The study of European decolonization in Africa and Asia is not a new field of historical enquiry. There are good reasons to suggest that it emerged almost simultaneously with the momentous developments leading up to the establishment of newly independent countries in the Southern hemisphere. However, in the last ten years, the study of decolonization has evolved into one of the most dynamic and thought-provoking areas of research, both in terms of empirical findings as well as in regard to theoretical and methodological diversity. Given the magnitude of the epochal changes and the prominent place decolonization occupies in the history of the twentieth century, it is appropriate, and indeed, indispensable, to both consider the results of recent scholarship in a comparative perspective, and to move forward to novel fields of enquiry.

It is sufficient here to name but a few of the fascinating trends visible in contemporary decolonization studies: the appropriation of ‘subaltern’ perspectives by imperial historians; the fruitful integration of ‘orientalist’ as well as post-modern approaches into political, social, economic and cultural history; and a general understanding of the importance to perceive decolonization not simply as a transfer of power but as a multi-layered process of social, economic, cultural, and political transformation. Last but not least, studies of decolonization are beginning to conceive of this transformation as not simply a phenomenon pertinent to African and Asian societies. It is now increasingly regarded as a process which equally affected European societies, not only in terms of international relations, but also in terms of domestic politics, questions of identity and social relations.

‘Modernization’ was a widely accepted concept and a vision of the time. ‘Modernization’ operated on many levels, ranging from the local to the global, and it was propagated by very different actors: by village leaders throughout Africa, the Middle East and Asia; by nationalists who framed their vision of the nation state in modernist concepts and language; by Europeans who transformed discredited notions of the ‘civilizing mission’ into European-defined concepts of modernity; and by Cold War actors who competed for sympathies and allegiances in the emerging ‘Third World’. ‘Modernization’ meant organization, planning, social engineering, the destruction of ‘tradition’ and ‘nation building’. ‘Modernization’ had multiple meanings which need to be explored from a comparative perspective.
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9

09:30 Coffee

10:00 WORDS OF WELCOME
Jost Dülfér and Marc Frey
Hansi-Peter Ullmann (Vice-Dean, Faculty of Arts), University of Cologne
Andreas Gestrich (Director), German Historical Institute, London

INTRODUCTION
Jost Dülfér and Marc Frey

10:30 Panel I: Indigenous Elites in Asia and the Middle East – Old and New
Chair: Dietmar Rothermund, University of Heidelberg
Southeast Asian Elites and the Construction of the ‘Nation’
Paul Kratoska, National University of Singapore
Negotiating Decolonization in the Classroom: Franco-Lebanese Interaction in the 1940s
Esther Möller, Jacobs University Bremen
Nehru - the dilemmas of a colonial inheritance
Judith Brown, University of Oxford

12:45 Lunch

14:30 Panel II: Metropolitan Elites and the End of Empire
Chair: Jost Dülfér, University of Cologne
It was not displeasing to be thus assured that I, too, was decolonizable: European Colonials and the End of Empire in Comparative Context
Elizabeth Buettner, York University
Dutch Elites and the End of Empire
Marc Frey, Jacobs University Bremen
French Elites and the wave of decolonization around 1960
Daniel Mollenbauer, Ludwig-Maximilian University Munich

16:30 Coffee

17:00 Keynote Speech
Alternatives to Nationalism: The Political Imagination of Elites in French West Africa, 1945-1960
Frederick Cooper, New York University

19:45 Dinner (for Panelists)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10

09:15 Panel III: Metropolitan, Settler and Transnational Elites and the End of Empire
Chair: Corinna Unger, German Historical Institute, Washington
French Elites and the Decolonization of Indochina
Hugo Tertrais, Université de Paris 1 - Panthéon-Sorbonne
Verwoerdian Apartheid and African political elites in South Africa, 1950-1968
Christoph Marc, University of Duisburg-Essen

11:00 Panel IV: Military-Administrative Elites
Chair: Benedikt Stuchtey, German Historical Institute, London
Drivers of Change: Military-civilian elite units and the search for ‘modern men’ in the context of colonial wars during the 1950s
Stephan Malinowski, Humboldt University Berlin

12:45 Lunch

15:00 Roundtable Discussion
Commentators
Jost Dülfér, University of Cologne
Dietmar Rothermund, University of Heidelberg

17:00 Panel V b: Indigenous Elites in Africa – Old and New
Chair: Marc Frey, Jacobs University, Bremen
Sekou Touré and the Management of Elites in Guinea
Mairi S. Macdonald, University of Toronto
Julius Nyerere and the Project of African Socialism
Andreas Eckert, Humboldt University Berlin
The Formation of African elites vis-à-vis the EEC-process in Francophone Africa
Urban Vahlen, University of Cologne

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11

09:30 Panel VI: Economic elites: Renegotiating the market space from the local to the global
Chair: Jakob Vogel, University of Cologne
Liverpool business elites and the end of empire
Nicholas White, Liverpool John Moores University
Emerging business elite in newly independent Indonesia
J. Thomas Lindblad, University of Leiden
International Organizations and their Impact on new Elites during the Period of Independence
Daniel Man, University of Giessen

11:30 Coffee

14:45 Panel VII: The Cold War and Elites of the Third World
Chair: Anja Kruke, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Bonn
The Soviet Union and the Socialist camp: Elite formation for the Third World
Andreas Hilger, University of Hamburg
United States, decolonization and the education of Third World elites
Karina Unger, German Historical Institute Washington, DC

13:00 Lunch

15:00 Roundtable Discussion
Commentators
Jost Dülfér, University of Cologne
Dietmar Rothermund, University of Heidelberg

16:30 Coffee

19:30 Dinner (for Panelists)