



ÖSTERREICHISCH INDONESISCHE GESELLSCHAFT  
**AUSTRIAN INDONESIAN SOCIETY**  
LEMBAGA PERSAHABATAN AUSTRIA INDONESIA



## INVITATION TO THE LECTURE

### The politics of oil and gas in Timor-Leste

**Prof. Dr. Judith Bovensiepen (Austrian Academy of Sciences)**

**Date and Time: Friday, 5 September 2025, 4-5 pm**

**Place: Institute for Social Anthropology,**

**Georg-Coch-Platz 2, 1010 Vienna, Room 4, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor.**

**Abstract:** This talk explores the politics of oil and gas in Timor-Leste through an anthropological lens, focusing on how resource extraction is entangled with colonial history and anti-colonial struggles. The Greater Sunrise gas fields, discovered in the 1970s, lie in the contested waters between Timor-Leste and Australia and have long been at the centre of disputes over sovereignty and maritime boundaries. More recently, the Timorese government has launched the ambitious Tasi Mane project, a large-scale petroleum corridor along the south coast intended to process and export offshore oil and gas. While these initiatives promise economic independence, they also expose tensions between development, environmental concerns, and local dispossession. By examining how anti-colonial and ancestral logics are strategically incorporated into extractivist agendas, this talk argues for an analytical framework that captures the coexistence of conflicting logics within resource politics in Timor-Leste.

**Prof. Dr. Judith Bovensiepen** is the Director of the Institute for Social Anthropology at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and honorary professor at the Institute for Cultural and Social Anthropology at the University of Vienna. Before taking on this position, she worked as a Reader in Social Anthropology at the University of Kent. She received her PhD in Social Anthropology from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and worked as a postdoctoral fellow at the Musée du quai Branly in Paris (2010-2011). Her current research focuses on human-environment relations, natural resource extraction, and the transformation of animist orientations through interactions with changing political, economic and religious regimes. Most of her research focusses on Southeast Asia, specifically Timor-Leste, where she has been carrying out ethnographic research since 2005. Her previous work focussed on analysing the dynamics of post-conflict recovery, examining how people's relations with the environment are transformed by violence and forced displacement. For her research achievements, she won the Nadel Essay Prize in 2014 and the Philip Leverhulme Prize in 2020.