



– Institute's Colloquium –

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**The return of the Sultan Jailolo: Legitimizing 'traditional'
polities in contemporary Indonesia**

After the resignation of Indonesia's President Suharto in 1998, new legislation led Indonesia into the reform era (*era reformasi*) and towards a more decentralized nation state. However, revitalization movements of so called traditional polities have been accompanying these transformation processes throughout Indonesia.

My fieldwork was conducted in Jailolo, North Maluku, where a Sultanate was revitalized after 500 years of absence. The Sultanate was one part of the four Sultanates of North Maluku which are imagined as the four socio-cosmological pillars of the region. As myths tell, all of the four Sultanates have to be established in order to guarantee the region's prosperity. The presentation focuses on the Sultanate's strategies to legitimate and articulate its reestablishment in Indonesia's contemporary socio-political situation. Therefore, the Sultanate employs myths, relations to the region's living and dead inhabitants as well as the decentralization laws of the Indonesian Republic.

As we will see, these strategies are articulated in the intertwined discourses of democratisation on the one hand and *adat* (custom, value system) on the other hand.

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4-6 p.m.

**Institute of Ethnology
Stuttstraße 21, Raum STU 105 (2.10)
Everybody is welcome!**