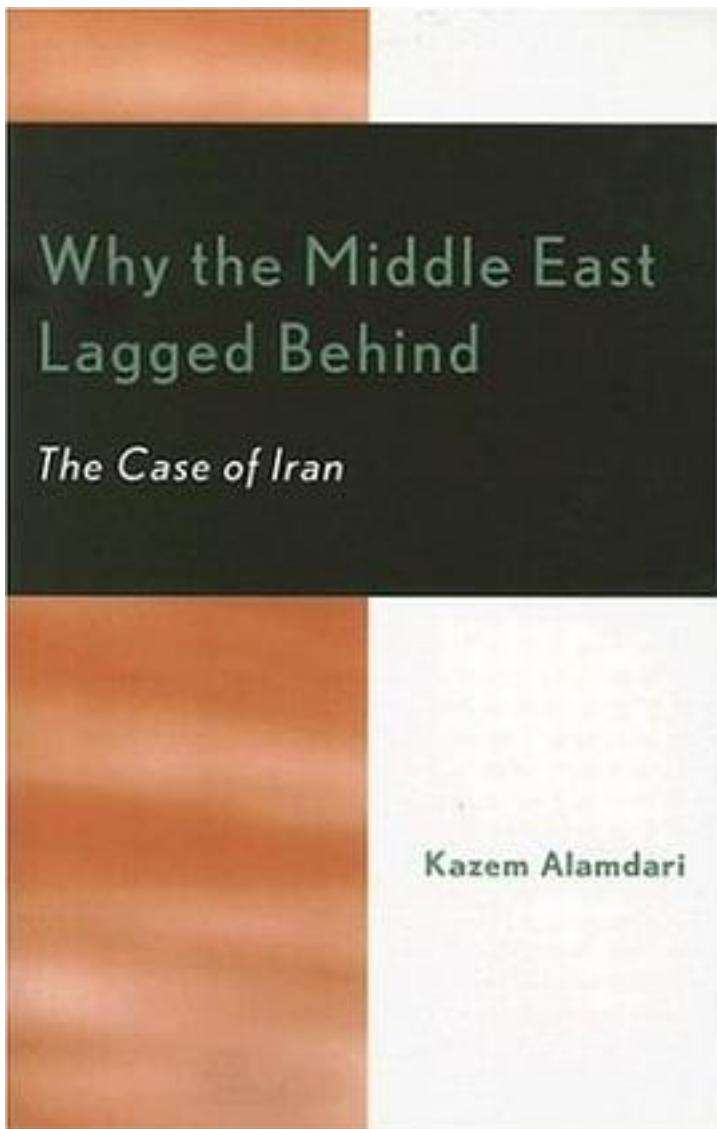


Why the Middle East Lagged Behind



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Capitalism was the engine of modern development in the West. The land tenure system in the Middle East, in contrast to the West, was an obstacle to the development of capitalism. In the West, feudalism resulted in a capitalist mode of production, and was driven by private ownership of land. In Iran, these fundamentals were absent. Understanding this, some Western developmentalists, in an attempt to remove this obstacle, rationalized a project of 'modernization' that involved imposing capitalism from the top down. Under this project, developing countries under the influence of the West were advised to launch land reform programs that would modify the traditional, and obsolete, land systems. The first part of this study explores the roots of this issue in Iran. The second part of the book examines the period from 1961, when the land reform program began, to 1981, when Iran saw the beginning of the Islamic system.

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