**TRANSCRIPT – Podcast “The empire that never was. A Global History perspective on European integration.**

**Prof. Patrick Pasture**

The question was asked to answer today was the following, what does the global history of Europe tell us about contemporary dynamics? Quite overwhelming, I must say I did not really where to start and one of the problems is what global history is?

Is that the History of the world? Is that the history of process of globalization or is it something else? When to start?

For me, it's basically a history of transregional and transcontinental interactions between regions. And that's already saying a lot, because that means it's not necessary about the whole world. And that also does not imply a certain chronological kind of border boundaries or identification. So it can be actually about everything.

I will return to some of the questions and approaches that I developed in that book, imagining European unity since 1000 Ad~~.~~ Anyway, what I have to say is that the title of that book and also the perspective is a little bit misleading. Actually, it is not about plans or ideas about European unity.

It is about that. But actually I used that to tell a different story about Europe, to look at the basic issues of European history, what I consider the basic issues of European history. I just use that idea of plans and imaginations about European unity.

What I do in the book and what I want to present today is a certain approach, and that approach is I call that decentring approach or decentring perspective. Some of you may have heard about decentering because it's very actual today in international relations. The historical approach of decentring is slightly different for the international relations specialist, particularly specialist of European foreign policy.

That is really looking at the view, the perspective of Non Europeans about Europe in the historical professions, historians interpret the concept broader than that. It is actually always different ways of looking at something, at a subject from different angles. It is important to understand that decentering can also be applied to everything.

It can be applied to historical events, but it is very often also the view of these events. It is about historical narratives, it's about political narratives as well. My historical decentring perspective includes a number of dimensions. First of all, of course, is that element of **space**. Space, and that is a bit similar as the international relations perspective, it is the view from others speaking about decentering Europe. It's the view of others on Europe.  But there is also tha**t interactional aspect**. It is about, if we speak about Europe, in part on the impact of Europe on the others, but viewed from the Non-europeans. But it is also on how this interaction with others, whoever that are on the Europe itself, and that is actually a very important element of this decentring dimension.

A third element is time. Time looking at certain objects, also, the present from a broad, long term historical perspective creates a sense of distance and it is that kind of distance that is essential to the decentering approach.

Looking at Europe history from this longer time perspective challenges the way we look at things. Because especially in Europe, the way we look at things, the way we look or approach things is very often from a very presentist perspective, where our perception of the past is really determined by the present. But also, we have the tendency not to look back very much and to illustrate that with a very simple, concrete example, we all know thing to know that the perspective of Europeans and

I always like to say that Chinese have that Millennium perspective on history.

But where you see that very clearly is, for example, in the history of colonialism. for Europeans, usually colonial times look like it is a very long time ago, but for the Chinese or for Africans, it is certainly not an event that happened in the 19th century. I think about open wars. I think about the Boxer Opera. That is what I in part mean Bringing this historical perspective is questioning also our appreciation of time.

So the perspective, the purpose of decentring is to question what seems obvious, what we assume without further thinking, bringing in the perspective of the outsiders, whoever that may be. And the idea is that offers a deeper understanding about the subject, but is also important important for our relations with others. And an example of this Chinese is evident. It helps to know the sensitivities and the way others look at certain events of the past.

With regard to European history, it's a way to overcome Eurocentrism.

Eurocentrism is in that way exactly the opposite: Viewing the world from oneself from the world from the perspective perspective of our own Place in history.

History in a Very broad perspective to illustrate. What decentering can mean? It Means is a concept that many of you may be very familiar with.

That is the normative power theory. I think that's yeah, I see people, not the normative power, is very is very popular. Tvalues associated with Europe, in this kind of context, is not exactly those that are prominent in the theories about normative Europe. It's certainly not those that are on the website of the EU, for example, as the fundamental. Values or expressed in. But in treaties of the EU. So it's often something entirely different. So how others perceive Europe in this respect is one of the Key questions that the decentering approach develops. But there is something that. I want to out immediately. That is that you cannot assume. Answers in fact, the decentering approach asks questions. Doesn't necessarily doesn't give the answers. The answers come out From the research.

But it's very important to realize that answers differ. And that you really have to go to the details and one of the things that a decentering approach. Emphasizes that's certainly different from, for example, colonial postcolonial approaches is that it really invites or compels you to get rid of simple dichotomies.

History is never that simple, and if you go to look at the perception or perception of others. You will see a wide variety of answers A wide variety of perceptions. Develop just a little bit in in one word, this colonial perspective you will find in a lot of sources as basic values of European greed, materialism Disrespect for local laws and rules of behavior.

You would find that very often. But you will find also very different kinds of appreciations. It's not always that negative. And even if then, the perceptions are more positive. Then still it can be entirely different. The Japanese doing a major restoration, for example, we know quite well how they developed a view of Europe, and it's still a fascinating story because. Now for East Asians. Needed to be imagined for standard, so that's the first thing you have to think about your fascinating. History by the way. Japanese also China is associated with Europe. Yes, it's greed. Yes is materialism but it is also Christianity for example.

Quite general by the way that Christianity is associated with with Europe. Colonialism one of the basic values between quotation marks of what Europeans are. It's colonialism. And that's one of the big lessons that the Japanese drew from their encounters as well. To be as strong as Europeans, we have to colonize. And that is what they did. They did so, by the way, in different ways. It's European, but that's a different story.

To move on a little bit in what I wanted to say. We easily speak about imperialism that we easily speak about colonialism, particularly in these days. But if we look at. The history of Europe being those plans for European integration, for example. We see ~~that we see.~~ Very more much complex story here too. For example, but what I wanted to point out is that ideas about European unity emerged very often from a sense of threat of fear of being marginalized.

And that is already the case very early in the 1820s, a certain Conrad, full Schmidt Fissel deck, for example Danishlooked in particular at the early United States. And already then so in the United States, a potential danger for Europe. And from that perspective. He pleaded for a strong European federation even with this, with a proper army in the 1820s. It's a fascinating history to look out the relationship between the United States and ideas and plans about European unity. Because yes, there is that element of possible threat and that really is a competitor. That's really something that comes back again and again in the 1820s, In the later 1890s and later again. 1890s, particularly, but at the same time it offered Ideas of how to Compete with this with the threat of the United States, for example, creating A common market, a customs union, strong federation. But also the idea of,And that's a bit strange, because we don't associate the United States with colonizing. But in the end of the 19th century. They looked at the United States conquering the West. And that idea Was taken up By Europeans. Not to go West, West is the ocean, but to go South to Africa is one of the ideas That inspired Europeans to go to colonize Africa. I'm making an explicit link with the conquest Of the West. Again, it's a bit surprising perspective.

Of course, if we refer to this kind of activities is slightly different from what we think about what European integration was about, isn't it? The basic narrative is that of Making peace and going to Conquer Africa is not exactly a specific project, it's true. But always and I, I think this is absolutely true And if you again look at the perspective of non Europeans, if they look at the European institutions, the history of European integration, it's something that really is emphasized for the more recent period of course.

The perception of European integration is peace Project, but of course the history of European integration is much more than about peace It is about peace, but it's about much more always, like we jokingly say that the 1st Plans for a European Union was for a crusade. It's a bit Laughing because yeah, I refer to the Middle Ages and It did not.

00:20:55 Speaker 3

We never think about the European integration as a pleading ~~for~~ for some sort of crusade, but I actually was saying that European integration is also inspired by threats I mentioned the United States, but quite surprising. Already around 1900, at the height of European colonialism, fear of a awakening of Asia, we're already quite present and motivated to some extent calls for a European Union.

00:22:17 Speaker 3

That is also relatively Important and we see that in that context, ideas about a European army with regard to The Boxer uprising ~~in the context of the Boxer Uprising.~~

The concept of a European and I stress European army appeared both in sources in China And in Europe. So there notwithstanding the fact that the European the army that.Went the intervention army that went to China in 1800. Nineteen 20 sorry was not a European army, it was perceived as such and it's a very interesting phenomenon. I already referred in that respect also to the EUR Africa project. Your Africa that was not simply called upon in the late 19th century. But continued within Europe as a major theme.

Until the late 1950s. In fact, until the early 1960s, A colonial dimension near African dimension was explicitly included in the Treaty of Rome. It was a much diluted Version, but it was nevertheless a certain a call for Europeans to associate with Africa and the background is ~~is~~ complex. But it has its origins in that your African ID.

It is very quickly forgotten. It's interesting, fascinating history how that could be forgotten. It has been forgotten both In Europe. Which is quite ~~understanding.~~ It's understandably, of course. Given the quick decolonization but also very quickly forgotten in Africa.

And I my hypothesis here is that it was also in the interest of African leaders to not to emphasize this dimension, because what continued was a development and assistant program that was part of this. Colonial between quotation marks program And that benefited. African leaders as well, so here too.  But I think. There is a lot of research to be done still on this African perspective of. The Your Africa project which is going on. At this moment. So we return to the peace project main element of European integration nevertheless.

And what is so fascinating for me that is that European integration finally brings together a lot of initiatives that have been developed in earlier periods. To establish peace. For example, peace through trade interactions by legal norms, by negotiations and so forth. Each of these separately had been tried and. But never really. Tried and tested I would say, but yes indeed, that's the to some extent but never worked very much. But altogether you could say that the European integration process has considerably contributed to pacify Europe. Although at the same time critical outside perspective will show to which extent.

The start of the. European integration project is also after the Second World War is dependent on the influence of the United States~~, I'm not going to develop that much.~~ More one of the elements and how I come to the idea of empire that was in the title of my talk was. One of the elements that I would say floats over many of these narratives is that. The peace system is an alternative for the idea of One empire. Taking dominance over Europe.

In fact, that's an idea that. Dates or pre dates already The Congress of Vienna. Has very much. Developed with regard to the chorionic empire. But many have beliefs and continue to believe that this idea that. Empires become obsolete in modern Europe because nation states take over. I think that is one of the things that also global history has strongly opposed and shown actually this not to be the case indeed. Though profoundly modified, continue to dominate the European political landscape until the Second World War. And with also the explicit Objectives for some at least to dominate Europe, the European continent.

Of course we think about if we speak about the European empires in the 19 and 20 century and we think about colonial empires, but we Than to dissociate and this that is one of the points that this global decentering approach has shown. The whole idea to dissociate European and colonial history. That is fundamentally flow a couple of years ago. The whole idea of Europe of the EU as empire emerged. As a story and I found that very, very surprising and very, very strange To be honest. Even I understand the argument very well, what is referred to in this context is not, of course, not the idea of an empire That is going to conquer Europe, no. But also in 2007, spoke about Europe's empire, explicitly referred to an idea of a non-Imperial empire. And Jan Zielonka with professor here well known to you, I think. Wrote a book about Europe as empire, referring to the idea on one hand.

Of course, especially that all the Member States associated by their free will, we're also referring to A rather loose Federation, in which all the different states maintain their sovereignty.

I think that's a very interesting but in some ways also problematic view because. In the end, the main difference between model and this. This morning new and old empires is particularly in the legitimation of the of this empire. The sovereignty which lays with the people in. Are the EU and modern European institutions not elsewhere? I think that is an important element. But it is true, and that is quite interesting. And that's one of the last points that I want to emphasize.

Is that the EU Has embraced the values of diversity? And I don't think that anybody realize to which extent this is a novel idea within European history?

Perhaps this is a team that I have particularly developed in in in the book Imagining European Unity, and it's one of the first things that struck me long time when I was starting to do research in Europe, is how much Europeans see themselves as being so diverse.

But if you compare you look to Europe from a non European perspective from an African perspective or Southeast Asian perspective. I find it very difficult to understand.

Why Europeans emphasize so much their diversity. Yes there is a great political fragmentation, but culturally the number of languages. Now we tend to say it's a lot, but compared to the number of languages in Africa or India or Southeast Asia, it's relatively limited certainly if you take into account Our families of languages. Religiously Europe remained largely homogeneous Christian.

The situation in Southeast Asia where you have Christians, Buddhists, hinduists Muslims and so forth is quite different in that respect, and this brought me to the very fundamental idea that in European history Europeans have developed fear of diversity. A deep longing for homogeneity And that longing for homegeneity that comes as deep historical roots.

On the one hand, everybody involved easily come up with the idea that our Christianity, which is belief. In one God and Having the monopoly.

On the truth, but I think that's true. Karen Armstrong, for example famous author has mentioned that, but I think the political dimension is certainly as important.The Association of Church and state which meant. That whoever defends off takes up a different position. Dissident position predefinition

Also attacks the state. Commits some sort of state, and it is that that particular association that explains. For me this. Deep longing for homogeneity.  What Is so remarkable for me. Is then that this ideal of homogeneity Has been continue In a secularized format and even's tangent in secularized form. In the idea of the nation in nationalism. And that has tremendous consequences in how societies are function. But it's really remarkable. And it also there are many, many interesting dimensions that you can see here. On the one hand, association. Of how we think about protection of rights. Integrated and associated with the nation.

But on the other hand, the whole idea of the development of minorities protected but also. And easily. You have this whole history of deportations of expulsions, and so forth. Eventually, even in the most extreme cases of organized genocide. Which is also part of this history.

The last thing that I'm I have not much time I, I guess, to develop this more is that if you look already mentioned that from a non-European perspective one Thing that that Strikes is also the fact that Europe. Remain Christian. Clearly the position of religion of Christianity within a European Society change tremendously and there is a kind of secularization in the sense but. Particularly of delegitimization of the state.  However, the cultural presence of Christianity Remained extremely strong and that is clearly visible from a non-European perspective. I that remain so until today, and that's really something that comes forward in in narratives about Europe.

In many places of Europe, but also comes to. The fore in the. In my experiences, migrant workers, for example. I always was always struck. I must say by the fact that my colleagues working on migrants systematically. Ignored this observation that they always said Europe is that's Christian is Christian.  And it was always ignored, and that's illustrates a certain what I call a secularist mindset among European among Europeans.

And I think it's important because we are now living in a society in where religion becomes more visible again becomes more a political issue again. The ease by which both populists but also secularist movements; Secularist, elites often Return to the question of Religion. Shows how strong its cultural dimension has remained within you.

I think this is an important element and it is really is something that has been emphasized by global historians. They have very much contributed to questioning the fundamental secularists who say narratives about Europe, synchronization thesis and so forth is partly. Questions by global historians from that perspective. So to conclude, what does global history of Europe tell us about contemporary dynamics? In 2000, historian Deepasha Kabati. I think some people know the work of Shanghai Party, but it's an important book of called Province Alliance in Europe. Provincial Ising new Europe was not about the marginalization of Europe in international politics. He says himself in the book that's obvious enough. Saying that is also quite. Challenged bessel fries. What he really meant is the need for a kind of decolonization of the mind. That was what it is about.Our decolonizing European thinking very prominent today in with regard to the Black Lives Matter movement as well.

What he asked for in the end is a kind of European reset. Where Europe would take stock with its history, its contested values and questions its own values and people. What are our values taking in account how we have behaved and so forth. And in fact, it's a plea for new dialogue.  think.

And here. What I Is that? Actually, if you look at the EU, it you with all the criticism that we can have has exactly tried to do this to some extent as really by introducing these narrative of all diversity

it has really tried to constitute. This kind of break. With with it's with his own past.

How difficult it also was, and because if you look at the European integration history, the very even when we speak about human rights, the European Convention of Human Rights is very well known that actually it's often set is more radical than the Universal Declaration. But it did not extend to people in colonies, at least not automatically. So some people have said, and I think not without round at doing European Convention was actually for white men only. But still there is a. Whole long way. And the EU today is very much. Far away from that situation. It's sometimes, and that's the last point that I want to say is that it has made Europeans, sometimes quite complacent, to be honest, and I think that is something that came to the fore particular.

It comes in the foreigner in contemporary relations with non-Europeans, but it has also very much. Come to the fore. In 1888, nineteen, 89 sorry in relations with Eastern Europeans. I think a decentering perspective can help. To overcome this complacency also. And can help to establish. A fresh dialogue. And I think that is really, the purpose, and to be honest. The EU.

In the end is quite well placed because if there is winding. That Europeans finally have learnt. That is to engage in a dialogue.

**Prof. Kaiser**

Yes, thank you very much Patrick for coming first of all and for sharing your great insights with us, especially the long term perspective I think, which is very unusual and which is perhaps one of the reasons why Prof. Georgakakis decided to invite you here.

First of all, I happen to agree with you on the function of history to help to understand and explain the project. Isn't sorry, and in our case perhaps the European Union, but that this is also only for historians.

A secondary function to understanding history itself, so I think that's always when you ask, as a sociologist or political scientist. For example, a historian. Can you please make a contribution to understanding how COVID-19 is changing the world now?

Then this is something that you know where historians perhaps will be a little bit reluctant to make comments very quickly. And so the interest of course of most of the students here, because they tend to be students of law or politics or economics, may nevertheless be more pronounced in the field of what is the contemporary relevance of history. So I'm going to try and relate what you've said, perhaps to slightly greater extent to some of the contemporary issues. In the European Union and then others who are present here among the students or other staff visiting professors can perhaps make additional contributions to that.

Now, I also agree on your critical assessment in the book of the Historiography of European Union of the present day European Union. With that capital EU. You add something that has been for a long time, quite limited and you argue, I think if I recall this correctly, that the dominant trend in the historiography is about interpreting integral integration.

As I quote the coming of age of a particular intellectual tradition, and of course they did in different intellectual traditions that different. Historians draw on, and while I understand that this is a particular perspective in the history of ideas, I also think that overall this is actually quite a marginal perspective in terms of the historiography of your of the European Union. More generally, in terms of the post war period.

Yet so, from my perspective, the bigger problem would be that much of this historiography is, in a sense, a historical, because it looks at institutional mechanisms, policy problems, decision making processes, and so on in a particular period of time, but without taking a long term perspective at the evolution of these or other phenomena. In this longer-term time perspective, and that's also where I think your work and your book particularly makes the greatest contribution in terms of adopting this longer period. Effective and also in terms of the decentering that you've emphasized so much and more, I think tonight than in the book itself, where it's somewhat more implicit now.

There's quite a lot of other literature now that looks at long term perspectives across the 1st and 2nd world wars, and I've tried to contribute to that myself, but I think there's very little that goes back to the middle. That to before the middle of the 19th century, so I think that's a very important country. I also agree on the need and not just because of contemporary political debates, but for historical reasons to consider colonialism and decolonization and to explore linkages in the past between European integration ideas and actual the actual process or politics of European integration and the post Period and colonialism. The colonial legacy and decolonization. But as you have developed this, I think more succinctly and for me, also somewhat more convincingly here than in the book. Actually, I do think that this needs to be conceived more broadly as Europe's as you put this in a similar way, I think.

Interconnectedness with the wider world and its exchange relations so and how this then related to. If you like the inverted commas, domestic politics of European integration in the post war period.

And so this would then also not just be about Europe's relationship with colonial territories in the past, but also with those with independent, the independent near abroad. If you, like you mentioned Russia for example, and at least you made a side remark today, I think to the Ottoman Empire or the modern day Turkey for example. And we might even say in the context of the European Union that we now have to consider the United Kingdom after Brexit, as well as the Europe's near abroad. In inverted commas, or the European Union, European Union's near abroad. And that this is an important relationship to consider in terms of outside, in perspectives that you emphasized and inside out perspectives. But also in the sense broader perspective, in the sense that these colonial relationships, and again you also said that today, and I don't think so clear in the book were not merely of course, about oppression and exploitation, although a lot of the relationship was about oppression and exploitation. But there was also a lot of cultural exchange, transfer of ideas and practices, and importantly, also concepts and practices of politics. In fact of your book, you refer to chords for egalitarian French colonies which facilitated decolonization. So in other words, the colonizers in the 19th century.

Onward from the 19th century onwards inadvertently spread tools. If you like for these deconstruction or destructions or of their own regime that they established in the colonies, and I think it's this kind of ambivalence in the historical relationship between Europe and the colonial.

Territories and colonized people that I think is really crucial for understanding this relationship and also its impact on post war European integration. So it's a multifaceted character and it shouldn't be reduced.

I'm not saying that you're reducing it to that, but I think sometimes in the contemporary political debate it gets reduced to this regime of. Oppression exploitation, which it of course also was.

Another point that I would like to make in relation to your arguments in the book is about the spatial dimension, which I think is really important, and you emphasize that a lot in terms of taking a global perspective and looking at other non-European perspectives on Europe and so on with which of course I entirely agree. But I also think that it's really important to understand, and I think that's where your book is.

Perhaps a little bit too much for my taste the Northwestern European history of all of this and continental European history with UK extensions if you like, which is completely natural.

I think in terms of your own background and where you are based, but nevertheless it's the Northwestern European history of colonialism, but colonialism and the colonial legacy have got very different meanings.

Across Europe in different parts of Europe, which I think is enormously important for understanding contemporary discourses about this. So in the enlarged European Union of the 27, not the six founding Member States from the post war period.

Many states of course have no legacy of own colonialism like the Republic of Ireland, Finland, Slovenia, Poland, Cyprus and so on, and instead some of them, like Ireland, have an experience of having been colonized by other European countries or other countries like Poland, for example, having been divided, occupied, oppressed by their name.

Papers for very long period of time, so your interpretation of the impact of colonialism on the history of European integration is perhaps to some extent limited to the six founding Member States of the EC, and I would say spend even more relevant to a country like France, possibly also Belgium, with its. You know, terror huge colonial territory in central Africa. Rather than Italy about which you talk a little bit more or Germany, because these countries of course had their own legacy of colonialism and had been a very oppressive force in places like Namibia or in Ethiopia, for example.

But of course the period of colonialism was shorter, and I think it left much less of an Imprint on the societies and on the population of these countries as well as the political elites in terms of their post 1945 orientation in relation to European integration. So I think all the literature that I know shows, for example, that the German policymakers were mainly concerned about economic benefits of getting access to French colonial territories, for example, but these larger geopolitical imaginations of Rafiq didn't really play a significant role there at all. So that takes me to the next point, which is

Your Africa idea or the OR Africa idea of the 1950s, and I'm just wondering, I know this book, which you also cite. Of course, by these two Swedes, which is?

You know, first of all, is not really written by historians. Secondly, it's methodologically really bad because they just associate some ideas that they've come across somewhere and make up the history out of this of the post war forms of Continental West European integration. As this Neo colonial Imperial project. Which I don't think is particularly convincing, but the general idea of course that the notion of Africa was quite important. You find that in other historiography nowadays as well, particularly in France, is of course relevant. My question is, how meaningful was this really outside? That of France, particularly the idea that this was important for maintaining a European great power status and not just you know, surviving economically in the post war context of the Cold War and competition with the United States of America and the attempt to contain Communism and the Soviet Union. So first of all, of course. It didn't absolutely nothing to prevent a decolonization.

In the late 1950s and 1960s, secondly, the colonial territories, as you point out, in most cases were an economic burden, and indeed the Overseas Development Fund that you're referring to in your book as well, which was created in the context of the EC, was about burden sharing. It wasn't about benefiting from Empire was about.

Getting the Germans to pay for some of the investments by the French and their colonial territories essentially.

Also, I think if you look at the politics in the 1960s, already uncertain in the 1970s, then the relationship of the EC and the EC Member States with the ACP, the African Caribbean and Pacific former then increasingly former colonial territories of some of the Member States of the EC, no overall.

All were of low economic and political relevance and became heavily submerged in the Cold War confrontation and the question of whether these countries would be communist or capitalist democratic in some form or shape. And my last point here, I think I would strongly advocate not to confound, and you're doing this a little bit. I think in your book. Probably inadvertently, some of the Member States or the Member States and Member State government with the European Communities or European Economic Community at the time.

So you say at one point that the EC, the European Community or communities had to give up its colonial ambition.

Now the EC was only created as such in 1958 and I think collectively as an actor. The EC never had any colonial ambitions and I think if you look at the supranational institutions, I think it's difficult to say that about the Commission or the European Parliament, although of course there were some continuity's we noticed from the literature in terms of how the European Commission managed.

We see development aid, for example, for the former colonial territories of countries like France and Belgium.

Now my last point is that my understanding of the overall and overarching objective of the book is that you want us to as historians, but also perhaps more generally as citizens of Europe and the European Union to enhance our own reflexivity in terms of thinking about Europe and the European.

From a decentered perspective where we take far more into consideration what people in other world regions or countries outside, including former colonial territories, independent states in Africa or Asia, but also from elsewhere like Japan or China, might be thinking about the European Union and our history and how that has impacted. From them, and of course, I'm all in favor. I'm all in favor of that as not something that anyone I think would seriously want to dispute. But what I would like to say in relation to the contemporary global politics is that at least I see a certain danger that.

This incredible obsession that we seem to be having with enhancing our reflexive reflexivity might be used by others in international politics as a kind of moral boomerang to undermine the European Union and its norms and values as they are defined in the Lisbon Treaty. And we see this both from within the European Union and from outside of the European Union. So internally, for example, when the Polish Prime Minister last week talks about the European Union as an imperial project that is preparing the Third World War against Poland. And that's a phenomenally good example of this, and I wonder whether it's not necessary for the European Union.

Perhaps to actually be a little bit less self reflexive at that point and say, well, there are actually certain norms and values, and even though they are associated with this history, we still stand by them and want to implement them and insist on them. Or externally, because even I know, because because of your particular interest in China also through your marriage etc. But also in terms of the history and the the cultural connections and so on.

I think China would be a fantastic example outside of the European Union. Of course the Chinese have all reason to think about what they conceive. Of the 100 years of humiliation to be concerned about the way in which Europeans oppress the Chinese and occupied parts of the country and interfered in its internal policy and then the US as well engendered Japan as well. So we are not the only perpetrators, of course. But at the same time, this narrative which precedes of course, the take of taking of power by the communists in 1949, has been developed into such a fantastically cohesive narrative by the Communist political party.

Now that it's used instrumentally, not just because history matters in China because they think about it in 2000 year terms, but it's also used strategically against the European Youth. Union and to present Chinese policy, which appears to me to be increasingly less oriented towards dialogue but far more oriented towards creating their own imperial project for the 21st century. It's being used against Europe and the European Union in many different strategic ways at the narrative level, but also in terms of Politics and policymaking, like the 1717 + 1 format, and some of the use usages of the road and belt initiative, etc. So I think maybe by becoming so self reflexive about our own imperial past, we are no longer able to.

Then actually opposed these kinds of contemporary imperial projects by others.

**Prof. Patrick Pasture**

Thanks Wolfram yeah. OK, I will talk a little bit closer, yeah? Well, thanks for the the Nice words.

First I think, it's not so easy to. Counter your arguments because I'm actually. I agree with a lot of the comments that you made. And yeah, there was a mistake and you pointed it and the mistake of speaking about. The European Communities that had to give up their colonial ambitions. Yeah, that is clearly a mistake and. Of course, I didn't mean that. And in part, but I get your point, but it's it's true that in.

European institutions have impart their own identity, but they're also very much dependent on this on the Member States, so making that distinction is not always easy. And it is not always that relevant, but in some cases this is and clearly in the case that you particularly mentioned, I I should have formulated it differently. I have no no problem in. Agreeing with that and this being said, I actually.

We agree to some extent with your comments on your Africa, the question how, how meaningful the Your African perspective wise. Outside of France.

First of all, I think it does depend on the time. If you speak about the the debate in the 1950s. I would fully agree that I think this is really something off. Of France in the first instance. Which more or less even the Belgians, were not immediately taken. In that project finally, they went along with it. But they had quite some reservations, so I think your your point is well taken for the 1950s, but not for earlier periods. The Africa. Well, but you know not as as good as I do.

For Germany in the 1920s already, and certainly in turn in the 1930s, the whole African project was quite important, so in that sense, yes, it depends on on on the period. No problem there you. That I would like to to mention. I think sometimes the the Yeah, the view on colonization is partly inspired by.

They influenced by that north Western European perspective, of course. Uhm, it's Britain. It's France, little bit random in colonial powers. I think that the German. German also Germany also had strong colonial ambitions, but again it depends on the time.

And of course, there's certainly now in the talker. Was not able to to. To go deeper in in all these differences, but they do matter, they do matter and. No, no problem there either.

That the Parts of Europe have a very different perspective. Perception of colonization refer to Poland, Ireland, and so forth. Yeah, that's absolutely right. Well, personally, I don't think that I.

I didn't mention that in the book, but it's a long time ago. But anyway, you see how it matters today also in in. In debates on decolonization in the in the memory wars. The literature on the memory wars in Europe focus very strongly on all the memory of the Holocaust and the the Second World War.

But actually you have similar story to be told about the colonial legacy, because this whole debate doesn't resonate in in Poland. In Ireland, yes. But with all the ambiguities. But at the same time there. Were a lot of Irish. Soldiers or colonialists in the British Empire, so it's it's more complicated. In the Irish case, or why?

But I I got your pointed there that that is certainly right. Uhm, I think you make an important your last question particularly is an important one, and this one that I I am struggling with a little bit. But in the end, I am a historian. And I know I know the work, my work and same for the work of others can be used by.

By people with bad faith in different ways, so be it. It's not my responsibility. In the end. I also don't think that jingping or has read my book to. Be honest so. Yes, I know these kind of narratives can be used to cancel your, but I would not exaggerate that.

It's also not the case that. It is so prominent now it is prominent among. A relatively small number of people. That's one element that I want to say. A second one is that actually. If I use the word decentering. It's also in part to go against this possibility, because Decentering is something that is not exclusive again.

Something that you you develop with regard to Europe. Everything needs to be centered, Chinese policies very much in need of this centering. Colonial discourses the whole way. Achero whole postcolonial narratives are very much in need of decentering. So in that sense, I think the centering is a move a much more flexible concept and invites to really. It's a way to question. All our self evident truth. That's the main thing I I would like to say. Perhaps the the very last last thing. Something we're not entirely agree with fans. It's not so that I don't agree with. But saying that. Uhm, the anti colonial struggles, partly inspired by the western concept, is true. But it's only partly true.

Nobody was waiting for Europeans or Westerners the way we communist flying flags of equality or whatever they Each country, its nature. Each people have their own traditions of resistance, but you know that Is as much. As I do. What I have tried to do in the book, perhaps less in the book, but I do in other work is is pointing out the multiple relations. Right? Book that you most of you will not be able to read because it is written in. Dutch is that we can count. In the east, where I discuss really long interactions. But the main focus, and it's a way of decentering Europe. This privileging of particular leaving, assessing the different relationship, for example, between Japan and India.

01:07:26 Speaker 3

It's in fact Europe played only very marginal rule. That is a way of the century and showing that. Also in the whole colonial history, we always tend to focus on West. The relationship between Europe and colonized countries, but in fact. That was all this only very. Small part of the interactions that happened. There was so much more going on. And often Europe was not even prominent. And that is something that that that I certainly miss in debates about colonialism and postcolonialism, because it's always about Europe and the rest. That's also why I am so allergic. To the term.

The global South. To global South doesn't exist, I'm sorry. It's the same old story of the West against the rest. And that is what the dissent. What I mean this century?

**STUDENT’S QUESTIONS**

**Student 1:**

We've been talking about the perception of the armies in maybe, for example, in China perceived as European, not as French, English, and so on. And I wanted to know if you had the chance to. Deep into the case of the international community of the international concession in Shanghai, the I think it's a peculiar part of history and then to reflection come. To my mind. The first is like. The need for the European Union. From national states to this conglomerate, this new entity might be driven to trying to replicate the Westphalian balance of power model, in which we need to scale up. In order to face these empires like the Russian and American, now addition is the is always more relevant; it might be the reason why we try to unify, and I didn't get in the conclusion. Why do you say the pursuing European unity was something that was like counterbalancing the The request by the anti colonization people inside the member, the national states. And finally, the last thing was this is a very broad reflection, like if a unit of reference in the future will be the nation, or if the concept of nation can be overcome, and if it's actually something fit. Like fit for the present in the future because I I imagine the. Maybe a Europe similar to the Holy Roman Empire, in which very is. One person the embodies the power of Europe by many regional, like small regional forces. And that's it. Thank you.

**Student 2:**

Hello, thank you. Thank you for your speech. First of all, I didn't have a chance to read your book, which is a. Shame, but I read the the conclusion which is very interesting and a few 80 years. That you mentioned in conclusion are very interesting, especially the idea of like unity in external threats, and some of these elements that characterize our European history. And I have two questions which are related to history but also related to future a little bit. So first question goes, do you think that's in 20 years? And today's history will be characterized by historians as scholars, as a period characterized by disunity, weakening of principle of diversity and reinforcement of nation states. So kind of like a period of decline of liberal consensus that we have in Europe now and the second question, do you think that European Union will be reinforced? Uh, European unity will be reinforced by new common threats. Perhaps the de fight against a liberal illiberal democracy, especially in countries like Poland or Hungary, which in my opinion again undermines the liberal consensus, contributes disunity, and also undermines the principle of Diversity thank you.

Student 3

 So like one of the questions that I had in this whole discussion is when we're talking about decentering European perspective. Then getting the perspectives from outside the EU like the whole time I was thinking about what about the migration aspect of that discussion that there has been a large diaspora of migrants that have come from colonial countries and that have arrived. To the to Europe in particular, I'm thinking about all the statues of Leopold two or other colonial administrator that were defaced because of that perspective of negative perspective of the colonial power that has subjugated the. The these regions and whether this kind of perspective of outsourcing the you know decentering sorry Like history takes into account this this dynamic and whether like this is something that you include in your. Uh, yeah, that gathering when you when making your your arguments in in your in your positions. Thank you.

Prof. Patrick Pasture

Thank you now. It's easier if I start with the last question perhaps, and I return. Thank you very much for interesting question by the way, in in. I think it's an important question. It's very important to. So in indeed I did refer to it in, but very very in passing in in in the lecture actually not in the book, and it's shame. The perspective of diaspora, would you rather use the word diaspora in this context, perhaps? It Is quite important there is of course a whole huge history on the aspera, also of the asper of migrants in all kind of ways in Europe and of there In different. Times in different moments in time and something is quite important. It's quite. The phenomenon itself is quite important. It's very interesting to see what what these migrants did this diaspora did in your. Very much depends of Course on what kind of people and why they were in Europe.

This makes a huge difference if it is. If if people come only for working or are actually political refugees. Or anti colonial is in itself quite interesting phenomenon. Quite a lot of anti colonial militants were able to come to to Europe. But what is more fascinating is that many. Who were not anti colonial militants, who in the course of the 19th or 20th century migrated to Europe?

Usually to work or to study because you had it specially in the British Empire. A lot of people from the elites we're able to to study in Europe, but they turned anti colonial militants in in Europe. It's this phenomena that has been relatively well studied. And if you look at the contemporary. Diasporas again. We have so many different kinds. But there is A very strong postcolonial.  See a little bit in in the Belgian context of Congolese spying in Belgium is very militant and is really driving a kind of post colonial or discourse, and these people in part who are responsible of.

It's possible, perhaps not the right word, but who are at the vanguard. Of this movement. Against the statues of the second and so forth. I think this is a very important voice. It's also a very particular voice. Overall, and that's in itself quite interesting. They become more militants, militant, anti colonial. Postcolonial in contemporary terms. And that the reasons vary for that. This can there's quite some research on it because perhaps they felt discriminations, even if the discrimination they had even in in, let's say the 1950s, or even in the 1920s. People from Africa from Asia went to. To Brussels, to Paris to Berlin too long. Experienced discrimination. Much more than in their home country. Perhaps not in fact, in Europe, probably.

The discrimination was less. Then in the column. But the perception is different. Why is the perception different? Because they live in in an environment. Equality is unknown. And then.

And we see that a number of people or she mean is a good example, become radicalized on from that perspective, some people married. European wives in general. And and that's also a factor that really drives.

The evolution towards more militant anti colonial. Narratives and militancy in general. So it is a very important voice. If you are writing a kind of decentralized history of Europe, I think it's it should be important to include. So it is a very good question.

Going to daughter also quite interesting questions. Yeah, the question how we look at this period in 20 years. If I more already suggested that is a kind of question that as a historian find always very difficult to answer. In part already because it all depends on what happens next. And that we don't know.

Maybe there is a bigger pandemic or there is a war and all our discussions change. So ah. And I also am very skeptical about the. The abilities of historians to predict the future. In that sense, they are not better. Moriston, sociologist. But at least historians know they come, but nevertheless. Really, I do not know external threats. Can reinforce unity. Do not always do.

It really depends. If the threat is, I would say if the threat is very identifiable. As a common threat to all the partners of the Union. There is much sense it will reinforce the the.The unity in the cohesion.

And will then lead to strengthening of the euro perhaps? If that is not the case. I would rather think the opposite And the example that you give.

Might be rather an example of the latter. Why is that? Because the the erosion of the rule of law in this case that you refer to is is internal. I don't see really happen.

You don't see a unity against Poland against Hungary. Very unlikely that it will change in the near future. Then I can. Then it is not very difficult to predict that things will. Get only worse. It will get only worse, but strengthening. Not that I don't believe. In fact, I answered the two questions to some some extent this way. How we look?

Desperate in 20 years will depend in fact also in part to the answers that the EU gives to do the challenges of Poland and Hungary. But much depends also what happens in Poland and Hungary.

Because it can be that you will have a total reversal of the situation, particularly in Poland still possible. In Hungary, I'm afraid that we passed. That, but I'm not sure you don't Know and again it will depend on what happened elsewhere. I think you. Were where you have to look now. Remains East Asia. That remains far, far more dangerous, and is something that in Europe people tend not to to consider enough. To know that.

If things go wrong. No in it by 1 St. The chance that you get more medium long term. An escalation that goes far beyond.

A station is far greater in my view, but. I am perhaps a little bit. Uh, I'm not overly objective here. I think it's very big and absolutely underestimated.Also, in the US, by the way.

All right, so that. But that can change things. What happens in Russia if?That is, if Russian Russia is more perceived as a threat, it will be much stronger. Much more lead to a stronger you, I think.But again, it depends how and why. Right, the first question.

I'm not so sure that the 1st. The first question on on the Shanghai Concession. I am not so sure what you really meant there, so perhaps you can say that again. But first the other questions. That was about China in part I think, and the balance of power.

Or should you play the balance? Of power in it was was that a question more or less.

First of all, I think balance of power. Is in itself a very bad way. Of doing international politics. The dynamics of international politics. Are prod definition unstable per definition? Will not lead to a lasting peace. It's one point if you want to read more why it's one reason why I would recommend to read the Book of Stella, have a conquering peace.

At that point she's right. Not too many other points I think. About a nation well? The my main point will be. Yeah, I don't believe that the nation state will disappear. It's much too much. Ingrained with European politics and international politics, it will not soon disappear and as historians like Evan Millward have demonstrated with all the reservations that you can have on his work, in fact the European Union. Continues to rely and strengthen the nation state.

But it does so many. Other things I do think that we need to. Find answers to some of the flaws. Of the nation state. But that will not imply that. It will disappear. But we have to rethink.

How we deal with diversity? I think that's a major issue, and here the framework of the nation state is not helpful. We have to go to find. New ways of thinking. About dealing with diversity. How we attribute right? To people. And purely individual system is also not always working