

Workshop

Destruction

Conceptual Approaches and
Ethnographic Explorations

ORGANIZERS

Marieke Brandt, Tim Burger, Laura Burke, Stephan Kloos, Martin Slama

CONTACT

Martin Slama
Martin.slama@oeaw.ac.at

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18-19 May, 2026

Austrian Academy of Sciences
Institute for Social Anthropology
Georg-Coch-Platz 2
3rd Floor, Room 3A.1
1010 Vienna

Programme

Monday, 18 May, 2026

09:00

Arrival

at Institute for Social Anthropology (ISA),
Austrian Academy of Sciences

09:15

Welcome Remarks

Judith Bovensiepen, Director, ISA

09:20

Workshop Introduction

By workshop organizers

09:30

Round of Introductions

10:00-11:00

Session 1

Chair: Laura Burke

Jacob Bessen, University of Toronto
Neighborly Sacrifice and Creative Destruction:
Theologies of Identity and Offering

Tim Burger, ISA
Destruction, Demography and the Divine at the
Margins of Europe

11:00

Break

11:30-12:30

Session 2

Chair: Martin Slama

Dominik Müller, Friedrich-Alexander-
Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg
Bureaucratic Destruction as Paradoxical
Preservation: Unintended Ethnographies of
Deviant-Declared Muslim Practices

Marieke Brandt, ISA
Ansar Allah and the Long Reach of Empire: Notions
of Destruction, Ruination, and Redemption in
Northern Yemen

12:30

Lunch

13:30-15:00

Session 3

Chair: Stephan Kloos

Laura Burke, ISA
How to Replenish?: Reproduction and Destruction
After Genocide in Timor-Leste

Taras Fedirko, University of Glasgow
The Gifts of War: Value and Destruction in the
Making of Ukraine's War Economy

Till Mostowlansky, Geneva Graduate Institute
The Promise of Destruction

15:00

Break

15:30-16:30

Discussion

Chair: Stephan Kloos

Tuesday, 19 May 2026

09:15

Arrival

09:30-11:00

Session 5

Chair: Tim Burger

Qiaoyun Zhang, Macao Polytechnic University
Economy of Grief: Living in the Aftermath of
Destruction

Darmanto, Czech Academy of Sciences
Power and the Ambiguity of Destruction in the
Halmahera Nickel Industry

Ekin Kurtic, University of Cambridge
Destruction: The Politics of Rubble in a Town
Under Dismantling

11:00

Break

11:30-12:30

Session 6

Chair: Marieke Brandt

Susanna Trnka, University of Auckland
Destroying Intelligence: Breaking Down the
Boundaries between Human and Machine

Martin Slama, ISA
Creative Destructions? AI Ideologies and the
Destruction of Communities

12:30

Lunch

13:30

Final Discussion

Chair: Martin Slama

14:30

Visit of the Haus des Meeres

(Aqua Terra Zoo)
<https://www.haus-des-meeres.at/en>