

# ROUNDTABLE: KAVEH YAZDANI

## UNIVERSALIZING THE „REST“: PERIODIZING GLOBAL HISTORY AND DEPROVINCIALIZING THE WEST

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With the aim of taking the *longue durée* and non-European contributions more seriously, a new periodization of global history will be proposed with special emphasis on socio-economic, techno-scientific and intellectual developments arising from hotbeds in West, Central and South Asia, North Africa as well as Arabic Spain. For this purpose, the ways in which scholars and thinkers from these spaces and some of their respective concepts influenced political economists and theorists (e.g. Descartes, Quesnay, Adam Smith and John Locke) will be examined. Furthermore, it will be reiterated that concepts and practices developed in China as well as the Haitian Revolution in the French colony of Saint-Domingue had significant repercussions on the development of universal ideas such as meritocracy and equality before the law. Therefore, I propose that modernity unfolded in the wake of a long-term process of different historical stages and phases going back to the 10th century. This idiosyncratic reassessment of global historical processes suggests that "early modernity" (c.10th to 15th century) was dominated by "Indic", "Islamicate" and East Asian core areas. During this period, modernity had not yet prevailed but only began to come into existence. This proposition challenges the common periodization of early modernity (15th to 18th centuries). The second period, an epoch that I have termed middle modernity (c.16th to 18th century), witnessed the rise of Europe. Although this period was characterized by pronounced European advancements, parallel developments of universal significance were equally taking place throughout core regions of Afro-Eurasia. The third period, viz. late modernity (c.19th to mid-20th century) was dominated by Euro-American empires and hegemons. The impact of European colonialism and the prevalence of British and US Empires have been largely responsible for the Eurocentric periodization of history that we inherit today. In short, it will be argued that offering a new periodization of global history could contribute to uncover the role and influence of some of the central but marginalized "non-Western" voices and developments in the genealogy of modern politico-economic thought and, thus, qualify prevailing modes of Eurocentric thought and periodization of history.

### KAVEH YAZDANI

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Kaveh Yazdani was born in Tehran and raised in Paris and Berlin. He received his Ph.D. degree at the University of Osnabrück in 2014 (*summa cum laude*). In 2015, he was granted the Prince Dr Sabbar Farman-Farmaian Fellowship at the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam and a Mellon Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at the Centre for Indian Studies in Africa (CISA), University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa between 2015 and 2017 where he currently holds a research association. Furthermore, Yazdani was Visiting Residential Fellow at the Warwick Institute of Advanced Study in 2017. Shortly after, he obtained the Newton International Fellowship by The British Academy (2018-2020) which he declined after accepting a faculty position at the University of Bielefeld. There, he taught courses in economic and social history between 2017 and 2020 before joining the University of Connecticut in 2021. In 2020, Yazdani was also Visiting Professor in Global Economic and Social History at the University of Vienna. He obtained a residential visiting scholarship at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin in 2022, a fellowship at the IZEA in Halle in 2023 and a fellowship at the Käte Hamburger Kolleg in Münster (EVIR) in 2023/4.



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