

## **EuroSEAS 2021 Panel proposal**

### **Provisional Title: "A Chaotic Time that Certain People will Always Exploit": The Regional Dynamics of the Indonesian War Against Dutch Re-occupation**

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Discussant:

#### **Single Session: 3-4 presenters (90 minutes).**

This panel invites scholars working on the regional dynamics of the Indonesian war against Dutch re-occupation between 1945 and 1950 to intervene in current debates on how the Indonesian-Dutch war is often portrayed. From the multi-various perspectives of different regions across the Indonesian archipelago, we challenge linear perspectives that end with the formal transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia in December 1949. Instead, we depart from the notion that no-one understood how the revolution would unfurl itself and what actors would drive various events and turning points that slowly but inexorably *turned into* what is now known as the Indonesian Revolution.

This panel has several unique characteristics. Foremost, it brings together Indonesian and Dutch scholars to ensure multi-perspectival angles: the panel finally brings Dutch and Indonesian historiographies together. Furthermore, by asking the question ‘what was the revolution like’, the panel centres actors rather than outcomes. Here, we aim to analyse ‘uncertainties’; an element historians traditionally are uncomfortable with. By embracing uncertainty—surrounding outcomes, trajectories, categorizing friends and foes thinking etcetera—our panel gives room to politics, events and actors (ranging from armies and paramilitaries to bystanders and individual participants) that often did not make it into dominant retellings of the revolutionary period. Basically, our panel challenges what we think of as ‘revolution’.

For the first time, revolutionary regions will be discussed in relation to each other, rather than individually.<sup>1</sup> This allows the panel to draw out specific differences and similarities. Although participants—through Medan, Central Java or Sulawesi—all focus on Indonesia, the panel’s conceptual approaches ensure variety. Individual papers draw on cutting-edge concepts that have hitherto been rarely brought to bear upon the 45-50 period. Participants will illuminate events in their regions through concepts of rebel governance, the porosity of mental and physical borders/barriers, the fluidity of loyalties, and revolutionary spaces, to name a few. The panel’s findings, therefore, have implications beyond the Indonesian cases.

Keywords: microdynamics, multi-perspectivity, decolonization, political violence, mobilization, Indonesia, Southeast Asia

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<sup>1</sup> A. Kahin, ed., *Regional Dynamics of the Indonesian Revolution: Unity from Diversity* (Honolulu, 1985).