**“Ungrateful children”: Alter-politics of child dissent in Southeast Asia**

**Convenors**

Daniel Whitehouse, Ph.D., SOAS, University of London, Email: ml07drw@gmail.com

Giuseppe Bolotta, Ph.D., Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, Email: giuseppe.bolotta@unive.it

**Proposed Format: Single-session workshop panel (1 discussant)**

This double panel adopts a workshop format to bring together early-career social scientists of Southeast Asia from around the world, with the goal to present comparative case studies in a single session (90 min). All papers will be circulated among presenters in advance, in order to create the conditions for direct engagement, cross-feedback, and a dynamic dialogue between participants. Participants are invited to speak in turn, with each slot strictly limited to 10 minutes. After paper presentations, the discussant will pose a first round of curated questions, before the floor is opened for continued discussion. There is not yet a list of panel participants. The conveners shall approach potential contributors who conduct research on the topic, and circulate the panel abstract for open submission.

**Panel description**

Southeast Asia is lurching towards political authoritarianism. But throughout the region, a countervailing push for democracy is being led by the region’s youth, a new generation of activists committed to diverse civic causes—antimilitarism, educational reorganization, indigenous rights, marriage equality, and a more open political order. Their tactics are often idiosyncratic, utilizing iconoclastic humor and art, repurposed artifacts of local traditions, globalized pop-culture, and digital disobedience. In doing so, they collate an expansive and surreal public discourse that undermines the rigid political narratives of an unconnected gerontocracy and challenges local “age patriarchies” that compel juniors to demonstrate respect and gratitude toward social superiors. In contexts as diverse as Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Indonesia, conservative adults consider politically disruptive youngsters to be “ungrateful children”; subordinates who do not know their place, and scandalously disregard longstanding traditions. So how is “childhood” (and, relatedly, “parenthood”, “siblinghood” or “seniority”) reformulated through children’s pro-democracy activism in Southeast Asia’s gerontocratic polities?

This panel invites contributions that identify and explore the unique lifeworlds of Southeast Asia’s child dissenters—how they live, survive, and flourish within various political conditions and social imaginaries. Our focus here is on child “alter-politics”, that is the myriad world-making practices through which children’s organized rejection of adult norms and paternalistic values brings about novel, child-centered visions of inter-generational hierarchy and moral authority. We are interested in papers that address these changes from a broad range of entangled sites, from the classroom, protests sites, digital spaces, and the domestic and religious realms. We particularly welcome presentations that attend to directly lived experiences that challenge a regional literature that has typically overlooked and denied political agency to children.