



The May 1998 Riots

Women Psychologists and the Entry of Trauma
in Indonesian Popular Discourse

4 December 2025, Thursday

15:00-16:30 (Japan Time)

Format: **HYBRID** In person & Online

For Zoom participants, please join from the following link

<https://kyoto-u-edu.zoom.us/j/82307268464?pwd=hBJ9h7GVpDbml04eHNVjNRMvamp67K.1>

Seminar Room (No.213)

Inamori Foundation Memorial Building, CSEAS, Kyoto University



Zoom/ACCESS

ABSTRACT

The 3rd edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association introduced Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to diagnose the emotional and psychological after-effects of traumatic events. In this presentation I focus on how traumatic events have been interpreted and how “trauma” and PTSD have become part of Indonesian popular discourse. Ideas around trauma and PTSD were not introduced by psychiatrists and psychologists, but by human rights activists and feminists shortly after the May riots in 1998, shortly before the resignation of Suharto. These activists supported Chinese Indonesian women who suffered sexual violence during these riots. Mental health professionals—psychiatrists and psychologists—followed years later, after the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. I do not view Indonesians as passive recipients reproducing Western ideas on trauma; instead, I view them as actively adopting ideas on trauma and using them for their own tactical and strategic purposes.

PRESENTER

Hans Pols

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Hans Pols, PhD, is Professor at the School of History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Sydney. He is interested in the history of colonial medicine and the transformation medical research and practice underwent during the process of decolonization. His research has focused on the Dutch East Indies and Indonesia, and on psychiatry and mental health. His book *Nurturing Indonesia: Medicine and Decolonisation in the Dutch East Indies* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2018. He has also published an edited volume on reactions to highly traumatizing events in Asia: Mark Micale and Hans Pols, eds. *Traumatic Pasts in Asia: History, Psychiatry, and Trauma, 1930 to the Present* (New York: Berghahn, 2021).



No
Reservation
required

Colloquium 2025