KAREL ČERNÝ

INSTABILITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

STRUCTURAL CHANGES AND UNEVEN MODERNISATION 1950–2015

KAROLINUM

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: CHRONIC INSTABILITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

MODERNISATION AS THE CAUSE OF INSTABILITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST – TOO SLOW OR TOO FAST?

The academic, media and public discourse regarding the development of the post-colonial Middle East has long featured two viewpoints that, on the face of it, are diametrically opposed. The first claims the region is backward and rigid, with change taking place too slowly, if at all. The second believes that the region is transforming too quickly and that this is traumatising and destabilising local societies.

This book offers an alternative way of looking at the issue that brings together these two apparently contradictory viewpoints. It conducts a theoretically original and empirically substantiated analysis of the structural causes of Middle Eastern social and political instability, an instability manifest externally in many different forms: the protracted crisis of governing regimes and their ideologies and legitimacy; an upsurge in different ideologically driven opponents of these regimes in the form of oppositional political Islam and pro-democracy movements; a surge in political violence in the form of terrorism, civil wars or revolutions during the Arab Spring; the chronic post-revolutionary instability of the region, the collapse of many local states and the erosion of social order resulting in chaos, anarchy and interregnum.

Monitoring these external, constantly changing manifestations of pan-regional instability means understanding the Middle East as a dramatic chessboard full of constantly materialising and disappearing state and non-state actors enforcing their interests, promoting their ideologies, and competing with each other, while at the same time entering into often unexpected coalitions or, indeed, dissolving them equally unexpectedly. However, the aim of this book is to offer an explanation of the deeper causes of a chess game that is being played ever faster and during which new pieces are being added and the chessboard itself being redrawn, along with the very rules of the game. A new Middle East is emerging, one completely different to that which we have been accustomed to for decades.

How is it possible that, while over the last fifty years the Middle Eastern political chessboard was one of the most stable, predictable and boring in the world, controlled as it was by the same figures playing in accordance with

the same strategies, over the last few years the pace of history has sped up beyond recognition? I will argue that this is the consequence of the impacts of long-term, subterranean social changes that have been taking place over the last fifty years but have been hitherto unobserved, since most observers have concentrated on the political game and not on the changes to its deeper demographic, social, economic and political determinants. And yet the character of these changes is strikingly reminiscent of what was a politically and socially destabilised Europe during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Reminding ourselves of recent European demographic and social history offers the possibility of better understanding the causes of the current turmoil in the Middle East.

EXCESSIVELY SLOW SOCIAL CHANGE

Those subscribing to the first viewpoint referred to above see the Middle East as an underdeveloped region, in which islands of modernity, progress, education and Western culture are surrounded by an ocean of medieval ignorance, obscurantism and Islamic-backed reactionary forces. According to this analysis, the region is experiencing a form of schizophrenia, with one leg in the camp of modernity, and the other still firmly planted in tradition (e.g. Longrigg, Jankowski 1963). More sophisticated versions of this line of argument describe the Middle East as a region inhabited by people who for the most part have not yet adapted psychologically to the modern world. Mentally they languish somewhere in the Middle Ages and its traditions. They cannot be described as "modern" because they are not sufficiently educated, socially mobile and informed. The boundaries of their community are the boundaries of their world. They are stuck in a time warp of tradition. They are walking backwards into the future, as it were, so as to replicate as faithfully as possible the patterns of behaviour, identities and aspirations of previous generations, which represent their role model and authority. They do not possess new, expanding consumer and career aspirations, and as a consequence lack an advanced sense of empathy, namely the ability to imagine alternatives to their life and the organisation of their community or wider society. They do not perceive themselves to be an active subject capable of changing the course of history according to a programme conceived of in advance, but as a passive object simply being dragged along by history and destiny (e.g. Lerner 1964, cf. Bah 2008). The more vulgar, borderline racist interpretation of the immutability of the region speaks of what it calls the "*Arab mind*", a specific, unchanging personality archetype common to all Arabs characterised by an aversion to manual work, an obsession with sexuality, an overabundance of pride, a partiality for conspiracy theories, a reluctance to accept reality, an unwillingness to submit to anything other than power, and a comprehensive backwardness (e.g. Patai 1973, Friedman 2006).

The latest perspective on the region is the influential series of studies entitled the Arab Human Development Report (2002, 2003, 2005, 2009), compiled under the auspices of the UN by Arab scholars and intellectuals. These reports traced the deeper cause of the backwardness of the Arab world back to a *combination of three deficits*: the freedom deficit, women's empowerment, and the knowledge deficit. Democratisation and the promotion of constitutional liberalism are not taking place, while, on the contrary, authoritarian and oppressive regimes persist. The status of women is not improving fast enough. The participation of women in different social spheres remains low, while oppression and discrimination remains high. As a consequence the human potential of an entire half of the population lies idle. Finally, the reports' authors say, the region is unable to mount an effective fight against illiteracy and to produce a sufficiently well educated population. It is unable to generate innovation and new knowledge. On top of this it is unable to avail itself of the innovations and knowledge generated elsewhere in the world. The Arab world lags behind other global regions in all respects.

One of the consequences is a lack of economic growth. In addition, what economic growth there is fragile, since it is wholly dependent on the export of raw materials, a burgeoning, ineffective state sector, and on family businesses from the informal sector on the boundary of the grey economy that are incapable of generating stable jobs or expanding because they cannot apply for bank loans. By contrast, the sophisticated output of stable firms with high value added plays a minimal role. Job creation is sluggish and the region is unable to compete within the global economy. Another consequence of the three deficits is the lack of functioning state institutions that would ensure effective, transparent and high quality governance and thus a reliable framework for economic development and a tranquil, safe life for the population. Quality of life lags behind other regions of the world because of the ongoing risk of poverty, poor health and deteriorating nutritional and ecological standards (AHDR 2002, 2003, 2005, 2009).

The approach taken by the Arab Human Development Report team selects developmental indicators from the many gathered by the World Bank and highlights those that show the Arab world to be lagging behind other regions. Not only does the Arab world occupy a lowly position in these rankings, but the situation is improving at a slower tempo (cf. Amin 2006). Such studies point out with relish that not a single Arab university features among the 500 top universities in the world. The Arab publishing market represents only 1% of global book sales, a figure completely incommensurate with population statistics. While Turkey and Iran have multiplied several times over their scholarly output over the last decade as measured by specialist articles, the Arab world does not research or publish and is stagnating academically. The Arab world has low newspaper circulation per capita, limited telephone

coverage, and translates only one book a year per one million of the population: in Hungary and Spain these figures are 519 and 920 respectively. All of this is intended to illustrate the region's intellectual stagnation and its aversion to new ideas (e.g. Zewail 2011).

One variant of the argument that the Middle East is developing too slowly involves a narrative of chronically unsuccessful modernisation projects and developmental strategies imposed on a top-down basis by enlightened dictators on a subservient and backward population. This often involves reformist leaders recruited from the army, who, face to face with military defeat and their country's obvious technological and economic inferiority as compared to the West, attempt to implement a *defensive modernisation strategy aimed at closing the gap*. Above all they attempt to establish a modern, powerful army and to embrace new technology so as to be able to resist the pressure of the West and play a commensurate role in international politics. However, generally speaking they are only able to create a strong army having first established a functioning secular education system and an effective state bureaucracy based on a codified, Western-style legal system. This strategy, based on the assumption that successful modernisation also requires a certain degree of cultural Westernisation, was first attempted by the Ottoman Turks, followed by the Arabs, Iranians, and Afghans. However, for the most part the strategy failed and encountered opposition on the part of a population unsettled by attempts at what they saw as excessively rapid change. What ensued were repeated waves of Islamic fundamentalism driven by the belief that, on the contrary, the region lagged behind the West because it had deviated from its own culture and religion (e.g. Lewis 2003a, 2003b).

Both the more sophisticated scholarly and the more vulgar non-academic versions of the slow-development theory of the Middle East region and its allegedly medieval character are often close to the *discourse of orientalism*, i.e. the set of widespread and deeply entrenched Western ideas, clichés and stereotypes regarding the Orient. Orientalism is based on the binary opposition of two interdependent categories – the Occident and the Orient, civilisation and barbarism – each of which makes no sense on its own. The idea of a Muslim Orient as the antithetical image of Europe, and later the United States, had always enabled the West to define itself by virtue of what it was not, locate its essence, and confirm its positive self-image as being in contradistinction to that of the Other, Oriental and inferior. This stereotype views a citizen of the West as broadminded, rational, active, industrious, peace-loving, progressive, dynamic and civilised, while the Oriental is prone to despotism, slavery, irrationality, savagery, fanaticism, indolence, violence, unbridled sexuality, primitiveness and barbarism (Said 2008, Halliday 2005, Barša 2012). The basis of the Orientalist discourse is *essentialism*, i.e. the idea that the present attributes of Oriental people are determined by an ancient

barbaric culture of primitive desert Bedouins, whose influence they cannot shake off, and that these attributes are intrinsic, not subject to historical development, and fixed in time. The only thing that can liberate the Oriental from being suspended in timelessness and stagnation is an external shock or intervention in the form of colonialism or neo-colonialism (Abdel-Malek 1963).

In Western popular culture Orientalism is manifest, for instance, in television programmes and Hollywood films in which for a hundred years Arabs have been depicted as one of the "three Bs": belly dancer, billionaire or bomber (Shaheen 2001, 2008). In Western politics Orientalism is then manifest in the justification of military intervention (Afghanistan, Iraq) in order to spread democracy, freedom, human rights and the emancipation of women. It is assumed that any change to this inflexible region can only come from without, and it is emphasised that the backwardness and absence of democracy in the region breeds violence and terrorism (Amin 2004, Amin 2006, Zogby 2012). The first to come up with the argument, still being recycled to this day, that justifies Western political violence against non-Western parts of the world was Napoleon Bonaparte during his expedition to Egypt in 1798 (Said 1981, Wallerstein 2008).

The basic premise of this book will perhaps seem counterintuitive in that it takes Middle Eastern societies to be relatively modern, a viewpoint at odds with the discourse of Orientalism. The fact is that over the last few decades Middle Eastern societies have changed far faster than have Western ways of thinking about the Orient, which remain rigid and incapable of adapting to the new reality. This is why we have a problem in understanding and correctly analysing the *new* Middle East.

EXCESSIVELY RAPID SOCIAL CHANGE

The opposite opinion views the Middle Eastern region as changing rapidly, a fact that over the last few decades has traumatised the population and driven them into the arms of both moderate and militant Islamists. For instance, in the religious revivals and the creation of new movements and sects, Saïd Amir Arjomand sees a globally intensifying process taking place in parallel not only within the framework of mainly Muslim regions, but within the framework of many other religious traditions. The common denominator is excessively rapid social change that all over the world sees the recycling of local versions of traditional fundamentalisms. This flies in the face of mainstream modernisation theories. The processes that were supposed to lead inevitably to secularisation and the death of religion have instead resulted in a renaissance and even the politicisation of Islam and other religions (cf. also Huntington 2001).

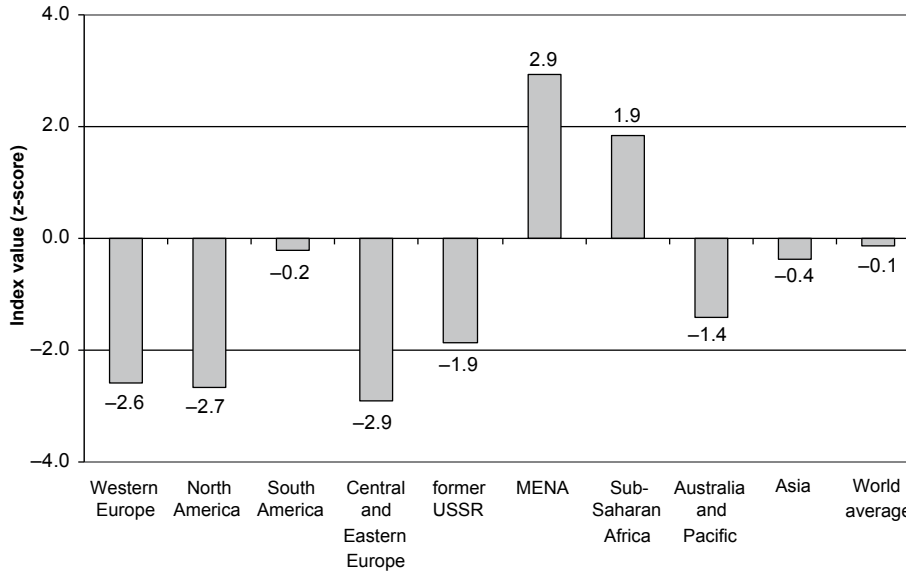
In the case of Muslim societies this involves, in approximately chronological order, the following processes, now running in parallel and overlapping, that escalated after World War II: (1) the integration of the Islamic world into the international economic and political system in the form of colonialism, imperial intervention, Christian missions, and economic, cultural and political globalisation, (2) the expansion of communication and transport technology and infrastructure, (3) the acceleration of urbanisation, (4) increased literacy and greater access to education in general, and (5) the creation of centralised nation states and the politicisation of the masses accompanied by repression on the part of regimes (Arjomand 1986, 2006). While the first four processes follow a similar trajectory in all countries and lead, arguably, to the unification of revivalist religious movements, the last factor is variable and leads to diversification as the character of political regimes forms to a significant extent the character of Islamist movements within each nation state (Arjomand 1995).

An approach that emphasises the rapid *social change* taking place in the Middle East often attempts to use this fact in order to explain the rise of oppositional political Islam, which has been going on since the 1970s. Though Islamic movements are highly heterogeneous internally and the formative influence of the specific national context in which they are rooted can be tracked down in the case of each, this is a phenomenon of international dimensions. The main causes of this upsurge must therefore be common to all movements (Dekmejian 1995). Individual writers then argue as to whether affinities and analogies can be found between current Islamism and earlier European Marxism (Gellner 1995, Roy 1992, 2004, Eisenstadt 2003), Russian anti-Tsarist anarchism (Gray 2004), German Nazism (Lewis 1990, 2003, Buruma and Margalit 2005), or secular nationalism (Juergensmeyer 1994). However, they all agree that the broad and internally highly differentiated current of Islamism is far more the product of the modernisation of the Middle Eastern region in the same way that the European political movements referred to above were the product of modernisation in their time, and not the consequence or residue of the Middle Ages, as proponents of the secularisation theory still thought until recently. I would agree with Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt (2000, 2003) that these movements possessed significant ambitions to define themselves in respect of the Western version of modernity, to be inspired selectively by it, and to come up with an alternative version or variation also inspired by domestic tradition, be this "invented" or genuinely authentic.

This was the approach I myself highlighted (cf. Černý 2006), when, using empirical data, I operationalised Zbigniew Brzezinski's theoretical concept (1993, 2004) of the *global political awakening* of modernising societies. Developing countries of the Global South are at present describing a similar trajectory to the fast social change that Europe experienced during the 19th and

early 20th centuries: a growing population with an ever larger proportion of young people and a consequent pressure on resources; an exodus from over-populated rural and peripheral areas to cities and central regions making political organisation easier; a more educated population and the expansion of mass media accompanied by a rise in career, consumer and political aspirations; and the development of market economies creating visible inequality. In 19th and early 20th century Europe these processes led to the deracination of populations from traditional social and normative structures. The resulting vacuum was filled by new political movements offering new social frameworks, identities and orientation in a rapidly changing world. This all culminated in the expansion of mass political movements, the wholesale political mobilisation of the population in the name of new ideologies, and considerable political destabilisation. And so we had a century of nationalism and revolutions (the 19th century) and a century of killing sprees in the name of utopian ideas promising to create heaven on earth (the 20th century). This was the "Age of Extremes", the "short 20th century" (1914–1989) (cf. Hobsbawm 1998).

Fig. 1 The political awakening of world macro-regions 1975–2003



N.B.: The resulting synthetic index of political awakening is the arithmetic average of dimensionless quantities (z-score) taking into consideration the rate of population growth (1975–2003), the pace of urbanisation (1975–2003), the rate of the intergenerational increase in literacy (adult population versus the young), and the rate of economic growth (1990–2003). Unweighted population sizes of individual states. The author's calculations.
Data source: UNDP Human Development Report 2005; cited in Černý (2006: 117).

By the same token, moving forward in time we find rapid social change bringing analogous political destabilisation in developing countries. While mass political movements in the Global South are not obliged to seek their raison d'être in secular ideologies, the structural sources of their expansion are identical to those of the movements of European modern history (Brzezinski 1993, 1999, 2004). And so the Middle East, along with Sub-Saharan Africa, finds itself in a stage of history in which it is experiencing the most powerful combination of rapid demographic, social and economic change. This is why the political awakening is so strong here in comparison with other world macro-regions, where the process of political awakening has already subsided or is subsiding (see fig. 1, cf. Černý 2006).

However, for a long time the problem with this type of analysis was that subterranean demographic, social and economic changes were being played out beneath the surface of Middle Eastern political systems that on the surface appeared to be stable and displayed no visible signs of political awakening. Individual countries were ruled for decades by the same dictators, and the political and economic power in a country was divided up among cronies of the same families, tribes or religious beliefs (e.g. Hybášková 2004). In the meantime, beneath the smooth political surface invisible social and demographic changes were simmering and gathering momentum. The attention paid by researchers to visible events in the political sphere and their orientation on the chessboard of political actors meant that these deeper, inconspicuous and less easily grasped structural changes were overlooked. They were also underestimated because, given their fundamental character, they progressed in slow, gradual accretions, over decades rather than years. As a consequence, there was an overemphasis placed on stasis in the Middle East and a focus on explaining the causes of this anomalous stability (cf. Gause III 2011).

CREATING AN ALTERNATIVE THEORETICAL MODEL: UNEVEN MODERNISATION AND ITS CONTEXT

Both the viewpoints outlined contain an element of truth. However, by looking at things selectively and focusing only on particular aspects of Middle Eastern reality, neither viewpoint captures the whole picture. The fact is that certain aspects of Middle Eastern reality are indeed changing very quickly, with, for instance, sharp increases in the population, urbanisation, media diffusion, and education. However, other aspects are changing very slowly, if at all. For instance, over the last fifty years political regimes have been rigid and the capacity of states to govern effectively and discharge basic functions in their own territory has been eroded. And the

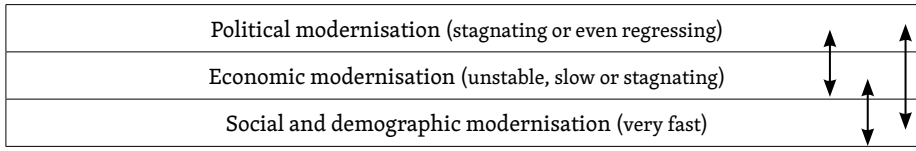
modernisation projects initiated by enlightened dictators have often failed, in the process discrediting the secular ideologies they had drawn on to justify their actions.

FIRST THEORETICAL INSPIRATION: UNEVEN MODERNISATION

For this reason, this book will pursue an alternative approach that to a large extent integrates the two positions referred to above. It will do this by emphasising the highly *uneven and asynchronous pace* of development in individual *dimensions* of Middle Eastern social change (see fig. 2). In this alternative approach Middle Eastern modernisation in the post-colonial period is characterised by (1) a very high pace of *socio-demographic modernisation*; a demographic revolution characterised by sharp population growth and a greater proportion of younger generations within the population as a whole, urbanisation, an intergenerational increase in education, and the expansion of the media and other means of communication. These swift changes are accompanied by (2) a slower, irregular pace of *economic modernisation*; economic growth made volatile by external influences and deformed by its unbalanced dependence on natural resources, the slow diversification of economic sectors, and an ailing labour market and hence the absence of social mobility. And finally by (3) a very slow, non-existent or even regressive rate of *political modernisation*; the erosion of the ability of Middle Eastern states and their institutions to govern effectively, to enforce their own laws and to discharge basic functions in their own territory, including the state monopoly on violence; and the absence of democratisation and constitutional liberal principles making it impossible to co-opt ever more modern populations into political systems.

The result of the collision of the divergent, mutually unsynchronised pace of development in these three basic dimensions of social change is a region with sizeable and relatively *modern societies* living in *rigid and non-functional states* controlled for decades by the same archaic monarchies or military republican dictatorships, and populations that are unable to find sufficient life chances in *deformed rentier economies* that fail to generate suitable job opportunities and distribute the nation's wealth evenly throughout society. In other words, the Middle East is a region full of modern, metropolitan, educated, media savvy and mainly young people with high consumer, career, professional, civic and political aspirations. However, closed, inflexible economic and political systems are unable to meet the growing demand in people for upward social mobility and self-fulfilment and *co-opt* these populations into an economic and political system. Modern societies are therefore excluded from participating in economic and political systems and stand outside them. This generates instability in the Middle East.

Fig. 2 Model of uneven modernisation: The interaction and tensions of the three dimensions of social change



N.B. Possible interactions and tensions are shown by the arrows.

The mutually unsynchronised rate of development in these three basic dimensions of social change gives rise to *three general deficits*: a prosperity deficit, a democratic deficit, and a security deficit. The *prosperity deficit* is due to the excessively rapid rate of change in the socio-demographic sphere that developments in the economic subsystem cannot keep up with; a surfeit of well educated, urbanised and informed people are acquiring professional and consumer aspirations that outstrip the possibilities of the economic subsystem. The *democratic deficit* is due to the excessively rapid rate of change in the socio-demographic sphere that developments in the political subsystem cannot keep pace with and which remains closed to the majority of the fast growing population and is unable to co-opt new political actors and the ever larger group of politically mobilised masses. The *security deficit* is again due to the excessively rapid rate of change in the socio-demographic sphere that developments in the political subsystem cannot keep pace with. This results in weak, unreliable and unpredictable states unable to perform basic functions and enforce law and order, ensure internal and external security, and provide adequate infrastructure and a social safety net for all social strata. The combination of these three deficits is the source of the frustration and political instability in the region. In addition, the interaction between the political and economic system needs to be taken into account: the formation of a rentier economy retrospectively shapes the character of political systems in the direction of rigid authoritarianism. These steps in the analysis mean moving from the macro to the micro level, from an examination of the development of structures to an examination of how these uneven social changes impact on the frustration, motivation and actions of political actors (this theme is addressed in more detail below).

Our alternative model is inspired by a *critical* reading of *modernisation theories* (cf. Knöbl 2003, Lorenz 2006, Wucherpfennig and Deutsch 2009). The concept of modernisation is taken to be a *value-neutral* analytical tool that enables us to distinguish between individual dimensions of the modernisation process, e.g. the technological, economic, demographic, social, political, cultural, value or psychological changes (e.g. Apter 1968, Smelser 1959). However, while classical modernisation theory assumed synchronised, interconnected

development in individual, mutually dependent spheres – the development of education or the media was to result in the development of the economy and social structure, which would in turn culminate in democratisation and secularisation (e.g. Lerner 1958, Lipset 1959, 1994, Rostow 1960) – this book will, on the contrary, emphasise the *divergent tempo and inconsistencies* in the development of individual spheres. While classical modernisation theories assumed the smooth, harmonious and peaceful development of modernising societies as opposed to the revolutionary development of Marxist analyses, this book will emphasise the discontinuous, reversible and nonlinear character of modernisation and above all its many unintended consequences and politically destabilising potential (cf. Sztompka 1993, Keller 2007, Arnason 2010).

A key author in this respect is Samuel P. Huntington and his classic text *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1968), which, reacting to the first wave of modernisation theories, showed that the pace of development tends to be very uneven and mutually conflictual in individual social dimensions. For this reason the internal dynamic of emergent modernising countries – previously European countries, at present developing countries – generates intense political conflict and instability. This is due to the mismatch between the excessively rapid pace of socioeconomic change and the slow rate of change to rigid political systems. During modernisation, socioeconomic changes produce a mass-mobilised population and more and more political actors entering into contentious politics with each other: intellectuals, the middle classes, students, workers and finally peasants. However, the rapid politicisation of society is usually played out in the absence of adequate political institutions that could co-opt political actors into the political system and offer them rules and mechanisms for non-violent contention and the promotion of their interests. Political actors are banished to the peripheries of the political system. Their pursuit of political participation is then realised on the streets in the form of direct action: demonstrations, strikes, violent protests, coups and revolution. And so while traditional societies are (still) politically stable, modern societies are (again) politically stabilised. However, *modernising* societies are politically destabilised, with a higher risk of coups in the first stage of modernisation and a higher risk of revolution in the second stage, when a genuinely mass political participation has already been achieved. In short, *tradition* and *modernity* are accompanied by stability, and modernisation is accompanied by instability and escalating conflict (Huntington 1968, cf. Fukuyama 2006). Huntington comes up with a counter-intuitive finding: without commensurate political development, modernisation may result in tyranny, political and social chaos, civil war, and outbursts of political violence (cf. Fukuyama 2011).

In this respect the Middle East is no exception. It is politically destabilised for the same reasons as Europe was in the past and other regions of the

post-colonial world later on. The analyses of the rise of oppositional Islam by writers such as Vallerie Hoffman (1995) and Sami Zubaida (2009) focus on the uneven pace of change in the Middle East in individual social dimensions. In his essays on the Arab Spring, Francis Fukuyama (2011) examines the mismatch between the pace of social, economic and political developments and explicitly highlights the topicality of the approach taken by Samuel P. Huntington. Fukuyama also describes his teacher as one of the last researchers who attempted a genuinely comprehensive overview of social change and tried to create an all-encompassing theory of political change. According to Fukuyama, most theoreticians these days are specialised in one dimension of social change and do not try to understand the relationship between its political, economic and social dimensions. For this reason we have a problem understanding the Middle Eastern world (Fukuyama 2011).

However, Huntington conspicuously overlooked the role of *external factors* in the destabilisation of modernising post-colonial countries, above all the role of the geopolitical context characterised by the Cold War with its bloody, proxy conflicts being played out in the early stages of the modernisation of the Third World. In addition, he overlooked the role of premodern culture and above all *religion*, since he was writing in the spirit of the secularisation theory prevalent at that time, which anticipated a decline in the influence of religion in modernising societies. However, these factors can be consistently built into our provisional model of uneven modernisation, and we shall look to the latest theory of multiple modernities for inspiration.

SECOND THEORETICAL INSPIRATION: MULTIPLE MODERNITIES

Classical modernisation theory mistakenly assumes the existence of only a single universal model, applicable to all societies, of the modernisation process, which reads from the same script all around the world and culminates in an identical way of organising society in an identical version of modernity. According to this narrative the Western version of modernity ought to be asserting itself globally, since modernisation and Westernisation are seen as synonymous. However, the competing concept of *multiple modernities*, based on a comparative analysis of different forms of modernity in various parts of the world and in different stages of the development of individual societies, emphasises the existence of multiple models of modernity and the existence of multiple paths to modernity. In addition, modernity itself is never definitive but contingent upon self-reflection and critical questioning. Instead of "the End of History" we are witnessing rather the historical stratification of different models of modernity in the manner of geological strata (cf. Arnason 2009, 2010, Eisenstadt 2003, Spohn 2001).