



# Wednesday Seminars

WINTERSEMESTER 2017/18

## Paschalis Maria Laksono

The 2006 Yogyakarta Earthquake: A Case Study of Media and the Power of Representation  
*in Kooperation mit der Austrian-Indonesian Society*

Mittwoch 29.11.2017, 17.00, HS C, IKSA, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien, 4. Stock



**Paschalis M. Laksono**  
*has been a tenured Professor at the Department of Anthropology, School of Cultural Science at the University of Gadjah Mada since 1981. From 2005-2006, he was a scholar in residence within the framework of the Fulbright*

*Program and taught Anthropology as a visiting professor at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania.*

*In his research and teaching, P.M. Laksono focuses on social boundaries, social movement, and education, and engages in national and international NGO activities. He currently is a board member of the Anthropology Association of Indonesia. Along with his former students, he developed the field of Participatory Visual Anthropology. Most of his research has been done in eastern Indonesia. His last study with LAURA (Anthropology Laboratory for Research and Action) at the University of Gadjah Mada produced a policy report and an academic paper which aimed at the promotion of adat (local custom) in the West Sumba District.*

### ...kommende Termine

DO 16.30 07.12.2017 **Ole Wittmann**

**Tätowierungs- und Professionalisierungsgeschichte**

On May 27th, 2006 a strong earthquake made Yogyakarta the sustained focus of world media coverage for several weeks. Within hours of the disaster, consumers of mass media could see the impact of the earthquake in which almost 6000 people lost their lives and more than 200,000 houses in Yogyakarta and in other areas of central Java collapsed into debris within less than a minute. They could also witness people's distress and frantic rescue efforts, followed by work to mitigate the dangers and obstructions presented by widespread destruction of the built environment and essential civic infrastructure. Based on an analysis of newspaper reports throughout a time-span of forty days after the event, I argue that the media coverage was far from exhaustive, but instead presented selective, fragmented images of the disaster. In this way media representations of the disaster affected a large part of the Indonesian population, producing an almost ritualised atmosphere that could be interpreted as a kind of "mass mourning." Hence, media coverage in the days immediately following the disaster arguably prolonged the grief of survivors rather than helping them to cope with the devastating effects of the disaster and to move on with their lives. During the first week after the quake in particular, many people from other parts of Indonesia and international aid organisations entered the impacted areas and witnessed the victims' situation, offering solidarity and relief. However, media reportage of their presence and activities had the effect of transforming the victims into a spectacle of a mass of people ready to grab at emergency relief. In the second week, the chaos eventually gave way to a more structured approach to relief with media reportage now placing a strong emphasis on the nature and effectiveness of the government's policy of disaster relief.

My research suggests that media can play a highly influential role in coping with disaster by its power to generate collective imagery and imaginings, and that the 2006 earthquake in Yogyakarta illustrates how media representations of natural disasters can be detrimental or useful for people to (re)gain their own lives.