

[View this email in your browser](#)



NEWSLETTER 2026/1 APRIL

IN FOCUS

Dear Anthropology of Economy Network members,

We are pleased to be reaching out with the first newsletter of 2026. Although April may be a little late to wish you a happy new year, we nevertheless hope that the year has begun well for all of you.

After several years of editing the newsletter's *Perspectives*, *Notes and Queries* column, James Carlier stepped down earlier this year. James's steady editorial hand will be greatly missed, and we are deeply grateful for his longstanding contribution to the newsletter. The transition is eased by the fact that [Andreas Streinzer](#) is taking on the role. Andreas needs little introduction as a former co-convenor of the network, and we are delighted to welcome him back in this new capacity.

We also mark another important departure. [Ognjen \(Oggie\) Kojanić](#), who has served as co-convenor of the network for the past four years, is stepping down from this role. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Oggie for his dedication, energy, and the many ways he has supported and shaped the network over this period. Below, you will find a call for expressions of interest for his replacement.

We round out this issue with network news, updates, and a rich selection of recent publications from members and friends.

Enjoy, and as always, we welcome your contributions and suggestions for future issues.

PERSPECTIVES, NOTES AND QUERIES

Making the Economy Affective in Post-Pandemic Shenzhen, China

I wish to recount a conversation with Jie, who was working for an investment company in Shenzhen, a southern Chinese city close to Hong Kong. Jie had graduated from one of China's elite universities in Beijing, and for those of his generation, called the "post-90 generation," graduating from an elite university meant good employment, such as professionals in finance or at major tech companies, and a bright future.

At three o'clock in the afternoon of a weekday in January 2025, I met Jie for coffee at a Starbucks on the ground floor of a shopping centre whose upper levels housed various financial institutions such as securities and investment companies. According to Jie, half of these floors now stood vacant due to the economic downturn. We sat by the window, surrounded by women and men who watched their children play while watching short videos and checking social media.

My original aim for the interview was to understand how investors conceptualise, plan and calculate their investment targets, and what criteria lead them to deem start-up teams composed of young graduates as promising investments. I had studied and prepared questions using terminology familiar to finance professionals, such as "How do you evaluate returns? Which industries are considered good investment targets?" Based on what metrics do you judge an investment likely to succeed?" Yet Jie cut me off, stating: "Truth be told, investing is 'at the mercy of the heavens' (靠天吃饭 *kaotian chifan*). You never know what sudden demand might emerge in today's market."

This ancient idiom, describing farmers' reliance on unpredictable weather, became the key to understanding a profound anxiety. Jie's education equipped him with models that promised order, but the post-pandemic reality of Shenzhen, with its falling property prices, widespread layoffs and shifting social sentiments, was disorderly. The "heavens" here were not just capricious policy shifts, but the volatile terrain of collective emotion. Here lies the core tension: the human desire to impose mental order on a disorderly world clashes with a world economy increasingly driven by elusive affective currents.

The classical and supply-side economics presented in his schooling offered Jie little guidance. They presumed rational actors and predictable equilibriums, and so failed to capture how demand was now being forged. Jie confessed that it was difficult to discern what could revive a consumption market weary of necessities and traditional luxuries. In response to this void, a new lexicon has emerged as a tool for ordering chaos. Jie explained his firm's focus on "emotional consumption," a phrase invented to categorise the uncategorisable. He cited the Chinese toy company Pop Mart, whose stock was soaring in 2025. He argued that purchasing one of Pop Mart's products, a limited-edition Labubu doll, was not about utility or classic conspicuous consumption; it was "acquiring potent yet fleeting joy." This was demand created not by material need or social status, but by the pursuit of specific, commodifiable emotion.

Chinese government, particularly local authorities, burdened by massive debts accumulated during the pandemic, attempt to stimulate new economic activity. Expanding the domestic consumption market and stimulating novel consumption are thus imperative. Yet even now, with investment targets relatively clear, Jie, as an investor, admits that it remains difficult to discern what demand-stimulating measures companies must implement to revive a consumption market traditionally dominated by what I mentioned above, necessities and conspicuous consumption. Classical economics posits that supply and demand will balance in the long run, while supply-side economics asserts that supply creates demand, with profits derived from this manufactured consumer need. To Jie, these classic economic principles, which are often abstracted in economics education, offer little insight into identifying and understanding new, emotionally driven consumption patterns.

Economic structural shifts caused by new consumption stimuli compel investors like Jie to invent new terminology (like "emotional consumption") to rationalise their "heaven-dependent" investment behaviour. As an individual navigating the new economic and social landscape during the post-pandemic period, Jie's interpretations and perplexities reflect the disorientation of post-pandemic actors confronting the disconnect between the newly embedded societal predicaments and familiar economic paradigms.

The invention of phrases like "emotional consumption" is an attempt to map and rationalise this nebulous new territory, to impose a grid of understanding on the chaotic weather of public sentiment. Jie's disorientation, then, is not a personal failing but an emblematic condition of this era. It reflects the struggle of all economic actors caught between the orderly paradigms of the past knowledge and the disordered, emotionally charged realities of a world where the heart of the market is no longer a metaphor, but its most volatile and essential organ.

Yujing Tan
Lecturer of International Studies, Leiden University
y.tan.5@hum.leidenuniv.nl

If you want to reply to this column, or if you want to write a column or have an idea for one, please communicate with Andreas Streinzer: andreas.streinzer@univie.ac.at

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Co-Convenor of the Anthropology of Economy Network

The Anthropology of Economy (AoE) Network of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) invites expressions of interest for the position of co-convenor.

The co-convenor works collaboratively with the existing convenors to support the network's activities, including:

- coordinating panels and events at EASA conferences,
- contributing to the network's communications,
- fostering engagement among members,
- supporting initiatives that promote research and collaboration in economic anthropology.

We welcome expressions of interest from scholars at any career stage who are members of EASA and are committed to contributing to the development of the network.

If you are interested, please send a CV and a short statement (up to 300 words) outlining your motivation and relevant experience to Nikolaos Olma (nolma@sa.aegean.gr) by 30 June 2026.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Digital Monies: For Better or Worse? Emerging Monetary Infrastructures between Social Change and Control

University of Freiburg, 2-3 July 2026

Digital monies - from e-wallets to cryptocurrencies - are rapidly transforming how people pay, save, and invest worldwide. Far from peripheral, contexts across the global majority are central to these developments, shaping technological designs, regulatory frameworks, and everyday practices. At the same time, digital monies are tied to competing political projects: they are promoted as tools of financial inclusion, while also enabling new forms of governance, surveillance, and exclusion. These systems operate between promises of accessibility and efficiency and the realities of unequal access, infrastructural dependencies, and emerging forms of value extraction.

This 1.5-day workshop approaches digital monies as socio-technical infrastructures that organise power, value, and social relations. Bringing together interdisciplinary perspectives and empirical case studies, it explores how digital monies function as infrastructures of governance, inclusion and exclusion, sociality, and future-making across diverse contexts.

We invite submissions from across the social sciences and related fields.

If you are interested in taking part, please send abstracts of 250-300 words by Monday 4 May 2026 to Fabienne Hansen (fabienne.hansen@email.uni-freiburg.de).

Organized by Fabienne Hansen, Tobias Jäger and Dr. Mechthild von Vacano.

For further information, including details on travel expense coverage, please see our website at: <https://uni-freiburg.de/ska/digital-monies>

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS



***Temptations in Ruin: Sovereign Accumulation and the Making of Post-Genocide Turkey*, by Alice von Bieberstein. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2025.**

Temptations in Ruin examines the political-economic afterlife of the Armenian genocide in present-day Turkey, focusing on the region of Muş (Moush). Anthropologist Alice von Bieberstein explores how the 1915 genocide and dispossession of Armenians shaped property regimes, citizenship, and economic logics that continue to reverberate today.

By combining ethnography with historical context and diverse perspectives, *Temptations in Ruin* generates new insights into how past violence shapes contemporary economic practices and social relations. To tell this history, von Bieberstein introduces the concept of "sovereign accumulation" to describe the ways in which the state and other actors mobilize histories of sovereign violence for present-day economic benefit. This framework illuminates the legacy of violence and resource extraction present in such practices as urban renewal projects, treasure hunting for "Armenian gold," and heritage tourism and identifies these practices' very existence as manifestations of the economic aftermath of the genocide.

Temptations in Ruin uncovers the ways in which the genocide gave rise to a racialized property regime and a recursive movement of sovereign accumulation that builds on and re-animates the Armenian genocide as generative of wealth in the present. And it demonstrates the complex interplay between genocide denial, destruction, and valorization in post-genocide contexts.

Highlighting the enduring resonance of genocide, von Bieberstein enhances our understanding of political violence's long-term impacts on society and on the economy.

The volume is available in hardcover and e-book from [the publisher's website](#).
ISBN 9781512828405

***Apo tin Koini Khrisi stin Syllogiki Drasi: Koina, Fysi kai Dimokratia [From Common Use to Collective Action: Commons, Nature, and Democracy]*, by Dimitra Koumparou, Papazisis Publishing, 2025. In Greek.**

How do communities organise themselves in order to use their natural resources - such as forests, waters, pastures, and salt flats - and how do their practices give rise to alternative forms of governance?

How does the collective governance of nature constitute alternative forms of democracy and shape counter-hegemonic practices?

These are the questions that this volume seeks to address. It engages with issues of sustainability, environmental governance, development, social and environmental justice, care, community, and democracy. It focuses on the ways in which people connect, collaborate, and collectively create the world they inhabit - from the lands of the Global South to the salt flats of the North.

What is described here about natural commons, self-organisation, and direct democracy is not a matter of theoretical abstraction, but of living practices manifested in different parts of the planet. Within a sharing economy in which both humans and nature participate, the commons constitute the vital space of socio-ecological interaction: a network of relationships and activities that connect people to their world, where sociality (*koimoneir*) is both a practice and a lived experience of community.

The commons function as forms of governance and as vehicles of politics, while at the same time constituting dynamic ecological landscapes shaped through the interaction of social relations, affective ties, and natural ecosystems. They form a "total social fact," in which social, political, and economic relations are interconnected and co-evolve. They represent an ontological condition of just and harmonious coexistence, fostering practices of care and solidarity toward alterity, resisting external impositions and hegemonic logics, and foregrounding forms of direct democratic governance.

This book is addressed to all those interested in contemporary challenges of environmental governance and alternative forms of democratic participation. It introduces theoretical frameworks and interpretive tools for researching the commons, taking as its point of departure the approach developed by Ostrom.

The volume is available in paperback from [the publisher's website](#).
ISBN 9789600245264

***Crossing Borders, Sharing Burdens: Rethinking Taxation and Migration as Fiscal Belonging*, by Lotta Björklund Larsen and Lynne Oats, Palgrave Macmillan Chats, 2026.**

Tax matters. It structures our societies, influences our choices, and reflects our values. Yet the meaning and impact of taxation are constantly changing in step with a world marked by climate transitions, demographic shifts, digitalisation, globalisation, and migration.

This open access book addresses critical questions surrounding attitudes to tax and tax compliance through the lens of "fiscal belonging," demonstrating the value of qualitative approaches to tax research. It explores the lived experience of immigrants to the UK, and how feelings of belonging, exclusion, reciprocity, and obligation shape their encounters with the tax system. The book illuminates the many different facets of fiscal belonging, including the right to work and access to employment, as well as histories of colonialism and the economic history of different communities on a national scale. By foregrounding personal narratives and the complexity of social worlds, this book argues for more methodologically diverse and inclusive approaches to understanding why people do, or do not, pay tax. It will be of interest to scholars across disciplines, as well as tax professionals working in business, consultancy, and public administration.

The volume is available in hardcover and Open Access e-book from [the publisher's website](#).
ISBN 9783031993930

SPECIAL ISSUES



Special Issue "Circular Cities, Motuations, Challenges and Prospects of Building Material Reuse in Urban Contexts," edited by Madlen Kobi, Adam Przywara, and Elena Siszyarenko. *Urban Research & Practice* 19:1 (2026).

<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/turn/20/19/1>

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Cergiç, Milvana. "Negotiating Variegated Stabilities: Working Conditions of Supermarket Employees in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Comparative Southeast European Studies* 73(3): 313-334. DOI: [10.1515/soeu-2025-0020](https://doi.org/10.1515/soeu-2025-0020)

Kojanić, Ognjen. 2025. "The Social Life of Resilience: From Techno-Politics to Socio-Environmental Justice." *Slovenský národopis / Slovak Ethnology* 73: 533-552. DOI: [10.31577/SN.2025.4.40](https://doi.org/10.31577/SN.2025.4.40)

Mauksch, Stefanie, and Giorgio Brocco. 2026. "Being in Work: Work as Experience, Circumstantial Disablement, and the Desire to Work as Normal." *Current Anthropology*. Online first. (With comments by Renu Addlakha, Tarini Bedi, Maria Berghs, Clara Devlieger and Michele Friedner.) DOI: [10.1086/740874](https://doi.org/10.1086/740874)

Milgram, B. Lynne. 2025. "Diasporic Entanglements: Philippine-Toronto Entrepreneurs Reinventing Food, Business and Belonging pre- and post-COVID-19." *International Development and Planning Review*. Online first. DOI: [10.3828/ldr.2025.30](https://doi.org/10.3828/ldr.2025.30)

Olma, Nikolaos. 2026. "Precarious Half-Lives: Silencing Toxic Legacies in a Former Uranium Mining Town in Kyrgyzstan." *Anthropology & Medicine*. Online first. DOI: [10.1080/13648470.2025.2604007](https://doi.org/10.1080/13648470.2025.2604007)

The Anthropology of Economy network was launched at the 2012 conference of the European Association of Social Anthropologists. The Network unites EASA members who share an interest in the anthropology of economy. Further information on the AoE Network: <https://www.easaonline.org/en/networksec30e09/>

Contact for Newsletter inquiries and submissions:
Nikolaos Olma, nolma@sa.aegean.gr

AoE Network Newsletter 2026/1 was set by Nikolaos Olma.