

Panel proposal for EuroSEAS 1,3 September 2026 - Universidad Complutense, Faculty of Political Science and Sociology - Madrid

1) Title: Exchanges Between the Middle East and Southeast Asia: Routes of Political Ideas and Movements in a Global Micro-Historical Approach.

2) Panel Conveners/Panel Chair:

Luigi Sausa, PhD in Linguistic Anthropology, University of Naples "L'Orientale"

Pietro Menghini, PhD in Global History and Governance, Scuola Superiore Meridionale – University of Naples "Federico II"

3) Format:

Selected participants (up to three) will need to submit draft papers of their presentations (max 20 pages, Times New Roman, 12pt, 1.5 spacing—including bibliography and notes) for pre-circulation among themselves, the discussants, and the panel chairs. During the panel, each participant will have ten minutes to introduce their work. The discussant will then have five minutes to provide observations and outline general questions to open the discussion with panel members and the audience, which will last 15 minutes. This approach focuses on the discussion, enabling participants to gain the most from interactions with the discussant and fellow panelists. Additionally, since the discussion will be based on pre-circulated papers, all panel members will be able to engage meaningfully with each presentation and offer timely comments. This format fosters a "workshop-like" environment and discussion, and, as we aim to promote a stimulating methodological debate, we believe this is the best format.

4) Description of the Panel:

The panel calls for methodological reflections based on concrete case studies on how to trace the exchange, adaptation, and reinterpretation of political ideas, practices, and movements between the Middle East and Indonesia during the 20th century. The panel originates from the conveners' research on the transmission of political Shi'ism from the 1950s and 1960s in Najaf, Iraq, to Indonesia, and its significance for both sides of this exchange (Sausa & Menghini, forthcoming). In this sense, the panel also invites proposals that focus on challenging the center-periphery relationship between the Middle East—also seen as, but not limited to, the heartland of the Islamic world—and Southeast Asia. Building on the numerous contributions about the connection between these two regions through Hajj routes, scholarly networks, and economic links (Von der Mehden 1993; Ho 2006; Laffan 2011; Ricci 2011; Tagliacozzo 2013; Bradley 2014), the panel seeks contributions exploring alternative routes of connection between Indonesia and the Middle East. These should focus on the exchange of political ideas, practices, texts, and the circulation of people involved in political movements. Additionally, the panel aims to use these case studies to foster a methodological conversation on how a global micro-historical approach (Ghobrial 2019) can help reconstruct the global lives (Gamsa 2017) of non-elite or subaltern actors (Trivellato 2011). Emphasizing the circulation of people and objects, primarily texts, can help connect a broad geographical research scope (De Vito 2019)—such as contacts between Indonesia and the Middle East—while allowing for in-depth contextual analysis of events. Simultaneously, this approach can shed light on global dynamics (Trivellato 2011), using biographies and circulation as "windows" into broader processes.

5) Single Session (the panel is open for two proposals, as one presentation will be given by the conveners)

6) Discussant: Chiara Formichi/Farjrie Alatas/Geradi Yudhistira (t.b.a.)

Bibliography:

Bradley, Francis R. (2014). "Islamic Reform, the Family, and Knowledge Networks Linking Mecca to Southeast Asia in the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of Asian Studies* 73, no. 1, pp. 89–111.

De Vito, Christian G. (2019). "History Without Scale: The Micro-Spatial Perspective," *Past & Present* 242, Supplement 14, pp. 348–372.

Gamsa, Mark (2017). "Biography and (Global) Microhistory." *New Global Studies*, Vol. 1, Issue 3, pp. 231–241.

Ghobrial, John-Paul A. (2019). "Introduction: Seeing the World like a Microhistorian". *Past & Present*, Vol. 242, Is. Suppl. 14, pp. 1-22.

Ho, Engseng (2006). *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press.

Laffan, Michael (2011). *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past*. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011.

Ricci, Ronit (2011). *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sausa, Luigi & Menghini, Pietro (Forthcoming), "The Roots of Political Shi'ism in Indonesia: Scholarly Networks between Iraq and Indonesia", in Ghobrial, John-Paul A. & Cooper-Davies, Christopher (Eds.). *Global Shi'ism: Scholars, Migrants, and the Islamic Revival before 1979*. Edinburgh University Press.

Tagliacozzo, Eric (2013). *The Longest Journey: Southeast Asians and the Pilgrimage to Mecca*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Trivellato, Francesca (2011). "Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?" *California Italian Studies* 2, no. 1.

Von der Mehden, Fred R. (1993). *Two Worlds of Islam: Interaction between Southeast Asia and the Middle East*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.