



Call for Papers

## **National Identities and the Youth in East Asia: Popular Culture, Political Mobilisation, and Digital Spaces**

*Workshop at the Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium, 2-3 May 2019*

As East Asian societies seek to come to term with demographic, economic, political and technological transitions in recent decades, the younger generation – the-called Millennials born after 1980 – have been both impacted by and assuming an increasingly active role in shaping these transformations. Despite being frequently depicted as a politically apathetic generation and with only limited access to traditional levers of state and cultural power, the youth in East Asia have been able to negotiate their political identities through a variety of channels outside official institutions such as popular culture, social and political activisms, and online communications. Digital spaces have become a particularly significant venue for the technologically sophisticated youth to engage in explicit or disguised forms of mobilisations and self-expressions as a strategy to, for instance, resist authoritarian control or to cope with social isolation. On the other hand, from the umbrella movement in Hong Kong and the sunflower movement in Taiwan to emerging feminist activisms in mainland China despite heightened oppressions, the youth are also increasingly involved in claiming the physical public space and in some cases utilising digital networks as a tool for real-world mobilisations.

This workshop aims to explore the formation, negotiation, and performance of political identities among East Asian youth with a special focus on the role of popular culture, online and offline mobilisations, and digital communications. While the workshop is particularly interested in the question of national identities, or how the youth appropriate and challenge nationalist imaginaries within the context of ever encroaching globalisation, we also welcome contributions examining the political (dis)engagement of the youth in East Asia beyond nationalist practices and discourses. Government policies and new patterns of political communication through digital media platforms that seek to influence the political identity of the young will also be taken into account.

Topics could include and are not limited to:

- Narratives and counter-narratives of national identities in popular cultural artifacts (e.g. films, TV shows, manga, anime, and video games)
- The role of the youth in political mobilisations such as pro-democracy movements, feminist activism, environmental activism, and labour rights movements
- Cyber-nationalism and diversified expressions of nationalist consciousness in the cyberspace
- Conservative activism online and extreme right discourses such as racist hate speech, xenophobia, and Islamophobia on social media

- Official and semi-official discourses of national identity produced by state-sanctioned platforms (e.g. national education, state media, and online communication of government apparatuses)
- The link between new media and youth activisms
- Emotion, affect, and identity formation
- How experiences of multiculturalism, immigration and international education influence young people's perception of the nation and its boundaries

The workshop aims for a multi- and inter- disciplinary discussion on national identities and political engagements of the youth in East Asia. We invite contributions from various relevant disciplines such as political science, sociology, communication studies, youth studies, and area studies. Participants' respective empirical research may be focused on any of the countries or regions in East Asia and comparative or cross-national approaches are particularly welcome. The collective project is scheduled to lead to an edited volume.

Please send your title, abstract (max. 350 words) and a short bio to Chenchen Zhang ([chenchen.zhang@ulb.ac.be](mailto:chenchen.zhang@ulb.ac.be)) and Frederik Ponjaert ([fponjaer@ulb.ac.be](mailto:fponjaer@ulb.ac.be)) by 15 February 2019. Selected papers will be notified by 28 February 2019. Participation is free. We are able to cover the travel costs of invited speakers with the limits of up to €300 for intra-European flights and up to €1,000 for transcontinental flights.

Organising Committee: Frederik Ponjaert (Université libre de Bruxelles); Chenchen Zhang (Université libre de Bruxelles)

Scientific Committee: Shaun Breslin (Warwick University); Vanessa Frangville (Université libre de Bruxelles); Thierry Kellner (Université libre de Bruxelles); Florent Villard (Science Po Rennes)