



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



Universiteit
Leiden



Universities and Society at the End of Empire and Beyond (UniSoc)

University of Birmingham, 23-24 June 2026

Arts Building, Lecture Room 5

Organisers:

Berny Sèbe (University of Birmingham) and Anne-Isabelle Richard (Leiden University)

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Tuesday 23 June 2026

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch (optional)

13.00 – 13.15 Welcome to the University of Birmingham
Aleksandra Cavoški, Director of Global Engagement, College of Arts & Law,
University of Birmingham

13.15 – 13.30 Welcome to the “UniSoc” workshop
Berny Sèbe and Anne-Isabelle Richard

13.30 – 14.45 Keynote and Q&A by Priyamvada Gopal, University of Cambridge

Chair: Berny Sèbe, University of Birmingham

Decolonisation as Praxis: Knowledge, Struggle, and Remaking the Human

14.45 – 16.15 **Panel 1**

Epistemic Continuities: Transitions between the Colonial and the Post-Colonial

Chair: John Munro, University of Birmingham

Beatrice Marchesini, University of Trieste

Italian education strategies and the shaping of Somali ruling class (1950-1960).

Elizabeth Marcus, Newcastle University

Law, Language and Cultural Imperialism: The Affaire de l'Ecole de Droit de Beyrouth, 1951-1959.

Anne-Isabelle Richard, Leiden University

How Dutch Universities Discovered 'Developing Countries' in the 1950s and 1960s.

16.15 – 16.30 Coffee

Case-Studies: Leiden, Birmingham and their Colonial Whereabouts

Chair: Anne-Isabelle Richard, Leiden University

16.30 – 16.45 Alicia Schrikker, Leiden University

Preliminary research into Leiden University's colonial and slavery history: next steps?

16.45 – 17.45 Caroline Chapain, Rweyemamu Ndibalema and Emma Surman, Birmingham Business School

Case-Study Workshop: Decolonising a Business School in Context: from Theory to Practice.

18.45 Conference dinner

Wednesday 24 June 2026

8.30 – 10.30 Panel 2 Universities and Knowledge Production: Epistemic “Winds of Change”

Chair: Rehana Parveen, Birmingham Law School

Vincent Kretschmer Calderón, Albert Ludwigs Universität, Freiburg-im-Breisgau

Tracing Colonial Legacies and Epistemic Resistance from Colonial to Indigenous Universities: The case of the Universidad Autónoma Comunal de Oaxaca in Mexico.

Wesley Maraire, University of Copenhagen

Watching Norway Watch Itself: Sixty Years of Partnership Under Scrutiny.

Oluwole Coker, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife

Decolonising the African University Curriculum: Canonisation and its Discontents in African Literature Studies.

Claudio Pinheiro, University of Rio de Janeiro/Sephis Amsterdam

Southern Attitude: A sociologically oriented political project towards renewed practical ethics.

10.30 – 10.45 Coffee

10.45 – 12.45 Panel 3 Institutions Navigating Decolonisation

Chair: Jason Haynes, Birmingham Law School

Philipp Krauer, Monique Ligtenberg & Sarujan Theivendran, ETH Zürich

Training the Postcolonial World: ETH Zürich and the Remaking of Colonial Expertise in the Age of Decolonisation.

Nicolas Hafner, Graduate Institute, Geneva

From African to Development Studies: the Geneva Africa Institute in Search of a Programme, ca. 1960-1975.

Abdeladim Erradi, University of Lyon

The Sorbonne University and the transition of postcolonial France.

Sarah Limb, King's College London

Education and Empire: King's College London and Knowledge Production, 1920-1970.

12.45 – 13.45 Lunch

13.45 – 15.45 **Panel 4 Academic Networks and “Contact Zones” at the End of Empire**

Chair: Emanuelle Santos, University of Birmingham

Sara Legrandjaques, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University

Quit India? The Enrolment of Indian Students in European Universities before and after Independence (1945-1950).

Louise Hardwick, University of Birmingham

Joseph Zobel's La Fête à Paris (1953) and its afterlives.

Jules Siran, University of Geneva

Contact Zones: Hungarian Technical Universities and the Postcolonial Nations (1950s - 1990s).

Lutz Wahnschaffe, European University Institute, Florence

(Un-)Making Global Student Communities: Mobility, Decolonization and the Transformation of Christian Academic Networks, ca. 1945-1975.

15.45 – 16.00 Coffee

16.00 – 17.00 **Panel 5 Disciplines and Decolonisation: Case-Studies**

Chair: Alicia Schrikker, Leiden University

Ernest Lee, University of Chicago

Theory into Ploughshares: the Michigan State University-University of Nigeria project and agrarian development in the transnational 1960s.

Wiebe Hommes, University of Amsterdam

Colonial legal education and the development of international law.

17.00 – 17.30 **From Birmingham to Leiden, and onwards: Next steps**

Anne-Isabelle Richard and Berny Sèbe