



WEDNESDAY SEMINAR

09.04.2025, 17:00 Uhr, Übungsraum (and online)
IKSA, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien, 4. Stock

Mathijs Pelkmans (London School of Economics and Political Science) Fitting and Refitting Graves on the Georgian-Turkish Border



Mathijs Pelkmans is a Professor of Anthropology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. A specialist of the Caucasus and Central Asia, his work explores specifically the intersection of power, knowledge, and difference. This is true

of his first monograph *Defending the Border: Identity, Religion, and Modernity in the Republic of Georgia* (2006) which traced the social biography of the Iron Curtain, as well as his second monograph *Fragile Conviction: Changing Ideological Landscapes in Urban Kyrgyzstan* (2017) which explored the fate of religious and secular ideologies in contexts of intense uncertainty. His interest in the shadowy sides of knowledge is especially visible in the edited collections *Ethnographies of Doubt* (2013), 'Wilful Blindness' (2020, with J. Bovensiepen), and *How People Compare* (2022, with H. Walker), and is central in his ongoing work on suspicion and conspiracy theorising.

kommende Termine

30.04.2025 **Working Group Against Intersectional Discrimination and Racism**
tba

28.05.2025 **Anna-Marie Walter**
Living with Ice: Between Engineering and Vitality. Perspectives from the Alps and the Himalayas.

Since 2018, Bihac, a small town in northwest Bosnia-Herzegovina close to the Croatia/EU border, has been a gathering site for irregularized migrants traveling the Balkan Route to the EU. Expectations were that local Bosnian Muslim population would feel solidarity with the mostly Muslim migrants, yet many soon joined efforts to demonize and drive them away. Local authorities restricted migrants' movement and forbade people from offering food, lodging, or transportation, while EU money funded official camps, where minimal care combined with control and containment. During my ethnographic research in Bihac in 2019-2020, many migrants preferred to avoid camps in favor of squats and make-shift shelters. Despite the near criminalization of offering aid, there were local residents who continued to quietly support migrants from their own resources and as autonomous actors not affiliated with organizations or aid groups. This presentation addresses this spontaneous and autonomous aid by bringing together concepts typically applied to similar activities – vernacular humanitarianism, everyday citizenship, or migrant solidarity. The aim is both to call attention to these acts that remain invisible in dominant accounts and to question and complicate the emphasis on resistance present in most scholarly assessments of small-scale aid.

Details:
<https://ksa.univie.ac.at/en/department/events/wednesday-seminar/>

