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Article

Radicalising Global IR: Modernity, Capitalism, and the Question of Eurocentrism

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Abstract

Theorising a non-Eurocentric "global international relations" has been a main preoccupation of scholars associated with international political sociology (IPS). In this article, I argue that scholars within the IPS tradition have provided a powerful critique of, but no clear alternative to, Eurocentrism. This is partly attributable to their insufficient problematisation of the historical narratives that propel capitalism backwards into history. By problematising "presentist" conceptions of capitalism, I show that a critical dialogue between IPS and "political Marxism" helps to introduce an alternative foundation for anti-Eurocentrism, which shifts our focus from "capitalist modernity" to "radical modernity". Radical modernity resists hierarchical colonial ontologies by emphasising the universality of egalitarian social patterns rooted in our common, non-capitalist past. I contend that radical modernity is an enduring legacy that is found universally, transmitted interactively, and revitalised continuously across time and space, hence providing an alternative base on which to theorise and globalise the "international" in a non-Eurocentric way.

Introduction

The question of how to globalise International Relations (IR) has gained considerable scholarly traction in the past two decades. Debates revolving around global IR have served as an intellectual platform for critical scholars to voice, argue, and reformulate some of the existent dissatisfactions with the Eurocentric foundations of IR.[1] Global IR was initially understood simply as a call to pluralise the field, i.e., an invitation to make the discipline

[1] Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, "Why Is There No Non-Western International Relations Theory? An Introduction," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2007), pp. 287–312; Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, eds., *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and beyond Asia* (London: Routledge, 2010); Amitav Acharya, "Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds: A New Agenda for International Studies," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (2014), pp. 647–59; Pinar Bilgin, "Thinking Past 'Western' IR?" *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (2008), pp. 5–23; Arlene B. Tickner, "Seeing IR Differently: Notes from the Third World," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (2003), pp. 295–324; Robbie Shilliam, ed., *International*

a more global enterprise that includes scholars, thinkers, and perspectives from the world's thus far marginalised regions. Yet, there has been growing recognition that involving "geo-cultural pluralism" in IR theorisation does not in itself solve the problem of Eurocentrism. Nor does it follow that adding in "new" voices from the Global South, however plausible, necessarily problematises the Eurocentric biases rooted in the discipline's methodological and conceptual underpinnings. On the contrary, in not developing a critical stance on conceptual categories and underlying assumptions of IR, global IR risks perpetuating Eurocentrism, broaching essentialist and parochial explanations for the question of "geo-cultural difference".[2]

This implies that Eurocentrism in IR is, first and foremost, a methodological problem. Among the critical approaches addressing and seeking to remedy Eurocentrism in IR, the burgeoning subfield of international political sociology (IPS), which appeared during the past two decades, is undoubtedly one of the most sophisticated.[3] Through focusing on the spatial and temporal aspects of power relations, scholars associated with IPS have questioned the disciplinary boundaries, categorical dichotomies, and conventional concepts used to study and explain world politics.[4] While interrogating the familiar binaries (re)produced by positivist social sciences, such as the "inside" vs. the "outside", the "traditional" vs. the "modern", and the "private" vs. the "public", IPS has drawn inspiration from a wide range of theoretical sources and contributed to a multiplicity of thematic debates, including the regimes of surveillance; the politics of exclusion and security, migration, environment, and finance; and the question of geo-cultural difference.[5] In tackling the issue of geo-cultural difference, scholars within the IPS tradition have specifically sought to repudiate the

Relations and Non-Western Thought: Imperialism, Colonialism and Investigations of Global Modernity (London: Routledge, 2011); Giorgio Shani, "Toward a Post-Western IR: The 'Umma', 'Khalsa Panth', and Critical International Relations Theory," *International Studies Review*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (2008), pp. 722–34; Rosa Vasilaki, "Provincialising IR? Deadlocks and Prospects in Post-Western IR Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2012), pp. 3–22; Arlene Tickner and Ole Wæver, eds., *International Relations Scholarship around the World* (London: Routledge, 2009); Arlene Tickner and David Blaney, eds., *Thinking International Relations Differently* (London: Routledge, 2012); Emilian Kavalski, *The Guanxi of Relational International Theory* (London: Routledge, 2017).

[2] Anderl Felix and Witt Antonia, "Problematising the Global in Global IR," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (2016), pp. 32–57; Audrey Alejandro, "Diversity for and by Whom? Knowledge Production and the Management of Diversity in International Relations," *International Politics Reviews*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2021), pp. 280–5; Tickner Arlene, Andrew Hurrell, and Amitav Acharya, "A Conversation between Arlene B. Tickner, Andrew Hurrell, and Amitav Acharya," *International Politics Reviews*, Vol. 9,No. 2 (2021), pp. 313–24; Sankaran Krishna, "On the Pitfalls of Geo-Cultural Pluralism in IR," *International Politics Reviews*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2021), pp. 276–9; Valerie de Koeijer and Robbie Shilliam, "Forum: International Relations as a Geoculturally Pluralistic Field," *International Politics Reviews*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2021), pp. 272–5.

[3] Tugba Basaran, Didier Bigo, Emmanuel-Pierre Guittet, and R. B. J. Walker, eds., *International Political Sociology: Transversal Lines* (London: Routledge, 2016); Xavier Guillaume and Pinar Bilgin, eds., *Routledge Handbook of International Political Sociology* (London: Routledge, 2016); George Lawson, Stacie Goddard, and Ole Jacob Sending, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of International Political Sociology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

[4] Didier Bigo and R. B. J. Walker, "International, Political, Sociology," *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2007), pp. 1–5; Didier Bigo and R. B. J. Walker, "Political Sociology and the Problem of the International," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (2007), pp. 725–39.

[5] Sanjay Seth, "'Once Was Blind but Now Can See': Modernity and the Social Sciences," *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2013), pp. 136–51; Pinar Bilgin, "How to Remedy Eurocentrism in IR? A Complement and a Challenge for the Global Transformation," *International Theory*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (2016), pp. 492–501; Sébastien Chauvin and Blanca Garces-Mascarenas, "Beyond Informal Citizenship: The New Moral Economy of Migrant Illegality," *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (2012), pp. 241–59; Jacqueline Best, "Ambiguity, Uncertainty, and Risk: Rethinking Indeterminacy," *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (2008), pp. 355–74; Raluca Soreaunu, "Feminist Creativities and the Disciplinary Imaginary of International Relations," *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (2010), pp. 380–400; Cristina Rojas, "Contesting the Colonial Logics of the International: Toward a Relational Politics for the Pluriverse," *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (2016), pp. 369–82; Vicki Squire and Jonathan Darling, "The 'Minor' Politics of Rightful Presence: Justice and Relationality in City of Sanctuary," *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2013), pp. 59–74; Audrey Alejandro, *Western Dominance in International Relations? The Internationalisation of IR in Brazil and India* (London: Routledge, 2018).

Eurocentrism that marks so much of disciplinary IR.[6] By revealing the centrality of imperialism and colonialism in the constitution of geo-cultural binaries and dichotomies, IPS has shed new light on the contested, multi-linear, and interactive experience of modernity, thus initiating new ways of thinking about the broader question of how to globalise IR.

Given the thematic and theoretical diversity of IPS, what can and cannot come under the "IPS" heading is, admittedly, not always clear. But this, perhaps, is necessarily so, for scholars within that tradition have consciously defied any static definitions of IPS so as to keep the "field" as open and hospitable as possible.[7] For example, the IPS section of the International Studies Association defines the subfield broadly as an attempt aimed at "opening the doors [of IR] to critical political sociology and answer[ing] to the efforts of sociologists to include an IR problematic in their own works". Similarly, if we take the journal *International Political Sociology* as a reasonable indicator of the subfield's scholarly composition, IPS would appear to be a very broad church. Although the bulk of the journal's contributions draws upon insights from Foucault and Bourdieu, the field also includes any form of critical political sociology with an international dimension, most notably thinkers and insights from post- and de-colonial studies.[8] In short, IPS is not a "school" or a unified approach, but rather a common moniker for a broad network of critical scholars seeking to challenge conventional ways of theorising and narrating world politics. This paper will use the term "IPS" in a similar manner—as a broad site encompassing not only the scholars who self-identify with IPS but also those whose works are close in spirit to and which have been influential in the development of IPS.

Regardless of the (necessarily) ambiguous nature of IPS, however, in my view, two interrelated concerns have constantly sharpened the critical edge of IPS since its inception. First, IPS has insisted on the importance of "world-historical time", advancing what may be called an "anti-presentist methodology". Presentism, i.e., the tendency to see the past in terms of the present, reads back into history the socio-spatial consequences of modernity. Against this presentist bias, scholars within the IPS tradition have defied singular, homogenous, and secular conceptions of history by invoking a temporally and spatially sensitive conceptual vocabulary.[9] For example, they have emphasised that the analytical categories and concepts which the social sciences presume to be universal such as "capital", "nature", "state", "individual", "sovereignty", "security", "modernity", and "development" are not universally and transhistorically applicable; instead, their relevance (especially for the non-Western world) must be qualified in light of spatial and temporal specificities.[10] Second, the loss of world-historical time leads to the problem of Eurocentrism. Presentist or timeless notions of historical change obscure the reality whereby the central categories of social sciences are products of the European experience of modernity, whose uncritical projection into history negates the significance of non-Western ways of knowing and being.[11] As a result, the

[6] Pinar Bilgin, "How to Globalise IR," *E-International Relations*, 22 April 2018, https://www.e-ir.info/2018/04/22/how-to-globalise-ir/; Sanjay Seth, "Historical Sociology and Postcolonial Theory: Two Strategies for Challenging Eurocentrism," *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 3; No. 3 (2009), pp. 334–8.

[7] Jef Huysmans and Joao Pontes Nogueira, "Ten Years of IPS," *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (2016), pp. 299–319.

[8] Lawson, Goddard, and Sending, *The Oxford Handbook*.

[9] Oliver Kessler, "World Society, Social Differentiation and Time," *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2012), pp. 77–94; Sanjay Seth, "Once Was Blind but Now Can See: Modernity and the Social Sciences," *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2013), pp. 136–51; Christine Helliwell and Barry Hindess, "The Great Map of Mankind," in Tugba Basaran, Didier Bigo, Emmanuel-Pierre Guittet, and R. B. J. Walker, eds., *International Political Sociology: Transversal Lines* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 145–61.

[10] Bilgin, "How to Remedy Eurocentrism"; Jef Huysmans and Ole Wæver, "International Political Sociology Beyond European and North American Traditions of Social and Political Thought: Introduction," *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (2009), p. 327.

[11] Seth, "Historical Sociology and Postcolonial Theory"; Siba Grovogui, "Counterpoints and the Imaginaries Behind Them," *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (2009), pp. 327–31; Alejandro, *Western Dominance in International Relations?*

West becomes the supreme representative of universal norms and practices, any variances on which are cached as historical deviations, or sociological exceptions to the accepted general standards of "progress". In short, as Bilgin puts it, existent narratives of modernity "many of which read contemporary ('standard') concepts back into history, end up reinforcing Eurocentrism".[12] The clear inference here is that IPS perceives a strong connection between "methodological presentism" and Eurocentrism.

In this article, I will ask to what extent IPS has accomplished the task it has set itself, namely, to formulate a non-Eurocentric understanding of global modernity on the basis of a multi-temporal and non-presentist methodology. In particular, scholars within the IPS tradition have both drawn on and criticised revisionist accounts of global history to formulate their own brand of anti-Eurocentrism. This article, therefore, asks how the existing conversation between IPS and global history can be deepened to overcome the twin problems of presentism and Eurocentrism.

My argument unfolds in four sections. In section 1, I discuss the IPS take on the question of temporality, multi-linearity, and Eurocentrism, in conversation with a particular brand of revisionist global history known as the California School. I argue that while IPS aptly pinpoints the potentially contradictory aspects of the California School narratives of global history, it does not provide us with a clear macro-historical alternative whereby to overcome Eurocentrism. In section 2, I suggest that IPS has not proceeded far enough towards remedying the problem of Eurocentrism, insofar as it has not systematically engaged with the issue of presentism. In particular, IPS has not shown how to "decolonise" the concept of capitalism, i.e., how to make a complete departure from the timeless and methodologically presentist conceptions of capitalism which, in turn, limits our ability to overcome hierarchical readings of global modernity. Presentist conceptions of "capitalism" or "capitalist modernity" unwittingly reproduce spatial hierarchies and lead to normatively problematic assumptions. In section 3, I draw on a particular strand of historical materialist sociology known as political Marxism (PM) to mobilise a non-presentist conception of capitalism. I contend that such a reconceptualisation provides an alternative entry point to the question of "how to think with modernity without Eurocentrism". More precisely, PM enables us to distinguish between "capitalist modernity" and "radical modernity", which then leads to a re-interpretation of global modernity from a novel non-hierarchical perspective. In section 4, I argue that the concept of radical modernity allows us to disidentify from capitalism in history, and in doing so reveal the existence of another form of modernity—one whose logic does not derive from a presumably common proto-capitalist past, but which is rooted in the radically egalitarian spirit of humanity's universal non-capitalist history. The seeds of this modernity were never spatially exclusive but found everywhere; their radically egalitarian legacy was interactively transmitted and continuously revitalised across time and space. As such, premised on histories of egalitarianism, radical modernity helps us to analytically signpost and digest the interactive accumulation and combination of a universal legacy. It thus offers an alternative foundation on which Western and non-Western interactivity can be theorised and historicised without falling back on hierarchical readings of world history. In conclusion, I provide a summary and also discuss the implications of my overall argument.

IPS, Multiple Temporalities, and the Issue of Eurocentrism

In his magnum opus "The Sociological Imagination", C. Wright Mills holds that all social sciences are, in essence, "historical" ventures "unless one assumes some transhistorical theory of the nature of history, or that man in society is a non-historical entity".[13] In this sense, reading "history" is not just about studying the past but involves also a process of freeing

[12] Bilgin, "How to Remedy Eurocentrism," p. 494.
[13] C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 146.

"history" from "transhistoricism"; it is a call to turn to "world-historical time", i.e. it rests on distancing ourselves from the presuppositions and methodological divisions that the contemporary world has itself created. Mills' remarks echo IPS's call for a distinct temporality and conceptual framework whereon to build a non-Eurocentric IR. According to IPS scholars, addressing Eurocentrism in IR is not merely about "studying other parts of the world"; nor is it just about introducing non-Western voices to the story of the constitution of the modern world.[14] Instead, a non-Eurocentric "international imagination" demands, first and foremost, an intervention that undermines the image of history unfolding across homogenous time, and which, in turn, necessitates a fundamental rethinking of, "the concepts and theories through which 'we' make sense of global history and politics".[15]

Interrogating our conceptual architecture thus inextricably, and inevitably, brings up the issue of "temporality" in social science research, because how we understand and represent historical time significantly shapes our empirical findings, ethical judgements and conceptual tools used to make sense of world politics.[16] Take as an example the way in which modernisation theory understands the concept of "modernity". In the modernisation view, the "political", "economic", and "cultural" spheres, each driven by a distinct set of values, interacted in specific ways in history that ultimately produced the "modern" world of economically industrial, politically liberal, and culturally secular entities of the West. Specifying the "stages" of and "preconditions" to "modernity" in the West was then used to identify why these were "absent" elsewhere in the world.[17] It is no wonder that, in the modernisation lexicon, geospatial differences were understood in connection with such hierarchical binaries as "developed" vs. "developing", which were, in turn, instrumental in fostering the image of modernisation as a unilinear and evolutionary developmental path along which all societies must pass. Modernity, in other words, was understood as a more or less singular process for all societies while its developmental sequence and pattern were abstracted from the presumed historical evolution of an ideal type of modernity that Western Europe and the United States supposedly epitomise.

In short, unitemporal and unilinear representations of time generate a conception of "modernity" that systematically privileges the West. Not uncoincidentally, the issue of multitemporality lies at the centre of political–sociological approaches to IR. IPS advances a non-presentist methodology for a non-Eurocentric social science, i.e., a methodology that does not read back the socio-spatial parameters of the contemporary world order, thus countering the superimposition of "Western" categories onto the non-Western world. IPS theorists argue that most social science concepts have a Europocentric genealogy: They have been shaped in the context of European modernity and closely linked to the colonial and racist practices of European powers that systematically obscured the legacy of non-European ways of being and knowing within the constitution of the modern social sciences and humanities.[18]

Therefore, using such concepts in an uncritical way risks imposing Western ways of knowing and being on differently constituted pasts, thus silencing the particularities of the non-Western experience with modernity. Indeed, this causes a form of epistemic violence, for "outside Europe, these concepts/categories, embedded in and given life through the institutions and practices of colonial governmentality…served to disseminate and 'make real'

[14] Bilgin, "How to Globalise IR"; Alejandro, *Western Dominance in International Relations?*

[15] Bilgin, "How to Globalise IR," p. 1.

[16] Kimberly Hutchings, "Time and the Study of World Politics," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (2018), pp. 253–8; Christopher McIntosh, "Theory Across Time: The Privileging of Time-Less Theory in International Relations," *International Theory*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2015), pp. 464–500.

[17] For example, Walt W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

[18] Robbie Shilliam, "Non-Western Thought and International Relations," in Robbie Shilliam, ed., *International Relations and Non-Western Thought: Imperialism, Colonialism and Investigations of Global Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 2.

what they (wrongly) assumed to be universal features of all human and social worlds".[19] In this sense, concepts and categories of the social sciences have not been neutral tools merely to offer cognition of a world outside.[20] By no means out there solely for purposes of understanding and explaining the modern world, these concepts are part and parcel of the power relations that constitute a Eurocentric understanding of global modernity.

The implication here is that IPS problematises the nexus between knowledge and power in order to deconstruct the notion of "Western" superiority and priority. In highlighting the international and multi-temporal dimension of social change, it counters the naturalisation and eternalisation of Western categories, thus revealing the political and ideological nature of positivist thinking. Scholars associated with IPS, therefore, have challenged the Eurocentric implications of such key IR concepts as "sovereignty", "balance of power", and "security".[21] Furthermore, in highlighting the constitutive role of imperialism and colonialism, they have sought to undermine the unitemporal historical narratives and geo-cultural dichotomies conventionally used to explain world politics.[22] Rethinking geo-cultural binaries is usually underlined by a process of conceptual "excavation", which "by studying 'intertwined and overlapping histories' of humankind" aims to reveal the "multiple authorship" of what is viewed as "autonomously produced" ideas and institutions.[23] In short, reimagining IR from an IPS perspective forces us to rethink IR conceptions of time and agency and its conceptualisation of "difference". It thus has the potential to activate a powerful critique of Eurocentrism.

In my view, however, to what extent IPS scholars have empowered this potential remains debatable. For one thing, although most IPS is underwritten by an explicitly internationalist and anti-presentist critique, none of its proponents has offered an alternative macro-level historical narrative of "modernity" whereby to investigate international connections and differences. At least partly, this would seem to be due to IPS's ambivalence about scientific "explanation". As argued above, IPS scholars oppose the transhistoricisation and universalisation of social science categories. They contend that, given their European genealogy, "modern knowledge, and the social sciences that formalise it, …are at once indispensable—but also inadequate—to making sense of [global modernity]". That is to say, social scientific explanation is "indispensable", in that it explains "*some* of the ways in which the world has been remade, and is now experienced and lived". Yet, it is also "inadequate", because "it only corresponds to *some* of these ways", i.e., it inevitably bears the mark of its Western origins, hence injecting from the very outset a Eurocentric bias into our analysis.[24]

As such, IPS reminds us of the necessity to adopt a reflexive and critical attitude towards the limits of social scientific thinking; it insists that analytical thinking should entail a restructuring of our conceptual toolkits in a way that captures diverse ways of knowing and being in a world that is at once interconnected and "irreducibly plural". Innovative as it may be, however, IPS does not specify how to advance such a non-Eurocentric agenda,

[19] Sanjay Seth, "The Politics of Knowledge: Or, How to Stop Being Eurocentric," *History Compass,* Vol. 12, No. 4 (2014), p. 318.

[20] Seth, "Historical Sociology and Postcolonial Theory," p. 337.

[21] For example, Pinar Bilgin, "The 'Western-Centrism' of Security Studies: 'Blind Spot' or Constitutive Practice?" *Security Dialogue,* Vol. 41, No. 6 (2010), pp. 615–22; Siba Grovogui, "Regimes of Sovereignty: International Morality and the African Condition," *European Journal of International Relations,* Vol. 8, No. 3 (2002), pp. 315–38; Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, "The Postcolonial Moment in Security Studies," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (2006), pp. 329–52.

[22] For example, Sanjay Seth, "Postcolonial Theory and the Critique of International Relations," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2011), pp. 167–83; Gurminder K. Bhambra, "Historical Sociology, International Relations and Connected Histories," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs,* Vol. 23, No. 1 (2011), pp. 127–43; Shilliam, *International Relations and Non-Western Thought*; Zeynep Çapan and Ayse Zarakol, "Between East and West: Travelling Theories, Travelling Imaginations," in Andreas Gofas, Inanna Hamati-Ataya, and Nicholas Onuf, eds., *The Sage Handbook of the History, Philosophy and Sociology of International Relations* (London: Sage, 2018), pp. 122–33.

[23] Bilgin, "How to Globalise IR," p. 3.

[24] Seth, "The Politics of Knowledge," p. 318.

i.e., how to proceed upon realising that power and knowledge are mutually reinforcing, and how to reconcile the "universal" and the "particular" in conceptual and logical terms.[25] IPS scholars aptly emphasise the "diverse", "intertwined", or "interconnected" nature of the global experience with modernity.[26] But neither diversity nor interconnectedness alone can substitute for a macro-historical narrative that systematically defeats presentism and Eurocentrism.[27]

Second, and more importantly, for the purposes of this paper, IPS scholars have rightfully noted that overcoming Eurocentrism requires an intervention not only into the history of the non-European world but also that of Europe. For example, Bilgin observes that "the very notion of state that we adopt in the study of world politics has its limitations not only when transplanted to other parts of the world, but also when studying Europe".[28] Similarly, Seth contends that let alone the non-Western World "modernity and the knowledges of which it is cause and effect" are not fully applicable, even to the West".[29] In other words, "we need to rethink the idea that even Western modernity was accompanied by rationalisation, disenchantment, and so on; that this might be more the mythology of modernity than the reality of it".[30]

This critical stance on the myth of "European modernity" makes IPS comparable to a branch of revisionist global history and historical sociology commonly known as the California School. Most commonly, the California School has, by stressing the existence throughout the history of highly developed markets, institutions, and technological infrastructure in the non-Western world, criticised Eurocentric assumptions about the emergence of capitalism. For instance, Blaut seeks to undermine the "uniqueness" of pre-1492 Europe by arguing that Asia and Africa possessed "the same potential for evolution towards capitalism", i.e., they had most of the preconditions for the development of capitalism, such as long-distance trade, monetised economies, and commercialised rural and urban markets.[31] Similarly, Pomeranz observes that technologically advanced market actors, commercial agriculture, and proto-industrial growth were equally available in certain parts of Asia (mainly China) and Western Europe (mainly England), so no "great divergence", therefore, existed between the West and the East until 1800.[32] Given that the West and the East were more or less equal as regards the sophistication of their economic capabilities, the post-1800 "divergence" can be explained only through the accidental and "extra-economic" factors that the West enjoyed, such as relative proximity to colonial/natural resources, its colonial and aggressive "identity", and the existence of favourable "trade winds" facilitating European colonialism.[33]

Obviously, IPS is not in complete agreement with the California School. Sanjay Seth, who advanced perhaps the most systematic engagement with the California School from an IPS perspective, raised a tripartite critique. First, that "such a strategy…[of] bringing the non-West into the account of the emergence of modernity need not, in and of itself, undermine the Eurocentrism of the conventional account"—because this position continues to "assign a pivotal role to Europe", while acknowledging the "co-production", as it were, of modernity. Second, "even if the non-West is made part of the story of modernity… this

[25] Kamran Matin, "Redeeming the Universal: Postcolonialism and the Inner Life of Eurocentrism," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2013), pp. 353–77.
[26] Bhambra, "Historical Sociology, International Relations"; Bilgin, "How to Remedy Eurocentrism."
[27] Vasilaki, "Provincialising IR?"
[28] Bilgin, "How to Globalise IR."
[29] Seth, "The Politics of Knowledge," p. 318.
[30] Sanjay Seth, "Is Thinking with 'Modernity' Eurocentric?" *Cultural Sociology*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (2016), p. 396.
[31] James Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History* (New York: Guilford Press, 1993), pp. 160–5.
[32] Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the. Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp.16–24.
[33] Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model*, pp. 180–2; Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*, pp. 437–45.

only pushes back, or reframes, the question of European exceptionalism: why was it Europe that exploited others, rather than vice versa?" In other words, "even where the normative valence changes—where Europe's 'dynamism' begins to look more like 'rapacity'—what is it about Europe that made it unique? can still remain the question". Third, this intellectual strategy seeking to map out the non-European contributions to modernity is "hostage to (empirical) fortune". That is to say, empirically speaking, there is always the risk that non-Western societies may turn out to be less central to the constitution of modernity than their Western counterparts. Of course, "this is … an exceedingly unlikely hypothetical"; yet, at least "in principle", there is such a possibility which, according to Seth, ultimately points to the limits of existing anti-Eurocentric theorising in global history and historical sociology.[34]

Seth thus draws attention to the potential conundrums in historical sociology of anti-Eurocentrism. Yet, whether Seth actually provides a tangible alternative to what he thinks is problematic in the California School narratives of global modernity is debatable. He argues that "any intellectual strategy that seeks to delink modernity from Europe principally on historico-empirical grounds may be following a strategy not best suited to its aims".[35] The way out of this conundrum, he suggests, requires "a rethinking of the relationship of modernity and the knowledge by which we know and describe it; one in which the knowledge whereby we understand modernity is constitutive of that which it purportedly merely describes. This does not provide a better answer to the question that we began with—*how to think with modernity without Eurocentrism*. It does, however, recast that question in ways that are fruitful".[36]

Exactly what this critical rethinking actually entails, in my view, is not clear. For Seth, it is an awareness that "modernity and the knowledge that accompanies and constitutes it is not privileged, and is not seen as revealing underlying truths". It is instead "seen as one way of knowing and inhabiting the earth. Only then will our categories, explanations, and imagination become as rich, capacious, and diverse as the world(s) we actually inhabit".[37] Fair enough; but the fact remains that although IPS aptly identifies potentially contradictory premises of the dominant anti-Eurocentric narratives in global history, it, yet again, fails to explicate what happens after we acknowledge that power and knowledge are mutually constitutive. IPS thus refrains from offering a clear theoretical and macro-historical alternative; therefore, whether IPS intends to provide only a palliative treatment or definitive remedy for the problem of Eurocentrism is not clear.[38]

The Contradictions of Presentist Anti-Eurocentrism

At this juncture, I suggest that IPS would be able to offer a more effective solution to Eurocentrism if it pursued more systematically its own methodological goals. That is to say, IPS has not progressed far enough in successfully tackling the problem of Eurocentrism due to not developing sufficiently the critique of presentism. IPS would benefit from a more systematic engagement with the presentist readings of capitalism which could then be used to illuminate in a more productive manner the question of "how to think with modernity without Eurocentrism". I will briefly explain this by re-problematising the California School.

As discussed earlier, the anti-Eurocentric narratives associated with the California School refuse to see the rise of capitalism in regard to the "abilities/advantages" that Europe possessed and the "blockages" that existed in the non-Western world. For example, most of the skills, ideologies, and political infrastructure associated with capitalism, according to

[34] Seth, "Is Thinking with Modernity," pp. 389–90.
[35] Seth, "Is Thinking with Modernity," p. 390.
[36] Seth, "Is Thinking with Modernity," p. 393, my emphasis.
[37] Seth, "Is Thinking with Modernity," p. 396.
[38] Cf. Vasilaki, "Provincialising IR?"

Hobson, were in fact, present in the non-Western world. "Long-distance trade", "rationalist capitalist investors", a set of virtues conducive to capital accumulation, technological inventiveness, and states that successfully pacified "internal" rivals and actively promoted the "background conditions necessary for capitalism" all existed in China, India, and in the realm of Islam, whereas "Europe remained mired in a backward agrarianism and a relatively weak commercialism" at least until the 1500s.[39] Furthermore, even when, in the 19th century, the West finally eclipsed the major Asian powers, this was made possible due not to its indigenous capabilities and resources, but initially to the "diffusion" and later forceful appropriation of Eastern ideas, technologies, and institutions, alongside a number of historical contingencies such as the fortuitous conquest of the Americas.

Seth has pointed out some of the potential contradictions in the California School rendition of world history. Yet, what Seth tends to overlook is that the California School narratives, albeit extremely rich empirically, have attempted to overcome the pitfalls of the old Eurocentric model without challenging the presentist interpretations of capitalism's origins. This is caused by their tendency to take the existence of commerce, merchant classes, and private property as necessary indicators of capitalism in history. The problem is that all these phenomena, in different yet comparable forms, have existed almost throughout history, i.e., they can be traced back to ancient societies. Therefore, their unqualified equation with capitalism risks the latter's transhistoricisation and naturalisation. In other words, by uncritically associating commerce, private property, wage labour, and so on, with the existence of capitalism in history, the California School narratives tend to see capitalism as just "more of the same old thing", adopting a circular logic of explanation.[40] As such, the California School presumes capitalism's prior existence to explain capitalism's origins, i.e., it risks seeing capitalism as present at all times and in all places (in embryonic form), hence extrapolating back into history the logic and dynamics of the present economic order, that is to say, capitalism.[41]

The transhistorical explanations for the appearance of capitalism have rendered the California School susceptible to hierarchical readings of world history. While extending the "preconditions" of capitalism from the West to *some* parts of the non-Western world, the California School has inadvertently created new spatial hierarchies; the California School stops seeing capitalism's "antecedents" as exclusively Western, thereby undermining the crudest versions of Eurocentric exceptionalism and diffusionism. Yet, it also considers these background conditions to be available only in "some" regions in the non-Western world. For example, Pomeranz adds only early modern China, Japan, and North India to the group of economically regions as promising as early modern Western Europe.[42] Likewise, according to Hobson, only China, India, and the Islamic world, alongside Western Europe, had a proto-capitalist potential in history. James Blaut, different from Hobson and Pomeranz, assumes that all civilisations had the potential to develop capitalism in world history but then confesses that his assumption, rooted in the "equal capability of human beings… in all cultures and regions", led him to "theorise well beyond available evidence", especially in regard to his argument about precolonial Africa.[43]

In short, the California School either universalises capitalism based on (fictional) spatial similarities,[44] or offers a non-Eurocentric history solely through creating new spatial hierarchies. A few regions or areas of the non-Western world are elevated to the same league as

[39] John Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 296–7.
[40] Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 171.
[41] Ellen Meiksins Wood, "Eurocentric Anti-Eurocentrism," *Against the Current*, No. 92 (2001), pp. 29–35.
[42] Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*, p. 27.
[43] Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model*, pp. 42, 153.
[44] Joseph Bryant, "The West and the Rest Revisited," *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (2006), p. 418.

Western Europe, yet this is done without supplanting hierarchical readings of world history. Furthermore, the assumption that everyone could be, or could have been capitalist tends to perpetuate the problematic assumption that capitalism is better than other modes of life, and hence that everyone must have had the potential in history to develop capitalism.[45] The California School thus turns anti-Eurocentrism into a "self-defeating exercise".[46]

The California School's contradictions signify that escaping the trap of Eurocentrism requires IPS to assert more systematically its own claim of a non-presentist methodology. In other words, IPS needs to challenge the view that capitalism is merely "more of the same thing": capitalism is not just more trade, more markets, more private property, or more wage labour and that it did not appear once certain European and non-European resources, technologies, and commercial abilities had combined and accumulated. As I will discuss below, once a non-presentist understanding of capitalism is advanced, IPS may find itself in a better position to offer a more viable alternative to Eurocentrism.

How to "Think with Modernity without Eurocentrism"

I have so far argued that IPS has not sufficiently disturbed presentist narratives of the rise of capitalism, thus limiting its ability to offer a non-Eurocentric theorisation of global modernity. It is precisely here, though, that we encounter a dilemma. On one hand, the argument that capitalism is not a transhistorical and natural phenomenon implies that capitalism must have had a spatio-temporal beginning. On the other hand, however, such an intellectual strategy seeking to postulate a specific birthday and birthplace of capitalism runs the risk of "internalism" and Eurocentric exceptionalism. Bhambra,[47] for example, argues that any attempt to locate the origins of capitalism in Western Europe inevitably presupposes "internalist" "idea-types", leading to the problematic assumption of European "priority" in history. Such efforts, according to Bhambra, unavoidably feed into hierarchical narratives of world history wherein Europe is considered more progressive than, and developmentally prior to the non-Western world. Against the depiction of Europe as the sole proprietor of rationality and institutions conducive to modernity, Bhambra underlines the role of colonialism, hence that of the non-Western world, in contributing to the rise of capitalism in Europe. She moreover notes, in the spirit of the California School, that "any logic of…capitalism that can be isolated has been demonstrated to have existed in other places and at other times [such as in India] and so can never be regarded as unique or causal in itself".[48]

I have already discussed the contradictions of such attempts to "equalise" the world based on the assumption of a universal proto-capitalist past. Likewise, emphasising colonialism's "contributions" to the rise of European capitalism entails a similar logical trap. Unless one can demonstrate that everyone "contributed" equally to the appearance of (European) capitalism, this mode of argument tends to build "less important" historical cases, leading to new spatio-temporal hierarchies.[49] Furthermore, as Sajed and Inayatullah[50] point out while trying to highlight the role of non-Western agency in the rise of European capitalism, we may end up covering up "Europe's sins…in the devastation of the third world",

[45] Immanuel Wallerstein, "Eurocentrism and Its Avatars," *Sociological Bulletin,* Vol. 46, No. 1 (1997), pp. 21–39; Wood, "Eurocentric Anti-Eurocentrism."

[46] Eren Duzgun "Against Eurocentric Anti-Eurocentrism: International Relations, Historical Sociology and Political Marxism," *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 23 (2020), pp. 285–307; Eren Duzgun, "Property, Geopolitics, and Eurocentrism: The Great Divergence and the Ottoman Empire," *Review of Radical Political Economics*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (2018), pp. 24–43.

[47] Bhambra, "Historical Sociology, International Relations."

[48] Bhambra, "Historical Sociology, International Relations," p. 138; for a similar critique, also see Krishna, "On the pitfalls of," p. 278.

[49] Duzgun, "Against Eurocentric Anti-Eurocentrism."

[50] Alina Sajed and Naeem Inayatullah, "On the Perils of Lifting the Weight of Structures: An Engagement with Hobson's Critique of the Discipline of IR," *Postcolonial Studies,* Vol. 19, No. 2 (2016), pp. 206–7.

thus "diluting the responsibility for the violence behind Western colonialism". In short, a "non-internalist" methodology emphasising the interconnectedness of world history may not necessarily deliver a non-hierarchical narrative of global modernity.

Nevertheless, another fork in the road confronts us here. As we have already seen, trying to overcome Eurocentrism based on "all-inclusive" narratives of capitalist modernity generates logically problematic and normatively unexpected results. Yet, on the flip side, restraining non-Western agency to highlight the violence of capitalist modernity may prove equally problematic, as it may lead to what Hobson calls "Eurofetishism", i.e., it ends up relegating non-Western peoples, "to the status of irrelevant, helpless, and 'passive objects/victims' of global capitalism".[51] In other words, downplaying non-Western agency risks the infantilisation of "non-Western societies/actors who tend to be seen as victims that are always acted upon".[52]

Is an alternative anti-Eurocentrism possible beyond this paradox? How can we transcend the triumphalism of the West and victimisation of the non-West without creating new spatial hierarchies, and without invoking normatively problematic assumptions? I believe our ability to enact non-Western agency in a non-contradictory fashion depends largely on our ability to pursue systematically an anti-presentist methodology. In particular, an anti-presentist conception of capitalism enables us to distinguish between "capitalist modernity" and "radical modernity" in history, which can then be used to "rethink with modernity without Eurocentrism".

We can examine this question more closely by engaging with the anti-presentist conception of capitalism advanced by political Marxism (PM) Indeed, to the critical reader, such an analytical strategy may sound somewhat contradictory, for PM is—due to its alleged Eurocentrism, Anglocentrism, and methodological internalism—perhaps one of the most commonly criticised approaches to global history.[53] I have systematically evaluated and criticised the critiques of PM elsewhere.[54] Suffice it to say, although I agree that PM has been a late-comer in terms of its level of empirical engagement with the non-Western world,[55] it nevertheless has provided important analytical tools whereby to deepen the international sociological imagination in ways that help to overcome the paradoxes diagnosed above. Let me briefly explain why.

PM emerged in the 1970s as a reaction to the presentism prevalent in conventional Marxist and non-Marxist accounts of the transition to capitalism.[56] Based on Marx's later writings, political Marxists have argued that the transition to capitalism cannot be understood as the *quantitative* extension of any "economic" phenomena, i.e., capitalism is not just more of the same thing; it is not just more trade, more markets, more private property, and more wage labour. By uncritically equating commerce, private property, and wage labour to the existence of capitalism in history, we ultimately see capitalism as present at all times and in all places, thus treating capitalism as something intrinsic to human nature. This is not to deny that capitalism undoubtedly expands the volume of production and commerce

[51] John Hobson, *Multicultural Origins of the Global Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 22.
[52] Sajed and Inayatullah, "On the Perils."
[53] For example, Hobson, *Multicultural Origins*, p. 22.
[54] Duzgun, "Against Eurocentric Anti-Eurocentrism."
[55] But see, for example, Duzgun, "Property, Geopolitics, and Eurocentrism"; Pedro Salgado, "Agency and Geopolitics: Brazilian Formal Independence and the Problem of Eurocentrism in International Historical Sociology," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2020), pp. 432–51.
[56] Robert Brenner, "Agrarian Class Structures and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe," in Trevor Henry Aston and C. H. E. Philpin, eds., *The Brenner Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 10–63; Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism: Longer View* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002).

and the size of a commodifiable workforce. But taking these as "necessary" indicators of its existence in history simply collapses capitalism's consequences into its causes.[57]

Against the transhistorical readings of capitalism, PM attempts to define it in a way that does not presuppose the logic and dynamic of capitalism as part and parcel of historical explanation. Markets, by themselves, have no inherent tendency to generate capitalism; this can be established only through the annihilation of longstanding communal systems of social reproduction. In other words, transitions to capitalism did not follow a universal pattern, yet all transitions required, in principle, a strategic political intervention and an institutional set-up geared to systematically eliminating non-market survival strategies whereby the market could become the main (but not the only) institution responsible for social reproduction. In this sense, transitions to capitalism required a *qualitative* shift in how societal relations were organised, in such a way that the customary conditions for social reproduction were systematically undercut to make the market an ultimate basis for holding and expanding the means to life. Capitalism consequently presupposes the development of "market-dependent" societies wherein the market is no longer a space of "opportunity" for the occasional sale of goods and services, but transformed into an "imperative" for social reproduction.[58]

What is at stake here, therefore, is a departure from a "presentist" interpretation to a "non-presentist" one, i.e., from that of transhistorically cumulating capitalism towards a conception of capitalism as a qualitative break and epochal shift in human history. What is more, PM provides not only a historically specific conception of capitalism but also the tools to capture the internationally and temporally changing dynamics of the transition to capitalism. PM insists that there can be no "transhistorical laws" governing the path to capitalism by reason of the changing intersocietal context of capitalist transformation, as well as to the variations in social reactions from "below". For "once breakthroughs to ongoing capitalist economic development took place in various regions, these irrevocably transformed the conditions and character of the analogous processes which were subsequently to occur elsewhere".[59]

Thus, by recognising the cumulatively changing character of IRs, PM defies transhistorical interpretations of "market dependence". This implies that, while outlining the minimum preconditions for a non-presentist conception of capitalism, PM's conceptualisation of capitalism hardly suggests a static "ideal type". Depending on the social, temporal, and international context, the process of eliminating non-market survival strategies can take a wide range of social and institutional forms. The socio-institutional content of market dependence is not fixed but rather changes cumulatively. Therefore, PM neither sets up pre-given norms for the transition to capitalism nor treats subsequent transitions as countermodels to privileged ideal types.

PM's anti-presentist position has three immediate and interrelated implications for a non-Eurocentric understanding of global history and global modernity. PM's insistence that capitalism is not an attribute of human nature entails that capitalism has to have a spatial and temporal origin. In other words, developing a non-presentist conception of capitalism makes it imperative to specify where and when capitalism was born. Furthermore, this does not necessarily pave the way for Eurocentric diffusionism, for PM shows that the origins

[57] Robert Brenner, "The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo Smithian Marxism," *New Left Review,* Vol. 104 (1977), p. 52; Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999), pp. 176–7.

[58] Ellen Meiksins Wood, "The Question of Market Dependence," *Journal of Agrarian Change* Vol. 2, No. 1 (2002), pp. 50–87; Charles Post and Xavier Lafrance (eds.) *Case Studies in the Origins of Capitalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

[59] Robert Brenner, "The Agrarian Roots of European Capitalism," in T. Henry Aston and C. H. E. Philpin, eds., The *Brenner Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 322; Ellen Meiksins Wood, "The Agrarian Origins of Capitalism," *Monthly Review*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (1985), p. 30.

of capitalism had nothing to do with the development of some "superior" human abilities linked to some commercial, entrepreneurial, environmental, or technological criteria. In other words, neither the existence nor the absence of these phenomena tells us anything about the specific processes, relationships, and institutions that led to the initial appearance of capitalism. Instead, once we emphasise the institutional foundations and qualitative distinctiveness of capitalism, we discover that the initial emergence of capitalism can be conceived only as a "contingent" affair. That is to say, capitalism's first appearance in world history was an "unintended" result of social and geopolitical struggles in early modern England.[60] A combination of factors, such as historically distinct forms of lordly solidarity, traditions of peasant resistance, and the absence of geopolitical opportunities, sets off a process of transition in post-feudal England during which lords began to lose their extra-economic powers over the peasantry. This left them with no other option than to resort increasingly to market-based measures towards appropriating peasant surpluses and maintaining themselves as lords, so initiating a process that was to transform the millennia-old rules of access to land. Lords, sometimes in cooperation with and sometimes in conflict with the monarchy, began to change the customary conditions of access to land by compelling peasant tenants to compete for market-determined leases. In short, social and geopolitical actors acted to reproduce themselves insofar as the way they operated, which in turn initiated a contingent process of changing the rules of access to land, transforming the market into the main means of holding and expanding the means to life.[61]

The implication—given that capitalism's origins bear no relation to the maturation and combination of certain superior human qualities linked to favourable commercial, environmental, or technological factors—is that building spatial or civilisational hierarchies between the West and the non-West is pointless. In other words, bearing in mind the unintended emergence of capitalism, there is no basis for reproducing the West vs. non-West hierarchy in accordance with the development level of certain pre-existing entrepreneurial abilities, rationalities, creative technologies, and so on. PM thus precludes thinking of the West and the non-West based on the relative presence or absence of any generic "preconditions" for capitalism. As such, emphasising the ruptural nature and contingent origins of capitalism pre-empts the charge of developmental priority and hierarchical diffusionism.

Second, and in a correlated manner, once we depart from the transhistorical conceptions of capitalism's origins, we begin to register the "qualitative sameness" of the West (except Britain) and the non-West throughout most of history. For while capitalism emerged in England "unintentionally", capitalist social relations were, by and large, absent in the rest of the world, including continental Europe, until at least the 19th century. Of course, there were several differences, both within and between the West and the non-West. But none embodied capitalism, in itself, as a developmental tendency. "Tributary" social forms, based on "redistribution" and state-based appropriation of peasant surpluses, remained the basis of economy rather than a mere appendix to it, both in the West and non-West (except England).[62] There was no "Asian mode of production;" nor was there a more or less singular proto-capitalist "Western" path to modern development. Instead, as Eric Wolf

[60] Brenner, "Agrarian Class Structures."

[61] This emphasis on "contingency" may remind the reader of the California School narratives of world history, wherein the rise of the West is explained through a series of serendipitous accidents, such as the "fortuitous conquest" of the new world, proximity of coal resources, and "favourable trade winds." But contingency in PM does not signify mere accident or luck of a purely external and non-sociological nature. In other words, to borrow an expression from Bryan Turner, PM does not resort to "methodological accidentalism" to explain the origins of capitalism [(Bryan S. Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*, London: Routledge, 1994), pp.43]. Instead, it explains capitalism's appearance through the open-ended character of class and geopolitical struggle.

[62] Hannes Lacher, "Polanyian Perspectives on Global History," paper delivered at the workshop "Beyond the Eurocentrism Debate," organized by the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle, October 2015.

argues,[63] continental European development up to the 19th century was characterised by forms of tributary organisation similar to those that we typically find in non-European states. In a correlated manner, when capitalism began spreading outside Britain in the 19th century it occurred, neither in the West nor the non-West, in an internally induced fashion. There was no "organically" developing capitalism; instead, it developed, in both the West and the non-West, from "above", as a response to (geo)political and (geo)economic pressures instigated, directly or indirectly, by capitalist Britain.[64]

Third, that capitalism was born only "contingently" before expanding "geopolitically" in both the West and the non-West signifies the persistence until quite recently of a universal non-capitalist past which, I suggest, can be used as an alternative foundation on which to build a non-Eurocentric narrative of "global modernity". For sure, "modernity" is a notoriously ambiguous term, usually used as an all-encompassing concept for a wide range of processes and transformations—including state-formation, capitalism, the Enlightenment, colonialism, imperialism, secularism, individualism, citizenship, nationalism, genocide, private property, and industrialisation—that are considered central to the transition to a "modern" world. Indeed, thanks to this conceptual ambiguity that theorists have used modernity to add a sense of complexity to their analyses without pledging themselves to any monocausal conception of this composite transition.[65] The point is that once we abandon the transhistorical conceptions of the rise of capitalism, the globality of "modernity" begins to appear in a new light. The blanket conception of "modernity", for example, becomes increasingly unsustainable, even in the Western European context. We realise that there was no more-or-less singular European modernity; rather that Europe witnessed during the (early) modern period the appearance of radically different modernities. In particular, while a "capitalist modernity" began to develop in Britain during the early modern period, generating a culture of "individuality" and "productivity", the rest of "European modernity", and in particular the ideas of "radical Enlightenment"—including demands for radical/universal equality, popular will, opposition towards all kinds of authority, a commitment to universal human emancipation, and a "reason" to reject capital—prevailed in parts of early modern Europe wherein capitalist social relations were utterly or relatively absent.[66]

Obviously, this is not to deny that "European modernity", capitalist or otherwise, requires criticism. After all, even the most radical Enlightenment ideas have been modified to bolster the processes of internal and external colonialism and imperialism. Yet, associating "European modernity" with colonialism and imperialism on an *a priori* basis is barely defensible from a historical point of view, and conceals the radical heterogeneity and democratic content of the socio-intellectual terrain of Western Europe.

Indeed, once we recognise that a distinctly non-capitalist context in Europe led to the formulation of overtly radical ideas and movements, we immediately encounter a set of intriguing questions. Was this "radical modernity" a phenomenon applicable only to non-capitalist Europe? Was the radical democratic potential of modernity rooted exclusively in the European experience, travelling, say, all the way from Ancient Greece to Revolutionary France? Or, given that the non-West and the West (except Britain) were marked by fundamentally similar forms of socio-economic organisation, at least until the end of the 18th century, can we infer that socio-intellectual resources that made radical modernity possible in Europe were equally present elsewhere? If such a point can be substantiated, the concept

[63] Lacher, "Polanyian Perspectives"; Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), ch. 3–4.

[64] Wood, "Eurocentric Anti-Eurocentrism."

[65] For example, Barry Buzan and George Lawson, *The Global Transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 71.

[66] Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Pristine Culture of Capitalism: A Historical Essay on Old Regimes and Modern States*. (London: Verso, 1991); Ellen Meiksins Wood, "Modernity, Postmodernity or Capitalism?" *Review of International Political Economy,* Vol. 4, No. 3 (1997), pp. 539–60.

of "radical modernity" may enable us to "think with modernity without Eurocentrism": Radical modernity shifts our focus from the strictures of "capitalist modernity", furnishing us with an alternative non-Eurocentric entry point into the question of global modernity.

Rethinking the Globality of Modernity: From Capitalist Modernity to Radical Modernity

In thinking of modernity in a non-hierarchical way, "capitalism", or "capitalist modernity", thus leads us up a blind alley. By contrast, the concept of "radical modernity" promises greener pastures, i.e., it points to a universal legacy transmitted interactively and revitalised continuously throughout the globe, so unleashing a novel non-Eurocentric ground for imagining world history beyond the parameters of capitalist modernity.

"Democracy" is undoubtedly the most fundamental component of radical modernity. Although etymologically Greek, democracy was invented by no one.[67] For one thing, democracy, understood as a set of egalitarian practices and power-sharing procedures empowering ordinary people *both* politically and economically, could be found everywhere, tapped from the social and intellectual resources of a "universal" non-capitalist past.[68] That is to say, since the appearance of homo sapiens some 200 000 years ago, at least 90% of our species' history was spent in bands of nomadic egalitarian hunter gatherers unburdened with private property. Spatial mobility lent them the ability to avert ecological and economic risks, and also rendered pointless the development of the private property, thus precluding the *institutionalisation* of social inequalities. In other words, given that these bands were constantly on the move and that nobody could own more than what they could carry, no institutionalised hierarchies developed. To maximise the efficiency of hunting and reduce the risk of hunger, moreover, hunters had to cooperate in large groups and ensure that their fellows were "well nourished, healthy and vigorous enough to keep on hunting efficiently as a cooperative unit".[69] Therefore, they had to learn how to share food and childcare; how to limit intra-group competition; how to prevent any one hunter from obtaining too much power; and how to discipline potential bullies. This implies that there was, besides the ethos of egalitarianism, indeed also a constant tendency towards hierarchy and despotism, even in this context. For example, there were often individuals, "with special learned or innate propensities to dominate". Equally important, "within the family, egalitarian principles were likely to operate more weakly".[70] Yet, at the group level, the social logic of nomadic bands entailed ensuring effective checks and balances against hierarchy which, albeit informal, were vital to the survival of prehistoric hunting bands and agricultural tribes as a whole.[71] In short, these bands had to be egalitarian to survive: They "became human by becoming equal".[72] Radical egalitarianism thus at once entailed an economic and political strategy; a key factor driving humanity's evolutionary emergence and constituting a universal building block towards (as well as an "obstacle" to) the formation of future democracies.

Within the global legacy of radical egalitarianism, ancient Athens was surely an important, albeit brief, episode that generated philosophical texts of world-historical significance

[67] Jack Goody, *The Theft of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 50; Benjamin Isakhan and Stephen Stockwell, eds., *The Secret History of Democracy* (London: Palgrave, 2011).

[68] cf. Siba Grovogui, "Remembering Democracy: Anticolonial Evocations and Invocations of a Disappearing Norm," *African Identities*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2015), p. 78.

[69] Christopher Boehm, "Prehistory," in Isakhan, Benjamin and Stephen Stockwell, eds., *The Edinburgh Companion to the History of Democracy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p. 31.

[70] Christopher Boehm, *Hierarchy in the Forest: The Evolution of Egalitarian Behavior* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 9–10.

[71] Boehm, "Prehistory," p. 37.

[72] Jonathan Neale, "All Things Being Equal," *Ecologist*, 2021, https://theecologist.org/2021/dec/17/all-things-being-equal

and reiterated the politico-economic logic of radical egalitarianism within the context of a class-based society. The exclusion of slaves, women, and immigrants notwithstanding, poor male citizens' participation in decision-making processes liberated them from the need to support aristocratic taxation and consumption. Despite the existence of institutionalised socio-economic differences, therefore, political participation in ancient Athens continued to engender economic emancipation, thereby retaining (at least partially) the millennia-old logic of radical egalitarianism.[73]

Similar patterns also appeared in other parts of the world. For instance, as in ancient Athens, "Many early political systems…embodied consultative procedures designed to determine the will of the people".[74] In other words, "non-hierarchical, egalitarian and inclusive models of power [existed] among peoples as diverse as the ancient Phoenicians and the Australian Aborigines".[75] Furthermore, mounting evidence from around the world suggests that the logic of radical egalitarianism was equally active in the non-Western world. For example, the ancient Middle East witnessed the rise of political systems wherein labourers were part of decision-making processes, and their membership in the political community freed them from debts and the threat of hunger. Therefore, besides the existence of egalitarian assemblies predicated on complex voting procedures, political rights directly translated into measures for distributive justice for (male) commoners.[76] In short, radical egalitarianism continued to reverberate throughout the ancient world, manifesting itself in a wide range of strategies seeking to empower the poor as well as to govern in a collective fashion.

Given the global legacy of egalitarianism, it is perhaps no wonder that struggles for and against political and cultural centralisation, conventionally considered to have produced the seeds and context for the "Enlightenment" in Europe, were indeed widespread across the world, generating a plethora of questions and answers about the nature of justice, equality, humanity, property, "public space", science, "reason", and more.[77] Western Europe stood out among these multiple enlightenments by virtue of its ability to "tame" and strategically use those of its own for purposes of state- and empire-building and to bolster the authority of "enlightened" rulers. Yet, when one considers the more radical core of the Enlightenment debates, the question of the universality and interconnectedness of the legacy of radical egalitarianism comes once more to the fore.

To start with, as far as the legacy of radical egalitarianism in Europe is concerned, we need to remember that the European Enlightenment tradition was something of a "laggard". Indeed, there did exist a radical egalitarian vein in Europe, rooted in the folk traditions of the Middle Ages and early Christianity, which, for example, the Diggers and the Levellers in early modern England radicalised to re-assert their customary rights in the context of the transition to capitalism.[78] Yet, the idea that freedom, equality and democracy are products of Western Enlightenment would be quite misleading.[79] That is to say, it is difficult to find a single philosopher within the European Enlightenment tradition who would not find

[73] Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Citizens to Lords: A Social History of Western Political Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (London: Verso, 2008).

[74] Goody, *The Theft of History*, p. 256.

[75] Benjamin Isakhan and Stephen Stockwell, "Introduction: Democracy and History," in Benjamin Isakhan and Stephen Stockwell, eds., *The Secret History of Democracy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 4.

[76] Benjamin Isakhan, "What is so 'Primitive' about 'Primitive Democracy'? Comparing the Ancient Middle East and Classical Athens," in Benjamin Isakhan and Stephen Stockwell, eds., *The Secret History of Democracy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 29–31; Marc Van De Mieroop, *The Ancient Mesopotamian City* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), p. 135.

[77] Goody, *The Theft of History*; Sebastian Conrad, "Enlightenment in Global History: A Historiographical Critique," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 117, No. 4 (2012), pp. 999–1027; Isakhan and Stockwell, *The Secret History.*

[78] Geoff Kennedy, *Diggers, Levellers and Agrarian Capitalism Radical Political Thought in 17th Century England* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008); Christopher Hill, *The world turned upside down: radical ideas during the English revolution* (London: Penguin, 1984).

[79] David Graeber and David Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity* (London: Penguin, 2021), p. 17.

problematic, if not outright reject, such ideals as freedom, equality, and democracy. Furthermore, when looking at the larger context wherein the Enlightenment debates unfolded, it seems that the ideas of the European Enlightenment were, at least partially, influenced by and in response to the indigenous American critique of European institutions.[80] The intellectuals of indigenous populations, baffled by the "selfishness", "competitiveness", and "hostility of freedom" of their European invaders, developed their own critique of Europe in the process of being colonised. This showed Europeans the possibility of a fairer world with greater emancipatory potential but also forced them to mobilise a collection of new ideas to neutralise that indigenous critique, namely, the Enlightenment.[81]

In a similar vein, whether even the most "radical" representative within the Enlightenment tradition—Spinoza—was distinctively "European" is somewhat debatable. Spinoza, whose thoughts several scholars[82] see as the pinnacle of the Enlightenment's "humanism", "pantheism", and "ethics", was by no means unique. For one thing, Spinoza's philosophy was indirectly, yet deeply influenced by the philosophers of Al-Andalus, from which Spinoza's family was expelled after the Spanish conquest.[83] Spinoza combined the legacy of Arab and Jewish philosophy (hence, indirectly, that of antiquity) with the resources of his native Netherlands, and while doing so, radicalised these earlier debates.

But, so also did the syncretic and heterodox political-religious groups and thinkers which, by expanding on the rich philosophical heritage of the Middle East and antiquity, laid the basis for radical egalitarian politics in the medieval and early modern Middle East, India, and Asia.[84] In Anatolia and the Balkans, for example, these groups popularised, fought for, and were persecuted for their defence of an Islamic form of pantheistic wholeness. By emphasising the unity of god, humanity, and the universe, i.e., by arguing that god is in everything and in everyone, they rejected the necessity of "intermediary" and "artificial" institutions governing people's access to the means to life, such as the state, institutionalised religion, and private property.[85] Concomitantly, they highlighted the autonomy and equality of the human being, the importance of the mind, love of humanity, and respect for differences, in ways, albeit not identical, but highly comparable to Spinoza.[86] With that in mind, it is scarcely surprising that, centuries later, the early Republican regime in Turkey would not only look to Europe as a model but also *selectively* interpret precisely this radical indigenous-universal source in search of a feasible political–cultural base for its own "Enlightenment".[87]

Of course, since the advent of modernity, the global legacy of radical egalitarianism has experienced dramatic modifications. More precisely, modernity has used, radicalised, and undermined the global legacy of egalitarianism. For one thing, modernity, whenever coupled with capitalism, either suppressed or eviscerated radical interpretations of equality and property. Predictably so, for capitalism itself is based on the repeated insulation of

[80] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, chapter 2. I am grateful to Aziz Güzel for bringing this book to my attention.

[81] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, chapter 2.

[82] Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

[83] Armando Salvatore, "Reflexivity, Praxis, and 'Spirituality': Western Islam and Beyond," in Johann P. Arnason, Armando Salvatore and Georg Stauth, eds., *Islam in Process: Historical and Civilizational Perspectives* (Berlin: Transcript-Verlag, 2007), pp. 288–9.

[84] For example, Mark Sedgwick, *Western Sufism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[85] Ahmet Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006).

[86] Betül Sürücü, "*A Study on Alevi Humanism*," MA Thesis (Middle East Technical University, 2020); Nur O. Yalman, "Further Observations on Love (or equality)," in Jayne Warner, ed., *Cultural Horizons* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011), pp. 357–69; Derya Sümer, Spinoza Felsefesine Göre Tanrı-Doğa-İnsan İçkinliğinde Alevi Nefeslerinin İlettiği Etik Düşünce, PhD Thesis (Gazi University, 2019).

[87] Mark Soileau, *Humanist Mystics: Nationalism and the Commemoration of Saints in Turkey* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2018).

the "political" sphere from the "economic", i.e., it cuts off "essentially political issues" (e.g. the control of labour, land, production, and property) from the political arena, displacing them to a separate and democratically-unaccountable "economic" sphere that presumably functions according to its own laws.[88]

The flipside of this is that, for capitalism to function, demands for political equality and autonomy must either be crushed altogether, or separated from demands for radical economic redistribution through the institutions of liberal democracy. Yet, unlike "capitalist modernity", invoking "modernity" in a non-capitalist context had the potential to generate, as well as to undermine the global legacy of radical egalitarianism. And undermining it was what it did—for the simple reason that modernity, in the sense of centralisation of the means of coercion, entailed a strong tendency to suppress and monopolise different life-worlds, thus prompting processes of internal and external colonisation. On the other hand, however, whenever modernising elites could not simply rely on the market to deliver socially and geopolitically beneficial results, they turned to and selectively extracted from the global legacy of radical egalitarianism to broaden their mass base and expand their geopolitical competitiveness.

Consider, for example, the establishment of "citizen armies". Conscription was undoubtedly one of the most violent measures whereby "ordinary" people became "citizens", i.e., peasants and ordinary subjects gained equality and citizenship through their participation in citizen armies. Yet, the creation of the citizen soldier was an uneven process, invoking the use and abuse of equality in historically specific ways. For instance, Britain, with its capitalist economy and dispossessed "surplus" population, had no need to invoke universal equality and citizenship until World War I, because it could fend off geopolitical threats simply by employing more foreign mercenaries and volunteers, and by strengthening its naval power. In short, capitalist Britain could afford to buy soldiers without creating citizens. However, modernising elites operating in non-capitalist contexts in the West and the non-West, such as in revolutionary France and the late Ottoman Empire, could not rely on the market for their (geo)political reproduction. There was no capitalist market; therefore, in the face of dire pressures from "outside", they had to resort to the "citizen soldier" and hence to the idea of universal equality and popular will as the engine of the new political and military machine.[89] They mobilised (however limitedly) an egalitarian and populist understanding of political community in order to appropriate the energies of their populations in the face of their (geo)political rivals.

Assuredly, the creation of the citizen soldier was essentially a conservative act, aimed at improving the (geo)political standing of modernising elites. Yet, initiating the relations and institutions of modernity in a non-capitalist context also activated (albeit limitedly) the global legacy of radical egalitarianism. For once, modern equality and sovereignty were invoked in a non-capitalist setting and entailed the concurrent expansion of economic and political rights. That is to say, in the absence of an autonomous sphere of "economic" reproduction, "political" rights were simultaneously "economic" rights; claiming political equality was hence also a claim (at least in principle) to equal access to state-guaranteed land and state-based sources of income, which were the main locus of social reproduction. Therefore, the citizen soldier, endowed with land and equality, entailed the simultaneous expansion of political and economic rights. Indeed, partly because of the potentially

[88] Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Democracy against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[89] Robbie Shilliam, *German Thought and International Relations: The Rise and Fall of a Liberal Project* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Eren Duzgun, "Capitalism, Jacobinism and International Relations: Re-Interpreting the Ottoman Path to Modernity," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (2018), pp. 252–78; Eren Duzgun, "The International Relations of 'Bourgeois Revolutions': Disputing the Turkish Revolution," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (2018), pp. 414–43; Eren Duzgun, *Capitalism, Jacobinism and International Relations: Revisiting Turkish Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

explosive socio-economic consequences of democratic modernity, modernising elites, while invoking popular sovereignty, more often than not resorted to draconian measures to hierarchically requalify the conditions of being civic, equal, and modern.

Yet, the elite embracement of popular sovereignty, however limited, could still be commandeered by the lower classes and made a breeding ground for radical forms of political equality, citizenship, and property. Indeed, that is precisely what happened across continental Europe during the first half of the 19th century. For example, in reaction to the restoration of conservative regimes after 1815, foot soldiers and officers in several countries perceived the army as the vanguard of democracy, equality, and property, participating in and radicalising the Europewide revolutions of 1820, 1830, and 1848.[90] Yet, in Western Europe, the legacy of radical egalitarianism blazed brightly, albeit rapidly. After the first half of the 19th century, democratic modernity lost most of its transformative force, and radical conceptions of "nation", "equality", and "citizenship" were abstracted from their economic implications and turned into merely "political" and "cultural" aspects of the rising capitalist modernities. Radical manifestations of popular rule were, by and large, suppressed and integrated into a liberal framework of constitutional politics. The meaning of "equality", "citizenship", and "nation" was watered down and reinterpreted as bulwarks against working-class radicalism and internationalism.[91] Perhaps unsurprisingly, although the West provided a fertile ground for such brilliant radical thinkers from Thomas Paine to Proudhon, from Karl Marx to Rosa Luxemburg, none of the successful revolutions of the late 19th and 20th centuries took place in the West; the few revolutionary chapters in Europe (as in 1871 and 1919) did not achieve success.

Nevertheless, although capitalism in the West has gutted "modernity" of its radical content, the non-Western world, in the relative absence of capitalist social relations, has emerged as the new hotbed for resuscitation of the global legacy of radical egalitarianism. For one thing, as epitomised by the Haitian Revolution "that combined the principles of the French revolution with local traditions of resistance and equality", non-Western actors reinterpreted equality and sovereignty in the interests of their own (geo)political concerns, and while doing so "moments of appropriation" usually went beyond their original context and became "instances of programmatic radicalisation".[92] Non-Western elites selectively appealed to the global source of radical egalitarianism to muster support for their own political/military goals, which led to the emergence of a multiplicity of revolutionary movements under new spatio-temporal circumstances. From the revolutions of the first half of the century in Iran, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, and China to the uprisings of the Cold War years in Egypt, Algeria, Cuba, Vietnam, Ethiopia, and Angola, the non-Western world has breathed new life into the global tradition of radical equality, giving birth to the novel conditions of being "modern" and "equal".

Of course, elites of the third world, just like their Western counterparts, hierarchically reinterpreted the idea of equality in the course of state- and nation-formation. Yet, it is worth remembering that several anti-colonial philosophers, revolutionaries, and bureaucrats of the recent past, from Cabral, Fanon, and Che Guevara to the *évolués* of African or Asian origin, were all deeply committed to the further radicalisation of modernity.[93] All proclaimed allegiance to the global legacy of egalitarianism, humanism, and democracy, which not only dramatically "extended the boundaries of liberal procedural equality" but also led to

[90] Sandra Halperin, *War and Social Change in Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 73.
[91] Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
[92] Conrad, "Enlightenment in Global History," p. 1013; Zeynep Gulsah Capan, "Beyond Visible Entanglements: Connected Histories of the International," *International Studies Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (2020), pp. 289–306.
[93] Siba Grovogui, *Beyond Eurocentrism and Anarchy* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), p. 11.

new derivations of the cumulatively developing heritage of global egalitarianism.[94] Indeed, given that their defence of equality, justice, humanity, and reason immediately translated into demands for independence from all forms of economic, political, as well as colonial "oppression", their ideas became popular among dissidents in the West, who used them extensively to re-radicalise their own vision of modernity.[95]

To recap, recognising the universality of our "non-capitalist" past helps to uncover the existence of a global tradition of "radical modernity" rooted in the universal legacy of egalitarianism. In a variety of combinatory moves, different actors have built on one another, drawing selectively from the global pool of radical egalitarianism. As such, our attempt at "thinking with modernity without Eurocentrism" generates new insights once we distinguish between "capitalist modernity" and "radical modernity". "Radical modernity", unlike capitalist modernity, provides us with a common denominator for an overwhelming majority of the world population, registering the generative nature of their interactions in a non-hierarchical way. In other words, the concept of radical modernity activates a common ontological ground on which the West meets the "Rest" on an equal footing, thus enabling a new foundation for the cumulatively and interactively developing common heritage of humanity as a whole.

Conclusion

This article has argued that IPS has yet to deliver a convincing alternative to Eurocentric accounts of global modernity, for which it has not sufficiently abided by its own methodological underpinnings. IPS has correctly identified "presentism"—the tendency to view the past in terms of the present—as one of the main reasons for the persistence of Eurocentrism in IR. Presentism obscures that the core categories and concepts used to analyse world politics have their origins in an ideal-typical understanding of the European experience with modernity. Utilising these categories in a way that disregards their socio-temporal specificities, therefore, introduces a Eurocentric bias to our analysis of world politics. Yet, to what extent IPS has been able fully to apprehend this non-presentist potential remains debatable. In particular, I have argued that IPS has not sufficiently probed the historical sociological narratives that propel capitalism backwards into history, thus perpetuating hierarchical readings of world history.

I have shown that IPS would benefit from engaging with PM, whose emphasis on the historical specificity of capitalism helps to raise new questions and provide new answers about the interactive and polycentric constitution of global modernity. PM's non-presentist conception of capitalism allows us to conceive of capitalism as a contingent rupture in human history whose origins cannot be understood as a cumulative and combined process. This, in turn, enables a non-hierarchical understanding of the question of its origins and expansion. As we stop seeing capitalism as constantly present in the interstices of history, we no longer hierarchically categorise the world according to the presence or absence of the so-called precursors of capitalism in history, namely, trade, private property, and wage labour. From a PM perspective, therefore, the non-West no longer develops as a "deviation" from or "replication" of a conventionally understood Western "path" to modernity. Non-Western societies were never "poor" imitations of capitalism; nor are they appreciated solely for the extent of their contribution to the rise of capitalism in Europe. Given capitalism's contingent emergence and the fundamental sameness of the non-West and the West (except

[94] Anthony Bogues, "Radical Anti-Colonial Thought, Anti-Colonial Internationalism and the Politics of Human Solidarities," in Robbie Shilliam, ed., *International Relations and Non-Western Thought* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 200.

[95] Grovogui, *Beyond Eurocentrism*, p. 14.

Britain) until the 19th century, IPS can now reconsider the question of "multiple beginnings" and "co-authorship" of global modernity without creating new "centrisms".[96] We can begin to imagine a new historical narrative wherein Britain can be held accountable for the consequences of capitalism while activating the non-Western agency in the formation of the modern world in a new light.

Indeed, once the concept of "modernity" is liberated from the cage of "capitalism", we realise that there is another modernity, i.e., radical modernity, that can be used as an alternative entry point for rethinking the interconnectedness of global history. "Radical modernity" resists hierarchical colonial ontologies by emphasising the universality of radically egalitarian social patterns, i.e., how the seeds of radical modernity could be found everywhere, embedded in the radically egalitarian spirit of our universal non-capitalist past. In a correlated manner, "radical modernity" can serve as a common denominator for the interactive accumulation and combination of this universal and fundamentally similar non-capitalist past; therefore, it has the potential to recover the agency of the non-West without creating new spatial hierarchies and victimising the non-Western world. "Radical modernity" helps us to disidentify from capitalism in history, thus leading to a new interpretation of the category of the "universal" and also shedding new light on the socio-temporally differentiated, yet fundamentally similar forms of sociability, resistance, solidarity, and happiness.[97]

All in all, then, I have sought in this article to develop a critique of Eurocentrism by deepening the already existing dialogue between IPS and historical sociology, which can generate crucial implications for the wider field of (global) IR. Since the sociological turn in IR, much effort has been made to de-reify the processes and institutions of IR. IPS has destabilised the conventional meanings attached to the international, the political, and the sociological and while doing so has uncovered the violence of disciplinary knowledge production and, in a correlated manner, problematised the hierarchical spatio-temporal assumptions and discourses used to govern the world. However, I have argued that IPS's potential to dispense with the hierarchical conceptions of world history is impeded by its implicit acceptance of methodological presentism. I have hence suggested that the historical sociology that PM advances helps to mitigate this limitation, providing IR with a new sociology of "the international relations of modernity". I have advanced a preliminary framework for rethinking spatio-temporal connections and differences in world history which can then be used to recover the role of "interactive multiplicity" or "pluriverse" in the constitution of global IR.

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[96] Bilgin, "How to Remedy Eurocentrism," p. 500.

[97] Cf. Vasilaki, "Provincialising IR?"; Matin, "Redeeming the Universal"; Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nisancioglu, *How the West Came to Rule* (London: Pluto, 2015).