individual interests, yet the conditioning of events and history is coming to bear, the weight of unresolved issues have relevance within the strategies employed by Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and others. Aside from Kuwait, the GCC where quite supportive of the normalizations. There have been arguments put forward as to the effects of the Arab Spring, the emerging safety decline, the popular emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood model. Qatar and Turkey played an outsize role in fostering a climate in the last ten years, that has destabilized and rocked the domestic politics in the Gulf. Following the Arab Spring and the war in Yemen, has further crystallized the notion that Qatar and Turkey were actors with malign intent vis-à-vis the merging Gulf States, they were pulling back from moderate Islam and favoring more support for Muslim Brotherhood activism and extremist ideology, using levers of influence such as Al Jazeera.

As Qatar leaned further away from moderate policies and more like Iran, acting in destabilizing manner, funding radical Sunni elements, as Iran with Shiite and Sunni radical terror. The Gulf imposed an embargo, expulsion from the Arab league, including Egypt, Bahrain, Saudia Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. This was not another diplomatic row, rather a far-reaching chasm, a blockade, banning ships and aircraft and blocking their only land crossing. This was not just some general friction, this was two worldviews colliding. Although some Western viewers may have been immune, apathetic to a regional division, or even some political players trying naively to lecture the Gulf States on peace with Qatar. However, this can be viewed as a coming-of-age, where Arab countries with a view toward moderation, acting, initiative and responsivity, and the future stability were publicly and forcefully a vehement rejection of terror and radical indoctrination. The Qataris had entered the Iran's destabilizing and backward turn. This coincided with the aftermath of Arab Spring, the global war on ISIS and Al-Qaida providing a backdrop for the fury of the Middle East.

Thus, has been shown there were a wide variety of elements which caused the Gulf states like the Emiratis to begin viewing Israel in a different light. However, it is the theory of this paper that the roots of all these historical events, political alignments that eventually began, the Abraham accord process were seeds planted long before. While the fruits of normalization had

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[66] Ibid, p. 395

not been seen, for a myriad of years, each decade brought further along in a societal evolution. As Saudia had to contend with the aftereffects of the World Trade Center attacks, the attackers, the Bin-Laden family, there were major choices for these Sunni societies to take. Once the UAE and Bahrain and Saudia Arabia began the path toward moderation, a distancing from the old Wahabis fundamentalism, the opening of public freedoms, the paradigm altering route of Abu Dhabi, allowing for more individual freedoms. Many different societal shifts in the last twenty years, as societies push for modernization, increasing global interconnected travel, tourism and genuine desires to branch out from oil dependence or the curse of great natural resources.

As the Gulf began to develop its human potential and talent, old hatreds had the potential to be reexamined. The dogmas were dusted off, critically evaluating the various actors. It could be argued that not just Israel was held up in new light but its relationship with Palestinians could come into question. While various factions have always tugged at the Gulf emotional connection, and massive investment in varied projects. Within a modern critical evaluation, emerged a new consensus regarding the Palestinian groups. There were billions invested, year after year of progress, yet the Palestinians were not any closer to state building. Leaving aside Hamas and other terror groups, the Palestinian Authority was viewed in many quarters as massively corrupt, inept, weak and uninspired. The old reasoning of always blaming the convenient Israeli's was beginning to wear thin. Thus, this frustration resulted in Gulf funds to specific groups and not the PA directly, because of the massive corruption. The paradigm had shifted drastically, such that with the timing, the JCPOA deal with Iran, led to a reckoning of who the forces of stability in the region genuinely were.

I.12 The basic elements of the Abraham Accords

There would be a fresh start. The formulas of the past would be abandoned. New thinking was required. The contexts, frameworks, essential thinking and conventional diplomatic approaches would be challenged. Thus, a year's-long process began to shift the emotions regarding Israel, the long-held views, the absolutist zero sum approach, and the cooling phase which was slowly warming up. Anecdotally, one may observe within the warming of ties, mutuality of interests from security and stability to a deepening realization of mutual threat environments. This does not imply that warming is one of necessities or convenience.

The great shift in perception would happen slowly, over time, together with many internal domestic changes within the UAE even Saudia Arabia and Bahrain, with its more conservative populace, so that the societies were in a different mindset and equilibrium. Thus, when the mutuality of interests began to merge, it was within a vastly different societal context. One that was fundamentally dissimilar to the historical and societal context of Camp David. When in contemporary historical recent events came together with these great shifts, this convergence was too much to ignore.

Major events, such as Prime Minister Netanyahu speech to the joint houses of Congress, while alienating some, and commentators feeling like was direct challenge, rebuke to the sitting President, nevertheless had an emergent result. The Gulf Arabs, having changed internally, sensed a new friend, an ally in an increasingly threatening regional landscape. Thus, none of the evolution was in a vacuum. From Camp David to current times, society's slight changes, over many years, led to a dawning of realities, a convergence of interests, mutuality of concerns, similar cost benefit analysis.

The paradigm of coexistence can contain a variation of meaning or intent. It may include meaningful interaction and work toward bridge-building. However, cooperation can imply a certain spirit or willingness to face issues in a joint fashion. This is explored in the intentions and limitations of the treaties and agreements. The new peace model: Financial/Security Regional – the major framers including Jared Kushner, leading the negotiations, a senior advisor and son-in-law of President Trump, Avi Berkowitz also a senior advisor to President.[67] Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and others on the national security teams in the US would play key roles in framing the Accords. Trump modeled the Accords on enhancing cooperation in the fields of technology, economic development and regional security.

The fact that some cultures in the Middle East had embraced some antisemitic tropes over the years, meant that this would be a serious one. Winkler finds that the state of war that was already upon Israel and Egypt can be seen as a major catalyst for the Camp David Accords.[68] Whereas when the Abraham Accords were framed this was in an objectively different environment. Therefore, he sees the Camp David approach as having been a product of War whereas the Abraham Accords came from a different root cause. That philosophically, war

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[67] Kushner, J. (2022) *Breaking History: A White House Memoir.* New York: Broadside Books, pp. 401-415
[68] Winkler, Z.J. (2025) "The Abraham Accords, a stable bridge in unstable times: an assessment of the Accords and their role in achieving peace in the Middle East." *Intergovernmental Research and Policy Journal* 2025

would bring about peace, does not ensure that peace is a warm one. The lack of nurture, the driving enmity and anger, would help formulate terms and red lines, yet not foster any environment for friendship. However, attitude changed over time, and some societies did not integrate hatred into implementable steps. Nations that had never had war with Israel, are perhaps riper for generational change of warm accords.

Lightstone argues that it was the initial steps that Jared Kushner led an initiative in late June 2019 in Bahrain.[69] Kushner brought leaders from north Africa and the Middle East to a workshop entitled Peace to Prosperity. With dozens of the pivotal leadership present, with notable consistent absence, having been invited, of any Palestinian leadership excepting nine business leaders. The point of the workshop was to portray an investment of fifty billion dollars in the Palestinian people to help them transition from economic aid to start building models of self-sufficient economy. Lightstone argues that the demonstration met with great positivity even though there was no perfect bullet. By presenting Israel as an economic model and the potential of tech innovation showed that other states in the region could bandwagon unto the progress an economic opportunity. This also portrayed a path forward for Palestinian growth and aspiration.[70]

While it may be argued whether Bahrain was following the lead of the United Arab Emirates or whether the nod from Saudia Arabia was the deciding factor, what is crucial is that there was a regional need for a security buffer against Iran. Also significant was the pacing done by American team. Being led by business savvy and pragmatism, the Accords would not be stalled by nuance or procedure. The rapid pacing, an El Al airplane landing in Abu Dhabi mere days before which there were no formal ties between the nations. Winkler finds that the accords may have been on shallow legal ground, this may have been by design not omission.[71] Nevertheless its emphasis on cooperation and voluntary nature show that the ties were meant to be fostered on stronger levels. This means that while the Camp David treaties had legal and binding effects, they were also limited by their very nature and design. The framework was cold, calculated and argued about ad nauseum, to the finest point of the Law. There were two combatant parties, each trying to sway the treaty in her nation's favor and direction. This interplay would have long lasting effects. It demonstrated that while there was some goodwill, the character of the

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[69] Lightstone, A. (2022) *Behind the curtain at the creation of the Abraham Accords*. Available at: https://jstribune.com/lightstone-behind-the-curtain-of-the-abraham-accords/(accessed 21/06/2025)
[70] Lightstone, A. (2022) *Let My People Know: The Incredible Story of Middle East Peace – and What Lies Ahead.* Salem Books, pp. 201-210
[71] Winkler, *The Abraham Accords*

agreement was limited. The nature of its scope was narrow because the leaders and their populations were not at stages of abundant goodwill. Therefore, there was constant jostling, a maneuvering for better terms, not unlike haggling for the best terms. This would not be an exemplary modeling for future agreements.

While the nature of that historic moment, the expediency dictated the nature and styling of treaty, it would not bode well if future agreements followed this tone and legalistic character. Thus, the Abraham Accords even their very framing came not only in vastly different geopolitical reality, changed contemporary setting, but was evidenced by a total change of mindset and character of participants. The amount of goodwill, the lack of a brewing conflict or war driver, could foster a wholly benign atmosphere of macro reconciliation. Thus, the Accords would focus on diplomatic partnership and cultural sharing. Winkler finds that there was signaling to the region at large. This was a new narrative and messaging within the power dynamic of the Middle East, finding that the old focus on the traditional outlook of conflict between Muslim and Jew would be reframed or would achieve a new emerging consensus if albeit not embraced by all regional partners. The frame and popular narrative would begin to shift toward the possibilities of economic cooperation, economic security and the joint awareness of the threat of Iranian malign influence. This also sees Saudia Arabia as a byproduct, coming closer to the newly cooperative frameworks. The pragmatism evinced even in face of lack of overt popular support, speaks to complicated nuanced geopolitical and local level environments.[72]

While naysayers may point to the lack of popular support for the Accords, it is valuable to view the internal political environments. While the framing and general positivity evinced by the elite of the UAE and Gulf societies, the nature of the time and the lack of conflict and war are a salient point. The fact that there was no pressing need, no driving overriding factor or need, no pressing timeline or major pressure can be said to have contributed to the flexibility and inherent cooperative nature of the Accord design. That is, while normalization has a formalistic aspect, the exchange of ambassadors, the establishment and functioning of embassies, the fanfare of retinue and diplomatic formality. Yet the Accords contain a richer element, seen above, in its very intention. The fact that personal relationships of business concerns, the mass of tourism, brings the very human element that was lacking in all previous Arab Israel

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[72] On economic diversification, tech partnerships and Israel's role as a tech partner, see: Hertog, S. (2010) *Princes, Brokers, and Bureaucrats: Oil and the State in Saudi Arabia.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 295-302

mediation and resolution attempts. In striving for a model of genuine cooperation, rather than dry legalistic terms and conditions. [73]

One may add that while the Egyptian agreement was solidly based upon a land for peace model, perhaps peace is a word that extended toward recognition, acceptance in the regional framework. The early years did not allow much normalization. The document of agreement was focused upon parcels of land and peaceful coexistence. That meant the allowing of normal regional functioning, in the barest sense of necessity of neighboring states. This would not foster any harmony or the building of bridges and levels of cooperation beyond what was deemed necessary. The dialogue and even intent and tension within its signing, deemed the Camp David Accords, with the mutual distrust and acrimony, as a limited form, a distillation of thirty years of war, as opposed to genuflection of breaking down barriers of social and historical construct. That the Abraham accords would attempt to breach those technical and cold tenets of peace and benign cooperation, a state of neutral stasis, which had not procured any breakthrough within either society, toward an approach based upon futuristic positive reflection and probing of potential breakthrough. Thus, the striving nature of the Accords would reflect a coming about within the Gulf, not merely acceptance of this foreign body and basic tolerance, but accommodation toward, and attempt to break down a few barriers and create a dynamic of true cooperation and moderation.

An issue worth tackling is the nature of publicly expressed disdain for the accords within Gulf societies. If as claimed, the animosity was indeed so ingrained, the argument was that the lack of free public expression would hamper a window into true feeling within the populace. Notwithstanding the place of Palestinian aspiration with the Arab world, a reckoning of its impact on the day-to-day life on the average citizen is valuable. Anecdotally, the professed social caring may not have been exhibited to meet a threshold of major public opinion as pivotal issue.

While emotional temperament may run high regarding expressed sentiment on the Palestinian question, as the UAE have framed the Accords to get Israel to cease in its effort for sovereignty over the Jordan Valley or expressed desire to achieve momentum in the nonexistent peace talks. This then is a framework for expressing the Gulf narrative, like the Trump and Kushner narrative, that a broken decayed process would need a fresh approach. While the foreign policy

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[73] Guzansky, Y. & Winter, O. (2020) "The Abraham Accords: Immediate Significance and Long-Term Implications." *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 14:3, pp. 379-389

camp expressed disdain for virgin foreign policy involvement, with veteran experts and their corresponding theories being cast to the side, there was an attempt to relook at the issue without the lens, perspective, and accepted dogma of what was possible. It also is of relevance to view the Gulf major frustration with Palestinian leadership. After decades and billions invested, with no fresh ideas, ingrained tension and no reform. The Gulf would be expressing narrative toward a break in impasse. If no progress had been made in the vast years that passed, the Emirates, Bahrain and the subtle blessing of Saudia would attempt something new, attempt progress trying a radically different approach to diplomacy.

Chapter II: Theoretical foundation and literature review

II.1 Theoretical foundation – selected models

II.1.1 Negotiation models: realism meets constructivism

This research uses key models within the field of international relations to frame the context in which the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt and the Abraham Accords were negotiated. Realism is an inherent approach to international relations, arguing that all nations are working to increase their own power, and those countries that manage to hoard power most efficiently thrive, as they can easily eclipse the achievements of less powerful nations. The theory further states that a nation's foremost interest should be self-preservation and that continually gaining power should always be a social, economic, and political imperative.[74]

To reach or accomplish their achievements, nations may use various means. Sometimes morality can be kept aside as it might not be in the interest of a nation. In fact, the nature of realism implies that seeking moral high ground is a goal that governments cannot always achieve, and that deceit and violence can be highly effective tools for advancing national interests. With homeland defense elevated to the highest priority, remaining morally righteous in the eyes of international organizations can take a backseat to enforcing foreign policy that improves the nation's global stature.[75] China's realism in the Ukraine war is directly connected to the controversy surrounding the political status of Taiwan. This controversy is a result of World War II, the second phase of the Chinese Civil War (1945-49), and the Cold War. China refuses to maintain diplomatic relations with any nation that recognizes the ROC but does not object to nations conducting economic, cultural, and other such exchanges with Taiwan that do not imply diplomatic relations

In modern times, realism is evident in the foreign policies of China and Russia. The relationship between Russia and the former regime in Syria is one that has raised eyebrows in Europe and around the world; despite a bloody civil war in Syria – and the international community's pleas for intervention – Russia has maintained strategic relations with the government of Bashar Al-Assad in order to protect Russian interests in the region ever since Moscow has engaged directly in the conflict by sending boots on the ground in April 2015 in the name of historical

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[74] Korab-Karpowicz, W.J. (2017) "Political realism in international relations" in Nodelman U. & Zalta E.N. (eds.) *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 1-40
[75] Walt, S. M. (1998) "International relations: one world, many theories." *Foreign Policy* 110, pp. 29–46.

alliance and friendship between the two countries since the days of the Soviet Union. The value of human rights was not raised or discussed by Moscow, rather the interest at all costs to keep the Syrian regime in place.

Similarly, China continues its diplomatic and economic association with North Korea, even though the latter has an abysmal human rights record and engages in aggressive nuclear testing. Chinese encroachment into the South China Sea and Russia's incursions into Ukraine also highlight the two countries' aggressive – and at times violent – realist political approach to international affairs. It plays as an example to the arguments that nations act according to their interests and not according to moral codes.[76] China's realism in the Ukraine war is directly connected to the controversy surrounding the political status of Taiwan. This controversy is a result of World War II, the second phase of the Chinese Civil War (1945-49), and the Cold War. China refuses to maintain diplomatic relations with any nation that recognizes the ROC but does not object to nations conducting economic, cultural, and other such exchanges with Taiwan that do not imply diplomatic relations.

Realism comes in several variants, each offering a slightly different perspective on the nature of world politics. Classical realists, such as Hans Morgenthau, trace the roots of power politics to an innate human lust for power, viewing international rivalries as an extension of basic human drives.[77] Neorealists, or structural realists, exemplified by Kenneth Waltz, locate the causes of conflict in the structure of the international system itself rather than human nature. For Waltz and his followers, it is the absence of central authority and the distribution of capabilities among states that condemn nations to power-seeking behavior, regardless of their internal characteristics or motivations.[78]

Critics of realism argue that the theory is overly pessimistic, ignoring the potential for cooperation and progress in international relations. They point to the growth of international institutions, the spread of democracy and human rights, and the increasing interdependence of the global economy as evidence that states can and do collaboration to address common challenges. Liberal thinkers emphasize the role of international law, diplomacy, and

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[76] Ibid; This concept has also been further developed in Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001) *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: Norton
[77] Morgenthau H.J. (1948) *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Knopf pp. 13–15
[78] On anarchy and balance of power see: Waltz, K.N. (1979) *Theory of International Politics*. Boston: Addisson-Wesley. pp. 88–93; See also: Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*

multilateral organizations in promoting peace and stability, while constructivists stress the importance of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping state behavior.[79]

Yet despite these challenges, realism remains an indispensable tool for understanding the enduring realities of global politics. In a world where power is still the ultimate arbiter of international outcomes, and where states continue to compete for advantages and influence, realist theories provide valuable insights into the underlying dynamics of the international system. While realism may not capture the full complexity of world politics, it offers a clear-eyed and unsparing assessment of the forces that shape the behavior of nations, and as such, it is likely to remain a vital intellectual framework for scholars and policymakers alike.

As the world enters a new era of great power competition, with rising powers like China and resurgent ones like Russia challenging the established order, the insights of realist theory are more relevant than ever. In an increasingly multipolar and unstable world, where the old rules and institutions are being tested and strained, states continue to rely on their own capabilities and pursue their own interests, even as they navigate an ever-more complex and dangerous international landscape. For those seeking to understand and navigate this new world order, realism offers a powerful and indispensable guide. This is especially valuable to understanding the ways in which the Abraham Accords and the peace treaties were reached. Israel, as a democratic western state signed agreements with countries that believe in different systems of rule. The Arab countries had to disband a tradition of hostility toward Israel. Realism played an important role in allowing these shifts.

This leads to another theory in negotiation models that deserves attention. Liberalism in international relations theory challenges the pessimistic assumptions of realism, arguing that states are not condemned to perpetual conflict but can achieve meaningful cooperation through economic interdependence, international institutions, and the spread of democracy.[80] Unlike classical liberalism, which focuses on the relationship between individuals and the state,

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[79] Duryea, S. (2022) *Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism: A Primer on International Relations Theory* [online]. Available at:
https://mises.org/power-market/realism-liberalism-and-constructivism-primer-international-relations-theory (accessed 21/05/2025) ; See also discussion in Korab-Karpowicz*, Political realism in international relations*; Walt, *International relations*
[80] Doyle, M. W. (1986) "Liberalism and world politics." *The American Political Science Review* 80:4, pp. 1151-1169

liberalism in international relations examines how the anarchic structure of the international system can be mitigated to allow for peaceful transactions between nations.[81]

One of the keyways in which liberals believe cooperation can be achieved is through the creation and strengthening of international institutions. Institutions such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and International Criminal Court help states overcome collective action problems by providing rules, norms, and decision-making procedures that reduce transaction costs and provide information and monitoring services.[82] By locking states into predictable patterns of behavior and raising the reputational costs of noncompliance, institutions can facilitate cooperation even in the absence of a global government. Collective security arrangements like NATO are another example of how institutions can reduce the security dilemma and promote stability by providing for the mutual defense of member states.

Neoliberal institutionalism, developed by Robert Keohane, places particular emphasis on the role of international institutions in fostering cooperation. Keohane argued that the complex interdependence created by trade, finance, and global supply chains means that states are connected through multiple channels beyond just formal diplomacy.[83] This web of connections creates new possibilities for cooperation and reduces the incentives for conflict, as the costs of disrupting economic ties increase. Military force becomes less relevant as a tool of statecraft in this context. Institutions play a vital role in this process by facilitating information sharing, reducing verification costs, and lengthening the shadow of the future, thereby creating conditions under which reciprocity and cooperation can emerge.

Andrew Moravcsik articulated three core assumptions of liberal international relations theory. First, the fundamental actors in world politics are not states as unitary entities but rather individuals and groups operating in domestic society. These actors pursue their interests by pressuring governments to adopt policies, and it is the configuration of these interests that ultimately shapes state behavior on the international stage.[84] Foreign policy, in other words, is driven not by abstract notions of national interest but by the preferences of powerful domestic groups. Second, the nature of the political institutions that aggregate those preferences matters:

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[81] Moravcsik, A. (1997) "Taking preferences seriously: A liberal theory of international politics." *International Organization* 51:4, pp. 513-553.
[82] Keohane, R. O., & Martin, L. L. (1995) "The promise of institutionalist theory." *International Security* 20:1, pp. 39-51.
[83] Keohane, R.O. (1984) *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 67–72; See also Keohane, R.O. (2011) "Neoliberal institutions." In Hughes, C.W. & Yew, M.L. (eds.) *Security Studies: A Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 157-164
[84] Moravcsik, *Taking preferences seriously*

democracies, for example, will behave differently than autocracies. Finally, the behavior of states reflects the nature and intensity of state preferences. States with similar or compatible interests will find it easier to cooperate and form durable institutions than those with divergent goals.

This emphasis on state preferences helps explain phenomena such as democratic peace, the empirical finding that democracies rarely ever go to war with each other. Liberals argue that democracies share a set of norms and values, such as a commitment to human rights and the peaceful resolution of disputes, that make war between them less likely.[85] They are also more transparent and accountable to their citizens, making it harder to mobilize for war. Ikenberry has described how the shared preferences of liberal democracies in the West allowed for the creation of a security community after World War II based on open markets, international institutions, and the rule of law.[86] These alignments of preferences and values facilitated the creation of a post-war liberal international order upheld by American hegemony and supported by a web of trade pacts, alliances, and multilateral organizations.

However, liberalism has also faced several critiques. Realists argue that liberals underestimate the enduring importance of security and relative power in an anarchic international system, and that liberal institutions largely reflect, rather than constrain, the interests of powerful states.[87] Marxists and critical theorists argue that liberals ignore domestic class conflict and the uneven distributional consequences of globalization, which can generate new forms of inequality and insecurity.[88] Constructivists argue that liberals take state interests as given rather than seeing them as socially constructed through interaction and learning.[89]

Moreover, the rise of illiberal states like China and the backlash against globalization in many Western countries has raised questions about the future of the liberal international order.[90] The complex interdependence described by Keohane has also created new vulnerabilities, such as financial contagion and supply chain disruptions, that can be exploited by revisionist states.

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[85] Doyle, *Liberalism and world politics*
[86] Ikenberry, G. J. (2018) "The end of liberal international order." *International Affairs* 94:1, pp. 7-23
[87] Mearsheimer, J. J. (1994) "The false promise of international institutions." *International Security* 19:3*, pp. 5-49
[88] Cutler, A.C., & Gill, S. (2014) "*New constitutionalism and world order: general introduction.*" In Cutler, A.C. & Gill, S. (eds.) (2014) *New Constitutionalism and World Order*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-10
[89] Wendt, A. (1992) "Anarchy is what states make of it: The social construction of power politics." *International Organization* 46:2, pp. 391-425
[90] Ikenberry, *The end of liberal international order*

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated some of these trends, leading to a resurgence of economic nationalism and great power rivalry.

Despite these challenges, liberal international relations theory remains an essential tool for understanding international politics. Its emphasis on institutions, domestic politics, and transnational ties offers a more optimistic and cooperatively oriented vision than realism, even if the achievement of that vision remains elusive. By highlighting the possibilities for positive-sum cooperation and the role of non-state actors, liberalism continues to generate important academic and policy-relevant insights in an increasingly complex and interdependent world. Essentially, the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt resulted in the formation of the Multinational Force of Observers (MFA) in Sinai, and the backup of the international community in solving disputes such as in Taba. These demonstrate the role these institutions, and therefore liberalism, in promoting relations in the Missile East.

To this one should add also valuable insights from conflict management scholarship, which examines strategies to reduce or resolve violent disputes. Jacob Bercovitch and colleagues classify mediation strategies (communication, formulation, manipulation) and assess their effectiveness.[91] Chester Crocker, Fen Hampson, and Pamela Aall provide comprehensive handbooks, emphasizing multiparty mediation and third-party guarantees.[92] Virginia Fortna's work empirically demonstrates the effectiveness of peacekeeping in sustaining agreements. Applied to the Middle East, these models explain the United States role at Camp David as an active mediator employing leverage, and the Multinational Force and Observers in Sinai as a peacekeeping guarantee.[93] For the Abraham Accords, the United States again functioned as manipulative mediator, offering incentives (arms sales, recognition) to achieve agreement.

Nevertheless, in the context of this research, liberal models help explain how the peace treaty was maintained, however, they contribute less to understanding how the agreements have reached. Since realism has its faults, and liberalism works only to a limited extent, there is a need to examine models that allow a combination of various aspects in the negotiations, such as constructivism. Constructivism is a theoretical approach to international relations that

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[91] Bercovitch, J. & Houston, A. (2000) "Why do they do it like this? An analysis of the factors influencing mediator behavior in international conflicts" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44:2. pp. 170–202, esp. 171–174
[92] Aall, P. Crocker, C.A., & Hampson, F.O. (1999) "Introduction" in Aall, P. Crocker, C.A., & Hampson, F.O. (eds.) *Herding Cats: Multiparty Mediation in a Complex World*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, pp. 3-8, esp. pp. 11-14
[93] Fortna, V.P. (2008*) Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerents' Choices after Civil War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 16–20

emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s, primarily through the work of scholars like Alexander Wendt.[94] It challenges the dominant neo-realist and neoliberal theories by arguing that the key structures of international politics are social rather than strictly material, and that these structures shape actors' identities and interests, not just their behavior.[95]

At its core, constructivism posits that the structures of human association, including the international system, are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces.[96] These shared ideas include norms (shared expectations about appropriate behavior), identities (understandings and expectations about self), and knowledge (shared understandings of the world). They shape how actors perceive their interests and the possible and appropriate courses of action.

While the state is fundamentally the most prominent actor within the international relations spectrum of realism, it's hard power absolute necessity within an anarchic system. Israel's security requirements would cause a technical threat, imposing strategic races upon the other regional actors. To this day, Israel's regional posture and formulation is defensive in nature, rooted in some core deterrence principles. Yet within the regional balance other Arab scholars would see Israel hard power posture as destabilizing and look for softer dialogue-based system. This has proven a zero-sum argument for Israel in the near past, yet Arab scholars often point to a certain overreach at expense of diplomacy. Therefore, for this research it is incumbent to view the effects of constructivism theory upon traditional realism theory. The ability and adoption of norms by both sides of negotiation, was a significant factor in framing, reshaping and ultimately leading to a breakthrough. By this social interaction starting from Camp David through the Abraham Accords should genuinely be shaping new consensus within the Middle East. Indeed, until 7 October it seemed to be doing so.

In one of the most influential constructivists works, Alexander Wendt's "Anarchy is What States Make of It,"[97] Wendt argues that the meaning of anarchy in the international system is not fixed but socially constructed through state interaction. If states engage in self-help behavior, it is because they have constructed a Hobbesian culture of anarchy. But other cultures of anarchy are possible, such as a Lockean culture based on rivalry but also recognition of

[94] Wendt, A. (1995) "Constructing international politics." *International Security* 20:1, pp. 71-81
[95] Wendt, A. (1999) *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
[96] Finnemore, M., & Sikkink, K. (2001) "Taking stock: the constructivist research program in international relations and comparative politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 4:1, pp. 391-416
[97] Wendt, *Anarchy is what states make of it*

sovereignty, or a Kantian culture based on friendship and mutual aid. Constructivists have applied these insights to a wide range of issues in international politics. For example, in the field of security, they have challenged the realist notion of the security dilemma, arguing that it is not an inevitable feature of anarchy but a social construction that depends on how states interpret each other's actions.[98] In the study of human rights, Keck and Sikkink have also emphasized the role of transnational advocacy networks in promoting new norms and pressuring states to change their behavior.[99]

Despite its contributions, constructivism has also faced several critiques. One is the charge of idealism or subjectivism - the idea that constructivism ignores material reality and reduces everything to ideas.[100] Constructivists responded to these allegations that they do not deny the existence of a material world but rather seek to understand how that world is given meaning through social interaction.[101] Another critique is that constructivism lacks a clear research program or methodology, making it difficult to test its claims empirically.[102] There are also debates within constructivism between its conventional and critical variants. Conventional constructivists, like Wendt, seek to develop a social theory of international politics that can complement or supplement rationalist approaches.[103] Critical constructivists, on the other hand, see their role as more transformative, using constructivist insights to critique and change existing power relations.[104]

Despite these challenges, constructivism has become an established and influential approach in international relations theory. It has broadened the discipline's understanding of international politics, highlighting the role of norms, identities, and social interaction in a way that other theories had neglected. In an era of globalization and transnational challenges, constructivism's emphasis on the social construction of reality seems more relevant than ever. As the world becomes more multipolar and diverse, constructivism offers a way to understand how different cultural and historical experiences shape states' identities and interests. It reminds that the

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[98] Wendt, *Constructing international politics*
[99] Keck, M. E., & Sikkink, K. (1998) *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
[100] Mearsheimer, J. J. (1995) "A realist reply." *International Security* 20:1, pp. 82-93
[101] Wendt, *Constructing international politics*
[102] Keohane, R. O. (2000) "Ideas part-way down." *Review of International Studies* 26:1, pp. 125-130
[103] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*
[104] Hopf, T. (1998) "The promise of constructivism in international relations theory." *International Security* 23:1, pp. 171-200

international system is not a static, given reality but a dynamic social construct that is constantly being produced and reproduced through interaction.

While constructivism has its weaknesses, it has made a significant contribution to international relations theory. By bringing the social and ideational dimensions of world politics to the fore, it has enriched our understanding of international relations and opened new possibilities for research and practice. This is an extremely important input to this research, since as the finding chapter in this research shows, the understanding of cross-cultural references and the realization of what each side perceives from the peace process were vital to the negotiations and prevented at times the entire breakdown of talks.[105] This is not speculation, since the summit was fraught with difficulties from the start. According to Professor Daniel Kurtzer, former U.S. ambassador to Egypt and Israel, Sadat and Begin did not waste a minute listing historical grievance, and Begin's opposition to any territorial withdrawal, resulting in Carter taking a more pivotal role by warning both nations that the American support would not be granted if the talks fail.[106]

Following this line of thought, the concept of realist constructivism comes to play. The thrust of this thesis within international relations is the theoretical basis within interculturalism and realism. It is at this juncture that would allow for some shift in theoretical footing, toward intersubjectivity, which may afford greater philosophical and theoretical grounding. The approach is nuanced and relatively new within the study of diplomacy and the international system. Its core aim, while initially seems simplistic, the fusing of realism and constructivism, challenges some long-held perception within approach to theory.

In this context, J. Samuel Barkin discusses the issue of defending paradigmatic thought when the thinking becomes staid and unchanging.[107] This insular thinking encourages a certain partisanship, fitting too much or overstretching. Specifically, realism and constructivism within the discipline have formed rigid camps. The association of realism with materialism and rationalism has forced constructivists to see only the incompatible. Similarly, realists do not see so much criticism in the methodology of constructivism rather they focus on perception of constructivists to be idealist or utopian. This, Barkin formed a new area of study by challenging

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[105] Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking,* pp. 209–215
[106] Greenspan, Jesse. (2019) *How Jimmy Carter brokered a hard-won peace deal between Israel and Egypt.* Available at: https://www.history.com/articles/jimmy-carter-camp-david-accords-egypt-israel (accessed 21/06/2025)
[107] Barkin, J. S. (2010) *Realist Constructivism: Rethinking International Relations Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 2

the dogma that these theories are zero-sum opposite. Synthesizing both, and the underlying understanding that each is not mutually exclusive can have a direct net positive effect on potential negotiations. As a poignant example Barkin shows that constructivism can present, within social lens, how to study the field.[108] Realism can offer wisdom in how politics operates. Therefore, the former sociologically may be more attuned and predictive while the latter more pre-strengths within classical realism.

Thus, Barker seems to take issue with neo realists who seek to use behavioralist approaches to match realism more predictably which only serves to detriment by avoiding the main learning within power structure and politics. Constructivists can focus more upon the relationship between the individual and society rather than the traditional lens of power within society.[109] This hybrid thinking has its detractors, however. Its non-paradigmatic thinking holds certain allure, for if theorists can display essential flexibility and nuance within concrete ideas, this would bode well for those who apply the theory, the mediators and those they ultimately seek to influence the social makeup of reformation conciliation.

Realist and constructivist thinking converge in practical application when discussing areas of national interest.[110] While this is central to realist thinking, there is a point where, by national interest being of public nature, it is then deemed a social construction by constructivists. That would focus directly upon the rules, norms to direct effect. This then is politics that moves the political apparatus or institutions in the way it sees purpose. Thus, the public is moving naturally in a direction. Whereas realism sees the gain in liberal norms being implemented, and hence agency and thrust of direction is necessarily top down. An individual, by choice or not, must work within the constraints of power. Nevertheless, classical realism still wants to move jn the direction of the prevailing social interest. Regardless, power politics is a fundamental raw element that is necessary. In contrast, while constructivism has often similar liberal end points, and deep recognition of the public interest, they diverge only slightly in the starting point. Constructivists see how social relations interact and affect, not focused on how politics should work.[111] Looking within the trend and seeing how the intersubjective patterns interact with political processes. This all comes upon diplomacy in a subtle way, and high expectations, and this major synthesis brings interculturalism to a new light.

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[108] Ibid, p. 4
[109] Ibid. p. 7
[110] Ibid. p. 67
[111] Ibid. p. 79

While Camp David had evolving norms and patterns, Abraham Accords had definitive core changes that existed. A classical realist sees the change as a pure social ripening of conditions, seen in individual trajectory within personal psychology, the constructivist would be interested in how the ripening and new norm occurred, how the slow acclimatation came to change. Whereas the theory of this paper veers to the realism spectrum by offering that Camp David led by a series of events and consequences to the Abraham Accords, constructivism has actively found its place in this aspect of international relations theory because norms are now seen to move beyond power and a state of anarchy, to a potent dynamism within theory. Therefore, culture can share genuinely because they can promise social learning naturally, thus the first 30 years of isolation for Israel is one period. Then the next 40 years after Camp David was a distancing arriving, over the normative shifting, a neutral and natural ripening, without much direct interference. A distillation of what reality is, yet within the constructivist neutral dynamic. That anarchy is not a vacuum in which power plays the only role but an acknowledgement of what can be ameliorated within the prevailing realist power conditions. Thus, morality and ideas can be shaped within conditions and historical, religious and cultural light, yet help shape transitional events and even high-stake negotiations.

II.1.2 From track II diplomacy to interculturalism

Scholars have realized that relations between nations and societies are not only dependent on formal political and diplomatic relations but also need mechanisms that enable them to implement the relations on a people-to-people basis. It is in this context that one must refer to the merits of track II diplomacy, which refers to informal, unofficial dialogue between non-state actors, academics, and civil society figures that complement Track I (official) negotiations. In the Middle Easte context Herbert Kelman pioneered interactive problem-solving workshops, bringing together Israelis and Palestinians in small group dialogues to reframe identity and security perceptions.[112] Harold Saunders expanded this into the concept of the public peace process, highlighting how sustained dialogue at the societal level can influence policymakers. In the Middle East, Track II processes have produced ideas (e.g. on Palestinian autonomy and recognition) that later migrated into Track I talks.[113] This is directly

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[112] Kelman, H.C. (1997) "Social-Psychological Dimensions of International Conflict" In Zartman, I.W. & J.L. Rasmussen (eds.) *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, pp. 191-101

[113] Saunders, H.H. (1999) *A Public Peace Process: Sustained Dialogue to Transform Racial and Ethnic Conflicts.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 25–32

relevant to both the Egypt–Israel negotiations of the 1970s and the Abraham Accords, where elite-to-elite informal contacts laid groundwork for normalization. Track II is often where norms and intercultural understanding develop before political agreements become feasible.[114]

The central hypothesis presenting interculturalism as bridge-building mediation has found theoretical approaches with a synthesis of Realism and Constructivism. As much as these theories require redefining and flexibility of thought to allow a synergy of overtly contradictory approaches, this is neatly reflected in the immense flexibility and hard work required by practical diplomacy to overcome impasse to mediation breakthrough. When the refined state of these ideas takes form, cultural exchange has softened much of the hard power dialogue and absolute red lines, the interpersonal has shown new areas of rapprochement and at this critical juncture hard realism has the true opportunity to evolve into a softer realism expressed eloquently via soft power and each side influencing the other. As time and place, acclimatization and ripening of conditions loaded such as strong role from Camp David to Abraham Accords, this opens new mediation methodology and technique for many conflicts.[115] For example. the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, can utilize this mindset, to overcome absolute zero-sum approach.

Dialogue is formed based upon concrete areas of intercultural affinity, shared concerns and the developing interpersonal connections lead to exploration of norms that are closer than previously thought. Fundamentally, as personal dialogue and narrative, the individual can often break previously held negative attribution and attitude, this slow approach is yet fixed within a dialogue that is grounded in Barkerian realism, or as President Carter would focus in the baby steps and areas of shared concrete security concern. Thus, progress is firmly realist, addressing core rational concerns but on the indicational phase and mindset is set with a constructivist flexibility philosophy, seeing areas of productive narrative and shared expectations. Thereby, interculturalism has found a mediation model based with traditional international relations thought and cutting-edge constructivist theoretical modeling.

The strength of each framework allows a combined flexibility, while each theoretical toolbox covers each other's weakness. So, modeling on Carter's approach in hindsight view, look

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[114] Agha, H., Feldman, S., Khalidi, A. & Schiff, Z. (2003) *Track-II Diplomacy: Lessons from the Middle East*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, pp. 7–11

[115] Complementary models refine this: Zartman's concept of ripeness explains why negotiations succeed when parties reach a 'mutually hurting stalemate'. see: Zartman, I.W. (2001) "The timing of peace initiatives: Hurting stalemates and ripe moments," *Global Review of Ethnopolitics,* 1:1, pp. 8–18, esp. pp. 9–12

toward constructivist approaches, leading thinkers and mediators to see tools for pushing Azerbaijan and Armenia. While those players would traditionally be locked closer toward zero-sum realism, the gentle nudges afford a softening, confidence building and ultimately foster climates of warming stages. Thus, while extremely long process for Israel and the Gulf States, and still ongoing to this day, the template for ripening of conditions, fostering of many cross-cultural initiatives and interpersonal trust and dialogue shows that realism can be tempered with constructivist theory for coherent solution-based approaches.

These theoretical frameworks have an advantage in that they garner immediate trust with both previous hostile parties. When the approach is firmly grounded in realism, there is certain room to maneuver, as there is more hanging political threat of major overreach. While some may accuse constructivist theory of utopianism, this synthesis model has been shown to afford methodology for genuine diplomatic breakthrough. Indeed, whole pure constructivism attempts to shape reality, this is a stretch for even many soft-power diplomats. As international relations has formed footing in the viable processes, what has worked in the past, accounting for varied cultural constraints. Thus, even while utilizing cultural intelligence and attempting to redefine limitations, a firmer grounding in traditional realism IR theory goes a long way in convincing minds and hearts, inevitably then pushing some dogma and norms of conflict for reevaluation. Referring to the above-mentioned conflict, Armenia and Azerbaijan can also derive benefit from two distinct methods used in Camp David and Abraham Accords. Sadat early confidence-building, from Jerusalem visit to recognition discussing led to many later flexibilities. Additionally, the reframing of conflict by the Kushner Trump teams, toward territory-based disputes versus religious overtones can be of help to negotiations between these two countries soon. An attempt to cool passions by instilling businesslike approaches and metaphors can offer a curious mix of hard business realism with a profit-based look toward construction of old bias and accepted facts. Thus, territory and mutual financial gain are harnessed in this growing field in international relations.

Following a constructivist background, it is important to pay attention to a body of research that developed in the last four decades with the creation of the Pin (Processes of International Negotiations) program at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Laxenburg, Austria. In this context, the program brought together many scholars from various disciplines, where they could examine and research models and approaches in the field of diplomacy and international negotiations. The researchers involved in this school of knowledge questioned the way negotiations were scrutinized and interpreted retrospectively after the

negotiations were concluded, thus simplifying the decision-making process and resulting with a lacking abstract theory. Instead, the scholars put focus not only on the manner the agreements concluded, but also on the decision-making process, the dilemmas of the actors and other pressure factors, thus simulating real-time negotiations. To achieve this, they proposed using methods from game theory. The scope of the research thus shifted from analysis of results to analysis of process, with emphasis on what the negotiators know, what pressure was put on them and by whom, what the alternatives were, etc.[116]

Specifically, the researchers on this school also contested the concept that a state is a singular and coherent negotiator. This perception prevented discussion on the way domestic politics played in international negotiations, based on a notion that both the United States and the Soviet Union (the Cold War was the background to the developments of many of these theories) are monolithic and singular structures representing one ideal and singular objectives, with all citizens in agreement with these objectives. Instead, there was a need to disentangle the actors and recognize that governments, politics and people do not have the same motivations.[117] In the context of this research two states are discussed - Israel and Egypt – but it observable that reaction toward the peace negotiation, the existence of different types of regimes and other internal factors played an important role in the development of the negotiations. This section discussed the importance of researching internal factors and their influence on the positions of the negotiators, as well as examining the interplay between the state and its population, while recognizing that states work differently from one another. These factors explain why democracies don't begin war with another,[118] but this is not the case in the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.

While it is important to discuss realist and constructivist methods in examining the negotiations, it is important also to pay attention also to liberal factors. Namely, that both Israel and Egypt had to consider external factors having both negative and positive influence of the negotiations, including superpowers and international bodies. It is important to note, therefore, that there are different models of international negotiations in questions, which all react differently to both internal and external factors. Putnam's two-level games, for example, illuminate how leaders negotiate simultaneously with international counterparts and domestic

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[116] Avenhaus R. & Zartman I.W. (2007) "Introduction: formal models of, in, and for international negotiations." In Avenhaus R. & Zartman I.W. (eds.) *Diplomacy Games: Formal Models and International Negotiations.* Berlin: Springer, pp. 1-3
[117] Ibid, pp. 26-28
[118] Ibid. Ibid

audiences.[119] These theories explain both Camp David (1978–79), where ripeness and American guarantees were critical, and the Abraham Accords, where shared threat perceptions of Iran and domestic coalition incentives enabled breakthroughs

The main actors in the context of this research is naturally the United States that was the main broker between the Israeli and Arab countries both in the peace treaty with Egypt in 1979, as the Egyptian president noted himself when he documented the Egyptian President convinced the Saudi and Syrian leaders and that the United States would draw a plan, or some proposals that would culminate in Israel's withdrawal from Sinai.[120] The Israeli Foreign Minister at the time, Moshe Dayan also noted the important contribution of the United Sates and especially their diligence, sagacity and goodwill (despite also arguing that they needed more regional knowledge).[121] During the negotiations with the UAE in 2020, the United States also took the mediator's role in similar fashion.

While the United States was a positive actor during the negotiations, there was also a negative actor such as Iran that motivated the countries to create an alliance with one another in the Abraham accords. The results of both treaties dismantle another important historic negative factor, which was the Arab coalition against Israel. If before the agreement with Egypt there was a unifying approach in the Arab world centered around the three Nos of the Khartoum Conference. Today there is an Israeli-Arab coalition against Iran. This is a game changer which deserves scrutiny. This was also a result of a historical shift. While some Arab States viewed zero-sum as their only option, the early Begin-Sadat peace proved a potential model. The ensuing years, while characterized by continued intransigence, allowed for some ripening of conditions. This regional maturation culminated in awareness of friend and foe. Ultimately, Gulf States internalized the inherent possibilities, the risk versus reward. That is, while perfection for the 'popular Palestinian cause', had yielded nothing for tens of years, progress on other fronts was possible. This would lead to new day-to-day realities once the accords were finalized.

According to Tuvia Boms and Hussein Aboubakr, since Egypt first chose to pursue peace with Israel, the Middle East has undergone significant changes. Today, more than half of the Arab world resides in nations that have normalized relations with Israel, while much of the rest of

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[119] Putnam, R.D. (1988) "Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games," *International Organization* 42:3, pp. 427–460, esp. 434–436
[120] Friedlander, *Sadat and Begin*, p. 36
[121] Dayan, *Breakthrough,* p. 167

the population lives in fragile or failing states. This stark contrast highlights a broader divide: one side embraces cooperation and tolerance as a path toward stability and prosperity, while the other remains entangled in sectarianism and conflict, despite the long and costly toll it has taken.[122] As the shift away from the single-issued discussion on a solution to the Palestinians, to a nuanced discourse on individual growth and national identity within an international system. Thus, while some hold on to continued ideological inflexibility, the UAE and Gulf states understood that wins can be had for both sides without perfect inputs or outputs. On the other side of the world, diplomatic negotiations have shown similar flexibility in initial framing. The lessons of the Trump-Kim summit showed that progress is not measured by qualitative or qualitative measures, surely not maximalist pressures in such frameworks.

II.1.3 Cultural issues and interculturalism in international negotiations

Cultural dimensions significantly influence diplomatic interactions, international cooperation, and conflict resolution. As Edward Said highlights in *Orientalism*, cultural perceptions shape how nations view each other, leaving impact on geopolitical relationships.[123] In the context of international relations, the way countries understand one another's culture, religion, and identity often determines the effectiveness of their diplomacy and the degree to which they can cooperate.

The concept of cultural diplomacy has grown in importance in recent decades. As Joseph Nye argues, cultural diplomacy is a vital tool of soft power, allowing countries to influence global perceptions without relying on military force or economic coercion.[124] Through cultural programs, educational exchanges, and media initiatives, countries aim to improve their image and build relationships based on mutual respect and understanding. Examples such as China's Confucius Institutes and the United States Fulbright Program demonstrate how countries can use cultural diplomacy to foster goodwill and strengthen international ties. The programs help to deepen cultural understanding, creating avenues for collaboration that transcend political and economic interests.

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[122] Aboubakr, H. & Boms N.T.(2022) "Pan Arabism 2.0? The Struggle for a New Paradigm in the Middle East." *Religions* 13:1, p. 28
[123] Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
[124] Nye, J.S. Jr (2005) *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs

Religious and ethnic identities play a crucial role in shaping international politics, with the potential to both unite and divide nations. Samuel Huntington posits that cultural and civilization identities increasingly define the fault lines of global conflicts.[125] Huntington argues that the tensions between different civilizations, particularly those stemming from religious and ethnic differences, is central to international relations. This theory has been debated widely, and it can be argued that it represents an oversimplification of global conflicts along civilizational lines. However, the core idea remains influential in understanding the cultural dynamics that underpin many international confrontations.

The Israeli-Arab conflict and United States-China relations are prime examples of how cultural misunderstandings and historical grievances shape diplomacy. These cases show how culture, in the form of religious, ethnic, and historical narratives, continues to shape the ways countries negotiate and interact on the global stage. The United States-China relationship is often framed by cultural differences, with Western ideals of democracy and human rights contrasting sharply with China's emphasis on sovereignty, political stability, and the preservation of cultural heritage, In the Israeli-Arab case, longstanding cultural and religious tensions have impeded efforts to reach a resolution, with both sides viewing each other's identities through the lens of historical trauma and religious significance. This means that Sadat and Begin had a daunting challenge to confront. Begin had to deal with claims for the historical belonging of Sinai to Jewish history and identity, while Sadat had to overcome the argument that the land of Israel should be Arab and Muslim. The following chapters go into detail of this impediment.

Interculturalism is an evolving concept that goes beyond the traditional notion of multiculturalism by advocating for dynamic interaction and understanding among diverse cultures. It emphasizes inclusivity, mutual respect, and the ongoing exchange of cultural values and perspectives. Unlike multiculturalism, which can sometimes focus on coexistence without interaction, interculturalism encourages deeper, more meaningful engagement between cultures, fostering greater harmony and collaboration in multicultural societies.

In the field of interculturalism there is a focus and intercultural competence. This refers to an individual's ability to effectively navigate and interact across cultural differences. This concept is central to understanding interculturalism, as it emphasizes the capacity to engage with others in a way that respects cultural diversity while promoting understanding. According to Byram,

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[125] Huntington, S. P. (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster

intercultural competence involves not only knowledge of other cultures but also the development of skills to bridge cultural gaps. This includes the ability to communicate across cultures, understand and interpret behaviors, and approach intercultural interactions with an open and respectful mindset.[126] Byram's model of intercultural competence is particularly relevant in educational settings, where it is crucial to teach students not just about cultural differences, but also how to engage with them in constructive ways.

Two seminal theories in understanding cultural differences come from Geert Hofstede.[127] Hofstede's research on cultural dimensions provides a comprehensive framework for comparing cultural values across countries. One of its key dimensions is individualism vs. collectivism, which describes the degree to which a culture values individual rights and independence over group loyalty and interdependence. Another important dimension is power distance, which explores the extent to which inequalities in power are accepted within a culture. These cultural dimensions are instrumental in understanding the various ways that cultures approach authority, communication, and social relations.

Trompenaars, building upon Hofstede's work, offers additional insights into cultural differences, especially in the context of business.[128] His model emphasizes dimensions such as universalism vs. particularism (the degree to which rules are universally applied or adapted to specific contexts) and neutral vs. affective (the extent to which emotions are expressed openly in cultural interactions). These frameworks help explain how individuals from different cultural backgrounds perceive and respond to situations, particularly in professional settings. Despite this theory applying for a business model, there is much to learn from it in applying it to the negotiations between Sadat and Begin.

Effective intercultural communication is key to the success of interculturalism. Gudykunst discusses the challenges inherent in intercultural communication, especially in global diplomacy and business contexts.[129] He highlights that misunderstandings often arise from cultural assumptions and ethnocentrism, where individuals interpret other cultures through the lens of their own, potentially leading to conflict or missed opportunities. Gudykunst's work

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[126] Byram, M. (1997) *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters
[127] Hofstede, G. (1980) *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*. Los Angeles: SAGE
[128] Trompenaars, F. (1998) *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business*. New York: McGraw-Hill
[129] Gudykunst, W. B. (2004) *Theorizing About Intercultural Communication*. Los Angeles: SAGE

underscores the importance of cultural awareness, empathy, and active listening in facilitating successful intercultural interactions. He posits that by understanding the cultural backgrounds and communication styles of others, individuals can minimize misunderstandings and create more inclusive environments.

Gudykunst also elaborates on the concept of anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM), a theory that explores how individuals manage the discomfort that comes with engaging in intercultural interactions. According to AUM, when people encounter cultural differences, they experience anxiety and uncertainty. Prominent levels of anxiety and uncertainty can impede effective communication, whereas low levels of anxiety and uncertainty are linked to more successful intercultural exchanges. Thus, intercultural competence involves not just knowledge of cultural differences but also the ability to manage emotional and cognitive responses to them.

Interculturalism, as a societal model, aims to foster environments where cultural differences are not just tolerated but actively engaged with and appreciated. By promoting intercultural dialogue, societies can move beyond the static idea of cultural coexistence toward a dynamic process of cultural exchange and integration. This approach benefits a wide range of social settings, from education and business to diplomacy and community building. One of the key principles of interculturalism is the promotion of inclusivity. Rather than simply allowing different cultures to exist side by side, interculturalism encourages deeper, more meaningful engagement. In educational contexts, for instance, interculturalism not only advocates for the teaching of cultural differences but also for fostering an environment in which students can experience and learn from those differences in real-time. This experiential learning approach encourages students to think critically about their own cultural assumptions and to develop the skills necessary for effective intercultural interaction.

The concept of interculturalism presents a dynamic and evolving framework for understanding and engaging with cultural diversity. The theoretical foundations laid by scholars such as Byram, Hofstede, Trompenaars, and Gudykunst have provided valuable insights into the ways individuals and societies can foster intercultural competence and navigate cultural differences. By moving beyond multiculturalism to a more engaged and interactive form of cultural exchange, interculturalism promotes mutual respect, empathy, and understanding, which are crucial for building inclusive and cohesive societies.

Begin and Sadat demonstrate this approach and explain why their individual leadership is paramount to understanding the success of the negotiations. When many in the field of

international relations discuss whether certain developments in history are a result of structural stages or whether they are a result of charismatic leadership, intercultural can fill the missing void. While the basis for peace between Israel and Egypt can be identified back to 1973 and the fall of Nasser, the whole negotiations may have not come to fruition without the contribution of the two leaders. Their success was exactly in the way they knew how to maneuver in intercultural dialogue.

In the context of the Middle East normalization process, the role of interculturalism was significant in the period of the cold peace and the informal years. While Qatar allowed Israel to open a trade office in the late nineties, there were also covert relations with Oman, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, that developed over time. While the Abraham Accords occurred at one specific time its development can be traced over many years. Karataş and Uslu point out that the UAE cooperation was well before the publicity of the accords, having been evidenced by drone and other security sales of up to one hundred million dollars.[130] They also point out that while Saudia Arabia has held back from normalization, MBS is trending in the reconciliation direction, Bahrain had also lifted their boycott to be able to commence a free trade policy with the United States.

Thus, new paradigms and the winds of change began to occur within the Gulf. Karataş and Uslu maintain that that naming of the Accords as Abrahamic is the wish to frame the intercultural history between Jews, Muslim and their shared ancestry.[131] This can be understood with a novel approach. While classical interculturalism relies upon a traditional view of respect for the other, the differences between each group, their individual makeup and personas and the sensitivities for nuances within respective societies. Yet, this celebration of diversity is nuanced by its very embrace of the multicultural fabric of general society. While homogeneous societies do have aspects of conformity, underlying conservatism in nature, this contrasts distinctly with heterogenous societies. Within the embrace of other backgrounds, sensitivity and religious differences are an essential contradiction. If the culture is so foreign as to be truly distinct or alien, the breaking of these cultural barriers is necessarily a major barrier to bridge.

While the end goal of such cultural embrace is a celebration of the feasible even transcendent power of resilience, yet a simpler and less contradictory approach would be simultaneous

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[130] Karataş, I. & Uslu, N. (2022) "The Abraham Accords: can interculturalism solve grave conflicts of the Middle East?" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 57:2, p. 300
[131] Ibid, p. 301

embrace of the aspect of shared experience and history. This can be fostered by a knowledge of the shared history of tolerance, previous exhibitions relating to the other culture within its distinctions. This acknowledgment of shared past allows for recognition of the previous historical and even ancient working models of cooperation. For the Abraham Accords, recent RAND reports assess economic and security dividends, while Chatham House evaluates political implications. These works together allow comparison of 1979 and 2020: both involved U.S. mediation, regional realignment, and pragmatic leadership, but the later accords were less about territorial compromise and more about shared security threats and economic integration.[132]

The second model would be the framework of Camp David Accords and the subsequent cold peace. While there were many shortcomings of such peace, the lack of dialogue and building of personal bridges, yet the break in the ice of modern relationships had begun. If the historical tolerance was diminished with each side feeling maligned, disenfranchised since Israel's founding, the old, shared history of respect, dialogue and tolerance was frozen. This practical paradigm, the boycott for thirty years, was then a breaking of the ice for societies who had put it all on hold. The nature of the trauma of the frozen relationship, required deft political maneuvering at Camp David by the American team led by President Carter. The cultural aftereffect was that the boycott, the shunning was broken in partial fashion, resulting in the cold peace. Nevertheless, the first steps to a greater resolution were taken. As shared interests and quiet dialogue increased, albeit in exceedingly limited contexts, the cold peace slowly warmed up.

The Abraham Accords can then be viewed as a full circle of interculturalism. As societies began to truly warm up to each other, finding camaraderie within the aspects that united them, in perspectives and political goals and threats came a newer phenomenon. This was a realization that the celebration of what is shared is the lone potent tool. The last step in this evolving historical context is the nuance within the shared experience. This evocative resolution does bring an emotional imagery and transcendent view toward the possibilities of the Accords. No longer were they merely an agreement on real estate, mending hurt national pride or building fences based on regional security architecture. This emotional framing can be thought to be

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[132] RAND Corporation (2021) *The Abraham Accords: Implications for Regional Security*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, pp. 5–9; Quilliam, N. & Vakil, S. (2023) *The Abraham Accords and Israel–UAE Normalization*. London: Chatham House, pp. 11–14

designed as a prism to which ordinary citizens can view these intercultural events through the light of the mending of an inherent imbalance. Karataş and Uslu find that the framing of the accords in language was precisely on these shared values.[133] While focusing on the greater peace in the Middle east, the values of respect, dignity, mutual coexistence and tolerance were directly enshrined within the new Accord wording. Thus, the focus was upon intercultural dialogue and promoting cultures fostering peace between the three Abrahamic faiths. The argument they present is that such wording reflects not only what the Accords found as a common cause because of similar historical origins, but rather to reap fruit of continuing traditions of dialogue, moderation and tolerance.

The fact that Morocco, that historically had contacts of some sorts with Israel, and with a history of shared diplomacy and intercultural friendship, also joined the accords, with Sudan a prominent possibility that was marred by war and violence, but the will and desire for the extending of the Accord framework was present in Sudan and there was additional hope by the framers, and consistent tidings in various media announcement of other nations that were considering joining the Abraham Accords. These tidings and resultant geopolitical and intercultural connections, of States that also want a break with the past of ostracism, hold value and essential validation for the framework of warming ties, P2P connection and the power with building of strong cultural bridges via a plethora of shared sensibilities, sensitivities and shared value and concern and even political, strategic and security interests.

Whereas interculturalism was viewed as a tool for empathetic expression of behavioral contrast and veritable separation yet acceptance. This new modelling goes a step further in the viewing of such dialogue as a window into previous historical tolerance, previous embrace of the unique differences. This has highlighted that within all the barriers of distinction lies perhaps a recipe for shared evocation. When what divides can join a collective visualization of past equilibrium, then the entire experience is not one of mere toleration for something drastically foreign, this no longer is mere toleration. Then recent tension, the triggers for conflict are assuaged, when collective visuals of the old toleration are evoked.

Following this theoretical approach, there is a need to discuss how these aspects fold into the topic of intercultural negotiations, that are complex and multifaceted processes that require negotiators to be aware of various factors, including cultural norms, communication styles, and conflict resolution strategies. Effective negotiations in an intercultural context demand a deep

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[133] Karataş & Uslu, *The Abraham Accords*, p. 303

understanding of how these elements shape negotiation dynamics and outcomes. Negotiation strategies can be broadly categorized into two main approaches: distributive bargaining and integrative bargaining. These approaches are foundational to understanding how negotiations unfold, especially in intercultural contexts. According to Lewicki et al. distributive bargaining involves a zero-sum approach where the goal is to maximize individual gain at the expense of the other party, often likened to a win-lose scenario.[134] This is particularly relevant in competitive, short-term negotiations where resources are fixed.

On the other hand, integrative bargaining seeks to create win-win solutions by focusing on mutual benefits, expanding the available resources, and fostering cooperation between the parties. In intercultural contexts, integrative bargaining may be more difficult to implement, especially when parties come from cultures that prioritize competitive or individualistic goals over cooperation. Lewicki et al. emphasize the importance of building relationships and understanding the other party's interests in integrative bargaining, which aligns well with Hall's research on high-context communication cultures, where implicit meaning plays a significant role.[135]

Hall introduces the concept of high-context vs. low-context communication, which has profound implications for negotiation strategies. In high-context cultures, such as those found in many Asian, African, and Latin American societies, communication relies heavily on shared understanding, non-verbal cues, and contextual knowledge. In contrast, low-context cultures like the United States, Germany, and Scandinavian countries favor explicit, direct communication. High-context cultures are more likely to rely on relationships, trust, and indirect communication during negotiations, while low-context cultures may prioritize clear, straightforward exchanges of information. Understanding these differences is crucial for negotiators to adapt their strategies and avoid misunderstandings. However, it is important to note that intercultural negotiations are fraught with challenges that arise from differences in cultural perceptions, communication practices, and conflict resolution strategies. Some of the primary challenges in these settings include differing perceptions of time, trust-building mechanisms, and indirect communication styles.

In some cultures, time is viewed as a finite resource that should be managed carefully, often referred to as monochronic time. This is common in cultures like the United States and

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[134] Barry, B., Lewicki, R. J., & Saunders, D. M. (2024) *Negotiation* (ninth edition) New York: McGraw-Hill
[135] Hall, E. T. (1976) *Beyond Culture*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group

Germany, where punctuality, scheduling, and efficiency are valued. In contrast, polychronic times are emphasized in cultures such as those in the Middle East and Latin America, where relationships and flexibility often take precedence over rigid adherence to schedules. These differing perspectives can lead to conflicts or frustrations during negotiations, particularly when one party perceives the other as being inefficient or disrespectful of time.

Trust is a central element in any negotiation, and different cultures approach trust-building in varying ways. In high-context cultures, trust tends to be built gradually through personal relationships and shared experiences. In contrast, low-context cultures may focus more on establishing trust through legal contracts, explicit agreements, and institutional mechanisms. These differences can lead to misunderstandings, particularly when negotiators from different cultural backgrounds expect differing levels of formality or informality in the relationship-building process.

Another significant challenge in intercultural negotiations is the varying use of indirect versus direct communication. High-context cultures often rely on indirect communication, where meaning is implied rather than explicitly stated. For example, a negotiator from a high-context culture might say "It may be difficult" to imply a firm refusal, while a low-context culture negotiator might interpret this as a simple possibility rather than a refusal. These differences can lead to misinterpretation of intent and create unnecessary tension between parties. One notable example of how cultural expectations shape negotiation dynamics is the United States-China trade negotiations. Fang explored the cultural underpinnings of these negotiations through the lens of Yin Yang, a concept from Chinese philosophy that emphasizes balance and the interdependence of opposing forces.[136] In Chinese culture, negotiators often seek to maintain harmony and balance, which can manifest in indirect communication, ambiguity, and a focus on long-term relationships rather than immediate gains. Conversely, U.S. negotiators may prioritize transparency, directness, and achieving quick, tangible results.

Intercultural negotiations are highly complex and require negotiators to be aware of a wide range of factors, including cultural norms, communication styles, and conflict resolution strategies. Understanding the fundamental negotiation frameworks, such as distributive and integrative bargaining, and applying them in culturally appropriate ways can lead to more effective negotiations. Awareness of challenges such as differing perceptions of time, trust-

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[136] Fang, T. (2012) "Yin Yang: a new perspective on culture." *Management and Organization Review* 8:1, pp. 25-50

building mechanisms, and indirect communication styles is crucial for avoiding pitfalls in cross-cultural negotiations.

The works of Hall and Fang highlight the significance of cultural context in shaping negotiation dynamics, while Lewicki et al. provide valuable frameworks for understanding how negotiators can adapt their strategies to fit different cultural norms. In the context of this research, the examples they present give a sense of the complexity of the negotiations. On the one hand, Sadat represented a classical middle eastern cultural approach: polychronic time, which means that the negotiations had to be conducted in their own timeframe and management of negotiations, and very high context (the classic *inshallah* approach). On the other extreme, there was the American leadership, which was exactly the opposite, and in the middle – Begin. Begin was both European as well as deeply accustomed to the Middle East. His party integrated many of the voters, who emigrated from those countries. It is perhaps thanks to this ambiguity that Begin navigated so well during the negotiations.

II.1.4 Leadership in the context of intercultural negotiations

Leadership in political science and international relations is a central topic that shapes domestic and global governance. As discussed earlier, political leadership is often analyzed through different theoretical frameworks, including realism, liberalism, and constructivism, each emphasizing distinct aspects of power, decision-making, and influence. Moreover, political leadership theories categorize leaders into different styles, such as charismatic, transformational, and transactional leadership. This was discussed by many scholars in the field from its onset. Max Weber introduced the concept of charismatic authority, where personal magnetism plays a crucial role in influencing followers.[137] Transformational leadership, as described by James MacGregor Burns, emphasizes leaders who inspire and mobilize people to achieve shared goals.[138] Transactional leadership, in contrast, relies on structured exchanges and rewards.[139]Additionally, Machiavellian leadership, derived from Niccolò Machiavelli's The Prince, argues that successful leaders must be pragmatic, strategic, and, at times, ruthless.

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[137] Weber, M. (1947) *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization,* Los Angeles: The Free Press
[138] Burns, J.M. (1978) *Leadership*, New York: Harper & Row
[139] Bass ,B.M. (1985) *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations,* Los Angeles: The Free Press

This perspective aligns with *realpolitik*, a concept in international relations emphasizing power and strategic interests over ideological considerations.[140]

These models of political leadership were further developed in the discussion of their forming international relations. Leadership in international relations is shaped by power dynamics and diplomatic strategies. Neorealists, such as Kenneth Waltz, argue that state leaders operate within an anarchic system where security and power dictate decision-making.[141] Conversely, liberal theorists like Robert Keohane contend that leadership emerges through cooperation, institutions, and multilateral engagement.[142] Constructivist scholars, such as Alexander Wendt, assert that leadership is influenced by social structures and shared beliefs rather than merely power and resources.[143]

In recent years, international leadership has been analyzed through the lens of global governance, highlighting how organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, and the G20 contribute to leadership on climate change, economic stability, and human rights. Leaders such as Angela Merkel have been credited for shaping the EU's response to financial crises, while Donald Trump's presidency marked a shift toward nationalist and isolationist leadership styles.[144] Following this, modern leadership studies explore the impact of populism, digital diplomacy, and crisis management. Digital diplomacy and social media have also transformed how leaders engage with the public and international audiences.[145] The rise of political figures in various countries in recent years shows how leadership styles can shift within democratic institutions.

This rich discussion and research on leadership in the fields of international relations provide important input to this research since they allow to juxtapose two types of leaders who negotiated the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. On the one hand there was Menachem Begin, a democratically elected leader who at the time of the agreement was not only a newly elected prime minister but also the first to come from the political right in Israel, marking a gargantuan change in Israeli politics. His task was daunting, however, since he had to adopt a policy, which was less popular among his voters. His ability to unite the people behind the

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140 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*
141 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*
142 Koehane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*
143 Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*
144 Mudde, C. (2019) *The Far Right Today,* Cambridge: Polity Press
145 Van Dijck, J. (2013) *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media,* Oxford: Oxford University Press

agreement was done in a transformative manner, while utilizing on shared beliefs of the Israeli society and its desire to have peace after so many years of war, in a system that was best described by Wendt. In other words, he was able to achieve leadership by evoking an ideology that was shared by many people in the society he was leading.

Sadat represented something different. After replacing popular Nasser, he was still an unelected leader in an authoritarian state. He had to deal with a deep-rooted hostility toward Israel within his own population. To his credit, he had the military establishment as well as a sense of pride following the Yom Kippur War. In such a system, Kenneth Waltz's model can explain how it works for an authoritarian military type leader work in a Machiavellian type of system, while realizing that the cold needs of the state, which was an agreement with Israel, pushed him to force such an agreement on his people.

As is be shown, no negotiation is perfect, what hampered any treaty with Israel was the perception of perfection. That is, in many an Arab government, lip service to a finalized resolution to Israel-Palestinian conflict – created a massive impediment in further exploration. By a zero-sum absolutist starting point, the decades went by without meaningful progress, because conditioning was too tight. By allowing for disagreement, acknowledgement of differing end game ideas vis-à-vis the conflict, and genuine pragmatism to leave those major questions to the side, allowed for initial starting points: itself a monumental breakthrough. This allowed for reciprocal momentum, based on shared interests, stability, trade and clear-eyed approach to the Iranian menace.

Within complex and sensitive negotiation, the difficulty in bridging a gap in perception of the opposing side, the political desire for a win, leads to maximalist claims that often amounted to nothing. The end of the Trump-Kim negotiations for nuclear debarment of North Korea, showed the weakness of two sides veering toward zero-sum. However, a staggered and nuanced approach, with modest gains viewed positively, could have yielded positive start and potential momentum. An example of this might be the North's signed agreement to cease testing nuclear devices or long-range missiles in return for the establishment of diplomatic liaison officers in Washington and Pyongyang. Even as these measures could be overturned by political-executive fiat, they are not insignificant and can build trust for further negotiations.[146] Nah shows that by avoiding the zero-sum approach, there is inherent gain of a 'starting point',

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[146] Nah, L. T. (2019). "The prisoner's dilemma and the U.S.–DPRK summit In Vietnam." *North Korean Review* 15:2, p. 95

potential for moving forward. This is because each side can see a level of fairness in the gains, economic progress with political and security mechanisms achievable for both sides. The mutually beneficial aspects, while unglamorous in the limited scope, can lead to concrete progress.

Overcoming the bias problems, the leadership is confronted by the need to make concrete decisions. Decision-making in political science and international relations is a complex process influenced by rational choice theories, psychological factors, and bureaucratic constraints. The study of decision-making explores how leaders process information, assess risks, and make strategic choices under uncertainty. Classical decision-making models emphasize rationality, where actors are assumed to maximize benefits while minimizing costs. This perspective, rooted in game theory, has been applied to various diplomatic and military strategies.[147] However, Herbert Simon introduced beforehand the concept of bounded rationality, arguing that decision-makers operate under cognitive and informational constraints, leading to satisficing rather than optimizing choices.[148] Additionally, the concept of strategic ambiguity is often employed in decision-making, allowing political leaders to withhold definitive policy stances to maintain flexibility. This approach has been utilized in foreign policy negotiations, such as the U.S. approach to Taiwan and the South China Sea disputes, or Israeli policy toward the Arab world and vice versa.

Cognitive biases play a crucial role in shaping decisions. Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky's prospect theory suggests that individuals weigh risks differently depending on whether they face potential losses or gains.[149] Robert Jervis gives a clear example of this approach as he highlighted how misperceptions, heuristics, and framing effects contribute to foreign policy errors, as seen in the misjudgments leading to the Iraq War of 2003.[150] Although, the peace agreement with Egypt does not represent the concept unplanned escalation, but rather its opposite, it still demonstrates how various factors represent decision making when more is unknown than known. Finally, there is the Graham Allison's three models' approach including rational actor, organizational process, and bureaucratic politics offer a nuanced view of decision-making in crises.[151] The Cuban Missile Crisis serves as a classic case study,

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[147] Schelling, T. (1960) *The Strategy of Conflict.* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press
[148] Simon H. (1957) *Models of Man: Social and Rational.* New York: Wiley
[149] Kahenman, D. & Tversky, A. (1979) "Prospect theory: and analysis of decision under risk." *Econometrica* 47:2*,* pp. 263-291
[150] Jervis, R. (1976) *Perception and Misperception in International Politics.* Princeton: Princeton University Press
[151] Allison, G. (1971) *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missiles Crisis.* Boston: Little, Brown and Co.

demonstrating how different government agencies influence decisions through internal competition and standard operating procedures. This, however, applies when there is more than one player in the political decision, and is important to understand Sadat's interplay with some of his generals and members of the public, who were hesitant toward any rapprochement with Israel.

Within the context of the negotiations toward the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, numerous challenges and decisions had to be met by both leaders. The complexity of negotiations required, taking into consideration issues such as security, ideology and economy, had to put trust on the counterpart and his ability to deliver on these prospects to his people. For Sadat, Schelling's rational approach makes a lot of sense. He knew that Egypt had militarily lost the 1973 war, despite its portrayal as a defeat, and was aware that Israel's alliance with the United States was continuously growing. He could now lay his hopes on a new movement in Israel, which was able to assure him of the chances of success, as the following chapters show, and especially the findings chapter. His decision to land in Israel and speak in front of the Knesset was bold but was not without planning and assuming its chance for success. Begin had more to lose. If the decision to retreat from Sinai would fail, and Israel's security would be in jeopardy, his whole legacy would be hampered. Unlike Sadat, he had little idea whether the agreement would succeed in leading to lasting peace. To understand him it is worth utilizing Kahenman and Tversky's theory, as it enables weighing what he knew at each moment and how he asserted the chances of the negotiations.

II.1.5 Summary

The most visible international events currently are the Russo-Ukrainian war and the Gaza War. The case of the former is exceptionally revealed to the discussions presented above. Russia was powerless to halt the NATO enlargements of 1999 and 2004 which incorporated many of the former Soviet and soviet bloc countries of eastern Europe and the Baltic Sea coast. NATO moved into what Russia perceived as its historical sphere of influence. Furthermore, the desire and willingness of both NATO and the Georgian and Ukrainian governments to accede to the alliance, resulted in Putin's growing aggression toward his neighbors under the pretext of a national threat. Like NATO the European Union simultaneously sought eastern integration with its Eastern Partnership proposal to bring Ukraine gradually into its economic orbit.

This is the perfect example and a recent one to see the different approach between realists, liberals and constructivists. All three provide a different view on the situation and they look at it in a different way. Realists center their analysis on the security interests of states and power distribution. Western influence created a perceived security threat to Russia and a relative power imbalance in favor of the west. Russia's invasion was therefore justified by its desire to protect its security interests. Liberals emphasize domestic politics and the role of international institutions in the conflict. The coup in 2014 that brought into power a pro-western government prompted Russia to undertake actions that would destabilize the country and pull Ukraine back into its trade orbit. On the other side, A pro-western population within Ukraine saw in NATO and the EU a way to advance their interests, reducing Ukrainian economic dependance on Russia. Constructivists look more at diverging identities in the conflict. The attraction of pro-democratic western identity stood in stark contrasts to the authoritarianism of Putin's Russia. Patriotic rhetoric from the Kremlin emphasized Russian identity and justified Crimean annexation as a reterritorialization of a historical Russian land.

International relations scholars view these main theories as both complementary and distinct ways of looking at the world. While staunch realists like Mearsheimer predicted the Russian reaction to NATO encroachment, many observers view these theories as tools in a toolbox of perspectives to consider when interpreting world events. Accordingly, it is important to understand that international relations theories provide lenses for interpretation rather than a set of public policies that should be pursued. In other words, international relations theories value freedom, seeking to understand how the world works. This outlook stands in contrast to ideologies of domestic politics or foreign policy, which are methods for achieving ends.[152] Finally, the set of theories in cultural and intercultural studies are invaluable to understanding the context in which the negotiations worked. It is a fact that despite the closeness of recent history, there were important cultural gaps that had to be bridged. The Israeli-Egyptian negotiations give a clear understanding of how these gaps can be bridged and therefore contribute to the further development of research in those fields.

The Middle East peace process and the Abraham Accords help examine these theories in times of peace, rather than war is the previous example. Realists would notice the need of Israel to find an agreement that protects its border. This is emphasized by Israel's insistence on the

[152] Satti, T. (2016) *Liberalism theory, types of liberalism, and criticism* [online]. Available at: https://www.slideshare.net/TallatSatti/liberalism-theorytypes-of-liberalismand-criticism (accessed 21/06/2025)

creation of an observer force and the prevention of the presence of an Egyptian army in Sinai. The Abraham Accords can be seen as part of a greater anti-Iran alliance that promoted the sense of security among all partners. Liberals would put focus on the interest of the UAE and Egypt to come closer to the West and enjoy economic benefits provided by the umbrella of the United States and other international organizations. Constructivists are able to discuss concepts of Middle East identity and the fact that it was a right-wing government in Israel, which was more conservative, and therefore understood codes of religion and culture, which was finally able to achieve these breakthrough agreements.

Like the psychology of the individual, where triggers are avoided for alleviating stress. So can be viewed within mediation between nations can be a practical bridging of gaps between views based on this unique modeling. Traditional forms would embrace all points of agreement and avoidance of contention. This model of interculturalism highlights an exploration of a potential new form of bridging gaps. The tension is explored within the medium of potential cultural uniqueness, and within this dynamic, the shared potential history of historical tolerance, emerges as a model for viewing the shared tolerance as points of agreement and mediation of the past. What is different is embraced for the tolerance it can exhibits resulting in a shared mutuality of experience, which paradoxically evokes a united stance within the tension of the contrast.

However, accounting for political psychology and constructivist analysis, one can find that both on an individual level and within the social context, these formative moves would be acclimated slowly within society. While the process required the warming or ripening periods, nevertheless within liberal and constructivist theory there exists the structure of balance between individualism and social construction to allow for societal changes.[153]

Thus, the invigorating political model of interculturalism uses Barkin's distinct theories of synthesis of Realist Constructivism, which then is seen to be a driving force in effective diplomatic modeling and bringing nuanced approach with power and liberal realism and flexible constructivist application to bring an empathetic realpolitik bare bones to the negotiation table. This is one of the great contributions of Camp David to Abraham Accords' thinking, philosophy and structure. The businesslike win-win mindset can then be viewed as a

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[153] Barkin, *Realist Constructivism,* pp. 160-165

foundational principle and variation of Barkin's IR modeling, which can bear practical fruit in future deadlock negotiation.

Thus, a fundamentally sound and robust theoretical structure has been presented, if nuanced and forward looking, for social good to be performed in any context, accounting for the national and personal aspirations of minority and the underrepresented, whether tackled in a prescriptive power approach or as existing social construction nonetheless has grounding and is also aspirational in approach.[154] Mediation as seen with President Carter, must always seek to soar and redefine boundaries, the limitation of what thought allows. To see beyond what is strictly viable and yet still be within the realm of critical political viability. This intense balancing act, both on a theoretical basis and indeed seen with modern day mediators, is shown in both the germination stages in Camp David, and the later intercultural stages at Abraham Accords as societal changes and constructions began to emerge. Thus, the historical look and nuanaced modeling presents highly complex yet viable approaches for difficult mediation and international diplomacy.

II.2 Literature review concerning the peace process between Israel and Egypt

II.2.1 Cold peace or prospect of future of wars between Israel and Egypt

A region with historical conflict such as the Middle East is where war became a pattern. However, despite the Middle East's tumultuous history, peace is still an excellent means to prevent war. Undoubtedly, peace opens doors to many positive options in many fields such as economy, cooperation, energy, culture, education, agriculture and other fields. Normalization can take these achievements even one step further.

Peace between Israel and Egypt was signed on 26 March 1979 in the White House in Washington DC. It was signed 16 months after the Egyptian president Anwar Sadat arrived in Israel to an historical visit in 1977. The peace agreement was obtained after intense negotiations and ended a state of war that had existed since the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, and subsequently the 1956 Suez Crisis, The Six-day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur war in 1973. All of these were

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[154] Ibid., p. 162

deadly wars that cost the life of thousands of soldiers from both sides and scars on both societies.

The achieved peace, however, does not negate the possibility of war between Egypt and Israel in the future.[155] Daniel Eilam discusses these possibilities in his study. In this research, Eilam reminds the reader that Israel and Egypt are two old enemies with a history of high-intensity war of the strongest Militaries in the Middle East. Due to Israel's disadvantage in size, it has developed the concept of the preemptive strike. The wars of 1956 and 1967, albeit a result of Egypt's movements, which were deemed as a *casus bello* by Israel, were also part of Israeli strategic thinking which considered Egypt as its biggest threat due to its large and powerful military.[156] In reviewing the history of the wars between Israel and Egypt he also that unlike the past, now Egypt has a game-changing option. While in 1956 and in 1967 Israel had the possibility to surprise Egypt, the 1973 war ended with a surprise Egyptian attack, who studied the Israeli army's locations, yet this could be repelled due to Israel's strategic depth in Sinai and there is no natural barrier between Israel and Egypt such as the Suez Canal.[157]

This fear, according to Eilam, may not be far-fetched and could happen when a serious war directly confronts Israel's existence would be exploited by Egypt, or alternatively it would be dragged to such a war by external forces. The future of the Gaza Strip after the war, the on-going tension between Israel and Egypt because of their arms races, the nuclear issue and the uncertainty and volatile situation inside Egypt like in Sinai can all lead to miscalculations that lead to a crisis that would eventually lead to war at any given time.[158] Another factor is maybe and perhaps the most important one is that many Egyptians do not like Israel, despite not wanting war. Egypt has reasons to keep the peace but, in their hearts, the Egyptian people are not in agreements with this peace. Peace was signed but normalization was absent. Nationalistic, ideological and religious opinions in Egypt, which have been creating hostility toward Israel, might do their worst in a case of high tension. They could reach a point of calling for war with Israel, especially during hostility periods between Israel and the Palestinians.

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[155] For the conceptualization of cold peace vs strategic peace, see: Aran, A. & Ginat, R. (2014) "Revisiting Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel under Mubarak: From cold peace to strategic peace." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 37:4, pp.556–559

[156] Eilam, D. (2014) *The Next War between Israel and Egypt: Examining a High-intensity War between Two of the Strongest Militaries in the Middle East.* Elstree: Vallentine Mitchell, pp. 1-3

[157] Ibid, p. 71

[158] Ibid, p. 199; This text provides a modern framework for conceptualizing different "qualities" of peace Jarstad, A., Eklund, N., Johansson, P., Olivius, E., Åkebo, M. et al. (2019) *Three approaches to peace: a framework for describing and exploring varieties of peace*. Umeå Working Papers in Peace and Conflict Studies, pp. 4-12

However, despite this gloomy possibility, there are factors that keep the option of war at bay, all resulting from the successful negotiations of 1979. Israel and Egypt understand perfectly well the consequences of a future war between them. They also understand the Reasons for a future war, and therefore the "cold peace" was the result. Yet Israel, which until the late 1970s considered Egypt's military as its single biggest threat, adjusted over the last three decades to seeing its closest neighbor from the southwest in a different light. The ties between them have been quite normal as much as they could be between Israel and a powerful Arab State while the Arab Israeli conflict continues. Israel and Egypt reached understandings on important strategic and military issues, such as seeing Iran as a threat to both their interests and agreeing on the need to avoid friction between Israel and the Arab states and non-states organizations like the Hamas. Israel and Egypt have been aware of the possible ramifications if there is a confrontation between Israel and the Arabs. The peace managed to survive such collisions, specifically those between Israel and the Palestinians in 1982 in Lebanon and later in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Egypt sometimes played the role of mediator between Israel and the Palestinians, which helped reduce the chance of escalation.[159] Furthermore, there was a certain cooperation between Israel and Egypt in other aspects such as trade, agriculture and natural gas.[160]

Moreover, since the late 70s the Egyptian military returned to relying on a western arsenal, mostly on American weapons systems. On Israel's part, the peace with Egypt has permitted Israel to deploy its forces and units in a different way: Since the early 1980s the IDF has been busy with hybrid and low-intensity wars against the Palestinians in the West bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as against Hezbollah in Lebanon. The cycles of violence continued in the Middle East, yet Egypt did not come to help the Palestinians, let alone Hezbollah, and this despite the skirmishes in the Gaza Strip were happening on the border with Egypt. During those hybrids and low intensity wars the IDF could have concentrated on its units according to its needs. It never had to mobilize most of its reserves for confrontations, unlike past wars with Egypt. This change gave a great advantage to Israel.

Another advantage to the new situation ever since the 1979 peace treaty is the fact that Israel could readdress its strategic priority to a new threat: preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear

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[159] Aran, A. (2020) *Israeli Foreign Policy since the End of the Cold War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 34-58

[160] Das, H. J. (2020) "Israel's gas diplomacy with Egypt." *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* 7:2, pp. 215-227

military capacity. The Israeli Air Force (IAF) has been training to attack Iran nuclear sites according to so many publications. This is Israel's biggest effort today. For the IDF (Israel Defense Force), focusing on Iran and Hezbollah instead of Egypt makes sense. It allows Israel to concentrate on other fronts especially with Iran getting more influence in the region and becoming a possible nuclear threat. Since Iran's aspirations involve the spreading of Shia Islam, the Sunni dominated Egypt has its own reason to be concerned from the nuclear threat Iran poses. After all, peace with the latter lasted more than three decades and it had become an Egyptian interest to maintain it as well. If one adopts the realist approach presented earlier, it is argued that the interest in peace keeps the balance in power and prevents both nations entering war.[161]

II.2.2 Commemorating the nation

Culture and identity play an important role in Egypt's motivations. Egypt is not just another Arabic country but is considered as a leading Arab country. Egypt was and still is referred to as "*UMM AL-DUNYA*" (mother of the world). It is thought to have originated from the ancient times when Egypt was one of the most powerful and advanced civilizations in the world. Egyptians believe that their country was not just an important part of the world, but it used to be the center of the world. This belief was reinforced by the country's location at the crossroads of three continents: Africa, Asia and Europe. That is the reason the signing the peace treaty with Israel was so significant.

For Egypt commemorating the nation is essential to its identity. This is not merely limited to the past of the age of the Pharaoh's, but also more recent events are significant to nation building. The Nahdet Misr monument built at the aftermath of the 1919 revolution in Egypt is an example.[162] Egypt developed also developed a culture of commemoration to national martyrs such as national heroes like Mustafa Kamil and Muhamad Farid. Mustafa Kamil Pasha (1874-1908) an Egyptian lawyer, journalist and nationalist activist who played a great role in the country's national liberation movement and his mausoleum (built between 1949-53) close to Cairo Citadel in neo-Mamluk style is open to the public as a museum. He is remembered as

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[161] See discussions on Mearsheimer and Walt in section II.1.1

[162] Gershoni, I. & Jankowski, J. (2004) *Commemorating the Nation: Collective Memory, Public Commemoration, and National Identity in Twentieth-century Egypt*. Chicago: Middle East Documentation Center, p. 58

a fervent Egyptian nationalist and an articulate advocate of Egyptian independence. Muhammad Farid (1868-1919) was an influential Egyptian political figure. He was also a nationalist leader. Writer and lawyer. Among Egyptians today, Farid is respected for his nationalism, courage and self-sacrifice. They represented Egyptian revolution of July 1952. [163]

The last major event that is of gargantuan importance to Egypt's public culture of commemoration is the war of October 1973, The Yom Kippur War, which has often been credited with establishing Anwar Sadat's legitimacy as president of Egypt. It had for sure upgraded his presidency in the eyes of his population. After three years of internal stagnation and growing discontent with the anomalous state of "no war-no Peace" that characterized the early 1970s the successful Egyptian crossing of the Suez Canal and the simultaneous Syrian offensive in the Golan Heights, shattered a solidifying regional status quo favorable to Israel. The war also set in motion the involved process of military disengagement and diplomatic negotiations that eventually culminated in an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and the reassertion of Egyptian sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula on the long run, since as a result of the October 1973 war, Egypt regained possession of the territory of Sinai lost to Israel in 1967; what war did not achieve – peace did. 6 October 1973 quickly became known in Egypt as "the day of the Crossing (*yawm al-ubur*), a military triumph that in part erased the national humiliation of the June 1967 defeat and made Sadat the hero of the Crossing (*batal al-ubur*).[164]

The malleable and instrumental character of national commemoration is illustrated by the transformation in the hierarchy of Egyptian national holidays following the October war. Not only new holidays but also a new ordering of national holidays emerged within two years of the war. 6 October became the primary focus of national commemoration from 1974. 5 June 1975 was the date that the Suez Canal was reopened to ship after its closure in June 1967 and became a new holiday of sorts (not an official state holiday but nonetheless marked by annual government-sponsored ceremonies). In the late 1970s, these two holidays formed complementary bases for the President's Sadat legitimacy. The crossing of October 1973 became his political-military claim to fame, and the reopening of the Suez Canal came to symbolize his economic reorientation of Egypt toward the world economy. From 1974 on, the

[163] Lavie, L. (2024). "From pharaoh to hero: contested constructions of Mubarak's image in Egyptian post-uprising collective memory." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, pp. 1–16
[164] Cook, S.A. (2023) "October War legacy fades in troubled modern Egypt." Available at: https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/october-war-legacy-fades-troubled-modern-egypt (accessed: 21/05/2025)

Holiday of the Revolution was not only deemphasized by the regime, but its significance was also re-evaluated as part of the broader 1970s campaign of "de-Nasserization."[165]

In fact, the infrastructure of commemoration celebrating the Crossing of October 1973 resembled in many respects that of the holiday of the Revolution. Egypt has taken a step away from its near past: In revolutionary Egypt, most of the holidays celebrated under the parliamentary monarchy were no longer relevant as the regime organized new commemorations and instituted new holidays to replace the old. The October war even took the place of the hero of the evacuation of foreign troops President Gamal Abdel Nasser who was defined by the Egyptian media such as "al-Ahram: The liberator of the homeland from imperialism."[166] The war against Israel, the October war, became a symbol for Egypt's strength and commemorating the Nation.

The story of national holidays and the alignment of the 1973 war with Egypt's independence is vital in understanding the steps that led to Egypt's rapprochement to Israel. Firstly, after a series of defeats Egypt's perceived success gave Sadat the mandate from the people to do bold moves. Most important was his ability to end Nasser's legacy of pan-Arabism and focus on policies that work for Egypt alone. While Nasser imagined himself as leader who wanted to change history, he mainly became a leader that changed geography, as supposedly said by an Egyptian diplomat 1970s Paris.[167] that left space for President Sadat to make what was perhaps the most significant step since 1948 - his trip to Israel. revolutionary for the Middle East in 1977. A journey that ended in the peace treaty of 1979. In the context of constructivist analysis, this is a prime example of how history and culture played a role in creating the pretext for negotiations. [168]

II.2.3 The Israeli perspective for normalization

Peacemaking was not a simple deal for the prime minister at the time, Menachem Begin, who was the first to person govern Israel coming from the right side of the political sphere since the country's independence. His political partners were not all enthusiastic about the formula in which land was to be exchanged for peace. While he was likely to pass the agreement at the

[165] Gershoni, & Jankowski, *Commemorating the Nation*, p. 283
[166] Ibid, p. 272
[167] Blanga, Y.U. (2019) *The US, Israel, and Egypt: Diplomacy in the Shadow of Attrition, 1969-70*. Abingdon: Routledge, p. 1
[168] Jarstad et al. *Three approaches,* pp. 10-14; See also: Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politic*

Knesset, he still encountered staunch opposition from his own ranks, mainly the *Gush Emunim* and the settlement movement. Externally, Begin's relations with Carter were frail and suspicious, which led the latter to suspect that Begin was not opting for substantial concessions. Ultimately, this would be the first time in the history of Zionism where a Jewish settlement would be removed by its own government initiative in the context of peace. This contradicted a major ethos in the Zionist movement: the building of settlements and protecting them regardless of the cost. Begin had to juxtapose his own Zionist ideology with his desire to secure peace and security.[169]

The implementation of the peace treaty was to be far more difficult from the perspective of an Israeli public, which was to realize the difference between agreement and implementation. At the time of the agreement popular security officials who could promote acceptance for the hard steps ahead, such as Moshe Dayan and Ezer Weizmann, left center stage. The next steps were to be taken by other political leaders and even Begin himself stepped aside before the full implementation of the agreement. The political dynamics were also become more unique than before, with major changes to the economy and the rise of civil movements, which demanded greater focus on internal Israeli affairs, and less on issues of national defense as was in three decades beforehand. Even factors such as relations with the United States and the wider international community was rendered secondary, in comparison to what was happening internally in Israel. [170]

Adding to this, there was a growing concern from Israeli officials about Egyptian abilities to implement the negotiation. Sadat's murder and the rise of Mubarak had a chilling effect on the peace agreement, and there was a deep-rooted hostility to Israel among the professional ranks from the Egyptian foreign office to an extent that they might put unpassable obstacles on the implementation of the agreement.[171] The general enthusiasm of 1979 was replaced with a growing suspicion, that ultimately led to cold peace and did not permit normalization that was initially sought for.

This bleak development does not render the peace fruitless. Peace between Israel and Egypt was kept intact and permitted the warmer agreement between Israel and Jordan in 1994.

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[169] Rubinovitz, Z. & Steinberg, G. (2009) *Menachem Begin and the Israel-Egypt Peace Process: Between Ideology and Political Realism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 170
[170] Gerdes, Daniel L. (2015) "The possibility of peace: Israeli public opinion and the Camp David Accords." *Departmental Honors Projects* 28
[171] Rubinovitz & Steinberg, *Menachem Begin*, p. 220

Considering other agreement from the same period and beforehand, in Cyprus and Sri Lanka demonstrates that one cannot take this achievement for granted. This applies also to the failed negotiations with the Palestinians in recent decades.[172] Moreover, as this research shows, the long-term impact and the ability of the agreement to change regional and international process of reconciliation is a unique strength of the agreement. Egypt's abandonment of the concept of Arab unity or pan-Arabism, which was the dominant political discourse since 1934, cracked the wall, which allowed the UAE and Bahrain to come through later.

The concept of a vast Arab Empire was not a romantic idea created by visionaries or idealists but rather result of an historical identity and the needs of the time. After the breakdown of the Othman Empire there was a common feeling among Arab political thinkers that such a political construct was necessary, as the only possible guarantee of Arab independence and development in a post-colonial world. The peace between Israel and Egypt changed this paradigm.[173]

Finally, the international climate as well as the aspiration and hope of the international community finally came to fruition, after years where seeing peace achieved in the Middle East was just a hope. It also made relations between Europe and Israel easier: "it is evident that the Arab Israeli conflict was of the utmost relevance and significance even before the events of 1967 (the six-day war) 1973 (the Yom Kippur war) and the oil crisis of 1973. These events are considered formative in modeling the European perception towards Israel and the EEC's need to consolidate a policy towards the conflict and the region."[174]

II.2.4 Prospects for future negotiation between Israel and the Arab world

The peace treaty with Egypt automatically raises the question of subsequent agreements. The article, titled "Prospects of reinvigorating the Middle East Peace Process: a possible joint EU-US undertaking?",[175] discusses the potential for revitalizing the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) through collaboration between the European Union (EU) and the United States (US). It begins by contextualizing the historical background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, tracing

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[172] Ibid. P. 224
[173] Gershoni, I. (1981) *The Emergence of Pan-Arabism in Egypt*. Tel Aviv: Shiloah, p. 49
[174] Heimann, G. and Herman, L. (2018) *Israel's Path to Europe: The Negotiations for a Preferential Agreement, 1957-1970*. Abingdon: Routledge, p. 268
[175] Cohen -Hadria, E, Hassan, Z., Levy, D. and Sidło, K. (2023). *Prospects of reinvigorating the Middle East peace process: a possible joint EU-US undertaking? Policy Department for External Relations*. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EXPO_STU(2022)702573 (accessed 21/05/2025)

it from the 1947 UN Partition Plan, through the subsequent wars, and up to the more recent developments, such as the Abraham Accords and clashes in Gaza and the West Bank. The article emphasizes that, despite various international efforts over the decades, a resolution has not been achieved, and the occupation of Palestinian territories persists.

The study highlights the limitations faced by the EU and the US in the peace process. The EU, historically recognized as a normative power influencing international negotiations, has seen its influence wane due to structural challenges in its foreign policy, especially its reliance on unanimity among member states. The EU's financial and diplomatic support has been significant but not sufficient to create lasting change. Meanwhile, the US, particularly under recent administrations, has shifted its focus away from the peace process. The Trump administration's unilateral approach and actions, such as recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, further complicated the situation. The Biden administration, while more critical of certain Israeli actions, has not fundamentally altered the US stance, and the MEPP remains a low priority.

Internally, the article examines the divisions within Palestinian politics, notably the split between Hamas and Fatah, and the challenges of unifying Palestinian leadership. It points out that these internal rifts hinder any cohesive political strategy and provide Israeli governments with an excuse to avoid negotiations. Similarly, the document explores the internal dynamics within Israel, describing a rightward shift in its politics, which has increasingly marginalized voices advocating for a two-state solution or meaningful engagement with the Palestinians.

The report also critiques EU-US cooperation on the MEPP, arguing that while there are shared interests, the EU has often been relegated to a secondary role, primarily providing financial aid without sufficient political leverage. The article suggests that the EU's ability to act decisively, as demonstrated in its response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, could be applied to the MEPP. The EU's credibility, the study argues, depends on its consistency in international affairs, including the Middle East.

The report concludes with recommendations for the EU to pursue a more independent strategy in the MEPP, regardless of potential changes in the US administration. It suggests that the EU could either act as a whole or, if consensus among member states is not possible, form a coalition of like-minded countries. This approach, it asserts, is necessary to preserve the EU's

influence and legitimacy, emphasizing that the current status quo is unsustainable and poses risks for the EU's standing in global diplomacy.[176]

II.2.5 Once *Haram* now *Hallal*

The ripening of conditions, while overt, once the accords sprung to the surface, has been fostered and even embraced by some elements of Gulf society.[177] This emerging popularity seen within the youth of the Gulf, is not seen as foreign influence rather a genuine reflection of internalization and embrace of new thinking and perspectives. These researchers have found, looking back in 2021 from the Arab Spring to the post-Abraham Accords era, that the region has in fact altered, thus a refreshing urgency to implement real and lasting progress toward religious tolerance and new ideas and outlooks.[178]

Yet, beyond surface narratives, a more mature paradigm is emerging, shaped by advocates of change across the Middle East. This movement challenges traditional ways of framing the region, arguing that its dynamics should be defined not only by ethnic, religious, or tribal divides, but also by a deeper contrast: between those invested in preserving the past and those committed to shaping a new future. The Gulf states, together with a handful of other nations, have become the main proponents of this shift, seeking to redefine a conflict-torn region through a forward-looking vision. While this idealism may seem remote from realities in places such as Yemen, Libya, Lebanon, or Syria, where sectarian tensions and proxy conflicts dominate, it nonetheless resonates with younger generations, and certain elite circles determined to steer the Middle East onto a more hopeful trajectory. Indeed, researchers Tuvia Boms and Hussein Aboubakr find that the trends among young Arabs are being inspired by the United Arab Emirates and pulling the older generations towards similar moderation and focus on individual opportunity.[179]

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[176] It is worth taking note in this context of consolidation of Palestinian internal politics and effects on MEPP and on Palestinian fragmentation and its effects on negotiations. See: International Crisis Group reports. (2023) "Rethinking gas diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean," *Middle East Report* 240

[177] Quilliam & Vakil *The Abraham Accords and Israel–UAE Normalization*

[178] Quantitative evidence that youth/education correlate with support for normalization in some countries. See: Arab Barometer (2022), "Arab barometer wave VII questionnaire." Available at: https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/ENG-Arab-Barometer-Wave-VII-Questionnaire-RELEASE-v2.pdf (accessed 21/06/2025)

[179] Aboubakr & Boms, *Pan Arabism 2.0?*, p. 1.

Therefore, the peace initiatives were never about a treaty of convenience. In this way, although mirrored and inspired by the Sadat-Begin revolutionary peace, here the UAE is prepared to go much further. This had profound effects upon regional architecture. Indeed, normalization is far more potent, for it is accompanied by value-based decisions about social interaction, trade, diplomacy and genuine person-to-person connections. By anecdotal evidence, the fact that Israelis feel extremely comfortable in the Malls of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, something which never occurred in the Egypt Accords. Thus, while the essential groundwork was paved in 1979, the conditions took many years to settle into a societal awareness in the Gulf. However, even within this paradigm there are yet pitfalls on the popular level. The resultant, even exultant, Israeli support for an open Gulf dialogue and tourism is not reciprocal. While received with open arms and friendship, the general populace has not yet been as keen, perhaps not even as interested in a proactive relationship or touring Israel.[180]

This shows that the inherent desire for change is not merely fostered by select, Gulf elite for pragmatic purposes. Rather this trend is finding massive resonance among the youth of Arabia. While old customs and habits die hard, it is difficult to ignore the potency of a grassroots youthful exuberance for healthy moderation and tolerance. Some can argue that it is but a natural process and real response to the repugnant ideology and extremism of the Islamic State. This sociological tend can therefore be viewed as a progression or long-in-coming reaction, to the orgy of violence with which ISIS and Al-Queda ruled the narrative of the Arab street. If this trend can continue, some may further argue that ultimately the youth of today are rejecting such violent narratives, even more deeply, exorcising these extreme tendencies which sought to define them for so long.

II.2.6 Critique of the normalization agreements

Within the many layers of criticism leveled at the various peace initiatives with Israel, it is crucial to focus upon the constructive and balanced Critique so as not to fall into traps of political nature. While there remain other avenues to explore in potential criticism of this work, the current environment of tension and conflict strengthens the case to avoid heavily politically

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[180] See for example report on support for normalization with Israel in MENA countries: Robbins, M. (2022) "How do MENA citiziens view normalizrion with Israel." Availabe at: https://www.arabbarometer.org/2022/09/how-do-mena-citizens-view-normalization-with-israel (Accessed: 21/06/2025)

driven emotional narrative in favor of constructivist forward thinking yet criticism, nonetheless.

One of the preeminent scholars from the Gulf who addressed the Abraham Accords in critical light is Dr. Abdulkhaleq Abdulla. He finds two key pillars upon which the Accords are founded: The pragmatic pillar and the idealistic pillar.[181] He argues, before the Hamas War, that the pragmatic front has proven to be robust as such, the Accords are here to stay. However, the thrust of criticism lies directly in the idealism area where he finds the accords wanting, in scope in aspiration and in the teeth which would require Israel to make difficult choices. Within the national interest of each nation, Abdullah finds significant promise however on idealist front within the paradigm of mindset and outlook, the "winning of hearts and minds," he finds the prospects bleak. While on the pragmatic front, there were 15 years of covert ties, they focused on the tangible strategy and regional threat environment. While presented as a pillar of "infinite possibilities," recognizing that Israel is here to stay and gains in relationship with the United States and arms procurement, Abdulla still finds problematic the ideas and the societal changes. He argues that Israel itself must change its mindset to bring the idealistic pillar of the Abraham Accords to fruition. While argued before 7 October, Abdulla views the prospect of lasting change contingent upon the two-state solution.

Another critique this time from a Palestinian perspective view the emerging relationship with Israel as more than strictly normalization deal rather viewed via lens of Alliance formation or even as an arms deal.[182] Within the reshaping and the economic progress, this was expected because of the varied security cooperation over the years. Dana views this mutuality of need based upon power needs. With the decline of trading Arab powers, such as Egypt, Iraq and Syria the power shifted to the Gulf, who carry immense financial clout. Therefore, Dana concludes that the frameworks of the Accords is not so much built upon an empathetic pillar of just dialogue rather he views this as an aggressive mechanism for "reshaping the region and its power centers." [183] Thus, the criticism is sharply focused upon an Accords that are seen to be built upon pillars of Arab authoritarianism and Israeli "settlers colonialism."

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[181] Abdulkhaleq, A. (2001) *The two pillars of the Abraham Accords*. Available at: https://www.mei.edu/publications/two-pillars-abraham-accords (retrieved: 16/08/2025)
[182] Dana, T. (2023) "The new (dis)order: the evolving UAE-Israel security Alliance." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 52:3, pp. 62-68
[183] Ibid. p. 67

The thrust of both criticisms can be seen in the original Carter and Sadat reluctance to leave the Palestinian question out of the equation. These scholars object to the marginalization and reframing of peace deals in a regional light leaving Palestinian leadership such as the Palestinian Authority out of the equation, and a narrative that reinforced the notion that Palestinian leadership is an obstacle to regional stability. On a theoretical level the criticism would focus less on the firm power context and realist accomplishment as seen with the tacit acknowledgement by Abdulkhaleq Abdulla on the pragmatic pillar and progress. While some may argue that interculturalism can provide eventual new status quos breaking with the old, these scholars see the process as historically still unmoved. Thus both, from Gulf Arab and Palestinian perspective, with the idealist pillar left not addressed, criticisms would focus upon the narrow implementation of constructivism, a narrative and norms that avoid the Palestinian question. These were naturally intensified since the 7 October 2023.[184]

II.2.7 Summary

The 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty, signed in Washington, was a landmark agreement aimed at ending the state of war and establishing lasting peace between Egypt and Israel. The treaty begins by reaffirming the commitment of both parties to the framework for peace in the Middle East, as agreed at Camp David in 1978. The governments of Egypt and Israel expressed their desire to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict comprehensively and invite other Arab nations to join the peace process.

The treaty's initial provision declared the end of the state of war and committed both countries to exchange ratification documents to formalize peace. Israel agreed to withdraw all its armed forces and civilians from the Sinai Peninsula within three years, returning the territory to Egypt. The treaty established the permanent boundary between Egypt and Israel, which followed the international border, and both nations since then committed to respecting this boundary.

To maintain security, the treaty introduced several arrangements, including the establishment of demilitarized zones monitored by peacekeeping forces. The deployment of these peacekeepers is intended to ensure that neither country threatens the other, and it details specific limitations on military activities in these zones to build mutual trust. The treaty also permits

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[184] Kateb, A. (2025), "The Abraham Accords after Gaza: a change of context." Available at:
https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2025/04/the-abraham-accords-after-gaza-a-change-of-context?lang=en
(accessed: 01/08/2025)

free navigation for Israeli ships through the Suez Canal and recognizes the Strait of Tiran and Gulf of Aqaba as international waterways accessible to all.

Diplomatically, the treaty outlines the normalization of relations between Egypt and Israel. This includes the establishment of full diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations and the removal of economic barriers. Both parties agreed to cooperate on development and to ensure the protection of human rights and freedoms. Disputes between the countries are to be resolved peacefully through negotiation, conciliation, or arbitration if necessary.

The agreement included a series of annexes providing specific details on the phased military withdrawal, security zones, and the functioning of the joint commission established to oversee the treaty's implementation. This commission is responsible for coordinating movements and ensuring compliance with the terms of the agreement, with the United Nations' support. Overall, the treaty serves as a foundational step towards broader Middle Eastern peace, demonstrating Egypt and Israel's commitment to coexistence and regional stability.[185]

All this was groundbreaking at the time, considering the historical enmity, the lack of trust, and lack of sympathy between the populations involved in this agreement. Yet, the success of the agreement, and the fact that it kept on for so long despite numerous regional challenges, demonstrated to the region that an alternative path exists to the Arab-Israeli future. The work in the next chapters therefore demonstrate that this is not merely a theoretical paradigm, but a provable impetus and pretext to future negotiations with other Arab countries, and how this agreement not only influenced the fostering of future relations, it also allowed to have lessons and offer improvements based on some of the *lacunae* of this agreement, for the betterment of future negotiations. At the dawn of any new age, the sociology of the region evolves. If at first the previous help beliefs were set very firmly, subsequent developments are even more fundamental. Then this rejection of the old was an essential maturation, to expel those who would seek to speak on behalf of the new generation.

The Middle East has little patience for prolonged procedurals for the sake of checking boxes. Some cultures value processes and systems like procedure as comfort to itself, however the pragmatism of the Middle East shows inherent value in cutting much the bureaucratic nature of international negotiation to a minimum. While some may point to the formalistic monarchies or tribal nature of some societies, it still may be argued that beyond the scope of

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[185] Arab Republic of Egypt & State of Israel. (1979) *Treaty of Peace between the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Israel.* New York: United Nations Treaty Series, pp: 1136, 116-202.

internal posturing, behind closed doors, a flexible realism, a nuanced constructivist approach is emerging, and power positioning and projection is favored in the region. Whereas many European cultures may value the known and stable, rejecting risk and the undefined. It perhaps can be proposed that the unknown, within Middle eastern cultures is valued as an exploration, thus potential and possible breakthroughs are valued inherently. While it is true that some societies positively value patience and culture of traditions, nevertheless dynamic momentum is still valued. Sadat, and Mohamed Bin Zayed, MBZ share perhaps a little of this nature.

But lessons of grabbing opportunity when timing is ripe requires the unique set of players. Cumbersome traditionalists have value in staid formal slow-moving scenarios; the Abraham Accords thrived in precisely the opposite environment. From speech the culmination of Gulf frustration boiled to surface leading to new understandings of pragmatism with Israel, once *Haram*, now *Hallal*.

(Also to be understood is the role of uncertainty in high level negotiations. While stakeholders may often want to avoid statistics or hard scientific approaches, some modeling can be useful. As seen with the scientist led Rains model, building much flexibility within the inherent uncertainty of negotiation models, is of great value. Then absolute targets and potential lock jams and intransigence can be avoided potentially. As seen from a regional perspective the ripening of conditions has multiple gains for the UAE, the Gulf in general and Israel. When both sides with traditional values, were able to gain insight into the various mutual gains, if from radically different perspectives, allowed insight into the far-reaching net positive effects on the national, regional and even international systems for the US.)

Therefore, successful bridge building, trust via the Egyptian Accords while seismic in the geopolitical structure, led to alterations in regional alignments and additionally influenced social narratives. The shock to the systemized exclusion of Israel was broken yet not fundamentally altered. This process would take years. The urban legends of the 'untouchable Jews' were slowly softened; the ice had been broken. The lessening of the firm boycott was not only a breakthrough unto itself but additionally a key step that allowed for future reconciliations. As has been emphasized in various chapters, the ripening of the conditions did not occur overnight rather than a tenuous and exceedingly organic development in regional comfort, the easing of an initially discomfiting addition to the neighborhood.

Once the Egyptian Accords began, with Begin-Sadat first step, led to a cooling period which then could lead to the eventual warming, via the UAE and other could pave way for a much broader and softer peace. The initial cooling period resulted, over many years, in engendering rich opportunities for warmer peace and bilateral agreements on a host of issues. While the 1979 treaty with Israel never achieved great public approval, never reaching the normalization that the Emirates and Gulf states seek, still the pressure and press coming out of Gaza, and the looming Trump mass immigration idea: lead to a very restive citizenry. Therefore, in sum, the Egyptians are under supreme pressure and do not want to lose US support, their practical counter is a realistic Gaza governance plan. If this can bring them Gulf rebuilding billions all the better. Therefore, blustering on the Gaza frontier and rumbling on the benefits of Israel treaty can be seen to be political deftness to gain more maneuvering space regarding the Trump Gaza plan.

Chapter III: Methodology: qualitative research in international relations

III.1 Views of qualitative research

As explained in the introduction to this text, this study employed a qualitative research paradigm. The choice of qualitative research was based on the premise that understanding ideas, terms, concepts and historical processes needs to be conducted by considering an array of information in various fields such as cultural and interpretive studies and using the practices of interviews, observations and detailed text analysis to draw important conclusions in these topics.[186] Furthermore, this type of research is juxtaposed by quantitative research, which focuses on gathering information about volume, amount, or frequency of events, which can be subsequently quantified in numerical and statistical charts as a basis for analysis.[187]

Another important aspect of the qualitative research method is its *bricoleur* aspect. This means that the researcher must be able to independently gather, and process information using various tools and does not hesitate to invent a new tool if that is required.[188] Qualitative research offers various ways of collecting data, in line with the *bricoleur* approach, and new forms of qualitative data continually emerge. Nevertheless, it is essential to narrow down the various methods involved in this type of research to four mainstream methods of information collection: observation, interviews, document analysis, and audiovisual records.[189]

Qualitative research is an approach that seek to understand human experiences, meanings and social phenomena through the collection of non-numerical data such as interviews, observations, and texts. It focuses on depth rather than breadth aiming to uncover the how and why behind behaviors, decisions and interactions. It is often interpretive, constructivist or critical in its epistemological foundations.

The key characteristics of qualitative research reveal both its advantages and weaknesses. These characteristics include the notion that it is subjective and context dependent, it uses open-

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[186] Denzin, K.N. & Lincoln, S.Y. (2012) *The Landscape of Qualitative Research. Theories and Issues* (fourth edition). Los Angeles CA: SAGE, pp. 2-3
[187] See definition of quantitative research in: Ibid. p.8
[188] Ibid, p. 161
[189] Creswell, J. W. & Poth, C.N. (2024) *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (fifth edition). Los Angeles CA: SAGE, p. 159

ended, flexible methodologies, and it collects data through interviews, focus groups, field notes (nevertheless, it uses also documents).

The advantages resulting from these characteristics include:

- Depth and richness: the research captures complex human experiences in their natural settings.
- Flexibility: adapts to new insights and emerging themes during data collection.
- Participant voice: prioritizes participants perspectives and lived experiences.
- Theory generation: the methods are useful for exploratory research and developing new theoretical insights (such as grounded theory)
- Contextual understanding: The research provides insights into how culture, environment and power dynamics behavior.

However, there are some weaknesses that result from these characteristics that require awareness from the scholar:

- Limited generalizability: findings are often specific to the context or small sample studied.
- Subjectivity: researcher bias can affect interpretation and analysis.
- Time consuming: data collection, transcription and analysis require significant time and resources.
- Replication challenges: difficult to reproduce to its flexible evolving nature.

Despite the challenges posed by these weaknesses, qualitative research is most appropriate for this study because the research seeks to explore meanings, perceptions or experiences that cannot be quantified. The study deals with complex political, cultural and social phenomena and argues that these were essential in understanding the myriads of challenges that had to be confronted to achieve peace, including: identity, interculturalism, leadership.

Qualitative research allows the investigator to co-construct knowledge with participants who have been closely engaged with the process under examination. These participants have contributed to the research either through direct involvement in the events analysed, through their geographic proximity to the historical context, through their cultural or religious affiliations, or through relevant professional experience, in this case, as former or current diplomats.

The goal of this approach is not to test a hypothesis, but rather to cultivate a nuanced, in-depth understanding of a complex process or phenomenon. In the present study, a peace process between two distinct cultures is investigated, focusing on the role of leadership in overcoming long-standing historical tensions between nations. By employing qualitative methods, this research aims to build a universal theoretical model that can be adapted to other geographic settings, other conflicts, or even larger peace negotiations within the Middle East and beyond.

Since this study analyses specific historical events and the behaviors of leaders and populations within a defined cultural and temporal context, quantitative data and statistics are less pertinent. Consequently, qualitative research emerges as the most suitable methodological approach for this inquiry.

III.2 Qualitative research in international relations

Following the general description of qualitative research in the previous section and its relevance to the topic of this research, it is worth noting that qualitative research in international relations refers to a research approach that aims to give answers and to understand the complexities of social phenomena in the field using non-numerical data such as interviews, observations, documents and other forms of narrative data. When one speaks of qualitative research in international relations one means the involvement of detailed information, collection and analysis of documents relating to the perspectives, beliefs and experiences of individuals and groups involved in international politics. This approach is often used to explore the subjective meanings and interpretations that people give to events, policies and practices and to uncover the underlying social and cultural processes that shape international relations.

Qualitative research in the field of international relations can be used in various contexts such as conflict resolution, human rights, development and cooperation, global governance, international negotiations, peace treaties. In this context Jackson and Sorensen give a good understanding of the challenge of the subject, its complexity and why flexibility is essential. They argued that to this day there is now single winning theoretical approach to analyze qualitative research in the field of international relations, and therefore the researcher ought to

use a variety of approaches to address these issues.[190] This corresponds with the *bricoleur* aspect mentioned in the previous section.

III.3 Qualitative research and a case study strategy

This research employed a qualitative approach and consisted of a plethora of sources, both written as well as spoken. Among the written sources examined were various documents including protocols prepared in the periods preceding the agreements, press clippings and political commentary from the newspapers of the region and the world, and think-tank research on the topic. The verbal sources were collected using interviews with officials who were involved in the various agreements, from the Israeli, Egyptian and UAE sides, as well as other scholars who have a deep and intimate knowledge with the processes discussed.

This research aims to contribute and better understand conflict resolution in the context if the Israeli-Arab conflict, and broadly to the fields of intercultural studies as well as intercultural negotiation diplomacy. This dissertation, which will focus on two agreements as case studies (the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt and the Abraham Accords), can contribute to future political discussions seeking a model for additional agreements between Israel and its neighbors and contribute one step further to developing a universal model for other conflicts, as some scholars heeded in recent years.[191]

III.4 Case study and research tools

The case study analysed in this research is the Abraham Accords, signed at the White House in September 2020 between Israel and four Arab countries, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Our focus is on the Abraham Accords in the context of the Israeli–Egyptian peace agreement, which laid the groundwork for the subsequent agreement between Israel and the UAE.

This case study explores the dynamics between two nations with a long history of conflict and war within a highly challenging regional environment. Under the leadership of President

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[190] Jackson, R., & Sørensen, G., (2016) *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 10
[191] See for example one attempt to create such models in: Philpott, D., & Powers, G. (2010) *Strategies of Peace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Anwar Sadat, Egypt – as the leading Arab state – chose to end hostilities and sign a peace treaty with Israel, primarily to regain sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula. In Israel, Prime Minister Menachem Begin likewise departed from traditional conservative policies and embraced the challenge of aligning public opinion with a path to peace. Meanwhile, Egypt aimed to shift its strategic alliances from the Soviet Union to the United States. In this context, the role of U.S. President Jimmy Carter was pivotal, as he recognized and acted upon the historic potential of the negotiations.

The Abraham Accords did not arise in a vacuum. This research aims to demonstrate and substantiate the claim that the foundation created by the Israel–Egypt peace agreement enabled the UAE and other Arab nations to pursue a deeper and more comprehensive normalization of relations with Israel.

The research uses the prism of case studies is a common method in the field of international relations. Case studies are crucial for research in International Relations because they offer in-depth, real-world examples of how international processes, events, or interactions unfold. They are particularly valuable for understanding complex and dynamic global issues. The case study of the Israeli Egyptian peace agreement reflects on a wider change of attitude toward Israel within the Arab world. It is paramount not only since it was the first agreement, but also because it was a momentous change coming from one of the most important and influential Arab countries.

In the field of international relations, case studies are a critical research methodology that allows scholars to explore specific events, policies, or international interactions in-depth. Case studies can help in testing theoretical assumptions, generating new ideas, or offering insights into the practice of international relations. However, there are different kinds of case studies. Some case studies are thematic, which focus on a specific theme or issue that has global implications, such as human rights, international security, or international trade. Other case studies can be comparative involving the analysis of two or more similar or contrasting cases to draw comparisons and generalizations about political phenomena, policies, or outcomes across different settings.

This research, however, uses historical case study. These types of case studies focus on past events to understand how they shaped contemporary global issues or influenced the development of international systems and policies. Such as study requires extensive close reading of a plethora sources from various types, including archival records (including written

documents, visual texts and recordings) as well as other forms of source production such as interviews and observations.[192] To achieve this, the research draws on semi-structured interviews and document analysis in a single case study.

III.5 Research design

The topic of this research does not require the usage of quantitative measures. Had this research discusses the trade relationship between Israel and Egypt following the agreement as an example of its success or failure, then this would have been an appropriate method, but these aspects are beyond the scope of the research. The aim of this research is to address how social, political, and cultural shifts allowed the agreement to happen in the first place, and how they changed hearts in the region in the aftermath of the agreement.

The investigation toward this dissertation divided the research plan to two stages to analyze the cross-cultural and historical events involved in the negotiation processes that led to signing the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. In the first stage, document research and data analysis methods were used and content analysis was structured. In the second stage, semi-structured interviews were conducted with chief American, Egyptians, Israeli and Emirati diplomats and decision makers, as well as citizens from Israel and Egypt.

Following this, a discussion represents how the ground-breaking peace agreement between Israel and Egypt enabled further agreements with reference to the agreement with the United Arab Emirates. [193]

Table 1: Research design

Stage	Aim	Research tools	Research population	Data analysis method

[192] Creswell & Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, p. 100; See also Yin, R. K. (2017) *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* (sixth edition) Los Angeles CA: SAGE; Blatter J. & Haverland M. (2012) *Designing Case Studies: Explanatory Approaches in Small-N Research*. London: Palgrave Macmillan
[193] Friedman, D. (2022) *Sledgehammer: How Breaking with The Past Brought Peace to the Middle East.* London: Broadside Books

1	To analyze the cross-cultural and historical events involved in the negotiation processes that led to signing the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.	Document research EU negotiation policy regarding peace between Egypt and Israel	European Parliament's study on reinvigorating the Middle East Peace Process	Content analysis
		Semi-structured interviews	Figures involved : chief American diplomats, Egyptian, UAE, and Israeli diplomats, decision makers, Egyptian and Israeli citizens 8 participants 8 participants	Content analysis
2	To understand how the Ground breaking peace agreement with Israel and Egypt enabled further agreements with reference to the agreement with the UAE	- Document research - SSI	Head of the commercial bureau in UAE, and other key Figures	Content analysis

III.6 Research population and sampling

The participants in this study were selected based on their direct connection to the research, whether through cultural, professional, or geographical links, as outlined in the research

population profile. In line with the approach advocated by Jennifer Mason,[194] the participants were chosen using purposive sampling, which emphasizes selecting individuals for their relevance to the research questions rather than relying on random or statistically representative methods.

According to Mason, the central criterion for selecting participants is their ability to provide rich, relevant insights into the phenomenon under investigation. In qualitative research, the value of a participant lies in their lived experience, their depth of understanding, and their potential to illuminate the subject matter, which was not in their ability to represent a larger population. Mason also underscored the importance of diversity and range in participant selection. Including individuals with varied backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives allows the researcher to capture the complexity of the issue and to move beyond a narrow or one-dimensional understanding. The aim is not to generalize findings, but to reveal the richness, depth, and nuances of the phenomenon being studied.

Another key consideration is theoretical sampling. This approach involves selecting participants iteratively as data collection and analysis evolve, ensuring that new or emerging themes are examined in depth. Theoretical sampling allows researchers to test and refine ideas by including participants who can confirm, disconfirm, or deepen the patterns and themes identified. Mason also emphasized the practical and ethical dimensions of participant selection, noting that participants must be both accessible and willing to engage meaningfully in the research. This consideration ensures the quality of the data collected, as well as adherence to ethical standards in qualitative inquiry.

Finally, Mason introduced the concept of saturation as a guiding principle for qualitative sampling. According to this approach, data collection should continue until no new significant themes or insights arise. Saturation marks the point at which the researcher can be confident that the research questions have been fully explored and that further interviews are unlikely to yield additional understanding.

In summary, Mason advocated for selecting participants based on their relevance to the research questions, the diversity of their perspectives, their contribution to theoretical

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[194] Mason, J. (2017) *Qualitative Researching* (third edition). Los Angeles CA: SAGE, pp. 53-82

development, their ability and willingness to engage, and the attainment of theoretical saturation.[195] The research population is therefore described in the Table 2:

Table 2: The research population

Participant	Age	Date of interview	Gender	Background	Current position	Education	Diplomatic Position
1	48	01/2022	F	Former ambassador to Egypt	Fellow researcher	MA	V
2	54	11/2023	F	Saudi researcher	Works in a research institute in the UAE	PhD political sciences	
3	65	10/2023	M	Ambassador to UN and director general of Israeli MFA	Ambassador in Germany	MA in IR	V
4	77	09/2023	M	Former judge in supreme court	Member of the Israeli – Egypt negotiation team	PhD	V
5	67	03/2023	M	Lived in a kibbutz during the Yom Kippur war	Businessman in the emirates	MA degree in economics	

[195] Mason, M. (2010) "Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews." *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 11:3

6	42	03/2023	F	Former Diplomat in Tel Aviv	Senior diplomat in the foreign office of a European country	Master's degree in political science and law school	V
7	56	04/2023	M	Born to an Arab family in Jaffa	Senior banker	BA sociology MA in finance	Banker
8	65	04/2023	M	Bedouin family from Egypt, who lived in Israel	Tourism	High school diploma	Head of a big touristic company

III.7 Sampling method: purposive sample

Purposive sampling (also known as judgmental or selective sampling) is defined as a technique that allows researchers to focus on specific, relevant individuals, groups, or cases that are most likely to provide meaningful and insightful data. as the selection of people who have an intimate knowledge of the topic researched and can shed light on the topic of the investigation due to their unique insight.[196] Since the subjects or cases are often complex, specific, and difficult to generalize, purposive sampling allows researchers to select individuals, organizations, or events that are particularly relevant to the research question. For instance, researchers may choose specific policymakers, diplomats, or countries that have a unique perspective on an international issue.

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[196] Creswell & Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, p. 156

In international relations research, it is often difficult or impractical to study large populations due to resource limitations (i.e. time, funding, access to participants). Purposive sampling allows researchers to make the most out of limited resources by focusing on the most pertinent cases, events, or individuals. It is particularly effective in exploration or case study-based research. Researchers may seek to understand incidents, conflicts, or diplomatic processes in depth, and purposive sampling helps incidents' appropriate cases or people to study. Furthermore, purposive sampling can be flexible and adaptive to the researcher's evolving understanding of the subject. For these reasons, this research draws on a purposive sample that includes actors who were involved in the process toward signing the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, as well as those involved in the negotiation toward the Abraham Accords, thus having the ability to examine the process from close range.

III.8 Research tools

In our research a combination of document analysis and interviews were conducted. The document analysis included the official communications concerning the agreements: the peace agreement text, think tank analysis of the middle east process and official annexes. There was no archival reading in this research since it primarily focuses on semi-structured interviews. The background of the author of this research is journalism, which means for the first step there was a need to clarify the manner, in which academic interviews are conducted with the aim of investigating, cross-referencing and examining evidence on which one can draw a balanced conclusion. The structure of the interview was therefore semi-structured, so that on the one hand a free flow of dialogue can be maintained, but at the same time allows similar topics across interviews that can provide comparative insights. The manner of analysis of the interviews is based on a seven stages model, but with responsive interviewing intertwined.[197] There are a series of rules to be observed such as:

1. Deciding the research questions that would be answered by interviews. These questions must be based on our study and making sure they are well understood by the interviewees.
2. Identify interviewees that are best related to our research and can help us reach reliable conclusions that can help us assess or not our research questions or theory.

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[197] See detailed discussion of the seven-stage model in: Ibid, p. 163

3. Determine how the interview would be conducted in practice. In the case of this research, the technique chosen was direct interview. As for one-on-one interviews, there would be a requirement for participants who are not hesitant in providing information.
4. Decision on the best recording procedure.
5. Design and use of interview protocol or interview guide.
6. Determination the place for conducting the interview. Finding a quiet location free from distractions.
7. Making sure that the interviewee shows complete consent to participate in the research, as well as to be interviewed for the purpose required.
8. Remaining concentrated and tuned during the interview although it is recorded, as not always the interviewee might stay focused or understand or answer the question.

Finally, one must remember that the interview is not an exchange of opinions, but rather a one-way dialogue that is designated to answer the questions and interest poised by the researcher, who has to notice and react when certain information is not conveyed for various reasons.[198]

The following questions were presented to all participants, which later developed to other discussions based on the semi-structured approach:

1. What do you think were the causes that brought President Sadat to Jerusalem?
2. Why do you think it happened in that specific moment in history and why did not happen before that?
3. Could the two countries, Egypt and Israel, succeed in their negotiations without the United States?
4. Did interculturalism contribute to the success of the peace negotiations between the two states?
5. What effect did cultural sensitivity and cultural competence influence negotiations?
6. What was the role of leadership in the peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt ? the specific role of President Sadat (Egypt) , Prime Minister Menachem Begin (Israel) and the American President Jimmy Carter?
7. Was leadership and decision making a determinant factor ?
8. Were there historical events that contributed to bringing the sides to the negotiation table?

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[198] Ibid, p. 173

9. In what way do you think the peace agreement between Egypt and Israel in 1979 contributed to sign the Abraham accord with the UAE?

10. Why do you think Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty known as a "cold peace" in comparison to the normalization agreement with the UAE?

11. What can one learn from the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt regarding future peace treaties in the future?

12. Why do you think Israel and Egypt could not reach normalization agreement?

13. What were the obstacles that prevented a peace agreement before 1979 and are there today still obstacles that prevent other peace treaties?

14. What can one learn about mediation process in the peace agreement?

15. The role of religion, language and interpersonal processes in peace negotiations in the Middle East?

III.9 Data analysis method: content analysis

Content analysis is a research method used to determine the presence of certain words, themes or concepts within some given qualitative data, for example a text. The use of content analysis allows researchers to quantify and analyze the presence, the meanings and the relationships between themes, concepts or even words. In fact, qualitative content analysis is a research method used to analyze and interpret the content of textual data, such as written documents, interview transcripts or other forms of communication. Additionally, it provides a systematic way to identify patterns concepts and larger themes within the data to gain insight into the meaning and context of the content.[199]

The content analysis in research such as in this dissertation allows examining and understanding the content of textual data. There are two types of methodological approaches to content analysis: quantitative content analysis and qualitative content analysis (not to confuse with qualitative and quantitative research). Using the term qualitative content analysis can be misleading because it often uses many quantitative elements. Therefore, it would be wise and helpful to clearly define each approach to show were this overlap in qualitative content analysis occurs.

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[199] Shkedi, A., (2003) *Words of Meaning. Qualitative Research – Theory and Practice*. Tel-Aviv: Ramot, pp. 93-100

9. Quantitative content analysis is a research method that systematically measures the presence and frequency of specific words, phrases or themes in a large sample of texts.

10. Qualitative content analysis answers the question "why'" "how" or "what". It is being done in an iterative process of coding, counting and interpretation. It explores the subtleties of data in a way the quantitative method does not.

Essentially, the process of data analysis requires the collection of the data collected and samples, narrowing down the information and categorizing it to focal thematic elements, and finally presenting the processed information in a revealing manner. This interplay can cause some criticism of bias;[200] therefore the following steps were taken to manage the data collection:

1. Organization the data
2. Reading in depth
3. Description, classification of data into codes and themes.
4. Interpretation of the data
5. Representation and visualization of the data

III.10 Research quality dimensions

In qualitative research, maintaining trustworthiness and rigor is crucial for ensuring that findings are credible and valuable. There are several key quality dimensions that help establish the strength and trust of qualitative research. These dimensions include triangulation, validity, reliability, trustworthiness, credibility, transferability (parallel to external validity), dependability (parallel to reliability), confirmability (parallel to objectivity), Internal and external validity (reinterpreted in qualitative research). The following section briefly describes all these dimensions.

Triangulation involves using multiple data sources, methods, theories, or researchers to cross-check and confirm findings. It's essentially a way to validate results by ensuring that multiple perspectives converge on the same conclusion. This research handled this by both providing written as well as oral interviews as sources. Moreover, it made sure that the interviews

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[200] Dey, I. (1995) "Reducing fragmentation in qualitative research." in Kelle U. (ed.) *Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis: Theory, Methods and Practice.* Los Angeles CA: SAGE, p. 78

represent a broad range of people from various backgrounds, thus providing a multifaceted perspective on the topic of discussion.

Validity refers to the extent to which the research truly measures what it intends to measure. In qualitative research, this means ensuring that the findings are an accurate representation of the participants' experiences, perceptions, or social phenomena being studied. When researchers can show that their findings reflect the actual context and meaning of participants' experiences, it builds confidence in the quality of the research. Therefore, a clear description of the questions asked is provided, and an analysis of the answers of the interviews are cross-referenced with the answers to the same questions as well as with the documents analyzed.

Reliability often refers to consistency and dependability of the research process. While reliability in quantitative research pertains to the repeatability of results, in qualitative research, it focuses on whether the process and decisions can be consistently applied. Reliable methods allow researchers to demonstrate that their findings are not just one-off occurrences but rather repeatable and consistent in similar contexts. The reliability of this research depends on how much one can apply all the multiple codes that have been mentioned before analyzing the transcript data. Undoubtedly there is flexibility in the process and researchers need to fashion an approach consistent with the resources in to Finally, generalizability in qualitative research refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied to other contexts or populations beyond the study sample. The aim of this research, as mentioned earlier, is to provide insights that can be applied to future agreement between Israel and the Arab World as well as applying these finding to intercultural studies in general.

Trustworthiness is the overarching framework for evaluating the quality and rigor of qualitative research. It was conceptualized by Lincoln and Guba as an alternative to the positive criteria of validity and reliability.[201] Trustworthiness seeks to answer the question: "can the findings be trusted?" it is composed of four interrelated components – credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability which collectively serve to ensure that the research findings are authentic, grounded in the data and ethically sound. Establishing trustworthiness involves intentional and transparent strategies throughout the research process. Before, during and after the interview. In our case, discretion was a key element which allowed the participants to feel secure. Participants did ask for discretion and were guaranteed that the information gathered was in a secure computer, without revealing their identity during the writing of the research.

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[201] Guba E.G & Lincoln Y.S. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry.* Los Angeles CA: SAGE, pp. 289-331

Thay were also curious to know the purpose of the interview. The fact that it was for academic work and not for media publication made them feel much more confident and allowed maximum cooperation between the participant and the researcher. In general, researchers might engage in reflexivity, maintain detailed documentation (audit trails) and provide rich description to allow readers to evaluate the credibility and relevance of the work. Trustworthiness strengthens the confidence that the study accurately reflects the phenomena under investigation as experienced by the participants.

Credibility refers to confidence in the truth of the findings. It assesses whether the research accurately captures participants' experiences and perspectives. To enhance credibility, qualitative researchers use techniques such as triangulation (drawing from multiple data sources or methods), member checking (returning data or interpretations to feedback) and prolonged engagement (immersing in the field to build trust and understand context deeply). Researchers must also be mindful of researcher bias and the interpretive lens they bring to the study. It is important to take into consideration aspects like Reflexivity – acknowledging and analyzing one's role assumptions, and influence – is crucial. The goal is to ensure that findings are not merely plausible but deeply rooted in participants' realities and are not distorted by the researcher's own perspective or preconceptions.

Transferability concerns the extent to which the findings of qualitative research can be applied or "transferred" to other contexts or settings. Unlike generalizability in quantitative research, which seeks statistical representativeness, qualitative researchers aim to provide thick, rich descriptions that allow readers to determine the relevance of the findings to their own contexts. Achieving transferability requires transparency in how participants were selected, what their context was and how data was gathered and interpreted. It becomes the responsibility of the reader – not the researcher – to determine if and how the findings apply elsewhere. Still, the researcher must provide enough contextual detail to enable that judgement.

Dependability refers to the consistency and stability of the research process over time. It concerns whether the research would yield similar results if it were repeated in the same context with the same participants. This does not mean replicability in a strict sense (as in quantitative research) but rather methodological coherence and transparency. Researchers enhance dependability by keeping an audit trail – detailed documentation of the research process, decisions made, and changes encountered. Peer reviews or external audits can also help assess

whether the procedures were appropriate and consistently applied. Dependability ensures that findings are not arbitrary but rooted in a well-documented and systematic approach.

Confirmability addresses the question of whether the findings are shaped by the participants and not unduly influenced by the researcher's biases or motivations. In qualitative research, complete objectivity is neither expected nor possible; instead, confirmability emphasizes transparency and neutrality in interpretation. To enhance confirmability researchers can maintain reflexive journals, record analytic decisions and provide evidence (e.g. direct quotes) that support interpretations. This allows others to trace the logical steps from data to conclusions. Like dependability, confirmability is often supported through audit trails or external reviews to ensure that findings are grounded in data rather than researcher assumptions.

Though traditionally associated with quantitative research, internal and external validity are often reinterpreted in qualitative contexts. Internal validity, which in quantitative research concerns the integrity of causal relationships, is represented in qualitative research by credibility. Here it refers to how accurately the research captures the lived realities of participants without distortion. External validity, or the extent to which findings can be generalized, is paralleled by transferability. Since qualitative research is typically context=specific and inductive, generalization in the statistical sense is not the goal. Instead, the researcher's task is to provide enough contextual depth and description so that others can judge whether the findings are applicable to different contexts.

III.11 The researcher's involvement

The role of the researcher in qualitative research is to attempt to access the thoughts and feelings of study participants. This is not an easy task as it involves asking people to talk about things that may be very personal to them. Yet, there are many ways and methods that can be used in the *bricoleur* method, which enables adapting to the most efficient method for research. This, however, is more complicated than it sounds. Each analysis in this research, as well as interview protagonist, must be explored as a small ethnographic analysis, which requires understanding of cultural, historical and societal factors. Thereafter, another vital point is to make sure that the information gathered is not adapted to fit the reigning theory or the

prejudgment of the researcher, but rather the theoretical background of the research must adapt to the results of the investigation.

In conducting this research, every effort was made to minimize bias. Although achieving complete objectivity is challenging, the reliability of the study was strengthened by employing a structured, standardized approach to interviews. All participants were asked the same questions, regardless of their background or nationality, ensuring consistency and comparability. The participants were selected based on their direct relevance to the research, including professional, cultural, or geographical connections. The questions were designed with utmost care to reduce the risk of social desirability bias. Interviews were conducted in a confidential and private setting, allowing participants to respond openly and reliably. The interviewer met participants individually, without the presence of any assistant or external party, to foster trust and comfort.

It is worth emphasizing that qualitative interviewing is a complex endeavor. Although it may appear akin to ordinary conversation, it must be conducted with academic rigor and in line with established ethical standards. As Mason observes, qualitative interviews must adhere to a clearly defined internal logic, making this approach one of the most suitable methods for capturing the central concerns of qualitative inquiry.[202]

III.12 Ethical considerations

Ethics in qualitative research explores conflicting philosophical assumptions, the diverse social contexts in which ethical problems arise, and the complexities of handling them in practice. One must always remember that ethical issues are present in any kind of research. The research process creates tension between the aims of research to generalize for the good of others and the rights of participants to maintain privacy. In qualitative research, the researcher must always have in mind the protection of the subject. The understanding of the difference between good and evil and always remembering that the research is not above everything is an ethical requirement in any research.

A qualitative researcher may face many ethical issues that surface during data collection in the field and in analysis and dissemination of qualitative reports. Ethical issues loom in the data

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[202] Mason, *Qualitative Researching,* p. 59

collection phase of qualitative research. For example, Lipson raises issues that could invalidate the research from having a valid outcome dur to ethics issues such as covert activity, deception, lack of informed consent, clarification of benefits or risks, among others.[203] The American Anthropological Association guidelines from 1967 also dictated that the research ought to protect the anonymity of the persons involved, that the analysis presents a general description rather than an individual picture, and a clear explanation to the person interviewed concerning the research and its objectives.

Certain steps were made before and after the interviews to guarantee an ethical analysis. Informed consent was secured from every participant prior to conducting the interviews. Participation was entirely voluntary, and none of the participants had any professional or personal connections, or prior relationships, with the researcher, thereby reinforcing the objectivity and ethical soundness of the process.

All information collected during the interviews was stored securely, and access was restricted to the researcher to ensure protection from harm, anonymity, and confidentiality. The data, including audio files and digital documents, were saved on a password-protected computer, ensuring the privacy and anonymity of participants. The names and identifying information of the participants have been withheld throughout this work. Given the political nature of the study and the inclusion of high-ranking diplomats, a judge, and a participant from a country with no formal diplomatic ties to the researcher, creating a safe and confidential environment was not only essential but crucial. Confidentiality measures were implemented to protect participants from any potential harm arising from their involvement.

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[203] Lipson, J. G. (1994) "Ethical issues in ethnography." In J. M. Morse (ed.), *Critical Issues in Qualitative Research.* Los Angeles CA: SAGE, pp. 333---355

Chapter IV: Findings

IV.1 Findings emerging from research question 1 – What were the cross-cultural and historical events involved in the negotiation that led signing the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt?

IV.1.1 Themes and categories related to research question 1

What were the cross-cultural and historical events involved in the negotiation that led signing the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt?

The content analysis that was performed on the data collected from the semi-structured interviews induced four themes with related categories. Table 1 presents the themes and their related categories as they emerged from the content analysis.

Table 3: Themes and categories related to research question 1

	Categories & Sample Evidence						
	Preliminary conditions: *The fact that Israel won the war. That has changed the existing conceptions.*	Stake holders: *Egypt and the UAE's will for closer tiest with the USA*	Mutual interests: *Economy is a major factor for both Israel and the UAE, and therefore, it is in the interest of both countries*	Mediation processes: *This was the subject of discussion with the Americans throughout the summer and early fall. Carter personally arrived to promote the dialog.*	Strategies: Egypt *decided to primarily prioritize its interest and Israel was clever enough to accept the change, follow it, and furthermore: join it.*	Leadership & decision making: *There was a new leadership in Israel since 1977, the same year of President Sadat first visit to Israel, thus playing a major role in rapprochement.*	Obstacles: *Both within Israel as well as in the Arab world, there was an existing substantial hostility*
Theme 1: Negotiation processes							

Theme 2: **Involved Historical events**	Following the "Yom Kippur war", in which Egypt, a leading and aspiring leading Arab state, realized it cannot prevail over Israel in the battle field, and subsequently understood that there are better ways to obtain its goals through the negotiation table.		
	Categories and Evidence		
Themes 3: **Cultural Issues**	Religion: *Respect for each other's religion allowed negotiations to succeed.*	Language: *Knowledge of Arabic is appreciated and reciprocated. The Arabs are much obliged to speak in Arabic. It even gives them a sense that the person in front of them respects their cultural identity and acknowledges it.*	Interpersonal relations: *Prime minister Begin never showed disrespect to his Egyptian counterparts, has not acted condescending to them nor belittled their approach. No such claims have ever been made.*

IV.1.2 Preliminary conditions

The content analysis demonstrates the approaches and positions of the interviewees regarding the negotiation processes. An example for this appears in the words of P1, a highly ranked Israeli foreign affairs official, who served in Cairo: "If Israel was not perceived as strong, no agreements would have been made." P1 further explained that "one of the most influential factors is the understanding on the part of Egypt – as well as the UAE - of the vast support that the United States gave Israel."

Egypt understood that the that signing the peace treaty with Israel would undoubtedly enable them to obtain what they lost at the end of the 1973 war: "The public (in Egypt – B.B.) was never re-educated to accept Israel as a partner in Peace. We never insisted on the messaging to stop being hateful." Yet, despite the perceived victory, Egypt found itself "at the end of the war

without the Sinai Peninsula which was under Israeli occupation," and they wanted it back. Egyptian sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula was not only a pivotal issue but a preliminary condition and opening position.

Indeed, the Camp David Accords – a set of two agreements between Egypt and Israel signed in 1978 and brokered by President Jimmy Carter – are generally considered to be the first example of the concept of land for peace in action. The accords created a steadfast peace between the two countries through an agreement, in which Israel would withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula, and subsequently Israel and Egypt would establish diplomatic relations, while the Gaza Strip and the West Bank would become fully autonomous states within five years of the agreement.[204]

During the interview, P1 explained in detail that the precondition was that "Egypt wanted to restore its sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula which it lost in 1967 Six-Day War. Egypt also wanted to redirect resources from military spending to strengthen its economy. Sadat understood that he could attach himself to the USA and its economic and military support only via a peace agreement with Israel, ally of the Americans."

"I think the Abraham accords were born out of a different interest," P1 continued explaining. In this case there was no issue of "land for peace," but the existence of "a supportive American administration behind it," played a decisive factor. For P1, there is no doubt that the Egyptian model for peace was a model to be adopted by the UAE "and other countries as well." In both cases, both during the peace treaty with Egypt, as well as the one with the UAE, a precondition was that "if Israel was not perceived as strong no agreement would have been made." Strength, relations (United States) and interest are seen by P1 as clear factors that enabled the formulation of a peace treaty in the case of Egypt, and normalization in the case of the UAE.

Another important issue discussed with P1 concerning the difference in strategy of negotiation and its results between the two case studies (Egypt and UAE), is that in the Egyptian case, the Egyptians "never really insisted knowledge, it was seeking for a true relation between people, hence normalization and that was a strategic mistake as it was perceived in the Egyptian frame as a weakness."

Furthermore, "the public was never re-educated to accept Israel as a partner in peace. It was never identified as a partner rather than an enemy. We (Israel) never insisted on messaging to

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[204] United Nations, *Egypt and Israel*, pp. 197-198

stop being hateful." Here is where P1 suggested that there was a reason for the difference in the relations between Israel with Egypt (cold peace) and UAE (normalization).[205] Additionally, "honor is a huge, impactful and significant element in decision making for Egyptians and all of the Arab countries." An element that was to be taken into consideration in both negotiations. P1 argued that honor was to be protected. Once Egypt crossed the line by signing the peace treaty with Israel, other countries could follow the path as honor was saved in the eyes of any Arab partner, even if merely a potential one.

A very interesting perspective was presented by P2, a Saudi fellow researcher, author, and scholar in the field of international relations, who lives in the UAE. casein her opinion, when Israel and Arab countries sit around the negotiation table to obtain a result "You have to, first of all, to solve the conflict between the sides and you. don't really need to sustain the culture of tolerance and coexistence." For P2, that was a key element regarding Egypt. "It was culturally so stuck meaning when they even entered the negotiation process. The idea of possible normalization was stuck even through the Egyptian movies and drama. Whenever you are associated with Israeli you are a Mossad agent, you are a spy, you are whatever."

She added that "it hasn't been like enough time to accept Israelis because of the hostility. You know in their minds it has been for so long and it is inherited unfortunately from one generation to another." This was the case in Egypt. Yet, the subsequent results of the treaty were widespread. "After that Jordan made a peace agreement which allowed countries singing the Abraham Accords like for example the UAE but also Bahrain to consult with them, with those who signed peace agreement before them." In fact, the agreement paved way for the possibility to obtain knowledge and credibility, as port of the negotiation process.

But for P2, when it comes to the UAE, things are different. Naturally, there was the element of time between the treaties, as she mentioned, but also when it comes to the UAE there is a question of culture: "it's part of its culture (UAE). The planning and organization of this country and a very clear vision from the beginning of the establishment of the country. The UAE was established from Sheikh Zayed and his sons now on tolerance and coexistence." From their perspective, "the culture of tolerance of coexistence and also happiness brought them to the idea of asking themselves how can we solve the conflict with a country we don't

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[205] It is important to mention that the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel did include sections promoting cultural and people-to-people relations, but unlike the Abraham Accords, these have not come to fruition. See: Ibid, p. 117

have diplomatic relationship with as we cannot also depend only on the United States. How can we make our future agreement work and face conflicts and threats together (Iran, terrorism, Islamic brotherhood) as we couldn't depend anymore on the United States." Furthermore, "if the United States is going to withdraw from the region and they have less interest in the region and usually you know it is, it was the country that we were depending on to our solving our issues in the country. Therefore, we have to be in charge of solving our own conflicts."

P2 also put focus on another issue that allowed Normalization with the UAE, the economy, which played a vital role in the negotiation process: "the UAE is a country very geared into economy and because of the culture they wanted to spread normalization with a country like Israel," and "they are much more business minded, they are mostly focused on the economy and into business."

For P2, time was a prerequisite factor as normalization could not happen overnight, as much as were the cultural factor (tolerance and coexistence), and socio-economic factors. However, the issue of national security was unique to these discussions since it was not in the UAE's interest to depend solely on the United States in confronting regional threats, especially the historical one posed by neighboring Iran. All those were on the table during the negotiation process and were very different to the territorial issues discussed with Egypt, as presented by P1.

For P3, a very senior Israeli diplomat, still serving as an ambassador in an important European country and was the ambassador to the United Nations as well as the general director of the ministry of foreign affairs, the preliminary conditions and opening positions were very clear in the case of the peace treaty with Egypt:: "Mohamed Anwar Al Sadat, the Egyptian president, decided to take Egypt to a new direction. To transfer it from the soviet bloc towards the Western world led by the United States in order to obtain prosperity for Egypt and the Egyptian people. I believe that the key factor was the Yom Kippur war that enabled him to restore the proudness oh his people: in his mind I will be able to obtain diplomatically to restore to Egypt what is Egyptian, I could not defeat the jews militarily although I have a surprised them and although I have obtained success on the battle ground I will on the negotiation table change the equation and obtain back the land that were conquered and occupied by Israel. In engaging a negotiation process my primary condition is very clear: regaining sovereignty over land that was lost to Israel during the 1967 Six- Day War with Israel." And as mentioned before, by doing so "Sadat

understood that he is creating a big chance in his country but also in the region but bringing Egypt to the western Bloc led by Washington therefore passing via a peace treaty with Israel."

However, concerning the agreement with the UAE, P3 offered different considerations: "you start a negotiation with an Arab state that I don't want to say is more westernized but is more practical, more operational in its way of being then your preliminary conditions are not only more flexible you may allow yourself to make a peace treaty which is people to people and if you don't have that people to people infrastructure , an agreement is much more difficult to last."

P3's standpoint was that since there were no territorial issues between Israel and the UAE, no Preliminary conditions were really on the table. "For Saudi Arabia for example, today, after the Gaza war, the day after in Gaza is an issue for a future possible agreement between Jerusalem and Ryad but not with the UAE." Also, "whether Israel likes it or not the future of the Palestinians and a prospective of a Palestinian state will always be on the table but it was not a precondition on the negotiation table." For P3 it is clear that "the peace treaty with Egypt opened the way and showed other countries in the gulf such as the UAE that it is on the interest of Arab states relations and peace with Israel. I believe that the peace treaty with Egypt that was the first enabled treaty with Jordan that opened the way for the Abraham Accords and the Normalization accord between Israel and the UAE."

Other views about preliminary conditions for negotiation were expressed by P4, who was a judicial advisor during the Camp David negotiations who led to the Camp David Accords signed by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin on the 17 of September 1978. He said that "the Egyptians raised the territorial issue and demand for restoring their sovereignty from day one. Every grain of sand was put to a level of holiness. Hassan Tuhami, Egypt's deputy prime minister at the time of the negotiations, said that 'Sadat will accept to shake the hand of Moshe Dayan (Israel's minister of foreign affairs and a symbol of the victory of the Six-Day War) only if Egypt gats the promise to obtain back all of the Sinai desert.'" Hence, the preliminary condition was clear: it was territorial. "And that was the opening position," argued P4. Thus, in Camp David, twelve days of secret talks led to the Egypt-Israeli peace treaty in 1979.

According to P4, "the Israeli prime minister, Menachem Begin, understood that in order to obtain this very important peace treaty with the most important Arab state he had also to pay a price on the Palestinian issue which happened to be the Palestinian autonomy… and once Begin

understood that, for the Egyptians it was added to the preliminary conditions." Discussing the normalization agreement with the UAE, he claimed that things were different in tone. "As you did not have a territorial dispute," and especially, added P4, "Egypt made a real breakthrough by signing the peace treaty with Israel. Once Egypt crossed the Rubicon, and made peace with Israel, she allowed other Arab states to do the same. She had opened the door for other Arab countries to imitate her. That was why strategically the peace with Egypt was a game changer in the Middle East."

Summarizing all this, it is correct to argue that preliminary conditions and opening positions were an integral part of the negotiation between Israel and Egypt.

IV.1.3 Stakeholders

P6 believed that "the Americans like the Israelis don't really understand the Middle east, but they don't live here, and they are a superpower that can impose. Yet even them, with all their power had difficulties imposing." Since the western notion of the Western countries do not necessarily coincide with the values of the Muslim countries in the Middle East. He reaches, therefore, the conclusion in the quotation above. Yet, the Americans were important and influential playing in forming the future agreement.

P7 added an important insight "Economy and the desire to attach Egypt destiny to the United States was the reason Sadat came to Israel." This means clearly enough that there was an Egyptian interest in having their Americans on their side. First, there was the economy. It is obvious that Egypt with its growing demography (43.75 million in 1979 year of the peace agreement) needed to strengthen its economy. Its old ally, the Soviet Union, was not reliable anymore and, therefore, Washington was targeted via Israel. But also, the future was becoming very challenging and as a result Sadat made the choice of having the United States has their main ally. "Egypt and the UAE, the fact was that they wanted to approach towards the United States," noted P8 an Arab Israeli, who has a deep acquaintance with the Arab world. Once again, the alliance with the United States is a clear interest of both Egypt in 1979 and the UAE in 2020. One can understand that the fact that the USA has maintained and even reinforced its role as a world leader attracted Arab States towards Peace with Israel.

The privileged relationship between Israel and the United States was a recurring issue throughout all the interviews. For P1, there is no doubt: "One of the most influential factors is

the understanding on the part of Egypt that America is with Israel and when the agreement was signed between Israel and the UAE there was no question about the American-Israeli interest and the vast support that the United States gave Israel." P2 went as far as to argue that "this idiot administration (Biden) came, and it was the beginning of the end as it was also against the Abraham Accords and therefore it did not continue." P6 also saw the change in United States as unfortunate. She claimed that "if President Trump was reelected in 2020 that could have had a really huge, huge, huge impact on the Abraham Accord especially om people like me who are pro this."

"From my own knowledge, when the Abraham accords were signed, it came only after consultations UAE and Bahrain had with those who made peace before then." Here again the partners were mentioned, partners who happen to be states who signed agreements with Israel, in that case – Egypt and Jordan. For P3, a the time must come to "transform the quartet (United States, the European Union, the United Nations and Russia) that is not relevant anymore and to transform it to a more relevant Quartet that consists of Saudia, the Gulf countries, Egypt and Jordan that are on our side and with them we can build something we can live with and that is why I see in this big tragedy of 7 October a real opportunity for a Restart." P4 added that "during the summer, the American effort was very punctual until Sadat visit to Geneva." He mentioned that the American were working on a summit prior to the visit of the Egyptian President to Israel. Here again we see how much the United States is involved with a dominant and determining role in future peace.[206]

In summary, one can conclude that the United States was very active in the agreements between Israel and Egypt and in the Abraham Accords, but not only as a dominant player who activated the talks and followed them but also in the spirit behind both accords.

IV.1.4 Mutual interests

"I think that the Abraham Accords were born out of a different interest than the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt," claimed P1and added that "the Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, made a strategic decision linked to economic and military interest that attached him to the west, understanding that he could only do it via an agreement with Israel." P1 reasoning is linked to

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[206] The role of the quartet in the existing negotiations, and its failures are further developed in: Cohen-Hadria et al, *Prospects of Reinvigorating the Middle East Peace Process*, p. 1

the fact that the UAE was already attached to the United States before the Abrahan Accords and did not have the same economic challenges Egypt was facing in during the 1970s and the following years.

According to P2, the UAE and Israel "are both very geared to Economy. They both spread the culture of tolerance, of coexistence and of happiness." P2 believed that after sharing the same values the two countries had to overcome the fact that "they don't have diplomatic relationship, so it was made to accomplish things together. In a certain way the UAE wanted to approach the United States but could not depend anymore on the United States only." If one analyzes the answer, one can add the military interest linked to the fact that the Gulf countries including the UAE felt threatened by Iran and its nuclear program and therefore made the strategic choice of signing a normalization accord with Israel. Israel's opposition to the American led nuclear negotiations between the five members of the security council, plus Germany, with Iran reassured the gulf countries, who were also concerned by the negotiations.

"It is true that we are dealing with a country that belongs to the Arab League, but its culture is, I would not say westernize, yet more practical and therefore more operational," said P3 who gained intimate knowledge of all the countries involved in this research while working with most of them diplomatically. He argued that that the countries that signed the peace treaty with Israel, Egypt and the UAE, crossed the *Rubicon* without denying their Arab identity, while understanding that they must find a way to develop their economic and social system, and improve their position within the international community. This can be done by approaching a country with which they could find a common ground, or in other words – mutual interest.

P4 clearly points out the mutual interests with Egypt: "God has brought us together at the same time three leaders who all wanted to obtain something that the other could offer: the Egyptian President wanted the Sinai Peninsula, although the Palestinian issue was important, but that was the main one, for the Americans it was important to forward in the middle east including the Palestinian issue knowing perfectly well that without this accord which shall not be able to advance and the Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin understood that he could obtain peace with the leading Arab state and even if he had to pay the price of autonomy to the Palestinians it was worthwhile and this is why Begin sent an official invitation to Sadat and then we started also dealing with a long range of topics where we started cooperating especially agriculture."

In this sense, it seems that even in difficult times the agricultural cooperation never stopped. The agricultural cooperation happened to be in the mutual interest of Egypt and Israel.

P6 contributed an important input: "Economy is an important issue for Israel and the UAE and is therefore in the interest of both countries. For the UAE the issue of Palestine is not something you give up your own interest for. Even Egypt in 1979 did not give up its interest for the Palestinian issue." The economic issue happened to be important as put by P7: "Egypt wanted to make a change in policy also for economic reasons as well as protection from Iran." P8 concluded that "Arab leadership in Egypt in the 70s and the UAE in 2020 understood that Israeli leadership can deliver."

In summary, all sides gained from the Peace/Normalization talks and agreements which obviously benefited them militarily, diplomatically and economically. All sides understood that to reach understandings and agreements, important issues such as the Palestinian question must wait.

IV.1.5 Bridging within negotiating processes

The United States played an important role or as noted by P1: "Normalization after the Abraham Accords with the UAE came with a supportive American administration behind it and that is certainly a model not only for Egypt but other Arab countries as well." For P2, the process was done in an original way: "they said it is better to have negotiations among us in the region, even with a country we don't have relationship like Israel." The mechanism is very interesting: giving credibility and especially legitimacy to the process by adding countries to the accords.

P3 asserted that "we lose credibility and points in the negotiations process because we tend always to say no. no, no but national honor should not be a criterion. And the fact that you have now a liberal administration can make things easier." P4 showed how interim issues were solved by the American involvement: "many issues you needed to overcome such as the fact that Menachem Begin had to sign over dismantling Jewish settlements so he was told that he could do it only if he has the legitimacy of the Israeli Knesset (Parliament), for the Americans it was important to advance in the Palestinian issue and as they had the idea of sending an Arabic unified delegation to the Geneva conference with a not very known PLO member. Over that issue there were a lot of discussions with the direct participation of the American President Jimmy Carter."

For P6 a good way to bridge misunderstandings in negotiations is "respect the honors of your neighbors." He explained that part of the success in 1979 was that the Israeli prime minister "came to negotiations as a proud Jew that understands perfectly well that other nations are allowed to be proud of what they are." Moreover, P8 added to this issue that "in the Arab culture, honor and respect and land are above all and in Jewish culture life and survival are above all and there is a point where those two values can meet." Surprisingly, or perhaps the contrary, food is also a bridging factor, or as P8 mentioned: "Mediterranean food has a lot in common for Egypt and Israel. Falafel and Hummus can also solve problems."

In conclusion, geography (chosen location of negotiations), culture, faith and beliefs were tools used by the parties to create the atmosphere that allowed reaching agreements.

IV.1.6 Strategies

One wise option in strategy negotiation is to accept the strategy of the other to advance one's own interest. This comes in line with what P5 argued: "Egypt decided to prioritize first its interests and Israel was clever enough to accept the change, follow it and more than that – join it. Israeli public opinion was in favor." On the other hand, P6 also noted that "the Gulf countries are very traditional, but they evolved in a way putting money or economy first. Avery big change. I think that is why they allowed Normalization and allowed it to be so easy." The opposite was also argued by some. P7, as well as participants, claimed that the Egypt put its own interest first, however, that allowed progress in negotiations because the other actors could identify Egypt's strategy and adopted it to determine theirs: "He saw the interest of Egypt before anything. He understood that a nation of above 50 million people at the time needed to secure its economy, he understood that maintaining the war with Israel is far too expensive and that you cannot count on the Soviet Union."

P8 was also added a rather personal motive: "I believe historically in the case of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt it was more a desire between two leaders and not two peoples." The Egyptian president understood that the best strategy to obtain what he wants coincides with his famous quote: "no more war, no more bloodshed translating beautifully the value of peace." He further argued that "Egypt realized it cannot beat Israel in the battlefield and therefore understanding there are better ways to obtain what he wants – around the negotiation table."

Interestingly, P1 emphasized something Israel did not do: "Israel never insisted upon knowledge, that was a strategic mistake that is conveyed in the Egyptian frame mind as a weakness." This was not with the UAE who worked in a different manner, since, according to P2, normalization with Israel was a long time UAE strategy: "The UAE are very well organized, and everything is well planned. And nothing in this country came without thought by hazard. So, from the very beginning they were ready for the agreement with Israel. The country promoted tolerance and coexistence."

Another important strategy that coincided with peace-making was the issue of education. For P3, "the Normalization was very important and what was important is the fact that for both sides not less important than military cooperation or economically cooperation – the education which allows normalization." Education was also a factor in Egypt when signing an agreement with Israel. "Sadat knew that in order to make a change in his country and bring Egypt to the future and turn from support on the Soviet Union to get help by the United States he needed to make the change inside Egypt also by targeting education." P4 put the emphasis on the negotiation itself: "we spent a lot of time in this cultural question of direct or indirect negotiations. There were two different strategies as options: should we have direct or indirect talks. The direct talks between the two sides became finally the strategy chosen."

In summary, a decision such as signing a peace treaty or normalization accords can only be achieved, if it is a strategic decision made by a leader who aims to take his country to a different path. Peace agreements in the Middle East were not a tactical but strategic choice.

IV.1.7 Leadership and decision making

This category discusses the role the leaders of the governments involved had in achieving and shaping the agreements in question. The leadership of Menachem Begin made a decisive difference, according to P6: "Israel's new Prime Minister at that time – Menachem Begin – made the difference." In reference to this, he reflected on whether such leadership could achieve further agreement and concluded that "Saudi Arabia by signing a peace treaty with Egypt can conclude this amazing journey but we are not there yet because of the cross-cultural differences between Israel and Saudia. Israel has to make a huge effort this time. Mohamed ben Salman can be a Sadat, but I am not sure that on the Israeli side you have a Begin."

P2 also put emphasis in Begin's role: "I did not envy Prime Minister Begin and the decisions he had taken. I was there. I saw him. He had to confront the very conservative branch of his party. I saw him in great pain and conflicts during the negotiations and decision making. You could see every time on the Israeli side when one of the participants was asked about something like minister of foreign affairs Moshe Dayan, he would send you to Begin saying that I don't have the responsibility to take a decision."

Sadat was also credited for his role. The personality of a leader and his leadership abilities are a key factor in decision making in general, and moreover for peace making in the Middle East in particular. "I believe Sadat saw the world changing before the world really changed in the Middle East before it occurred," P7 concluded. P8 was even more decisive when he claimed that there is no doubt that the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt was thanks to "Sadat's courage and initiative." The leadership of Sadat made the difference. Nevertheless, "there was a new leadership in Israel since 1977 that coincided with the first visit of Sadat to Israel and that too was an important factor." For P8, "it also takes sometimes one man to make the difference, one man to make history." Notwithstanding this, P1 added another vital contribution by arguing the leadership was not the only factor, but it added to another factor: "Honor is a huge impactful and significant element in decision making."

In the case of the UAE leadership also played an important, According to P2, "decision making is based on the DNA of the UAE in the case of the normalization. It's part of its culture (UAE). The country has a very clear vision from the beginning of its establishment. The country since sheik Zayed and until now is based over tolerance and coexistence." P3 added to the role of Sheikh Zayed: "I think it's a question of leadership that makes the difference. In the case of Sheikh Zayed he could have continued his journey without taking a decision, but I decide to take my country to a different way and make a Normalization with Israel, or I could have defined it in a different way by saying taking the Sadat way and making a peace treaty with Israel." He then added that "Sheikh Zayed is a leader. He decided to go forward." Concerning the peace agreement with Egypt, he concluded that "Sadat was a leader. He decided to take Egypt into the future. To leave the soviet sphere and move forward into the future to make his country more prosperous in the interest of the Egyptian people."

To surmise, one can see that all the people interviewed credited the three leaders of Israel, Egypt and the UAE: Begin, Sadat and the Sheikh Zayed, in playing a decisive role in peace-making.

IV.1.8 Obstacles

"We are in the Middle East, and everybody wants to be the friend of the strong guy. A strong Israel allowed peace with Egypt. a strong Israel allowed the Normalization with the UAE. A strong Israel will allow more countries to join. A weak Israel will change the equation but not only a weak Israel but also a weak America," is P5s main observation concerning the route to overcome obstacles in gaining peace in the region. The participant argued that he believes in peace from a position of strength which allowed us to overcome obstacles such as public opinion and old prejudices those countries had to overcome. P6 referred to obstacles from an historical perspective: "there were wars between Egyptians and Israelis, there were victims, there was humiliation all of that cannot be changed in a day."

These obstacles are never easy to overcome. For P7 the war in Gaza created a great opposition to the peace treaties between Israel and Arab countries. Accordingly, "Public opinion was always an obstacle for any agreement with Israel." Part of the problem was the activity of actors opposing the nascent peace: "The opposition to the Abraham Accords came from countries like Iran and its proxies. They turned towards China which developed a new competition in the Middle East between the United States and China. The united Stated had always an active policy in the region and contributes to peace treaties in the Middle East."

The Palestinian Problem undoubtedly was, is, and will remain a serious obstacle to obtain a new Middle East. Many among the international community argue that it continues do damage security, stability and peace. In this context P8 argued that "the Palestinian Problem was not solved and therefore it was, and it still is an obstacle as it was not wise to towards a peace treaty with Isael as long as the Palestinian problem was not solved."

P1 added a very interesting point of view based on his intimate knowledge of the Israeli society as well as the Arab society, having served in Cairo: "The public was never reeducated to accept Israel as a partner in Peace. On the contrary Israel was more identified as the enemy. We see again the idea of prejudices as an obstacle coming from public opinion which may have several causes such as wars, the Palestinian Problem, the refusal to accept a Jewish state." For P2 "The majority of the population in the Arab world is against Normalization. When you have on my side those who perceived as killers and occupiers, and you invite them to the negotiation table, or you want to sign an agreement with them well you are considered to be or a traitor or someone who does not respect Islam." P2, who was born and raised in the Gulf, supports the Normalization agreement and the peace treaty with Israel signed by Egypt, but she believes

"that the war in Gaza will make it very difficult to advance especially with a stupid administration like the Biden administration." Nevertheless, she believes that the American presidential election result in 2024 might have an impact on the pursuit of the peace negotiations and on the Abraham accords "although it will be much more difficult for an Arab leader to make concessions on the Palestinian problem after the Gaza war."

P3 also contributed to the discussion about preexisting hatred and prejudice toward Israel in the Arab world: "The hostility towards Israel is big and historical. I must remind you that when Egypt signed a peace treaty with Israel, she was expelled from the Arab league that she always led." P4 witnessed the negotiations between Israel and Egypt in Camp David summit where the USA hosted the direct negotiations between Israel and Egypt, which led to the Camp David Accords. These were a pair of political agreements signed by Egypt and Israel, by their two leaders following 12 days of secret negotiations on the 17 of September 1978:

"President Sadat spoke of the necessity of breaking the psychological barrier. Maybe it was softened after his visit in 1977, but it was still there. It was very difficult, and the Americans were very stressed because they did not know how to overcome the Palestinian problem and the idea of a Palestinian representative in negotiations when Israel refused the idea of having the PLO around the table. Let's not forget that in Israel it was forbidden under law to meet any member of the Palestinian Liberation Organization."

In summary, one can find all the obstacles mentioned before as the main concern preventing the further development of agreements: prejudice, hatred, and the Palestinian problem. Public opinion was, and still is, a problem one must overcome. The fact is that the existence of Israel – the Jewish state - is still not seen as legitimate or natural, and on the Israeli side many Israelis do not accept the idea of a Palestinian state and that was reinforced after the 7 October massacre.

IV.1.9 Relevant historical events

Recent history, and especially in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, was intertwined with aspects of culture that dominated the discussions, and especially the aspect of honor, or as put by P1: "but the fact that both sides came with their honor kept allowed a successful negotiation."

In order of obtaining a peace agreement with Egypt, Israel was ready to allow Egyptians to perceive themselves as victors of the Yom Kippur War that started on 6 October,1973. "Israel was ready to the forego honor of declaring itself as the victory of the war even though it was an unconditioned ally of the United States and without doubt the victorious side of a difficult war that lasted 19 days despite being surprised at the end of the war Israel controlled the Sini peninsula," argued P1.

P2, however, focused on other historical events more related to the Palestinian issue. "The history is going on; the conflict is going on. When you look at the humanitarian aid of the UAE - you look at the Palestinians who lost their houses and are vulnerable people especially after the Gaza war." While P1 and P2 discussed historical events related to the Israeli-Arab conflict, P3 shifts the discussion to interim changes in Israel itself: "what led us to the peace treaty with Egypt was the fact that there was a political change in Israel and in 1977 a new government was elected. It coincided with the fact that there were international changes on the international sphere and Sadat, the Egyptian president understood that he needed to change blocs, from the weakening soviet block to the western block led by America that will allow him to obtain and fulfill Egypt's interest."

For P4, both interim as well as external issues played along together: "I believe that it was the Yom Kippur War. My estimation is that President Sadat understood that although he succeeded in launching an attack against Israel by surprise, and Israel was indeed surprised as it was never before in its history (until the 7 October , 2023, attack by Hamas), and the Egyptian army did have in the first days of war a significant military success by causing the death of 2665 Israeli soldiers (the number includes also the casualties in the northern border with Syria) provoking a real trauma in the Israeli society, still he had the IDF 100 km from Cairo with an open road to the Egyptian capital. Therefore, he understood that he will not obtain the sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula via military means as well as regaining the Egyptian honor. The Yom Kippur war was a significant historical event that allowed the negotiations between Israel and Egypt and all that followed."

In summary, historical events are paramount in understanding the negotiation processes between Israel and Egypt. Above all, the Yom Kippur War was a determining event.

IV.1.10 Cultural-religious aspects

Religion is an important factor in the Middle East and determines the cultural identities of the people of the region. These issues came into practice during the negotiation with Egypt. For example, as P1 noted: "the fact that Judaism is a monotheistic religion like Christianity and Islam made it easier for them to accept the people in front of them in the negotiation table. Egyptians do not hide their faith in ALLAH and the fact that they had in front of them people who are perceived as believers contributed to the success of the negotiations and I would also assume that in a way it was also a certain precondition." Moreover, P1, who has a great understanding of the Egyptian culture and especially of the vision Egyptians have on other cultures, testified that "It's very difficult for an Egyptian to comprehend or to accept that somebody is not religious, whether it's a Jew, Christian or Muslim. It would be much easier for them to accept a religious non-Muslim rather than an atheist or any other kind of religion that is perceived by them to be an offshoot of Islam like Bahai or Druze." Nevertheless, even in those conditions P1 continued: "I don't think that at the end it played a significant role so long as the leader does not belong to an extremist belief, for example an extremist Islamist in the case of an Arab or Muslim leader."

This point raised by P1 is very interesting, and it helps clarify why four years after the Yom Kippur War Israel and Egypt could seat around the same table, but in the case of the war between Israel and Hamas in 2023-24 led by an Islamist extremist (Yahya Sinwar) no similar negotiation is even imaginable. The religious aspect as well as the cultural aspect had its importance but P1 concluded that "the cultural difference or similarity were not at the end of the game a factor in the success of the negotiation."

From a personal experience of numerous trips in the Arab and Muslim world, it can be noted that practicing religion, even from a different monotheist religion, was perceived positively especially in comparison to atheist French friends. It would be often easier for them to accept a Jewish state (still a difficult concept for many countries in the Middle East) rather than an atheist state. This is how the idea developed to organize meetings between religious leaders from both camps to succeed in breaking barriers.

For P2, who was born and raised in the Gulf, "the fact that Arabs accepted to sit with Israelis around the same table was already breaking a big taboo. It was not only the fact that they are Jews because sitting with a Jew from another nationality was fine – but the fact that they were Israelis!" For P3 who participated in several negotiations, "religious element was never a

determinant element. Religion had nothing to do with success or failure in a negotiation and I must admit that religion is a key factor for Egyptian but also to modernized gulf states including the UAE."

There are also insights from inside the negotiations that allow learning more about the cultural issues: "I think it was in July 1978, I was sitting beside Osama El-Baz (one of the most prominent diplomatic figures in Egypt) and he was telling me that he was eating only halal meat (Muslim dietary law) and therefore when he was a student in Boston he was looking for Halal food and as he did not find he was eating only in Kosher restaurants (Jewish dietary law)," as P4 remembered, and then added "I don't know how much religion was a factor in the negotiation but it was indeed a factor in our meetings in camp David. I remember that we spoke a lot about the idea of a Jew to wear a Kippah (a small cap worn by Jewish males as a sign of Jewish identity) and of the way president Sadat was praying five times a day. And we invited them to our Kiddush (Friday's prayer before meal) on Friday evening by Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin who for him respecting the Jewish religion and tradition were very important. In fact, they both were not very religious, but they integrated religion into their ideology."

The cultural issues have not determined the success of the negotiations, but they contributed a lot for breaking the ice, before leading to successful talks. Those cultural issues were a way to show what the two sides had much in from a cultural perspective, rather than being two polarized opposites. Thus, religion often used as a cause for war, could also be used to bridge and bring the two sides together, as the Israel-Egypt case demonstrates.

To conclude, one can argue that cultural issues were not the cause for peace, same applying to religion, but it allowed the success of the negotiations.

IV.2 Findings emerging from research question 2: How did the ground-breaking peace agreement with Israel and Egypt enable further agreements with a focus on the agreement with the United Arab Emirates?

The idea that the peace treaty is a precedent to other agreements in the Middle East was already set within the treaty itself: "Noting that the aforementioned Framework as appropriate is intended to constitute a basis for peace not only between Egypt and Israel but also between Israel and each of its Arab neighbours which is prepared to negotiate peace with it on this

basis."[207] This is repeated three times in different wording in the preamble of the agreement. This leads to the second research question, and therefore a second round of interviews was conducted. This section presents the findings, as well as the insights that emerged from the content analysis. P1 offered an interesting notion saying that "the peace treaty with Egypt needed to be digested by the Arab world. Don't forget the peace treaty with Jordan in 1994, a year after the peace with Jordan that was also important but the peace with Egypt changed everything and allowed all that we saw afterwards." In other words, once the Arab world initiated the possibility of re-thinking their attitudes towards their relations with Israel, it allowed other Arab countries to follow this trend. P2 strengthened this notion by saying that "The peace with Egypt changed everything and I am surprised he took such a long time for the UAE to join." In other words, the peace between Israel and Egypt was a political gamechanger to the entire region.

From both participants one can learn that the peace treaty obtained in 1979 by the Egyptian president and the Israeli prime minister changed the course of history in the Middle East. It created a new era that allowed other peace treaties to follow. Egypt was not just a simple Arab country in the Middle East but a leading nation. It was even known as the "mother of all nations." The headquarters of the Arab League were also based in Cairo. So, when such an important actor in the region made such a determining move, one can realize the profound results of such a move.

That explains why P2 wondered why it took such a long time for the UAE to follow. One must remember that Israel signed the peace treaty with Jordan in between, yet the Abraham Accords in which the agreement with the UAE was obtained was somewhat different, as it included a value Israel did not have, neither in the peace with Egypt, nor in 1994 with Jordan, and that is the element of Normalization. This is desperately needed if one wants to reach peace between people and not only peace between governments. Eventually, normalization bears potential to become a political climate change. The normalization is a significant change since Israel becomes a state with which one can not only talk, refer or sign agreements, but also visit, cooperate in various fields, conduct tourism and other forms of bilateral relations. A future between countries was achieved with an added value (normalization), and this was done with practically no demands such as land or resolving the Palestinian issue. This is a major shift since the it was presumed based on the Saudi Peace Plan that normalization is conditioned

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[207] 'United Nations, *Egypt and Israel*, p. 116

solving the Palestinian issue.[208] The main requirement is common interest that can benefit both countries in economical or security fields, or in the case of Gulf states as the example of the UAE – both.

P3 added that "everything we see today started in 1979. 1979 allowed the Abraham accords, 1979 allowed the normalization between Arabs and Jews in the middle east. Moreover, the peace of 1979 permitted this huge change that we have today: we passed from an Arab coalition against Israel to an Arab coalition against Iran. that is an amazing change in the middle east. For me the biggest one." This demonstrates that the agreements with Abraham Accords not only ended with an agreement, but with an alliance. Surely, the idea of the formation of a coalition, as explained by P3, who served as a diplomat in the Middle East, is very significant. One can see the change that has occurred since the period prior to the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel and the Abraham Accords. The Arab countries have gone a long way since the days of non-recognition of the state of Israel to the days where Israel is seen as a partner in defending moderate Arab nations in front of the Islamic-Shiite Iranian threat. That would have been unimaginable but a few decades ago. The peace treaty between Israel and Egypt allowed the partial alliance we see today between Israel and the Arab world confronting Iran.[209] P3 added that "It is true that regional changes have happened. The Iranian revolution in 1979 has created a big change in the Middle East with the Islamic republic of Iran ambition to become not only a leader in the region but to export its revolution and extremist Islamic ideology to as many countries in the region."

Countries like Bahrain, the UAE and Saudi Arabia have realized the Iranian threat to their regime. It was not only a simple threat, but serious actions taken by Iran and its proxies that caused a wake-up call for the Arab Muslim countries in the region. Israel, Iran's main enemy, happened to be another strong military actor in the region and in addition an ally of the United States. Those were two factors or even assets that created this significant change in coalition. The peace treaty with Egypt started the process. P6 supported the notion that the peace treaty with Egypt paved the way to the Abraham Accords. She specified that "definitely, when a big country like this (Egypt) will facilitate and put the, you know, and make the stage ready for the others on the front line is Egypt, and Jordan, the next. I'm speaking about like logic and my own analysis. When one of the biggest Arab countries make like peace agreement, that no doubt

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[208] 'Prospects of reinvigorating the Middle East Peace Process', p. 5
[209] See discussion on the Iranian threat and its influence on Gulf States policies in: Ibid, pp. 37-38

will facilitate the peace agreements in other Arab countries. So, when Egypt, like it's considered one of the core countries in the Arab world, make this peace agreement, it will put the stage for the other Arab countries." As a person born and raised in the Gulf (Saudi Arabia and UAE) there is an understanding that Egypt is a leading State in the Arab world. This fact much contributed to the understanding that peace treaties with Israel can be considered as legitimate. Additionally, Egypt was not only a leading country but a leader in the Arab world when their President (Sadat) made the historic visit to Israel. Therefore, even if there was a great protest at first, the idea penetrated the minds in the Arab world. In 1994 Jordan followed, but this was still a cold peace with many mutual interests (security issues and the protection of the Hashemite kingdom) but the best was to be followed – the Abraham Accords – a direct continuity of the peace agreement with Egypt despite coming four decades after. P5 mentioned that "It is true that the Abrahan Accords, thanks to the peace treaty with Egypt, were a form of almost natural – yet late – continuity but obstacle occurred on the way. Sadat's decisions and initiative opened the path towards other accords such as the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan in 1994 and obviously the accords mentioned that added the UAE to Israel's partners in the Arab world."

The issue of security was always a key aspect in these developments, thus enabling the abovementioned alliance. P 5 related to this matter: "Because they see and understand that there is a growing military potential, nobody needs a weak Israel. They all need a strong Israel. Okay. Okay. So that's why I'm saying that after the signing of the Abraham accords there was an improvement in the messaging. Some changes, especially in elementary school curricula was made in the past two, three years. Not enough to slow but a little bit." According to him, the issue of security and threat made the relation with Israel important and even crucial. Yet, to make the relation with Israel acceptable by public opinion one had to consider changing the education in schools. Teaching about the Shoah, the extermination of European Jewry during the Second World War, was introduced to the school curriculum. This was difficult even in European countries like France.

Despite all this, there are some impediments that have not yet been solved. P4 claimed that "things are going to be very complicated for any Arab country that will want to join a peace treaty with Israel not to demand a solution for the Palestinian problem." He added that "I believe that the war in Gaza, the pictures from Gaza and public opinion in the Arab street are becoming more and more demanding. the peace agreement was threatened and that I think it

had also an impact on the Abraham Accords. Even during the Arab Spring in 2011 peace maintained and then Egypt was under the rule of the Islamic brotherhood."

One cannot underestimate the war in Gaza in 2023-24 and its consequences on the peace treaty with Egypt and the Abraham Accords, as well as on the future possible agreements. If the Abraham Accords pushed forward Normalization and set aside the Palestinian issue, the Gaza war has brought back this issue to the Arab debate. Arab public opinion could not ignore the issue anymore. The two states solution was once again back on the table within the Arab public opinion, as it was in the past, and therefore also part of the Arab leadership debate. From that point the way leading toward international institution and international parliaments was paved. For Israel this was the worst scenario: not only it had to endure the tragic event of 7 October and its consequences, but also the idea of the two states solution was back in almost every thinkable international platform. The Palestinian problem returned to the table of any future negotiations in the strongest way possible.

P5 added that "I wouldn't say that the Egyptian model allowed or paved the way to the Gulf outwards, rather, I think, the fact that that accord made Egypt, recalculate, it's very cold antagonism on the 'People to People' level towards Israel." The notion that the Egyptian peace treaty with Israel paved the way according to most participants to the Abraham Accords, yet the Normalization aspect in those accords made Egypt rethink the translation of a peace treaty on the ground. One might imagine a real improvement in the people-to-people relationship between Israel and Egypt and an improvement in what can define as a cold Peace.[210] Nevertheless, the war in Gaza did affect that potential positive movement. As mentioned before, peace and Normalization did suffer a terrible blow. The challenge now is firstly to protect the past agreements. Nevertheless, one can imagine that once a peace treaty is secured, subsequent ones can follow. That reconfirmed the role of past agreements. That was the big challenge for Jerusalem and Washington.

P7 said in this context that "that would bring the Saudi's to the negotiation table and to a peace treaty with Israel when the story of Gaza and how will Gaza look like and the reconstruction of Gaza, also in the field of infrastructures, and also in the field of education and in fields who

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[210] A cold peace refers to a peace agreement whose implications in the aspect of the people-to-people relations remains at minimum. This does not mean that the countries freeze their governmental relations, in which Israel and Egypt continued to develop since 1979, as the example of the agreement on the gas pipeline shows. See: European Union, *'Memorandum of understanding on cooperation related to trade, transport, and export of natural gas to the European Union.'* Available at: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/MoU%20EU%20Egypt%20Israel.pdf

are seen as more democratic everything you know according to the way things are being seen by the west. This is the element that will allow the Saudis to make peace with us when they present it in the Arab world. They will present it as their contribution in building the Palestinian State, weather we in Israel like it or not. It will help the Saudis to show the world that make peace in order to help the Palestinian problem and not ignore it."

In fact, this participant is already going a step forward and sees the evolution of the Abraham Accords and a potential of bringing onboard the most important country in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia. But the participant believes that the peace agreement could not materialize without a real answer on the Palestinian issue. P7's notion is congruent with what Saudi's crown prince (also known as MBS) has declared in a summit he hosted. "There was also Jordan but let's concentrate on Egypt that showed the way," says the former Ambassador that recognizes that the peace with Egypt opened the door to future agreements to come – like the Abraham Accords.

For P8, another vital aspect in future agreements, is the issue of education, "there was no education for peace in those countries (Arabic states), education and the Palestinian problem." In other words, the fact that education for peace and tolerance was absent, or on the contrary, there was an active denial of the right for a Jewish state to exist, made it almost impossible to think even of making peace between Israel and the Arab world. When Egypt showed that war was not a necessary, and despite negative education towards peace was dominant, one can overcome that problem by a governmental decision.

This is perhaps Egypt's most important tole. P8 emphasized in the clearest form, by maintaining that "the agreement with Egypt changed the way of thinking. Meaning the question of can we make peace with Israel was not relevant anymore – now the question was what are the conditions and how do we do it? And what is the Palestinian problem, the concept of peace was born in the Middle East. No doubt, peace with Egypt enabled everything. Egypt crossed the Rubicon. With all the complexity of a cold peace and the fact that some of the clauses in the agreement were not fulfilled still in a strategic perspective it permitted the Arab world to advance, to go forward. If the greatest Arabic state has done it than others can do it as well. Egypt has opened the door."

In conclusion, there is an agreement between all the participants that Egypt opened the door to peace, but that alone is enough. The Gaza war and the consequences of the war to the Palestinians will be an issue in the future negotiations to come.

IV.3 Summary

The first topic is agreed by all participants interviewed and is that the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt enabled the Abraham Accords. Egypt has opened the door, as mentioned by one of the participants who was an important factor in the negotiations with Egypt. He knew the Middle East before the treaty and the Middle East that followed – It was not the same. Israel suddenly became a legitimate actor. It is true that the peace with Egypt needed to be digested and accepted, especially in a very hostile environment where a great opposition to the peace treaty existed. Nevertheless, the seed of peace was planted. Israel was not to be seen as a Pariah state but as a possible partner in the future. This was a momentous change.

Secondly, the agreement with Egypt led to shifting reginal alliances. As a leading country in the Arab world – *Umn-Al-Dunya* (Mother of all nations) - the step it took was very significant. It created a significant change that shifted the path of history in the Middle East. This is an idea that would have been unthinkable before the peace treaty with Egypt in 1979. One must remember that ever since the independence of Israel in 1948 there was a permanent Arab alliance focused a common understanding – the denial of Israel to exist. So, from an Arab coalition against Israel, now one moved to an Arab coalition with Israel, despite being still a partial coalition. The common enemy turned from Israel to Iran.

It is nevertheless noteworthy that it was much easier to sign the Abraham Accords than the peace treaty with Egypt since there was no territorial issue or common border between the countries involved. However, it still took 72 years to reach these agreements. The fact that Egypt was there beforehand and the interests of the UAE could be addressed in the issued of security, economy, and privileged relations with the United States, all contributed to signing the accords.

Despite all the positives, there is still one major impediment to both the existing agreements as well as potential future agreements. In March 1979 and in September 2020 both historic agreements with Egypt and the UAE, the Palestinian issue was important but not a condition for signing a deal, neither by Egypt nor by the UAE. However, today, due to the Gaza war (2023) things may become different because of the length and intensity of the war that broke after the massacre of 7 October where 1200 civilians were murdered, and more than 200 Israeli's were taken hostage in Gaza.

At the same time, the pictures of death and suffering as well as the humanitarian crisis in Gaza dominated Arab public opinion in this crisis. For them, the Palestinians are once again the main victims. The Palestinian issue, whose importance seemed dwindling, became once again dominant and most of the Arab world now demands a Palestinian state urgently, while many Israelis oppose this idea - both acting on similar grounds.

Chapter V: Discussion

V.1 Discussion of findings emerging from research question 1: What were the cross-cultural and historical events involved in the negotiation that led to the signing of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt?

V.1.1 Preliminary conditions and opening positions in the Egypt-Israel peace negotiations

The content analysis reveals that preliminary conditions and opening positions played a central role in the negotiations between Israel and Egypt. Both countries recognized that continued conflict was not in their mutual interest, a realization underscored by the events of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. For Israel, the war, despite ending in military victory, came at a significant cost: 2,665 soldiers lost their lives, and the Israeli public experienced a profound crisis of confidence in its government and intelligence services due to their failure to anticipate the attack. For Egypt, although the war began with a strategic advantage, initiated during the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur and supported by Syrian forces in the Golan Heights, it ultimately resulted in defeat after 19 days of heavy combat, without any lasting territorial gains, particularly the failure to reclaim the Sinai Peninsula.

The shared understanding of the consequences of future wars formed the basis for clear and strategic opening positions during the negotiations. Israel sought official recognition from Egypt, the most influential Arab nation at the time, often referred to as *Umm al-Dunya* ("Mother of the World"), and home to the Arab League headquarters. For Egypt, the objective was the recovery of the Sinai Peninsula, lost in the 1967 Six-Day War, which carried significant political and symbolic value as a matter of national pride and sovereignty. These opening positions were acknowledged by the leaders involved in the negotiations and are corroborated by interview data from P4, a member of the Israeli delegation at the 1978 Camp David Accords. According to him, Egyptian sovereignty over Sinai was regarded as sacred, describing it as a land where every grain of sand was holy.[211]

Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, elected in May 1977, recognized early on that territorial compromises would be necessary to achieve peace. As early as two months before

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[211] All the references in this chapter to interviews are reflected in the findings chapter.

President Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem, Begin signaled a willingness to revisit Israel's territorial stance. The foundational principle of land for peace thus emerged, with Egypt insisting on the return of Sinai and Israel seeking recognition and normalization of relations. Although Egypt framed the 1973 war as a symbolic victory, it ended without the return of Sinai, which remained under Israeli occupation. As discussed in the findings chapter, land holds deep cultural and symbolic importance in the Arab world. Therefore, following Israel's landmark 1977 elections – which resulted in a government shift from the Labor-led coalition to Begin's Likud party – President Sadat consulted other Arab leaders, including King Khalid of Saudi Arabia and Syrian President Hafez al-Assad. While he made no public statement on the election, Sadat understood its significance and anticipated a shift in Israeli policy.[212]

Egypt was not deterred by the prospect of negotiating with Israel. Rather, it was motivated by a clear goal: regaining sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula. To achieve this, Sadat needed to prepare not only the Egyptian public but also the broader Arab world. Since Egypt, like many Arab states at the time, was not a democracy, Sadat focused on persuading fellow Arab leaders rather than the general populace. As one of the participants noted: "We never insisted on the messaging to stop being hateful." The content analysis further suggests that the potential to reclaim lost territory was a driving factor strong enough to override long-standing ideological hostilities. As honor plays a crucial role in decision-making in Egypt and the Arab world, regaining Sinai allowed Sadat to preserve national dignity while breaking with entrenched anti-Israel sentiment. Once Egypt crossed this symbolic threshold by signing a peace treaty, other Arab states could potentially follow suit, knowing that national honor had been maintained.

Another critical preliminary condition for Egypt was its shifting relationship with the United States. Confronted with economic and demographic challenges, Egypt turned away from its traditional ally, the Soviet Union, and sought a strategic partnership with the United States – widely seen as Israel's closest supporter. It was therefore assumed by many that the road to Washington passed through Jerusalem. Sadat realized that aligning with the United States required a willingness to engage with Israel. The geopolitical shift was bold – Sadat was prepared to pay a high political price, including making an unprecedented visit to Jerusalem, to solidify Egypt's position as a United States partner and reclaim Sinai.

In preparation for this visit, Sadat travelled to Romania, Iran, and Saudi Arabia in October 1977. The leaders of Romania and Iran had previously hosted Begin and Dayan and were likely

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[212] Friedlander, *Sadat and Begin,* p. 36

sources of insight into Israel's intentions. Additionally, back-channel diplomacy and intelligence-sharing, such as an Israeli warning to Egypt about a Libyan plot against Sadat, helped build trust. Still uncertain of Washington's intentions, Sadat took a bold step. In mid-September 1977, he dispatched Deputy Prime Minister Hassan Tuhami to Rabat for a secret meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan. The meeting, held under strict secrecy in a palace of King Hassan II of Morocco, marked a turning point. This meeting confirmed that Sinai was Egypt's non-negotiable starting point. Israel in 1977, shaped by the trauma of the Yom Kippur War and a dramatic political shift, was open to new diplomatic possibilities. While the country's politics were moving rightward, it was a hawkish government such as Begin's could make the necessary territorial concessions without fear of political backlash – a dynamic acknowledged by many scholars.[213]

By early September 1977, Begin had already stated publicly that Israel was willing to propose full diplomatic and economic relations with Arab states in exchange for peace and would be willing to cede territory accordingly. As P4 observed: "Begin accepted to change his preliminary conditions as he wanted to reach an agreement."[214] The Carter administration had initially more modest ambitions. However, the momentum of the discussions between Begin and Sadat ultimately led the process. The United States played a critical supporting role, ensuring that the diplomatic "train reached its destination," or as P4 metaphorically noted, "organized the wedding and came with the biggest gift to the party."[215]

In summary, preliminary conditions and opening positions were indeed pivotal in shaping the peace negotiations between Egypt and Israel. These positions, centered on territory, recognition, national pride, and strategic alliances, formed the foundation of a historic agreement that reshaped Middle Eastern geopolitics for decades to come. It is noteworthy that the preliminary conditions described here were not equivalent to the Abraham Accords. Firstly, there was no territorial issue between Israel and the Gulf countries. Secondly, indirect communications and official representation existed prior to the signing of the Accords, and the foundations for the Accords stood on solid grounds. These preliminary conditions made the Accords a question of time rather than a question of whether they would happen or not.

[213] Friedlander, *Sadat and Begin*, p. 47
[214] See interview in findings chapter.
[215] Ibid

V.1.2 Stakeholders

Content analysis reveals that the United States played a highly active role in both the peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt and in the Abraham Accords. However, its involvement extended beyond that of a dominant actor facilitating and monitoring the talks; the United States also embodied the underlying spirit and strategic vision of both accords, as one interview participant observed, "The Americans, like the Israelis, don't really understand the Middle East – but they don't live here, and they are a superpower that can impose."[216] This perception aligns with the reflections of one of Israel's key figures during the peace process with Egypt, then-Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, who remarked the words "goodwill," "sagacity," and "diligence" aptly characterize American efforts during the Camp David negotiations.[217] These critical talks culminated in the Camp David Accords – two political agreements signed by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin on September 17, 1978, after 12 days of secret negotiations at Camp David, the United States presidential retreat in Maryland. The accords were later signed at the White House, with United States President Jimmy Carter acting as a witness and principal mediator.

The strategic and political involvement of Washington both in the peace process as well as during the Abraham Accords was paramount. President Carter and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance laid the groundwork for the negotiations by proposing a framework rooted in a Geneva Peace Conference. This framework was based on three pillars: (1) Arab recognition of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state; (2) Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in the 1967 Six-Day War, within a framework that would not compromise Israel's security; and (3) maintaining Jerusalem as an undivided city. P4, who served as a legal advisor during the peace talks, recalled how United States Ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis actively collaborated with Moshe Dayan and himself to shape Israel's negotiating stance. From the outset of his presidency in January 1977, Carter prioritized the Middle East peace process, which had stalled during the preceding American election cycle. Yet, despite American resolve, a disconnect persisted between Washington's multilateral approach and the bilateral strategy preferred by Sadat and Begin. Nevertheless, the deep-seated hostility and mistrust between Egypt and Israel necessitated American involvement. The United States not only hosted the Camp David Summit but also sponsored and guaranteed the subsequent peace treaty. The research and interviews conducted for this study consistently highlight that while the United States may not

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[216] See interview in findings chapter
[217] Dayan, *Breakthrough,* p. 167

have fully grasped the complex values and sensitivities of the Muslim world, its influence was pivotal in shaping the eventual agreement.

American presence was particularly crucial given the deep mutual suspicion between Israel and Egypt – two nations that had waged four major wars and a prolonged War of Attrition since Israel's founding in 1948. President Carter demonstrated unwavering commitment by personally inviting Sadat and Begin to Camp David, where he kept the talks from collapsing during nearly two weeks of tense negotiations. Carter took considerable political risks, especially considering domestic challenges such as inflation, unemployment, and rising energy costs.

The negotiations took place within a broader geopolitical context shaped by the Cold War. The United States and the Soviet Union both had interests in the region, with the United States aligned with Israel and the Soviet Union backing Arab states. While both superpowers co-chaired the Geneva Peace Conference and issued a joint declaration on October 1, 1977, calling for comprehensive peace talks, the Soviet Union's influence remained marginal. Moscow emphasized Israeli withdrawal and Palestinian rights; positions viewed with suspicion in Jerusalem. Conversely, Egypt's pivot toward the American sphere of influence was a crucial factor in the peace process. One interviewee noted, "Economy and the desire to attach Egypt's destiny to the United States was the reason Sadat came to Israel." (P7)[218] While this statement reflects only part of the truth – Egypt's sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula was the central motive – it does highlight the strategic recalibration underpinning Sadat's actions.

The United States – Israel relationship also surfaced frequently in the interviews. In 1948, just eleven minutes after Israel's declaration of independence, President Truman became the first world leader to recognize the Jewish state. This swift recognition signalled enduring American support, undoubtedly considered by Sadat when he made his historic visit to Jerusalem. As discussed in the literature review chapter, Middle East scholar Bernard Lewis argued that Sadat's strategic realignment with the United States, rather than continued Soviet alignment, was instrumental in enabling the peace treaty. Lewis also foresaw increased Arab normalization with Israel, driven by concerns over Iranian regional ambitions and the instability posed by Islamist regimes.

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[218] See findings chapter

Drawing from personal experience as Israel's ambassador to Mauritania (2004–2008), the author has observed firsthand how American backing facilitated dialogue and influence within Arab nations, especially in international institutions like the World Bank and IMF. During two *coups d'état* in Mauritania, new leaders quickly sought legitimacy from Washington – just as Sadat had, decades earlier. Conversely, the European Union and the United Nations were relatively marginal actors in the Egyptian–Israeli negotiations. The European Union's role gained significance only later during the Abraham Accords, while the United Nations's General Assembly's perceived bias limited its effectiveness in this context.

Despite America's indispensable contribution, another fundamental factor emerged from this research: Israel's strength. As some participant emphasized, Israel's strength was crucial – Egypt would not have recognized Israel without acknowledging the power of the Israeli military. Only once Sadat internalized this reality did he pursue negotiations to regain Sinai. The United States was not merely an initiator and facilitator of the peace agreements between Israel and Egypt, but also a catalyst to the treaty. The same pattern would later be repeated in the Abraham Accords, where the United States not only facilitated the location for the agreement, but also brokered much of the discussions leading to the signing of the Accords.

V.1.3 Mutual Interest

The content analysis revealed that all three parties involved in the peace negotiations (Egypt, Israel, and the United States) benefited from the agreements in military, diplomatic, and economic terms. As one participant (P4) succinctly stated during the interview, quoted in the findings chapter: The Egyptians got the Sinai Peninsula, the Americans advanced diplomacy in the Middle East, and the Israelis to gain security through peace with the most prominent military power in the region.

For Egypt, with a population exceeding 70 million at the time, agriculture was a vital sector, as discussed in the previous chapter. Israel's advanced agricultural know-how appealed to Egypt, and this area of cooperation proved to be consistently productive. Notably, agricultural collaboration continued uninterrupted even during major regional crises such as the two Lebanon wars (1982 and 2006), the First and Second Intifadas (1987–1993 and 2000–2005), and the Israeli airstrike on Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981.

Economic interests were also a key driver. Egypt sought new partners for future development, aiming to strengthen ties with the United States and gain access to Western markets. Israel, in turn, hoped to normalize relations with a regional partner, thereby opening the door to broader engagement across the Middle East. Growing economic ties were repeatedly referenced in this research, even if they came at the cost of deprioritizing the Palestinian conflict in practice.

The military dimension, however, presented more complexity. Egypt and Israel shared mutual security concerns, including the threat posed by the Muslim Brotherhood and the need to combat terrorism. Yet a too-powerful Egyptian military might pose a threat to Israel if political circumstances or regimes were to change – as seen during the 2011 Arab Spring, when President Mubarak was overthrown and Mohamed Morsi, a leading figure in the Muslim Brotherhood, was elected. His brief presidency presented substantial challenges for the peace treaty.

Another crucial factor is the role of the military in Egypt's internal politics. Historically, the military was seen as a potential threat to President Sadat's rule and his peace initiative. However, the army had long been depoliticized; its size, structure, and discipline contributed to its general passivity in political matters. Sadat also believed that a direct appeal for peace with Israel might resonate with the Egyptian military, which was strained by prolonged conflict, economic hardship, and inadequate compensation. Thus, even the military, often perceived as a conservative and potentially oppositional force, found benefits in the peace process, particularly in the form of economic modernization and improved conditions for officers and soldiers.

At the time of the treaty's signing in March 1979, there may have been hope for a warmer relationship between the two countries, despite their violent history. However, it soon became apparent that shared interests did not automatically translate into public affection or people-to-people ties. While mutual interest facilitated the success of peace negotiations and continues to serve as a stabilizing force, particularly during recent crises such as the ongoing Gaza conflict, the peace remains what has often been called a cold peace, a term coined in 1982 by then-Egyptian Foreign Minister Boutros Boutros-Ghali. More than 40 years later, it remains unlikely that a deep friendship beyond *realpolitik* should emerge. The Abraham Accords of 2020 introduced a new model of normalization between Israel and some Arab states, such as the United Arab Emirates, aiming for broader societal integration. However, the Gaza war of 2023 shifted regional priorities back toward conflict management rather than relationship-building.

Although some may lament the lack of warmth in the Egypt-Israel relationship, it stands as one of the most stable bilateral arrangements in a volatile region. For Egypt, Israel has consistently served as a gateway to the White House. For Israel, peace with Egypt means a secure southern border and the ability to focus on other regional concerns. A strong Arab ally remains a critical component of Israel's foreign and defence policies. The strategic importance of Egypt's peace with Israel is underscored by its alignment with American interests. One of the participants, a former Deputy Ambassador to Cairo, emphasized that President Sadat, in his strategic shift toward the West, particularly the United States, could only do so via a peace agreement with Israel. This served Israeli interests as well, reinforcing American-aligned moderates in the Middle East and weakening the influence of extremist actors. Nevertheless, despite these mutual interests, peace has remained largely governmental in nature, with little translation to popular support.[219]

In conclusion, both Egypt and Israel derived substantial benefits from the peace treaty across multiple domains. However, these mutual interests were largely kept hidden from the public – particularly in Egypt. While shared interests facilitated peace and helped both countries navigate crises, they have not led to meaningful normalization. Peace was achieved, but it remained peaceful between governments, not between peoples.

V.1.4 Bridging in mediation processes

The content analysis reveals that decisions such as signing a peace treaty or normalization accords is be realized if they represent a strategic choice by a leader committed to redirecting their nation's trajectory. Peace agreements in the Middle East have historically been strategic rather than tactical decisions. Throughout the interviews, it became clear that negotiations encountered substantial obstacles. As Participant 4 aptly explained that Begin had to enable dismantled of settlements only if the Knesset permitted it.[220] For Begin, and even more for his electorate, the notion of dismantling settlements was difficult to contain.

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[219] The author can recall a specific example as he covered events of the 2011 Arab Spring in CairoWhile attempting to enter Tahrir Square during a mass demonstration, I was stopped by young revolutionaries who asked to see his passport. When inquiring why, they replied: "To make sure no Israeli journalists enter the square." These were young Egyptians advocating for a democratic future, yet their perception of Israel had not changed since the days of Nasser's regime. The same hostility remained.
[220] See findings chapter.

The Americans were aware of the challenges facing both Sadat and Egypt, particularly in the broader Arab context, where recognizing a Jewish state in the Muslim Middle East was ideologically unacceptable. Added to this was the centrality of the Palestinian issue, which dominated public opinion throughout the Arab world. On the Israeli side, the idea of a Palestinian state was similarly inconceivable. The Israeli participants, who were interviewed and quoted in the findings chapter of this research, noted the Americans were trying to find a way to raise the Palestinian issue indirectly via a joint Arab delegation to the Geneva conference.

The Camp David Summit was, in many respects, characterized by bridging efforts within the negotiation process. President Jimmy Carter played a central role, not only in maintaining dialogue between the parties, but also in ensuring their continued presence at Camp David, despite recurrent threats of withdrawal. For President Sadat, the peace initiative, launched by his unprecedented visit to Jerusalem in November 1977, represented not only a radical shift in Egyptian-Israeli relations but a transformative moment in the entire Arab-Israeli conflict. While it remains uncertain whether the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement results in lasting, comprehensive regional peace, or even whether bilateral relations endure in the future, the process itself marked a turning point since it challenged the previously unshakable assumption that no Arab state would recognize Israel or sign a peace agreement with it.

Mediation in international conflicts often requires more than neutral facilitation – it demands creative engagement and active involvement. One of the most sophisticated and effective mediation strategies is *bridging*: a method in which the mediator goes beyond relaying offers and counter offers and instead crafts integrative solutions that reflect the core interests of both parties. Yet even this approach is not always sufficient on its own. When examining the use of bridging in the Israeli-Egyptian peace process, particular attention must be paid to the 1978 Camp David negotiations, mediated by American President Jimmy Carter. In this model, the mediator becomes a co-architect of the solution, applying creativity, empathy, and diplomacy to move the parties from stalemate to settlement.

Although both parties shared a strategic interest in reaching a peace agreement, as indicated by their willingness to break with Pan-Arab orthodoxy, highlighted most clearly in Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem, deep divisions persisted. Egypt demanded a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula, while Israel sought robust security guarantees and avoided addressing Palestinian autonomy. At Camp David, Carter moved beyond the role of a passive intermediary.

Rather than merely transmitting messages between delegations, he actively developed proposals that combined elements from both sides' positions. For instance:

- On the contentious issue of Sinai, Carter proposed a phased Israeli withdrawal coupled with demilitarization and UN peacekeeping. This addressed Egypt's territorial claims while responding to Israel's security concerns.

- On Palestinian autonomy, Carter employed deliberately ambiguous language, enabling each party to interpret the provisions in a way that suited their political needs, thereby preserving the overall negotiation process.

These bridging efforts were grounded in Carter's personal diplomacy, direct engagement with each leader, and his nuanced understanding of their domestic constraints and strategic interests. Dayan noticed that Carter was warmer to Sadat, yet he made the utmost attempt to facilitate understanding between the two adversaries.[221]

Sadat and Begin met several times during the early stages of the Camp David talks but did not engage directly again until just before signing the agreement at the White House ten days later. Carter's personal assessment of the two leaders led him to believe that frequent direct interactions would be counterproductive. Instead, he facilitated parallel dialogues involving trusted aides: Aharon Barak on the Israeli side and Osama El-Baz on the Egyptian side. Together they were able to discuss the unresolved issues in the discussions.[222] As this research indicates, Carter employed personal rapport and empathy, which enabled him to pressure each leader while maintaining credibility. He reformed issues to emphasize shared value, such as peace, security, and sovereignty, and proposed phased implementation to build trust incrementally and reduce risk.

The Camp David Summit, held from September 5 to 17, 1978, was the most decisive and challenging phase of the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations. Dayan observed that there were major gaps between both leaders, which had to overcome their deep-rooted beliefs and assertions.[223] Finally, the Israeli-Egyptian peace process illustrates that bridging can play a pivotal role in transforming entrenched conflict into diplomatic resolution. When mediators adopt a proactive and out-of-the-box approach, they can uncover common ground even in seemingly intractable situations. Carter's strategy at Camp David serves as a compelling model of how visionary

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[221] Dayan, *Breakthrough,* p. 156
[222] Friedlander, *Sadat and Begin*, p. 216
[223] Dayan, *Breakthrough,* p. 153

leadership and skillful mediation can break deadlocks and foster lasting peace. One revealing anecdote demonstrates Carte's creativity as Moshe Dayan recalled that Carter even brought peanuts from his home state of Georgia to help humanize the atmosphere and ease relations between the negotiating parties.

V.1.5 Strategies

The content analysis reveals that the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt was successful only after both parties recognized that such an agreement could only be achieved if it was a strategic decision undertaken by both sides. Without this level of commitment, an agreement would have been impossible. This research shows that each side, Egypt and Israel, not only had its own strategic approach but was also wise enough to understand, respect, and even adopt elements of the other's strategy for its own benefit. This reflects a mutual recognition that strategic flexibility could advance their respective national goals.

Egypt's primary objective was to regain sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula, which had been under Israeli control and was widely perceived by Egyptians as occupied territory. This was well-known to the Israeli side. On the other side, Israel saw its settlements in Sinai as strategically, ideologically, and militarily significant. However, Israel also had a broader strategic aim: to achieve peace with an Arab state, thereby establishing a precedent that could reshape future regional diplomacy. As several participants in this study noted in the findings, Egypt prioritized its own national interest, while Israel was able to follow suit and understand this shift, including in its public opinion. In practical terms, this meant that Israel recognized Egypt's strategy of entering negotiations to regain Sinai and was willing to pay the price: dismantling its settlements and withdrawing from the peninsula in exchange for peace with its most formidable adversary. Thus, the strategy for peace ultimately took precedence over the strategy of settlement expansion in Sinai. This represents how Barkin's model, described in the literature review, came into practice. Begin's realism merged with constructivist approach allowed the confrontation of one of the major hurdles on the Israeli side.

One can observe that both parties eventually adopted peace as the strategy to achieve their mutual interests. Although this aspiration was more strongly held by the two leaders than by their respective populations, as the findings indicate, Egyptian President Sadat understood that the best strategy to achieve his goals was encapsulated in his iconic phrase: *"No more war, no*

more bloodshed," which powerfully expressed the value of peace. Nevertheless, and in line with Barkin's model, also Sadat adopt an approach was with both constructivist and realist. In 1976, President Sadat abandoned Henry Kissinger's step-by-step approach to diplomacy. He even called for renewed talks in Geneva, including Palestinian representation, before March 1977. While regaining sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula was Egypt's central strategic demand, a secondary demand, establishing a Palestinian entity in the West Bank and Gaza with a territorial corridor, was more complex and less urgent. It is argued that Sadat feared that an insistence of the Palestinian issue would be an impediment to securing the return of Sinai.[224] This point was critical for both the Israelis and the Americans, who adapted their strategies accordingly. In general, strategic adaptation, as seen in this case, can be highly functional and beneficial.

The peace negotiations between Egypt and Israel, culminating in the Camp David agreement (1978) and the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty (1979), reflected fundamentally different but strategically complementary approaches. Sadat reoriented Egypt's national strategy away from pan-Arab confrontation and toward pragmatic diplomacy focused on reclaiming the Sinai Peninsula. By reframing the conflict as a matter of Egyptian national interest rather than an Arab-Israeli struggle, Sadat gained both domestic legitimacy and international support. His visit to Jerusalem in 1977 was a deliberate gesture, intended to break the stalemate and demonstrate seriousness of intent. Egypt also capitalized on its Cold War position by aligning with the United States and portraying itself as a regional stabilizer – thus increasing its value to American policymakers.

In contrast, Israel, led by Prime Minister Menachem Begin, approached the negotiations with a security-oriented mindset. Israel's strategy emphasized obtaining concrete guarantees, such as the demilitarization of Sinai and normalization of relations, before making territorial concessions. Israel adopted a gradualist approach, offering incremental steps in exchange for reciprocal moves toward peace. This allowed Israeli leadership to manage internal political divisions and sustain public support. Additionally, Israel relied strategically on the United States as a mediator and guarantor, recognizing that American involvement could ensure the enforcement of the agreement and provide essential military and economic support.

Despite their divergent starting points, the strategic interaction between Egypt's diplomatic boldness and Israel's cautious pragmatism created a workable framework for compromise.

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[224] Friedlander, *Sadat and Begin*, p. 26

Egypt's unprecedented willingness to recognize Israel was ultimately matched by Israel's agreement to withdraw from the entire Sinai Peninsula. Thus, the peace treaty did not emerge from ideological convergence but rather from a convergence of national interests. Each party secured its core strategic objectives through calculated compromises. In this light, the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty did more than end a bilateral conflict – it established the diplomatic and strategic foundation that made later agreements, such as the Abraham Accords, conceivable. It helped normalize the idea of normalization between Israel and Arab states, a theme the is explored in later sections of this chapter.

V.1.6 Leadership and decision-making

The content analysis revealed that leadership played a decisive role in shaping the outcome of the peace process. Although the initial initiative came from President Anwar Sadat, the leadership of Israel's newly elected Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, was equally crucial, as affirmed by both the participants and the literature. According to participant 6, who is cited in the findings chapter, there was no doubt that President Sadat's leadership was a key factor in the success of the negotiations. His visit to Jerusalem and its implications are well-discussed in this research. However, the major difference was made by Begin.

In response to the Egyptian President's initiative, which called on Israel to make both territorial and ideological concessions, particularly regarding the Palestinian issue, Begin faced several critical decisions. He had to confront the conservative elements within his political party. The interviews suggest that whenever a significant decision was required during negotiations, Israeli delegates, including Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, would defer responsibility to the Prime Minister, stating that they lacked the authority to decide. Menachem Begin, though ideologically rigid, displayed pragmatic decision-making, especially in agreeing to the territorial withdrawal from Sinai. This highlighted the complex tension between ideological commitment and strategic necessity. Begin's ability to make such decisions as a leader of a conservative government was particularly noteworthy.

Leadership is also closely tied to the exercise of authority. Both Begin and Sadat centralized decision-making power, sidelining opposition to streamline the negotiation process. As this research indicates, both leaders made the strategic shift from a multilateral approach to a bilateral one. President Sadat's decision to move from the Geneva Conference framework to

the more focused Camp David format enabled substantial progress. Both leaders took considerable political and personal risks. Sadat, ultimately, paid with his life, assassinated in 1981. Begin and Sadat had to navigate highly sensitive issues including borders, the status of Jerusalem, and Palestinian autonomy. At each step, decisive leadership was necessary to overcome unprecedented challenges.

Finally, President Carter's leadership was also indispensable in addressing the needs of both parties and ensuring the treaty's success. The United States played a key role in providing security guarantees, financial aid, and diplomatic support. The Israel-Egypt peace negotiations underscore the profound influence of leadership in resolving international conflicts. Without the decisions made by Sadat, Begin, and Carter, peace would likely have remained elusive. The findings indicate that in protracted conflicts, visionary leadership and centralized, risk-tolerant decision-making are essential for achieving breakthroughs. As noted in the literature review, Eilam argues that both Begin and Sadat understood the potential consequences of another war. Eilam emphasizes that Israel and Egypt, long-standing adversaries with two of the most powerful militaries in the region, had fought high-intensity wars in the past. Israel, disadvantaged in size, adopted the doctrine of pre-emptive strike, as seen in the wars of 1956 and 1967. However, the 1973 Yom Kippur War marked a turning point for both nations. It is true that Eilam warns that the fear of future conflict remains relevant as a major war, triggered by a miscalculation, a regional crisis, or external pressure, could still occur and threaten Israel's existence. Written in the aftermath of Operation Protective Edge in 2014, Eilam's assessment remains highly relevant today. His analysis reaffirms the historical significance of the leadership displayed by Begin and Sadat. As echoed by participants in this study, leadership can indeed change the course of events in a substantial manner, yet, it cannot eliminate all sources of conflict, and the question of who follows in the footsteps of such leaders remains an enduring challenge for the future.

V.1.7 Obstacles

The content analysis reveals that many of the obstacles faced by Egypt and Israel prior to President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977 persist today on a broad scale. Public opinion, then as now, remained a significant barrier to peace. The legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish state continues to be questioned in many Arab societies, just as it was in 1977. On the Israeli side, most citizens remain opposed to the establishment of a Palestinian state. As one interview

participant observed in the findings chapter, the public education in the Arab world has not changed concerning Israel since. This persistent mindset is a fundamental obstacle. The root of the issue lies in the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine (Resolution 181), adopted by the General Assembly on 29 November 1947, which was rejected by the Arab League, the Arab Higher Committee, and various Arab leaders and governments. For these actors, the entire territory of Palestine was to remain exclusively Arab. From this historical rejection, one can deduce that two foundational obstacles have shaped the conflict since the establishment of Israel: the non-recognition of Israel and the unresolved status of the Palestinians. One can surmise the following obstacles that could have hampered the peace treaty, and to a certain extent later on also the Abraham Accords.

1- Territorial Disputes and Strategic Assets

Sinai's return was a non-negotiable condition for Egypt. The challenge was compounded by several factors:

- The presence of Israeli settlements and airbases in Sinai, which the Israeli government regarded as crucial for national security and deterrence.

- Prime Minister Begin's initial resistance to a full withdrawal, due to ideological attachment to the land and a reluctance to dismantle Israeli infrastructure. This hesitation was also influenced by his recent election and his conservative political base.

A breakthrough was achieved after significant American pressure, when Begin agreed to a complete Israeli withdrawal in exchange for normalization, including the evacuation of settlements and military installations.

2- The Palestinian question

As the self-proclaimed leader of the Arab world, Sadat could not ignore the demand for Palestinian self-determination. However, Israel firmly rejected the creation of a Palestinian state, offering instead a vague proposal for autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza. The gap between the two positions was substantial, and at several points in the negotiations, the Palestinian issue threatened to derail the talks entirely. Although the Camp David agreement included a limited autonomy plan, it was widely regarded by Palestinians as insufficient. The failure to achieve a meaningful agreement on this issue significantly diminished the regional impact of the treaty and further isolated Egypt.

Considering the 2023 Gaza War, triggered by the massacre of 7 October, one might ask whether greater attention to the situation in Gaza could have averted the conflict. Friedlander argued that the Egyptians suggested an autonomy in the Gaza Strip as a first step toward dealing with the Palestinian issue, with the Egyptian police taking responsibility – an offer that was rejected by Dayan as the agreement not permitted it.[225] Dayan defended the Israeli military presence in Gaza as essential to counter-terrorism. Today, one might wonder: would the Middle East be different if Egypt had assumed security responsibility for Gaza?

3- Jerusalem and Religious Symbolism

Although Jerusalem was not formally addressed in the peace treaty, its symbolic significance loomed large over the negotiations. East Jerusalem, captured by Israel in 1967, was viewed by the Arab and Muslim world as occupied territory. In contrast, Begin insisted that Jerusalem was Israel's eternal and indivisible capital, leaving no room for compromise. This position clashed with Egyptian and broader Arab expectations and fuelled regional opposition to the peace agreement.

4- Domestic Political Constraints

Both leaders faced substantial domestic challenges. Sadat was harshly criticized by many Arab states and by political factions within Egypt, who viewed the peace initiative as a betrayal. His eventual assassination in 1981 by Islamist extremists reflected the high domestic price of his diplomatic gamble. Begin also faced significant internal resistance, especially from nationalist and religious factions that opposed territorial concessions and the dismantling of settlements. His political survival required him to walk a fine line between pursuing peace and maintaining domestic support.

5- Distrust and Psychological Barriers

After decades of conflict and propaganda, mutual distrust ran deep. Despite Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, suspicion remained a constant presence throughout the negotiations.

6- Arab World Opposition

Egypt's outreach to Israel was perceived as a betrayal by much of the Arab world. Consequently:

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[225] Friedlander, *Sadat and Begin*, p. 275

- Egypt was suspended from the Arab League and became diplomatically isolated in the region.

- Sadat had to balance his commitment to bilateral peace with pressures from Pan-Arab solidarity.

This regional backlash weakened Egypt's negotiating position but also encouraged Sadat to secure a definitive agreement that could justify the high political cost. In early December, several Arab states convened in Tripoli and agreed to freeze diplomatic relations with Egypt. The five so-called rejectionist states – Algeria, South Yemen, Libya, Syria, and Iraq – did not fully implement Baghdad's call for harsher sanctions, but President Sadat responded by expelling the official representatives of these radical states from Egypt. This diplomatic rift, especially the deterioration of Egypt-Syria relations, dashed hopes for a broader resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

7- American Mediation Challenges

Although American mediation under President Jimmy Carter was instrumental in achieving the peace agreement, it also introduced complications:

- Both Egypt and Israel at times resented American pressure and accused the Americans of bias.

- Carter's deep involvement sometimes caused friction, especially when ambiguity in language led to misunderstandings amid low trust.

Nevertheless, the American role was ultimately decisive in bridging key gaps and providing security guarantees that enabled final compromises.

Based on the findings, one can conclude that the peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt were shaped as much by the obstacles as by the vision of the leaders involved. Territorial disputes, the Palestinian issue, ideological rigidity, and regional opposition all threatened to derail the process. However, through leadership, strategic compromise, and sustained external mediation, these challenges were gradually overcome. Understanding these obstacles highlights both the magnitude of the achievement and the considerable cost of pursuing peace in a region long defined by conflict.

V.1.8 Involved historical events

The content analysis revealed that historical events are inextricably linked to the peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt. In fact, they are crucial to understanding the mechanisms that led President Sadat to make his historic decision to visit Jerusalem in 1977. The peace negotiations were shaped by a series of critical historical developments. Among them, one event consistently emerged in this research and interviews as the decisive turning point: the Yom Kippur War of 1973, which Israel won and maintained the Sinai Peninsula, but not without substantial American support. While his predecessor, President Gamal Abdel Nasser, was remembered by Egyptians as the liberator from imperialism, the October 1973 war became, as the literature review shows, a national symbol of strength and resilience. Israel, understanding the cultural importance of this commemoration, allowed Egypt the space to celebrate this narrative. The infrastructure surrounding the commemoration of the October War in Egypt bore many similarities to that of the July Revolution celebrations. However, the Yom Kippur War was not the only historical event that influenced the peace process. Several other key developments shaped the trajectory of Egyptian-Israeli relations:

- The 1948 Arab-Israeli War, in which Egypt, along with other Arab states, invaded the newly declared State of Israel.

- The 1956 Suez Crisis, when Israel, Britain, and France launched a military intervention following President Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal.

- The establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Cairo in 1964 by the Arab League, which negatively influenced Arab policy towards Israel.

- The 1967 Six-Day War, during which Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, along with other territories. This represented a major humiliation for Egypt and a turning point that eventually led to renewed conflict and diplomacy.

- The 1974 and 1975 Sinai Disengagement Agreements, brokered by the United States, which established buffer zones and introduced UN peacekeeping forces into the Sinai, initiating a series of diplomatic confidence-building measures.

Historical events are essential to any comprehensive understanding of the negotiation process between Israel and Egypt. Among these, the Yom Kippur War stands out as the most influential turning point.

V.1.9 Cultural aspects – religion

Content analysis reveals that although religion is a significant factor in the Middle East and plays a crucial role in shaping the cultural identities of the region's peoples, it cannot, according to the participants, be concluded that religion was a determining factor in the negotiations. While religion was very present both symbolically (such as prayers) and cognitively (with leaders openly expressing their faith throughout the negotiation stages), it had little to do with the success or failure of the negotiations.

Cultural dimensions profoundly influence diplomatic interactions, international cooperation, and conflict resolution. As discussed in the literature review based on Edward Said's *Orientalism*, and Allison's three model's approach, cultural perceptions shape how nations view each other, impacting geopolitical relationships. In the context of international relations, how countries understand each other's culture, religion, and identity often determines the effectiveness of their diplomacy and the extent to which they can cooperate. An interesting observation from the interviews presented in the findings chapter was the mention of kosher dietary laws, which were raised to highlight commonalities and foster a sense of connection between the nations involved.

The Sinai Peninsula, a geographic focal point of the Israel-Egypt conflict, holds profound religious significance in both Judaism and Islam. In the Hebrew Bible, Sinai is where Moses received the Ten Commandments, symbolizing a divine covenant. In Islamic tradition, Sinai is also considered sacred and is mentioned in the Qur'an as a blessed land where Moses communicated with God. This shared religious reverence added symbolic weight to the territorial dispute. Beyond geography, the broader context of Jewish-Muslim relations in the twentieth century shaped attitudes towards reconciliation. The trauma of the Holocaust, the Arab-Israeli wars, and the rise of religious nationalism contributed to a complex interplay between faith and identity. In both Israel and Egypt, religion was not merely a private matter but a public force capable of legitimizing, or delegitimizing, state actions.

The Camp David negotiations were not only political or strategic endeavours but were also steeped in religious undertones. Both President Anwar Sadat and Prime Minister Menachem Begin infused their diplomatic rhetoric with religious symbolism, framing peace as a moral and even divine mission. Sadat often framed his 1977 visit to Jerusalem, and the subsequent

peace talks as acts of faith. In his historic address to the Knesset, he invoked divine justice and the shared spiritual heritage of the Abrahamic faiths: By referencing Abrahamic unity, Sadat aimed to soften ideological divisions and evoke a sense of spiritual destiny.

Menachem Begin responded in kind, employing Jewish religious language. As a traditional Jew, he viewed the land of Israel as both a spiritual and historical inheritance. In his speeches, he cited biblical prophets and Jewish law, portraying the peace treaty as aligned with Jewish ethics and divine aspirations. After signing the treaty, Begin proclaimed: "We extend our hands in peace, as our prophets once dreamed… from Isaiah to Amos, the call for peace resounds through the ages." Both Sadat and Begin used themes of forgiveness, justice, and sacrifice to frame peace not as surrender but as redemption. This symbolic language helped each leader overcome domestic skepticism and recast diplomacy in spiritual terms. In deeply religious societies, such narratives were essential for public acceptance of political compromise.

However, despite the leaders' use of religious language, significant opposition emerged from religious communities in both countries. In Israel, influential groups such as *Gush Emunim* viewed territorial withdrawal as a violation of the divine promise of the Land of Israel. In Egypt, Islamist groups like *Al-Jamā'a al-Islāmiyya* denounced the treaty as a betrayal of Islamic solidarity. Sadat's religious legitimacy was undermined by accusations of apostasy, and his assassination in 1981 by Islamist militants was a direct consequence of this perception. Indeed, one can argue that religion became a source of opposition to the agreement, contrasting with the leaders' attempts to use it as a unifying force. While Sadat and Begin invoked religion to unite their peoples, their opponents used the same religion both rhetorically and violently – as evidenced by Sadat's assassination.

Religious institutions in both countries played dual roles: endorsing peace as a moral act or condemning it as theological treason. The religious establishment's responses illustrate the tension between institutional religion and political authority. Although leaders leveraged their spiritual capital to shape public opinion, this capital was not universally accepted, especially among more radical or grassroots religious factions. The religious framing of the peace treaty has had enduring effects. In Israel, debates over land-for-peace continue to be influenced by religious perspectives. The Oslo Accords (1993) and the disengagement from Gaza revived religious and halakhic (Jewish legal) debates regarding sovereignty and territorial withdrawal. In Egypt, the treaty contributed to broader discourse on the role of Islam in governance. Sadat's

fate became a cautionary tale for subsequent leaders, while Islamists used his actions to justify their own political agendas.

The Israel-Egypt peace negotiations were as much about spiritual narratives as they were about diplomacy. By invoking religious symbolism, leaders like Sadat and Begin sought to elevate the political act of peace to a moral and theological ideal. However, religious opposition from both sides underscored the risks inherent in politicizing faith. Religion thus functioned as both a bridge and a barrier to peace – a dual force capable of enabling visionary reconciliation or inciting violent resistance. Therefore, one can argue that religion was not the cause of peace but facilitated the success of negotiations. It was helpful but not determinative.

Intercultural competence, nevertheless, was a key factor in the success of the negotiations. According to Byram's work that was discussed in the literature review, intercultural competence involves the capacity to engage with others in ways that respect cultural diversity while promoting understanding. This competence requires not only knowledge of other cultures but also the development of skills to bridge cultural gaps. As Byram suggests, it was important not only to learn the cultural differences between Israelis and Egyptians but also to learn how to work together constructively and engage meaningfully.

V.1.10 Cultural aspects – language

The content analysis reveals that language itself was not a decisive factor in the success of the peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt. The negotiations were conducted in English – a common international medium and the native language of the mediator, United States President Jimmy Carter. Neither President Sadat nor Prime Minister Begin spoke each other's native language; Sadat did not understand Hebrew and Begin did not speak Arabic. However, some members of the delegations were proficient in Arabic, such as P4, one of the research participants, who noted that his knowledge of Arabic occasionally helped to break the ice. Within the context of discourse analysis, it can be said that the dominance of the language of negotiation, i.e., English, necessitated the use of thematic content analysis to relate to what people were saying rather than how they were conversing.

It is important to acknowledge that language is often not neutral. In high-stakes diplomacy, the vocabulary, metaphors, and narratives used are not merely tools of communication, but also instruments of persuasion, legitimacy, and historical framing. The peace negotiations of the

late 1970s, culminating in the Camp David Accords (1978) and the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty (1979), offer a compelling case study of how language functions both as a strategic resource and as a reflection of deeper cultural and political values. Although English served as the primary language of communication during the Camp David talks, the leaders often reverted to their native languages, Hebrew and Arabic, when addressing domestic audiences or invoking emotionally resonant themes. Each language carried its own semantic weight, cultural connotations, and historical context.

For instance, in Arabic, the word *sulh* (reconciliation) implies a moral and social restoration of order, while *salam* (peace) is more neutral and often embedded within broader Islamic discourse. In Hebrew, *shalom* conveys both a daily greeting and a vision of messianic hope. These linguistic nuances shaped how each side internally framed the peace process. Nevertheless, it is crucial to reiterate that Hebrew and Arabic were used primarily for internal purposes – not during the negotiations themselves. President Sadat's speeches during and after his 1977 visit to Jerusalem serve as an example of such rhetoric. He employed emotionally charged and symbolically rich language to frame his actions as both historic and divinely guided. Phrases such as "the wall of fear" and "a psychological barrier" redirected the conversation from geopolitics to human emotion. Sadat's inclusive rhetoric, often referring to "our children" and "our future," implicitly invited Israelis into a shared moral universe. This choice of pronouns and future-oriented language aimed to soften resistance and portray peace as a collective necessity.

Begin's rhetorical style was markedly different. Rooted in Jewish historical consciousness, his language was formal, legalistic, and saturated with biblical references. Phrases like "eternal Jerusalem" and "undivided Land of Israel" were common, even while negotiating territorial compromises. Begin framed the treaty in terms such as honorable peace or, as just an agreement, using legal vocabulary to present the accord as a moral obligation rather than a concession. This rhetorical strategy helped him maintain credibility with his nationalist constituency.

Translation at Camp David extended beyond linguistic accuracy; it required sensitivity to tone, cultural resonance, and diplomatic nuance. Interpreters navigated idioms, religious allusions, and emotionally charged language to maintain the integrity of communication. The Israel-Egypt peace negotiations were conducted not just through formal documents and meetings, but through carefully selected words. Language shaped the peace process as not merely a political

arrangement but as a cultural, emotional, and moral journey. Vocabulary mattered, not because it was in Hebrew or Arabic, but because of the strategic and symbolic content of the words themselves. In the context of the Middle East, where religious and historical references are highly salient, emotionally resonant language played a critical role in fostering mutual understanding. Cultural elements did not determine the outcome, but they significantly contributed to breaking the ice and facilitating dialogue.

V.1.11 Interpersonal processes

The content analysis reveals that while cultural aspects were not the determining factor in the peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt, they nevertheless played a significant role. The personalities of the presidents contributed greatly to leveraging cultural differences, particularly through mutual respect for what each side represented, to advance the negotiations. From this research, it is evident that Menachem Begin understood the importance of respecting Arab culture. Conversely, Anwar Sadat demonstrated an ability to find common ground with his Israeli counterpart.

Beyond the formal negotiations, legal frameworks, and high-level political maneuvers that shaped the Israel-Egypt peace agreement in the late 1970s, interpersonal relationships exerted a profound influence. The dynamics between individual leaders, diplomats, advisors, and intermediaries significantly impacted the tone, pace, and outcome of the talks. The peace process was anchored by two contrasting yet complementary figures: Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Their direct interactions, including private conversations and symbolic gestures of mutual respect, played a central role in establishing the fragile foundation of trust necessary for progress.

The imagery of Sadat shaking Begin's hand in the Knesset conveyed a message that transcended diplomacy. Similarly, Begin's thoughtful and ceremonial responses, such as presenting Sadat with religious texts and adhering to respectful protocols, reflected his intention to reciprocate Sadat's gesture with dignity and respect. While ideological differences remained stark, the willingness of both leaders to engage face-to-face humanized the negotiation process and imbued it with moral significance.

The isolation of Camp David created a unique psychological environment that fostered both interpersonal intimacy and emotional strain. Without media access, external advisors, or rigid

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diplomatic protocols, the leaders were compelled to interact more directly and personally than usual. This seclusion intensified the emotional highs and lows of the summit. Tensions frequently escalated, with Sadat at times threatening to walk out. It was often the interpersonal appeals made by Carter or the reassurance provided by trusted aides that brought the participants back to the table. The summit's atmosphere, marked by fatigue, frustration, and moments of camaraderie, gave the process a near-theatrical character, with shifting alliances and reconciliations occurring throughout the twelve days.

Ultimately, the success of the Camp David agreement underscores the critical role of personal diplomacy. The treaty was not merely the result of political alignment, but of interpersonal perseverance. While Begin and Sadat did not become friends, they developed a grudging mutual respect. Carter's emotional intelligence proved instrumental in bridging their divides when traditional diplomacy faltered. The interpersonal legacy of Camp David influenced subsequent peace efforts in the region. It served as a model for the importance of empathy, shared narratives, and emotional resilience in negotiations. More broadly, it left a lasting imprint on global diplomacy, highlighting that trust between individuals can often transcend structural and ideological divides. This resulted in emerging social construction developed directly from intercultural sharing , by leaders and then societies who are generally constrained by power-based thinking.

While political ideologies, military strategies, and legal frameworks underpinned the Israel-Egypt peace process, it was the human dimension, trust, gestures, vulnerability, and determination, that ultimately carried the negotiations across the finish line. Understanding these interpersonal dynamics offers a more comprehensive perspective on how peace was achieved and provides enduring lessons for the practice of diplomacy.

V.2 Discussion of findings emerging from research question 2: How did the ground-breaking peace agreement with Israel and Egypt enable further agreements with a focus on the agreement with the United Arab Emirates?

The content analysis and research findings suggest that the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt laid the groundwork for broader normalization with Arab countries. The signing of the Abraham Accords in 2020 represented a significant milestone that, while novel in its form,

was conceptually rooted in the precedent set by the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty. Based on the interviews conducted for this study, the following key conclusions were drawn:

1. Resilience of the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty: The treaty has remained remarkably stable despite multiple regional crises. It endured 15 rounds of violence between Israel and Gaza-based Palestinian factions and two major conflicts in Lebanon (1982 and 2006). Even the political upheaval of the Arab Spring in 2011 and the election of Mohamed Morsi, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, did not alter the treaty's status.

2. The Palestinian issue and its constraints: The Palestinian question has consistently emerged in peace negotiations, yet it was not a deal-breaker for either Egypt in 1979 or the UAE in 2020. However, moving forward, especially in the context of potential normalization with Saudi Arabia, avoiding a substantive resolution to the Palestinian issue is unlikely. The implications of the ongoing Gaza war may compel Saudi Arabia not only to demand a political solution but also to offer financial support for Gaza's reconstruction as a means of gaining public support across the Arab world.

3. The role of Egypt in enabling Gulf normalization: Normalization between Israel and the UAE was facilitated by the prior peace with Egypt. In turn, the Abraham Accords inspired renewed interest in fostering people-to-people relations between Israel and Egypt, beyond the formal diplomatic level.

4. Egypt as a regional pioneer: Egypt's central position in the Arab world paved the way for other Arab countries to follow suit, notably Jordan in 1994 and later the UAE and Bahrain through the Abraham Accords.

5. Catalyst for broader peace efforts: The Egypt-Israel treaty reignited discussions about a comprehensive Middle East peace process, including potential joint US-EU initiatives (see European Parliament report, 1993, cited in the Findings chapter). The treaty made the idea of peace more plausible and actionable in the region.

While the 1979 treaty marked a significant step toward peace, the Abraham Accords moved beyond the cold peace model. Relations with the UAE introduced a new dimension of public, open cooperation in areas such as culture, tourism, and commerce. As a former ambassador to Mauritania (2004–2008), the author can recall the constraints of conducting diplomacy in secrecy including visiting the presidential palace after hours, without any cultural or sports diplomacy on the agenda. Although Mauritania signed an agreement with Israel in 1999,

relations remained at a minimal level – better described as frozen rather than cold. This stands in stark contrast to the openly cooperative relations forged under the Abraham Accords. Nevertheless, as numerous interviews argued, the peace with Egypt is what allowed future negotiations with the Arab world, culminating in the Abraham Accords.

Thus, the 1979 peace treaty directly enabled the 2020 Abraham Accords. The interviews further highlighted a major geopolitical shift: while Israel once faced a united Arab coalition opposing it, the post-Egypt treaty era allowed the emergence of an Arab coalition aligned with Israel – particularly in opposition to Iran. This reversal is considered by some participants as one of the most significant transformations in the region.

Israel sought recognition; Egypt pursued sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula and substantial American aid, shifting away from reliance on the Soviet Union. With both countries having achieved their objectives through the peace agreement, Israel turned its focus toward expanding normalization across the Arab world. The treaty with Egypt limited further bilateral development beyond diplomacy and security cooperation, prompting Israel to seek new opportunities – particularly in the Gulf. Israel's discreet presence in the UAE since 2005 was a precursor to the full diplomatic relations established through the Abraham Accords. Peace with Egypt enabled normalization with the UAE, which in turn encouraged Egypt to consider deepening its own relations with Israel.

V.2.1 A comparison of the Israel-Egypt peace treaty and the Abraham Accords

Table 4 maps the main aspects of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt in comparison to the Abraham Accords.

Table 4: A comparison between the Israel-Egypt peace treaty and the Abraham Accords

	Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty	Abraham Accords
Motivations	For Egypt: • To regain sovereignty over Sinai Peninsula • Turning strategically toward the United States.	For UAE and Bahrain: • Economic growth and reinforce ties with United States.

	For Israel: • Stable security with its chief adversary. • First recognition from an Arab country.	• Security concerns Abraham accords as a response to the Iranian threat For Israel: • Connection global economy.
External influences	For Egypt: • Positive influence from the United Stares. • Negative influence from the Arab League and the PLO, as well as public opinion who opposed the agreement For Israel: • Positive American pressure on decision makers • Objection to withdrawal from settlements.	For the UAE and Bahrain: • Positive influence by the United States, Saudi Arabia as well as from the European Union. • Iran's threats • The PLO demand until the Palestinian issue is resolved For Israel: • Positive American pressure on decision makers • Israel's search for allies against Iran
Cultural shifts	• Peace agreement is a huge shift as Egypt was the leading country of the Arab league that opposed the creation of Israel, and whose history involved four wars and a territorial conflict.	• No territorial conflict • No history of wars • Politics based more on economical growth • No negative interaction with Israel

		• Limited cultural shift (mainly addressing issues of education)
Public opinion	Very hostile to Israel regarding the past and the Palestinian problem and the claim for land.	• Arab solidarity and the Palestinian issue, yet neither no real animosity nor real natural friendship.
Impact on Palestinian issue	The negotiations lead to negotiation on Palestinian autonomy – but no advance towards Palestinian state.	Palestinian issue not an obstacle in the negotiations and no advance in the claim for a Palestinian state.

However, the trajectory of normalization was severely disrupted by the events of 7 October 2023, when Hamas launched the deadliest attack in Israel's history, killing over 1,200 people. Israel's subsequent military campaign in Gaza, aimed at four strategic objectives – (1) dismantling Hamas's military capabilities, (2) freeing hostages (255 at the start), (3) eliminating Gaza as a threat to Israel, and (4) facilitating the return of displaced residents from northern Israel – sparked a broader regional conflict. On 8 October, Hezbollah attacked Israel from Lebanon, expanding the conflict to seven fronts: Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen (Houthis), Iraq (militias), the West Bank (Palestinian armed groups), and Iran, which launched two major missile attacks on Israel – one in April 2024 (130 ballistic missiles), and another in October 2024 (201 missiles), culminating in the so-called 12 day war between Israel and Iran in June 2025.

At the time of the October 2023 escalation, Saudi Arabia appeared close to normalizing ties with Israel, as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman indicated in an interview with Fox News. The war halted these developments. Egypt, sharing a border with Gaza, took a more critical stance, delaying the appointment of a new ambassador to Israel. Media outlets described the relationship as reaching new lows. While the Gaza war has undermined momentum for expanding the Abraham Accords and strained Egypt-Israel relations, moderate Arab states remain cautious of groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. These countries continue to balance public hostility toward Israel with shared strategic interests – particularly opposition to Iran and Islamist movements.

The return of President Trump to office in 2025 has reshaped the regional atmosphere. His mid-May visits to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar were aimed at strengthening moderate alliances and reviving interest in expanding the Abraham Accords. Several interviewees emphasized that the lack of territorial disputes between Israel and the Gulf states, combined with long-standing commercial ties between Gulf elites and Jewish communities, makes normalization more feasible.

To conclude, the 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty was not merely a bilateral accord; it marked a fundamental shift in the diplomatic landscape of the Middle East. It laid the conceptual and political foundation for subsequent normalization agreements, including the Abraham Accords. Recognizing this historical continuity is essential for understanding the evolving architecture of peace in the region.

Chapter VI: Conclusions and recommendations

VI.I Factual conclusions

The analysis of the findings derived from this research indicates that the negotiation process between Israel and Egypt was marked by the articulation of preliminary conditions and distinct opening positions by both parties. The peace treaty negotiations were further characterized by the sustained and active involvement of key stakeholders throughout the process. Thus, mutual interests played a pivotal role in advancing the diplomatic dialogue, even though the benefits and intentions of the agreement did not fully resonate with or reach the broader Egyptian public. The negotiation process also involved significant efforts in mediation and bridge-building, which contributed to overcoming challenges and fostering an atmosphere conducive to progress.

Furthermore, strategic planning on the part of both nations facilitated a climate of cooperation and mutual understanding. The role of strong leadership and deliberate, strategic decision-making was likewise instrumental in steering the negotiations forward. The conclusion drawn from the discussion is that the peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt cannot be fully understood without situating them within their broader historical context. These historical events are indispensable for a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics that shaped the negotiation process. Moreover, the 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty represented more than a bilateral agreement; it signified a transformative moment in Middle Eastern diplomacy. It established both the conceptual and political foundations for subsequent normalization efforts, including the Abraham Accords and the Israel–United Arab Emirates normalization agreement. Acknowledging this historical continuity is crucial for grasping the evolving architecture of peace in the region.

VI.2 Conceptual Conclusions: a new thinking framework to understand Intercultural Negotiation Diplomacy – a case study of Israel – UAE normalization agreement

The data gathered for this research enabled the emergence of an evidence-based conceptual framework that can explain the intercultural negotiation processes within the Israel-Egypt peace treaty in 1979 that brought about the normalization agreement between UAE and Israel

in 2020. Evidently, the case study being the Abraham Accords where the UAE and Israel normalized relations between them. Figure 1 illustrates the Intercultural Negotiation Diplomacy – a case study of Israel – UAE normalization agreement
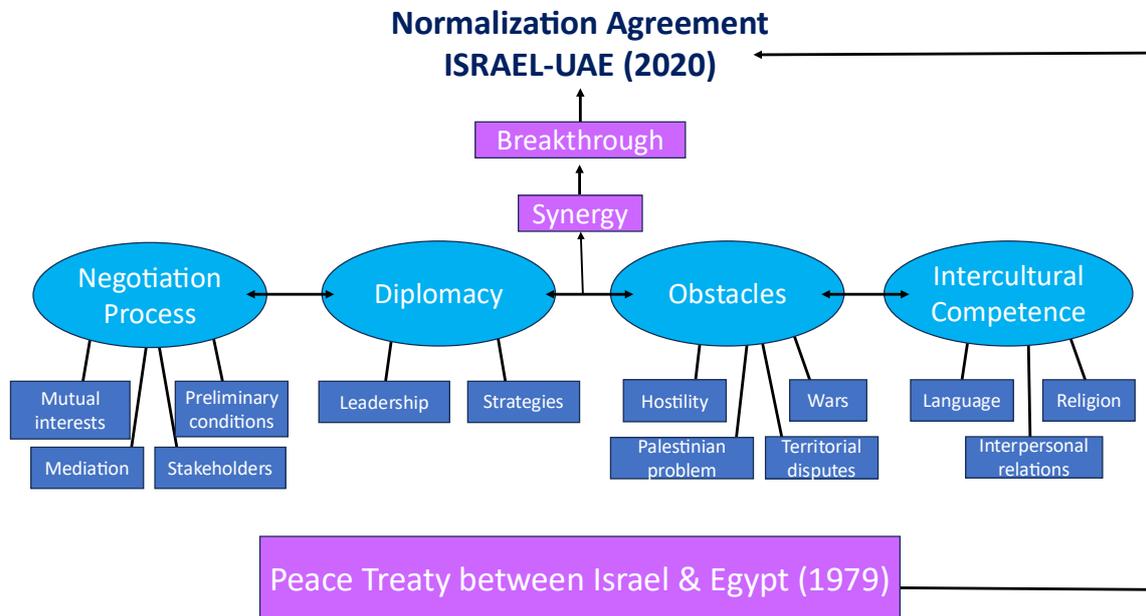

Figure 1: Intercultural Negotiation Diplomacy: Israel – UAE normalization agreement

Figure 1 shows that the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, signed in 1979, formed the foundation and platform for a process that enabled further agreements. It marked a transformation in the regional mindset, allowing the development of the mechanism that our research explores. One can identify four key aspects that enabled this process: the Negotiation Process, Diplomacy, Obstacles, and Intercultural Competence. Each of these aspects included specific components that significantly influenced the actors involved, their decision-making processes, and the outcomes – both immediate and long-term.

To understand the linkage between the peace treaty with Egypt signed in 1979 and the Normalization accord with the UAE signed in 2020 it is required to look at the four different aspects that are the base of the process:

- The negotiation process
- Diplomacy
- Obstacles

- Intercultural competence

In each of those aspects one can see the different components that englobe the different aspects

For the negotiation process:

- Mutual interests - peace contributes to stability, recognition, economical prosperity, upgrading relationship with the United States, regaining sovereignty on the Egyptian side versus historical recognition from an Arab state regarding Israel.
- Preliminary condition – regaining Egyptian sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula and favourable relations with the United States (while abandoning those with the Soviet Union). On the other side, recognition and full diplomatic relations for Israel with an Arab state – in this case a leading Arab state.
- Mediation – the United States played the vital role as President Carter in Camp David.
- Stakeholders – all the countries involved but not all contributing including the United Nations, the Soviet Union, the Arab League, the PLO, and Arab public opinion.

For Diplomacy:

- Leadership – the leadership of President Sadat, Prime Minister Begin, and President Carter was paramount. This included Sadat's unpopular visit to Jerusalem, and Begin's willing to dismantle settlements and recognize a future autonomy for Palestinians, despite internal opposition.
- Strategies – by Begin's willing to favour peace over settlements, and Sadat's focus on Sinai while setting aside the Palestinian issue.

For the Obstacles:

- Hostility – Israel was not recognized in the Arab world.
- Wars – Four wars with Egypt happened before the realization that land can also be achieved via peace. The concept of land for peace was born in 1979 peace treaty.
- Palestinian problem – this issue vexed all conflicts and prevented any agreement as for the Arab world Israel took the place of Palestine.
- Territorial disputes – the Sinai Peninsula was the cause of dispute in that period yet in 1948 the idea of any land in Palestine for the cause of a Jewish state was not accepted.

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For intercultural competences

- Language – as the two sides used other languages, English was the common language that the three leaders could use and was a source of contribution for success in the negotiations, especially in Camp David.
- Religion – the source of conflict and war became a source of rapprochement as religious personalities like Abraham are shared by Judaism and Islam.
- Interpersonal relations – the leaders and delegations succeeded in overcoming old conflicts and hostilities to create an atmosphere of personal confidence and intimacy.

In conclusion, the synergy between these aspects – and the components within them – enabled the diplomatic breakthrough that, decades later, contributed to the signing of the Abraham Accords in September 2020. Egypt's bold move to cross the Rubicon paved the way for the United Arab Emirates to follow suit. Much like Egypt, the UAE proceeded without demanding a resolution to the Palestinian issue as a precondition for normalization. In both cases, one can observe striking similarities – especially in terms of leadership (President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and President Trump) and intercultural dynamics. These elements once again proved crucial in transforming historic animosity into diplomatic progress.

VI.3 Implications and recommendations: applying the model for future policy and diplomacy

The theories expounded upon in this work have a real-world practical application. The Abraham Accords were a distillation of the previous Camp David Accords, the subsequent years of normative and societal acceptance and the gradual ripening of conditions for its expansion. Additionally, the hard power expressed by Israel has helped cement its relevance in regional eyes. Whilst the Arab World has great sensitivity for Palestinian suffering as a meta cause, on a tactical and strategic level they would like to work toward solutions with Israel. This is the massive paradigm shift in the middle east, from ostracism and regional shunning toward expansion, normalization and whilst there continue to strong disparities of views ,the new framework is a work toward conciliation within the Abraham normative dialogue approach.

While the evolving Gaza War on Hamas has devastated many in the Arab World, and subsequently their perspective on Israel, all the facts have yet to emerge and thus narrative in the future, especially for developing positive social construction and interculturalism requires both Israel and the Arab World to see clearly the pain of each side, once the resolution and even more critically the fog of war and the powerful narratives driving old hatred are calmed in the face of facts.

A conceptual framework developed in this research does not remain purely theoretical; it offers clear, practical pathways for those engaged in policy, diplomacy, and peacebuilding in the Middle East and beyond. By studying the evolution from the Israel-Egypt peace treaty to the Israel-UAE normalization agreement, this research provides fresh insights into how intercultural negotiation diplomacy can be systematically applied to resolve longstanding conflicts and open new channels for cooperation. Indeed, this breakthrough while paid for in societal turbulence and suffering, makes a genuine template for other conflicts, by its very nature. This was not a dry theory developed only in halls of academia, this was tested in the very real world, uncompromising middle east, emerging as viable, relevant and potent form of mediation.

For **policymakers**, the model highlights the importance of recognizing that agreements cannot be sustained through formal signatures alone. Political leaders should invest equally in face to face and surmount diplomatic challenges, shaping the cultural and interpersonal dimensions that make peace credible and resilient. One of the key lessons from the Abraham Accords is that social narratives matter: it is not enough to sign agreements at the elite level if the societies involved continue to view each other with suspicion and hostility. Therefore, policymakers should prioritize initiatives that encourage genuine people-to-people contact, academic and cultural exchanges, economic partnerships, and educational efforts to confront old stigmas and foster mutual understanding. Investing in these channels not only strengthens the durability of agreements but also creates political capital that shields leaders from backlash at home.

For **Israeli diplomats**, the model underscores the value of intercultural competence as an integral part of negotiation strategy. When there is real engagement and two sides, within the vast gulf of enmity, and win-win possibility. Missions should deepen their engagement with the societies they wish to reach, not just their governments. This means equipping diplomats with tools to understand local cultural and religious sensibilities, to communicate messages in ways that resonate emotionally, and to identify stakeholders beyond the formal political elite -

including civil society, business leaders, educators, and youth networks. Israeli diplomacy can draw on the example of the UAE's approach, which combined high-level negotiation with deliberate societal outreach, sensitivity to the real history that matters, such as Holocaust education vis-a-vis Israel, adapt its engagement with other countries that may be potential partners for future normalization.

For the **Palestinian leadership**, the findings offer an opportunity for reflection and rethinking. The case studies show that successful negotiations are possible when parties combine firm protection of their core interests with flexibility in approach and openness to build trust where possible. The Abraham Accords did not erase the Palestinian issue but demonstrated that pragmatic leaders can bypass deadlock when the time is right, provided that local and regional conditions are prepared thoughtfully. For Palestinian leaders, this means recognizing the power of framing: advancing their cause may require investing more seriously in people-to-people trust-building, clear and consistent messaging, and practical cooperation that can gradually shift entrenched public attitudes -both their own and those of their negotiating partners. The leaders must position themselves, potentially expressed privately and breakthrough with key opinion leaders and elites and journalists to break the stagnation of absolutism, the zero-sum approach which has not yielded results for the very society the represent.

For other **stakeholders** -whether regional allies, international mediators, or civil society organizations -the framework provides a map for supporting processes that nurture both the formal and informal tracks of peacebuilding, creative business initiatives and financial framing contrary to mere IR traditional diplomacy thinking. Third-party actors should encourage states and communities to address the cultural barriers that outlive any formal treaty. International partners can help by supporting educational programs, joint business ventures, media collaborations, and cultural initiatives that bring ordinary people into the story of reconciliation, rather than leaving peace agreements to gather dust in political archives, this can be streamlined following UAE culture initiatives, broad tourism appeals, and societal normalization of tolerance.

Finally, the broader implication is that this model can guide those who design future diplomatic initiatives in the Middle East or other regions marked by deep-rooted conflicts. It reminds leaders and negotiators alike that agreements grounded only in cold calculations of interest and risk with *realpolitik* balancing alone, can be a fragile strategy. True breakthroughs occur when strategic interests are combined with honest recognition of cultural realities, a willingness to

confront historical narratives. In this sense, the research does not merely explain the past -it offers a practical toolkit for shaping the future. By putting cultural understanding and human connection at the heart of negotiation diplomacy, it points the way toward peace processes that are not only signed by leaders but invested by people with vested concern and interest and even financial stakes.

VI.4 Theoretical contribution: advancing knowledge in international relations and interculturalism

This research offers an original, even creative approach to the theory of International Relations and how diplomacy is framed via contemporary dialogue. The nuanced approach embraces non-traditional aspects of this financial diplomacy. In practice, the contribution enriches two key areas of scholarship: international relations and intercultural studies. By examining the connection between the Israel-Egypt peace treaty of 1979 and the Israel-UAE normalization agreement of 2020, the study highlights the need to broaden traditional theoretical frameworks because previous models did not include breaking cultural barriers in such innovative ways. The bridge building of baby steps was always set in specific almost rigid understandings of what was viable. This frozen thinking resulted in status quo rationale that were unchallenged, when some regional paradigms were in fact no longer relevant. There is a need to better understand how durable peace can be crafted in regions shaped by deep-rooted conflicts and cultural complexity.

In the field of international relations, this study demonstrates that classical theories, which focused on the dynamics of power, security, and national interest, do not on their own fully explain the path or the math from conflict to genuine normalization. While realism rightly emphasizes the strategic interests that drove both Egypt and the UAE to engage with Israel-whether to realign their defense priorities or to benefit from economic and technological partnerships, this research shows that strategic interests alone are insufficient to explain why some agreements remain "cold" while others succeed in reshaping regional paradigms. The primary difference between a cold or hot approach is by delving deeply into the processes within which a 'warming' of conditions occurs. By comparing the Israel-Egypt treaty with the Abraham Accords, the study argues that sustainable peace in the modern Middle East depends equally on how leaders manage cultural narratives and are willing to abandon faulty framing, when shown to be broken on fundamental level, even when the process may be traumatic for

local populace in terms of narratives and ultimately even if political leaders are at risk of a political price. By firstly addressing historical stigma, and actively foster human connections between societies, it enables a hope toward a reconciliation in fact and deed as well as on the way to a treaty.

In doing so, this research brings together insights from negotiation theory, conflict resolution, and decision-making studies to propose an integrated framework for what it defines as intercultural negotiation diplomacy. This concept builds on existing models of multi-track diplomacy but emphasizes the deliberate inclusion of cultural variables, financial incentives, trade and investment -religion, language, social identity, and interpersonal trust -as core elements of strategy rather than as background factors. In this way, the research contributes to a richer and more practical understanding of how states can move from hostile region tensions and barely acknowledged existence to meaningful cooperation.

In the field of interculturalism, this study provides empirical evidence that cultural barriers can be actively transformed into channels for building trust and legitimacy. The Israel-UAE agreement did not emerge solely from behind closed doors among political elites; instead, it consciously opened pathways for cultural, religious, and economic interaction that challenge decades of mutual suspicion. The findings illustrate that intercultural processes that genuinely are fostered, when intentionally embedded within diplomatic practice, become a decisive tool for shaping how peace agreements are understood and accepted at the societal level. Using these understandings has helped refine some existing models of realism theory.

The research has highlighted strengths of interculturalism in international relations yet has brought to light one of the seeming frailties within zero-sum realism modeling. Within the search for the common ground of cultural, shared history and religion, a new understanding of classical realism was required. A contribution to international relations theory is the possibility offered by the frank businesslike frameworks of Abraham Accords. This research has found theoretical grounding and critically, future viability for the Barkin approach of Realist Constructivism. This has allowed a formal comprehension of the long-term trends, the psychological ripening, and the critical warming phases of people-to-people relationships.

For all this to occur there needed to be a nuanced approach from the beginning. From Carter, Sadat and Begin constructing new dialogue and narrative, to the eventual UAE and Israel new frameworks, the nature of interculturalism, the deep roots of realism and the trust it builds

based upon power viability, is then finally tempered with the vision of new societies who allow a construction based without led stigmas and hatred, to allow for newer realities to emerge.

By framing the Abraham Accords as a next step that builds upon, yet also goes beyond, the Israel-Egypt peace treaty, the research refines the concept of normalization itself. The core belief of limitation and facts on the ground are challenged to a core process that looks for new thinking, and bilateral opportunity which could then change the regional narrative in the historical game changing way. This suggests that future agreements should be designed with a dual lens: they must address states' hard interests while simultaneously investing in soft bridges that reach people's hearts and reshape social attitudes. This insight expands the knowledge base within intercultural studies by connecting it directly to the practice of international negotiation. While this has been addressed in past research, the current modeling proposed here goes further and embraces fundamental new bridges of diplomacy and the way mediation is initially framed.

In sum, the research's theoretical contribution lies in showing that durable peace agreements in complex regions require a framework that integrates strategic, political, financial, intercultural dimensions as mutually reinforcing rather than separate tracks. By developing and illustrating this framework, the study offers scholars and practitioners an updated lens for analyzing conflicts, designing negotiations, and nurturing long-term coexistence. By bringing business like briskness of pace and grounded ultra realism to shape new ways of thinking, and new tactics for strategic breakthroughs of historical great impasses. This blend of international relations and interculturalism opens new directions for research and practice, pointing toward diplomacy that does not stop at formal treaties but reaches deeper into the social fabric that ultimately sustains or undermines peace.

VI.5 Practical contribution: a universal model for diplomats and policymakers

Beyond its theoretical value, this research makes a clear practical contribution by presenting a model that can serve as a guiding tool for diplomats, policymakers, and conflict resolution practitioners working not only in the Middle East but also in other regions marked by deep-rooted conflicts and cultural barriers. Because the paradigm shift of thinking and framing is so grounded not only in theory but in the processes and failures of past attempts, shows the value

of the sensitivity and absence of dogma and challenging dogmatic assumptions even in the mediation fields.

Thus, this study challenged not only the frameworks that were effective within practical negotiation but also the staid beliefs in how international relations diplomacy must be formalized. The comparative study of the Israel-Egypt peace treaty and the Israel-UAE normalization agreement shows that successful negotiation diplomacy is not limited to high-level summits and formal treaties; it depends on practical, adaptable strategies that bridge interests with cultural understanding and can be adapted to streamlined business efficiency.

One of the key practical lessons emerging from this study is that any agreement aiming for long-term durability must deliberately address the human, social, and cultural layers that sustain or undermine formal diplomacy. The model developed here demonstrates how negotiators and policymakers can systematically integrate cultural competence into their strategies finding common ground means avoiding past assumptions or ingrained beliefs even in the minds of the diplomats, because this limitation can stymie initial progress. This means paying attention to language, religion, historical memory, and interpersonal dynamics -all of which shape whether an agreement remains confined to paper or becomes a lived reality shared by societies on both sides.

For diplomats, this framework offers a practical roadmap for designing negotiations that do not stop at the signing ceremony but continue through carefully planned efforts to build trust and connection among people. The study shows, for example, how the UAE's approach differed from Egypt's earlier model by investing in visible cultural outreach, business ties, and social openness that reached ordinary citizens. Such measures helped transform what could have been the old cold approach, merely a strategic arrangement into a genuine recalibration of relations that enjoys broader public support. This insight equips future diplomats with a practical reminder: winning trust must go beyond closed-door meetings and cultivating channels for dialogue, exchange, and cultural engagement. There must be real bridges constantly being formed or at least strengthened.

For policymakers, the model emphasizes the need to design peacebuilding initiatives that align security interests and economic goals with the realities of public perception and identity. Leaders who understand this balance and address concerns of citizens directly are better positioned to navigate internal opposition, manage regional dynamics, and sustain agreements over time. The research suggests that in contexts where hostility and historical grievances run

deep, early investment in education, cross-cultural programs, and people-to-people contact can become as critical to success as any formal clause in a treaty.

Importantly, this model has a universal aspect that makes it relevant far beyond the Israeli-Arab context. Whether in regions grappling with major history of conflict, religious divides, ethnic tensions, or post-conflict reconciliation, the principles outlined here offer practical guidance for how to build diplomatic bridges where skepticism and fear once stood. It encourages diplomats and mediators to approach negotiations as multi-layered processes that require not only political skill but also cultural fluency and an understanding of how narratives shape societies' willingness to accept peace. This means the negotiators must challenge themselves and their own ingrained biases and beliefs to really come to understand and then design something that could last and even flourish in the test of time.

In essence, this research provides more than an explanation of how one historic normalization unfolded; from bilateral to regional, it offers a replicable template for how similar processes can be initiated and sustained elsewhere. It gives practitioners a clear reminder that durable diplomacy is not achieved through strategy alone but through the patient work of constructing and reshaping attitudes, building trust, and connecting people. In this way, the model stands as a practical contribution for those who wish to transform conflict through negotiations that do not end at the handshake but continue in the hearts and minds of the societies they touch. Thus, the framing was historical and far reaching, but the effect of the effort shows conclusive advantage to normative effort and humanizing the stigmatized other side.

VI.6 Limitations of the research

While this research offers valuable theoretical and practical insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations, which stem primarily from the nature of the chosen methodology and the inherent challenges of qualitative research in the field of international relations and intercultural negotiation.

A significant limitation relates to the main research tool, namely, the use of in-depth interviews as a primary source of data. Interviews are a powerful tool for uncovering personal perspectives, motivations, and behind-the-scenes processes that are not always visible in official documents or public discourse. However, this method is also sensitive to the well-known challenge of **social desirability bias**. Respondents -especially diplomats, policymakers,

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or other high-level stakeholders -may consciously or unconsciously present their actions, decisions, or roles in a more favorable light. This human dilemma, seen psychologically often in retrospect, requires a dispassionate overview of what was accomplished. When dealing with complex and often sensitive political events, interviewees might also choose to omit, soften, or reshape certain aspects to align with their personal legacy or institutional narrative. While every effort was made to ask probing, open-ended questions and cross-reference accounts with archival sources and secondary literature, this inherent limitation should be borne in mind when interpreting the findings.

A further limitation concerns the role of the researcher himself. In this case, the researcher's close professional and personal exposure to many of the processes described in this study - as a journalist who intimately covered the peace initiatives and later as a diplomat involved in the region -there is an unavoidable risk of **subjectivity and bias** influencing the research. The same firsthand experience does enrich the study with unique access and depth also means that the researcher's perspectives and interpretations may be shaped by personal involvement and past relationships with key figures or institutions.

Recognizing this, conscious steps were taken to mitigate the impact of bias and subjectivity throughout the research process. First, the methodological design included systematic triangulation: insights from interviews were compared against archival documents, published memoirs, academic analyses, and media reports to verify consistency and to challenge possible blind spots. Second, an explicit effort was made to distinguish between descriptive accounts of what had occurred, who was involved, how events unfolded -and the researcher's own interpretive analysis. Throughout the writing process, the researcher sought external feedback and constructive critique from peers and academic advisors to ensure that interpretations were grounded in evidence rather than personal assumptions.

Finally, it should be noted that the qualitative nature of this study inherently limits the extent to which its conclusions can be generalized to every context or future negotiation. While the political change was complex and the gulf that was bridged was vast, still the value of a personal view within acknowledged limitation of perspective is of historical value. The dynamics explored here are rooted in a unique historical, cultural, and regional reality. While the conceptual framework offers guidance that can be adapted elsewhere, each conflict and negotiation necessarily carries its own distinct features, stakeholders, and cultural dimensions that must be carefully considered.

In acknowledging these limitations, the research remains transparent about its scope and methodological boundaries. At the same time, it aspires to open the door for future studies to expand, challenge, or refine its findings, perhaps by combining qualitative insights with quantitative measures or by applying the model in different regional contexts. In this way, the very limitations of this study also serve as an invitation for continued exploration of how intercultural negotiation diplomacy can be better understood and practiced effectively.

VI.7 Potential future research

VI.7.1 Further research and potential in the field of study of this research

While the qualitative methods have tremendous immersion and take advantage of the anthropological perspective, its limitations must also be acknowledged. Building on the insights and limitations of this study, one clear direction for further research would be to complement the qualitative findings with a broader quantitative dimension. While this research relied primarily on in-depth interviews and document analysis to capture the complex dynamics of intercultural negotiation diplomacy, future studies could benefit from expanding the pool of participants and systematically measuring attitudes and perceptions among a larger sample.

In utilizing a quantitative approach may have advantage and make it possible to test how widespread certain views, motivations, or obstacles are among different groups -for example, diplomats, policymakers, civil society leaders, and even ordinary citizens in the countries involved. Surveys or structured questionnaires could help reveal patterns that may not surface through interviews alone, especially on sensitive topics such as trust, perceptions of cultural difference, or willingness to accept normalization with former adversaries.

Adding a quantitative layer would also enhance the generalizability of the model developed here. By examining whether the variables and dynamics identified in the Israel-Egypt and Israel-UAE cases appear in other contexts or resonate across broader segments of society, future researchers could test the robustness of the proposed framework in explaining how intercultural negotiation diplomacy operates in practice. Comparative surveys across multiple countries in the region, or even beyond the Middle East, could shed light on whether similar cultural and psychological factors play a role in other conflicts and normalization processes.

The mixed-methods approach -combining qualitative depth with quantitative breadth -would provide a definitively richer and comprehensive picture of how intercultural competence,

leadership strategies, and stakeholder engagement interact to shape peace agreements. This could help refine practical recommendations for diplomats and policymakers to help design and frame in the future and strengthen the evidence base for designing future negotiations.

In this way, expanding the research with a quantitative perspective does not replace this study, the depth and nuance of the present study rather builds on it, offering a valuable path for scholars and practitioners interested in understanding and applying a new way of cultural framing of the traditional diplomacy and its steps of negotiation in a wide evidence-based context.

VI.7.2 Further research and potential of application to other conflict zones, such as the Azerbaijan and Armenia war and subsequent tensions.

Another important direction for future research is to apply the conceptual model developed in this study to other conflicts and regions that face deep-rooted tensions and cross-cultural barriers. While this research focused on the Israeli-Arab context, specifically the evolving conditions of the cold peace to its warming phases and region changing dynamic, this trajectory, from the Israel-Egypt peace treaty to the Israel-UAE normalization agreement -the underlying principles of intercultural negotiation diplomacy are not limited to the Middle East. The core idea, that sustainable peace requires aligning strategic interests with deliberate cultural bridging, defying old assumptions, even perspective of seasoned mediators and diplomats, has relevance wherever historical grievances and cultural mistrust hinder progress.

One relevant example is the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which, despite various ceasefires and rounds of negotiation, remains locked in cycles of hostility and fragile truces. The longstanding dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh is deeply intertwined with questions of religious connotations, identity, historical memory, and cultural narratives that fuel mistrust between societies on both sides. Applying the model developed here could help researchers and practitioners examine intercultural competence, trust-building measures, and a warming compilation by normalization of both sides instead of demonizing, crafted social narratives to help and complement traditional diplomatic tracks to create conditions for a more stable and accepted resolution.

Future studies could investigate how leaders, mediators, and international partners might adapt strategies like those that proved significant in the Abraham Accords. For example, they could

explore what kinds of people-to-people initiatives, cultural exchanges, or confidence-building measures might reduce public hostility and lay groundwork for reconciliation beyond elite agreements. How business leaders with tabula rasa on IR theory and old mediation dogma can help frame networks and break barriers from fresh perspectives of financial negotiations. They could also examine whether shared economic interests, such as regional infrastructure projects or cross-border trade -might serve as a practical entry point for broader normalization, if framed and communicated in culturally sensitive ways.

Comparative research across different conflict settings would also test the flexibility of this model, namely, which elements are universal, and which need to be adapted to fit the unique political, historical, and cultural realities of other disputes? By applying this framework to contexts like Armenia-Azerbaijan, Kashmir, or the Korean Peninsula, scholars could refine its practical guidelines and develop new insights into the interplay of diplomacy, leadership, and intercultural dynamics.

Such research would not only strengthen the model's explanatory power but also help policy practitioners embrace more realistic, and grounded, real-world application and culturally informed approaches in situations where traditional negotiations have struggled to deliver lasting peace. Ultimately, this line of inquiry supports the larger goal of this study, namely, to show that complex conflicts cannot be resolved by political calculation alone, but require strategies that reach deeper into the social fabric and reshape how divided communities see one another. Additionally, challenging of all previous assumptions helps to adjust starting points and baby steps by framing what is of genuine concern to the average citizen

VII.8 Significance of the research for international relations

The significance of this research for the field of international relations lies in its ability to offer both a fresh perspective, new way of thinking for extreme deadlocked procedures and a practical model for understanding how peace agreements can move beyond traditional frameworks of diplomacy rooted solely in power politics and security interests. By closely examining the path from the Israel-Egypt peace treaty to the Israel-UAE normalization agreement, this study highlights how a blank slate, can redefine the essential framing and broad macro historical assumptions even within historical accepted narratives. This intercultural negotiation, highlighting sensitivity to experience and grounding in the narrative of the street

and business leaders, this powerful diplomacy adds a crucial dimension that has often been underestimated or overlooked in mainstream international relations theory.

At its core, this research demonstrates that the durability and success of peace agreements depend not only on the balance of power or the strategic interests of states, but also on how leaders and negotiators manage cultural narratives, historical stigma, and the complex psychology of societies shaped by decades of conflict. The study shows that the breakthroughs achieved through the Abraham Accords were possible because they addressed both the formal aspects of diplomacy and the informal layers of public perception, social trust, and cultural acceptance. This dual focus represents an important refinement of international relations theory, encouraging scholars and practitioners alike to see that conflict resolution in culturally sensitive regions requires a more nuanced and multidimensional approach. Beyond theory, this research provides a practical contribution that can guide future diplomatic initiatives.

By utilizing key opinion leaders from nontraditional diplomacy, yet focused on effective procedures for breakthrough, brings a valuable efficiency and freshness of unencumbered viewpoints, not lashed down by historical hatreds and old hurt only. It offers a concrete model for designing negotiations that build synergy between political leadership, mediation, cultural openness, and stakeholder engagement. This model can serve as a flexible blueprint for diplomats, policymakers, and mediators who face similarly complex challenges in other parts of the world. It illustrates how pragmatic leaders can balance strategic security goals with cultural bridge-building, and how societies can gradually shift from entrenched hostility to cautious cooperation -and eventually to genuine normalization. Thus, warming follows the conflict and cooling stages of initial mediation.

The significance of this study is also reflected in its relevance to contemporary global challenges. In an era where many conflicts have proven resistant to purely political or military solutions, this research reminds us that the cultural and psychological dimensions of conflict must be treated not as secondary considerations but as core elements of any peace process. By documenting how the lessons of one historic agreement informed and shaped the success of other decades later, the study shows that knowledge and experience can travel across generations and contexts, offering guidance for future negotiations that aim to break cycles of mistrust.

In this sense, the research does more than recount what happened; it provides international relations with a tested, adaptable framework for how complex and sensitive negotiations can

be approached differently. Its significance lies in the invitation it extends: to think beyond borders, to design peace processes that engage both governments and societies, and to recognize that lasting change is achieved when diplomacy is paired with cultural understanding and genuine human connection.

By its adaptability of approach, flexibility of its mindset, this study of the contemporary modeling of new diplomacy, using financial modeling and new stakeholders and challenging all previous assumptions has direct implications and applications for future study and conflict resolution.

By disassociation of ingrained narrative, the dogmas even unconscious of the very framers, to allow for true new produce to be jumpstarted, truly shows the unique value such modeling and confidence measures show for future impasse. By the scope of its new thinking, the study of this mediation, from interculturalism to realist constructivism, how it evolved over tens of years to become something different and bigger can offer a new look at broken processes even long abandoned. Because of its real-world success this study highlights unconventional actors and new framework for treaty building which can shed light in the knowledge of how modern mediation theory can provide breakthroughs in those conflicts which have been accepted to be unresolvable.

Epilogue

Rarely does a research project in the field of social sciences undergo such a significant evolution during its development. Throughout this thesis, many of our foundational assumptions were tested or confronted by emerging realities at nearly every stage of work. The war in Gaza, triggered by the onslaught perpetrated by Hamas against Israel on 7 October 2023, proved to be an unprecedented event in the lives of Israelis. However, its impact extended beyond Israel's borders, influencing the broader Arab world, including states such as Iran and Turkey, and reshaping dynamics in a changing Syria. Rather than serving as a "game changer," this conflict has acted as an accelerator of ongoing processes in the Middle East. In this context, the Abraham Accords have solidified their role as a central platform for any viable future solution.

On the day following the attack, in which 1,200 civilians were murdered and 251 people were taken hostage to the Gaza Strip, Hezbollah launched an assault against Israel, aligning itself with Hamas. Soon after, Shiite militias in Iraq and Syria, as well as the Houthi movement in Yemen, joined the hostilities. On 13April, 2024, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), in coordination with the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the Houthi Ansar Allah movement, launched a large-scale assault on Israel. This included loitering munitions, ballistic missiles, and cruise missiles. This marked Iran's first direct attack on Israel and a turning point in the proxy conflict, escalating it into a regional confrontation. Paradoxically, this war may catalyze a shift toward peace. Iran's direct involvement could serve as a wake-up call, renewing momentum behind the Abraham Accords.

As a journalist, I had the privilege of witnessing the signing of the Abraham Accords at the White House in September 2020. Our thesis seeks to demonstrate that these agreements were made possible, both conceptually and diplomatically, thanks to the foundations laid by the 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. Numerous barriers to peace have been dismantled, i.e., deep-seated animosity, lack of recognition, cultural divisions, absence of visionary leadership, and the perception of religion as an obstacle. Instead, one can observe a transformation in which religion became a resource for dialogue, interculturalism was embraced, and regional stakeholders were effectively mobilized. These developments enabled the Abraham Accords to be signed and now to be expanded.

Iran's destabilizing role in the region has inadvertently pushed Gulf states to consider normalization with Israel more seriously. Lebanon, experiencing the decline of Hezbollah's dominance, and Syria, witnessing the erosion of the Assad regime, have also emerged as potential candidates for future agreements. Saudi Arabia, a key player in the Arab world, and even Mauritania, where I had the honor of serving as Israel's ambassador, have shown signs of warming toward peace.

Today, there is a prevailing spirit aimed at increasing the number of moderate actors in the region while marginalizing extremism. This process began with the courageous leadership of Egypt and was sustained by leaders such as the Emir of the United Arab Emirates. Now, with the same components and dynamics identified in our research, including shared interests, leadership vision, cultural transformation, and multilateral engagement, there exists a belief that the Abraham Accords can not only expand and reshape the Middle East but also contribute to regional stability and security. Ultimately, with courageous and inclusive leadership, it may become possible to resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, thereby eliminating one of the main obstacles to comprehensive normalization in the region.

This research has addressed important questions and, more importantly, proposed a model that offers potential solutions applicable not only in the Middle East but also in other conflicts, such as the one between Armenia and Azerbaijan, where similar dynamics are present. Developing such a model is, in my view, a meaningful contribution to peacebuilding both in the region and globally.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to UBB and to the doctoral school of international relations and European studies. Special thanks go to Professor Sergiu Miscoiu, for guiding me through this work. I also thank my parents, whose support enabled me to receive an international education, an experience that nurtured the open-mindedness essential for conducting research of this nature.

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