



Lecture Series in Social Anthropology

Spring
Semester
2025

Tuesday 25 March 2025 | 4.15 p.m. | Room AND-4-06

Labour Relations and Mutual Moral Expectations in the Naivasha Cut Flower Industry

Dr. Gerda Kuiper (Universität zu Köln)

Over the past half a century, Lake Naivasha in Kenya has developed into the largest cut flower production hub on the African continent. Conditions on the farms have been scrutinized in the light of global discussions on ethical trade. Moreover, the sustainability of the industry and its ability to survive in a context of increased international competition and deteriorating environmental circumstances have been questioned for decades. To counter criticism on harsh labour conditions and on for instance pesticide use, many Naivasha farms have adopted external certification schemes. Such schemes, with Fairtrade being the most well-known example, contain detailed regulations meant to improve the position of labour and to reduce local environmental damage caused by flower production. Yet, such schemes are largely based on norms set in consumer markets. In comparison, the motivations and values of various groups of employees in the Naivasha production site have received little attention. In this talk, I will highlight local ethics of work and the value that is attached to flower farming in Naivasha. More specifically, I focus on the mutual expectations between the (mostly foreign) top managers, Kenyan middle-level managers, and general workers on the farms. This discussion will sketch the contours of a particular moral economy that has developed in the Naivasha cut flower industry - a moral economy based in the industry's (relative) stability rather than in conflict or an imminent break-down.

Organization:

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Entrance free of charge.

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