



Oriental Institute, Czech Academy of Sciences
cordially invites you to a lecture on

Sharia Reform and the Dynamics of Socio-Legal Change in the Islamic Monarchy of Brunei Darussalam

by

Dominik Müller (Goethe-University Frankfurt)

Brunei Darussalam is the only Southeast Asian country that has unambiguously defined itself as an “Islamic State” since Independence. In the absence of democratic institutions or an influential civil society, the Islamic bureaucracy has become the Sultanate’s most powerful political actor outside the royal family. In this position, the clergy has institutionalized a monolithic, legalistic understanding of Islam as the only acceptable Muslim truth, strengthened by indoctrination, material incentives and the threat of harsh sanctions. Since the late 1980s, several governmental institutions have pursued various strategies to “purify” Islamic beliefs and practices in the country. Within the region, Brunei has been ahead in terms of criminalizing alternative interpretations of Islam, a phenomenon of great current concern in Malaysia and Indonesia. The lecture will first outline how Brunei’s “faith control” policies have evolved in recent years, and how the legal framework for prosecuting religious “deviance” has changed following the implementation of the Shariah Penal Code Order in 2014. Based on anthropological fieldwork and primary sources, our speaker will then illustrate some of the bureaucracy’s efforts of “purifying” Islam, and explain how they are discursively embedded.

Dr. Dominik Müller studied Anthropology, Law and Philosophy at Goethe-University Frankfurt and Leiden University, and obtained his Ph.D. *summa cum laude* from Frankfurt in 2012. Müller is now a post-doctoral researcher at his home institution in Frankfurt, the Cluster of Excellence “Normative Orders”. He held fellowships at Stanford University (2013), the University of Brunei Darussalam (2014), and was most recently a visiting Senior Member at St Antony’s College, University of Oxford. His thesis, *Islam, Politics and Youth in Malaysia: The Pop-Islamist Reinvention of PAS*, received the award for Germany’s best anthropological dissertation of 2012 and was published by Routledge in 2014.

When: Tuesday, 5 May, 2015, 17:30–19:00

Where: Charles University, Faculty of Arts, Celetná 20, room 238



**Oriental
Institute**

The Czech Academy
of Sciences