

Einladung zum Kolloquium

The moral economy of Assam's tea production: On the negotiation of justice between different interest groups for tea plantation labourers

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Assam, located in Northeast India, is the largest tea-growing region in the world. Assam tea is the main ingredient of many popular global tea blends, including German East Frisian Tea and English Breakfast Tea. Apart from being a famous beverage, however, Assam tea also raised international criticism recently regarding the precarious working and living conditions of tea plantation labourers in unequal global commodity chains. The present lecture analyses how different interest groups working on behalf of Assam's tea plantation labourers have negotiated on fairer labour and living conditions in the context of a shifting moral economy of tea production since the late 1990s. The focus of the analysis is on how different logics of activism, including post-Independence class-based trade unionism and the more recent identity politics of an indigenous peoples' movement in Assam, produce different mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, whose emancipating potential for tea plantation labourers will be further evaluated on the background of India's broader socio-political context.