

# „Eastminster: Decolonisation and State-Building in Asia“

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All of the South Asian States that emerged from British control in varying degrees took key substantial elements of the British Westminster system. This system was more commonly associated with the British settler countries like Australia, Canada and New Zealand where “kith and kin” links with Britain seemed to make this appropriate. However, the British and the South Asian indigenous elites saw advantages in applying this very British system to the very different context of the East. These South Asian nations did not have centuries to interpret and adjust in order to develop their constitution as the British had. Instead within months they needed to formulate and design a constitution and therefore invariably drew upon the system of their imperial master. The local elites with the involvement of external actors like British officials determined that Westminster could be fashioned to work in the East. Since the Westminster system is based on convention and ambiguity and not rigid evident rules the same Westminster system could be adopted and manipulated to produce diverse results and reactions that would shape these South Asian countries forever. These states therefore became Eastminsters that had clear institutional and political resemblances to Britain’s system, but with cultural and constitutional divergences from Westminster and the settler cases. This Lecture broadly examines the concept of Eastminster in the eventful context of South Asian decolonisation and need for rapid constitutional settlement. This constitution making period and the adoption of Eastminster had far reaching consequences for all of South Asia.

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**Venue:** South Asia Institute, Room Z10

**Time:** 6.15 p.m. / 18.15 Uhr