



WEDNESDAY SEMINAR

07.12.2022, 17:00 Uhr, HS-C

IKSA, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien, 4. Stock

Stefan Tarnowski (University of Cambridge)

The Logics and Logistics of Stabilisation: Beyond the Borders of Humanitarian Reason



Stefan Tarnowski is an anthropologist whose research brings together political and media anthropology, with a particular focus on the aftermaths of the 2010-11 Arab Revolutions. He completed his dissertation at Columbia University's Department of Anthropology, Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, and Center for Comparative Media. He's currently a postdoctoral Research Fellow at Corpus Christi College, the University of Cambridge.

kommende Termine

11.01.2023 **Jaanika Vider**

On the tracks of Maria Czaplicka: An Ethnography of a Collection

19.01.2023 (Thursday) **Jonathan Fine**

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The Syrian Civil Defence, or White Helmets, are a celebrated humanitarian organisation, with Nobel Peace Prize nominations and an Oscar to their name. Yet, during ethnographic fieldwork, it emerged that their founding and funding stemmed from a set of governmental logics called 'stabilisation', and that these should be "bucketed" as a separate kind from humanitarianism. Why not fund the celebrated search and rescue work of the Syrian Civil Defence for humanitarian reasons? What is distinctive about stabilisation as a kind of reason, or a set of logics and logistics? In this paper, I intervene in well-established claims by scholars that humanitarianism is the dominant frame of reference and form of reason for Western political and military interventions in scenes of misfortune around the world. Far from being a dominant or hegemonic discourse, I argue that the "War on Terror" marked a shift in the 'dominance' or even 'hegemony' of humanitarian reasons. I give an account of the logics and logistics of 'Stabilisation', which justifies political interventions on a moral economy of security, for reasons of preventing "violent extremism", and on the basis of theories of 'failed states'.
