

Call for Papers
Workshop “Social Studies of Economics after neoliberalism?”
3-4 December 2026, Berlin

Organisers: Rouven Reinke, Lukas Bäuerle, Stephan Pühringer

The Social Studies of Economics (SSE) is an interdisciplinary field that examines the role of economists, economics and economic knowledge in society (Maesse et al. 2022, Pühringer et al. 2025). Over the past decade, SSE has consolidated as a distinct research area, focusing on the influence and performativity of economics—how economic theories and models actively shape social realities—and the intellectual and institutional structure of economics, including its homogeneity and epistemic authority (Fourcade et al. 2015, Muniesa 2015, Bäuerle 2023, Reinke 2024, Reinke & Porak 2025). Key debates in SSE include e.g.:

- (i) the influence of economic imaginaries on policymaking and public discourse
- (ii) the role of economists as powerful experts
- (iii) the mechanisms of economic knowledge dissemination in academia and beyond.
- (iv) the contribution of economic reasoning to the emergence, perpetuation and transformation of neoliberalism.

However, political-economic developments over the past 15 years and the mutually dependent disruptions associated with economic, political, social and ecological crises phenomena suggest that neoliberalism, at least as an economic policy paradigm, has – again (Crouch 2011, Mirowski 2013) – come to an end. While several political activists and scientists argue for a social-ecological transformation as the progressive successor of neoliberalism, regressive alternatives, comprising right-wing populism, techno-libertarianism, and authoritarian ideologies, are gaining strength in the emerging era of post-neoliberalism.

Economic knowledge and imaginaries, as central frameworks of thought that shape how societies perceive and organize economic realities, play a crucial role in these developments. These imaginaries not only underpin the rhetoric of these movements but also reveal fractures within traditional economic thoughts. For instance, the tension between economic liberalism, which emphasizes progress and market-driven innovation, and regressive ideologies, which often advocate protectionism, nationalism, or anti-globalization, highlights the contested nature of economic reasoning in contemporary society. At the same time, there are also some resemblances and mutual reinforcements between market-radical and right-wing concepts on several levels (Pühringer & Ötsch 2018, Meyenbug 2025), including the discursive construction of dichotomous world views and an implicitly derogative conceptualization of masses. The project of socio-ecological transformation also has diverse connections to economic knowledge. On the one hand, technocratic “green growth” approaches to transformation rely on empirical evidence of academic economics (e.g. CO₂-pricing), on the other hand, some voices call for a left-wing populism, which challenge traditional economic liberalism as well as the superiority of academic economics.

These developments challenge SSE and its established view on economists, economics and economic knowledge. In the workshop, we want to discuss how SSE can address recent

societal and political trends in their research on the role of economists, economics and economic knowledge in society. The workshop will explore the political-economic, ideological, epistemic and societal characteristics of a contested post-neoliberal era as well as their implications for the field of SSE and related field (e.g. STS).

Contributions:

We welcome three different formats of contribution (see below). In general, contributions should address the following questions:

- To what extent do we face the end or yet another crisis of neoliberalism and neoliberal economic reasoning?
- How does economic reasoning and economics relate to the rise of regressive ideologies?
- What is the economic reasoning behind concrete regressive imaginaries?
- What is the role of economic reasoning and economic experts in debates about socio-ecological transformation?
- What actors and institutions contribute to new economic imaginaries?
- How do these developments reflect broader shifts in the relationship between economic knowledge production and societal values?
- How do these developments lead to a further marginalisation of distinct groups of economists along the dimensions of paradigm, gender, ethnicity and class.

Please send your abstracts to: rouven.reinke@uni-hamburg.de, lukas.baeuerle@jku.at and stephan.puehringer@jku.at until 15 July 2026.

Notification of acceptance: End of August 2026

Paper Presentation

The traditional "paper presentation" format includes a presentation by the authors (approx. 15 min), followed by a silent reflection (2 min) and a shared discussion (approx. 15 min). Participants who chose this format can circulate their paper amongst workshop participants.



Research Idea



In the "Research Idea" format, you introduce your research and get feedback and ideas on how to proceed. These slots will be structured around an initial short presentation (max. 5 minutes, max. 5 slides), followed by a silent reflection (2 min), audience input (10 minutes), interim feedback and clarification by the presenter (5 minutes) and a collaborative wrap-up (5-7 min).

Burning Dilemma

In the "Burning Dilemma" format, you provoke a shared discussions on pressing questions or dilemmas. The presenters can share their "burning dilemma" (5 minutes, 1-2 slides) and end with a statement, specific questions or prompts. Participants will discuss these prompts in small groups of 2-3 (10 minutes) to report their thoughts to the room. We will finish with 10-15 minutes of open discussion.



Financing:

Thanks to the financial support of the VolkswagenStiftung, conference meals, travel costs and accommodation will be covered for all participants.

Venue:

Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin (WZB), Reichpietschufer 50, 10785 Berlin, Germany

Questions:

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the organizing team: Rouven Reinke (rouven.reinke@uni-hamburg.de), Lukas Bäuerle (lukas.baeuerle@jku.at), Stephan Pühringer (stephan.puehringer@jku.at)

Organizing institutions:



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