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Comparativist

By J.D. Bowen

Prior to the terrorists attacks of 9/11/2001, political scientists paid relatively little attention to the Middle East because, really, how many interesting things can you say about a bunch of iron-fisted dictatorships? They're all pretty much the same, right? WRONG. What the popular uprisings (and the responses they have elicited from their respective regimes) in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, and beyond have taught us is that these regimes actually have relatively little in common. The Mubarak regime in Egypt is a classic example of an "electoral authoritarian" regime that had multiple parties and elections, but the rules of the game were sufficiently unfair so as to guarantee that the winner was always the same. Regimes in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan are more traditional monarchies which dispense almost entirely with the façade of democracy. The Gaddafi regime in Libya is (was?) a fairly unique

