



Venue

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
14129 Berlin

ZMO-Colloquium Winter Term 2017/2018

The Idea of Youth: Concepts, Practices and Life-worlds of a Global Category

Thursday, 30 November 2017, 5 pm

Pop-Islamist Youth Politics in Malaysia: Rethinking 'Instruments of the Devil'

Lecture by **Dominik Müller** (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology)

The presentation will explore how Malaysia's Islamist opposition movement, led by the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS), is currently undergoing dramatic cultural changes and has developed an unprecedented normative flexibility in the field of modern popular culture. Based on ethnographic data, it will elucidate how, spearheaded by its youth wing, the Islamic Party has shifted from a group that long held the image of conservative zealots who try to ban any form of art and entertainment towards being a pioneer of pop-cultural creativity for missionary (*dakwah*) purposes. This reorientation, however, and the underlying processes of normative change continue to be fiercely contested within the movement, and parallel to the rise of pop-Islamism, the same media-savvy young generation is now also using pop-cultural channels to propagate more classical Islamist ideas, such as the implementation of Islamic criminal law. While the proposed ethnographic description will focus particularly on the role of youth and generationality in these and earlier changes among the Islamic Party's community, the lecture will also reflect upon the local and group-specific meanings of the concept of youth (*pemuda*) and illustrate how these, in certain respects, have rather little to do with some of the term's cultural connotations in Western Europe.

Dominik Müller is heading the DFG Emmy Noether Research Group "The Bureaucratization of Islam and its Socio-Legal Dimensions in Southeast Asia" at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle. From 2012 until 2016, he was a Post-Doctoral Fellow in Anthropology at Goethe-University Frankfurt's Cluster of Excellence "Formation of Normative Orders". Since completing his PhD in 2012, he also held visiting positions at Stanford University (2013), the University of Brunei Darussalam (2014), the University of Oxford (2015), and the National University of Singapore (2016). Parallel to his current position in Germany, he is a Fellow at the National University of Singapore (2017-2020) and will be a stipendiary Visiting Fellow in Law and Social Change at the Islamic Legal Studies Program, Harvard University, in spring term 2018. He is a member of the "Junge Akademie | Mainz" at the Academy of Sciences and Literature in Mainz. His dissertation on the rise of pop-Islamism in Malaysia received the Frobenius Society's Research Prize 2012. His research appears in peer-reviewed journals such as *Asian Survey*, *Globalizations*, *Indonesia and the Malay World*, *Internationales Asienforum*, *Paideuma*, *South East Asia Research*, the *Cambridge Journal of Law and Religion* (forthcoming), the *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia* (forthcoming), and the *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* (forthcoming).

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