

Liberalization and Militancy in the Arab World by Risa A. Brooks
- A review -

The article by R. Brooks proposes a well-grounded and balanced look on the issue of the provision of U.S. security in the long-term perspective in the era that has suffered from the molestation of terrorism. Ms. Brooks seems to have found a direction for the national security policy-makers to look in; and that direction seems both logic and workable: militancy of certain groups can be well reduced, if not uprooted, by liberalization of the socio-political space of the Arab world.

The article, though rooted predominantly in the field of political science and international relations, offers an insight on certain social and religious aspects as well as the prospects of the region's development that is worth to get familiarized with. The author's account of historical facts and phenomena pertinent to the results of activities of Islamist groups and their relations with the ruling elites of the states in the region not only creates a clear picture for the reader to understand the feasibility of the article's main argument – that is, letting Islamist parties participate in governance and welfare programs is worth the risk – but also points to areas in need of further research, like ways of balancing extremist trends in the mainstream policies. The scholar, contending for the support of liberalization, sets forth perspective lines of policy for the Western states that can clearly contribute to the development of the Arab world: the sparks of mere efforts to uphold the dormant democracy can boost the region in ways that surely reach beyond the political sphere.

Though scarce in speculations regarding religion, the study under analysis is a comprehensive source of ideas for political science. Ways to influence extremist groups from the point of view of engaging them in state governance are offered and the positive effect of such engaging is argued to outweigh some of the potent risks.

The research points to the possibilities of further studies in the manifestations of democracy in the region and ways to uphold and assist the budding democratic initiatives of

certain political individual and group activists. Another question that seems to rise out of Ms. Brooks' account is a more meticulous comparative evaluation of effectiveness of the suppression/undermining Islamic sentiment approaches with that of liberalization. Also, a seeming need to dwell more on the topic of the detrimental influence of the militantly critical attitude of the West towards the extremist Islamist factions is present in the context of the investigated issue.

The approach to the national security issue undertaken in the article by the Northwestern University assistant professor Risa Brooks proved topical in view of the experience received in the years that followed.