



Modern Middle East Authoritarianism

Roots, Ramifications, and Crisis

Edited by Nouredine Jebnoun,
Mehrddad Kia, and Mimi Kirk



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ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN MIDDLE EASTERN POLITICS

“The Arab uprisings of 2011 have forced scholars of the region to rethink arguments about the durability of authoritarianism and the prospects for democratic change in the Middle East. This volume is an important contribution to this necessary rethinking. Its chapters offer valuable insight into the complex and evolving political landscape that is taking shape in the Middle East today following the mass protests that forced four Arab autocrats from power, and left their counterparts elsewhere in region uneasy about their own survival.”

Steven Heydemann, *Special Adviser of Middle East Initiatives,
United States Institute of Peace*

“This fine collection, nicely introduced by Nouredine Jebnoun, features timely analyses by seasoned scholars, including several with a wealth of recent field experience in the Middle East. Particularly impressive are sage assessments by Clement M. Henry, Michael C. Hudson and Eric Davis, but case studies by a number of the authors are also of high quality. This is an indispensable volume for understanding the authoritarian political context in which the Arab Awakening began in late 2010. In addition, three noteworthy contributions on Iran expand the substantive canvas. At a time when on-the-fly books on the ‘Arab Spring’ vie for attention, this volume offers more durable scholarship.”

Professor Augustus Richard Norton, *Boston University, USA*

While the Arab uprisings have overturned the idea of Arab “exceptionalism,” or the acceptance of authoritarianism, better analysis of authoritarianism’s resilience in pre- and post-uprising scenarios is still needed. *Modern Middle East Authoritarianism: Roots, Ramifications, and Crisis* undertakes this task by addressing not only the mechanisms that allowed Middle Eastern regimes to survive and adapt for decades, but also the obstacles that certain countries face in their current transition to democracy.

This volume analyzes the role of ruling elites, Islamists, and others, as well as variables such as bureaucracy, patronage, the strength of security apparatuses, and ideological legitimacy to ascertain regimes’ life expectancies and these factors’ post-uprisings repercussions. Discussing not only the paradigms through which the region has been analyzed, but also providing in-depth case studies of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran, the authors arrive at critical conclusions about dictatorship and possibilities for its transformation.

Employing diverse research methods including interviews, participant observation, and theoretical discussions of authoritarianism and political transition, this book is essential reading for scholars of Middle East studies, Islamic studies, and those with an interest in the governance and politics of the Middle East.

Nouredine Jebnoun is a faculty member at Georgetown University’s Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, where his teaching interests focus on governance and security challenges of the Arab Middle East and North Africa.

Mehrddad Kia is Director of the Central and Southwest Asian Studies Center and a professor of Middle Eastern and North African history at the University of Montana.

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Cover image: © Nouredine Jebnoun, graffiti reads ‘long live freedom’

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