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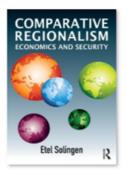**Author**
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Democratization in the Middle East

Quandaries of the peace process (1996)

By Etel Solingen

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ABSTRACT

The notion that democracies rarely wage wars against each other has gained remarkable acceptance in scholarly and policy circles. At the same time, observers have expressed concern that incipient democratization in some Arab countries may pose a threat to the nascent peace between Israel and its neighbours. The general contours of democratization in the Middle East circa mid-1990s, the author turn to the relationship between democratization and peace, especially in the context of the Arab-Israeli peace process. Democratization in Saudi Arabia and smaller Gulf countries has been minimal following the inception of the Saudi Consultative Council. An influential study argues that former authoritarian states with rising democratic participation are more likely to engage in wars than are stable democracies or stable autocracies. The democratic-peace theory has found significant, but not unchallenged acceptance among academic experts, who compete to explain why democracies are unlikely to wage wars among themselves.

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