



Kaleidoscope of truth

written by Sandhya Fuchs
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Sandhya I. Fuchs (LSE and University of Bern) will talk about “Kaleidoscope of truth: Legal fictions, real cases and controversial proof in the production of the Prevention of Atrocities Act in Rajasthan”. Natasha Raheja (Cornell University) will be the discussant.

When: 9 April 2021 / 2.00-3.30 pm CET



Link: <https://zoom.us/j/93210372616pwd=dTZZ...>

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Abstract

The experiences and narratives that define my reality as a Dalit usually amount to lies in the eyes of the law!" This declaration, articulated by one of my fieldwork interlocutors in Rajasthan (India), who hailed from a family that occupies the lowest rank of 'untouchable' (Dalit) within the traditional Hindu caste hierarchy, highlights a tension between the perceptions and practices of truth and restitution that characterize marginalized lifeworlds, and legal understandings of proof and justice. Based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork in Rajasthan, India, which explored the social life of the 1989 Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act (PoA) – one of the most ambitious antidiscrimination laws worldwide – my presentation explores the relationship between legal proof and social testimonies of casteist violence. Against the backdrop of a 2018 judgement by the Indian Supreme Court, which declared that most complaints filed under the PoA amount to "false accusations," I argue that socially narratives, experiences and 'facts' of discrimination and casteist prejudice are often incompatible with legal 'truth' (Latour 2010; Fuchs 2020). This incompatibility results in the fact that the development of legal cases relies on abstracting precisely those socio-historical particulars (Cheng 2017) that define discriminatory action as such. Hence, I argue that the discourse of "false cases" that has come to the forefront around the Prevention of Atrocities Act in India, forces us to ask new questions about the different forms of truth that compete when law takes up the fight for equality.



See you on Zoom!

Here is the full [schedule](#) of the webinar series.

You can also access the webinar videos on [Allegra's YouTube channel](#).