

Panel 2: The History of Alcohol and Drugs in Modern South Asia (18th—20th Century)

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Abstract: At the beginning of the 21st century, alcoholism and/or transnational drug trafficking and drug addiction undoubtedly constitute major problems in various South Asian countries. That the production, circulation and consumption of mood altering substances not only creates (and responds to) *social* upheavals in the region but also has widespread economic, political and cultural repercussions on an international level is well known. This panel invites scholars who take a historical perspective on the role that alcohol and commodities nowadays classified as drugs (most notably opium and cannabis) have played in South Asia during the last three centuries, thereby looking at the changes in the way mood altering substances were produced, used and sold, but also regulated and controlled. Taking an encompassing approach, the panel will put social, cultural and economic aspects of the phenomenon under scrutiny.

The topics we would like to discuss in the session include, but are not limited to,

- the religio-cultural dimension of alcohol and drug consumption (or abstinence) in various regional and historical constellations and especially their effect on social status and cultural identities.
- the historical trajectory of the interaction between the politics of the colonial state and the production and trade of alcohol and narcotics
- nationalistic appropriations of the anti-opium and temperance movements in late 19th and early 20th centuries
- post-independence politics of prohibition (such as election campaigning in Indian states with a promise to ban alcohol).
- the establishment of and contestations over regimes of drug and alcohol regulation (in different periods of time), including state policies and international agreements as well as conflicts between administrators and producers and consumers of illegal substances.

The subject matter privileges a historical approach but fitting contributions from scholars from neighbouring disciplines (e.g. social anthropology, political science, modern indology or cultural studies etc.) will also be considered.

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